



ERICKSONIAN CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

Reference Companion: 2026 Edition

Ericksonian Choice Architecture (ECA) is a choice-centric communication model that organizes forms of language and interaction designed to influence judgment, attention, motivation, and behavior, including mental processes that operate largely outside conscious awareness, such as implicit attitudes, cognition, emotion, perception, and recall. Because ECA is not derived from the assumptions and terminology of the medical model, some of its vocabulary may be unfamiliar to therapists. While ECA draws on an Ericksonian clinical tradition, its vocabulary is aligned with behavioral economics, cognitive psychology, and related academic fields—adapting those concepts to fit a *choice-centric* framework.

The *Reference Companion* is meant to serve as an ancillary guide to ***The Practitioner's Guide to Ericksonian Choice Architecture: Integrating Clinical Wisdom and the Science of Choice***. The Companion is organized with a three-tier structure. First, there is a glossary that defines key ECA principles, strategies, tactics, cognitive biases, theoretical constructs, and documented psychological phenomena that appear in *The Practitioner's Guide*. It is intended to help readers distinguish broad organizing principles from specific methods of application and to provide concise definitions for terms used throughout the text. As the vocabulary of ECA becomes more familiar, the mind becomes better able to recognize its patterns, make its distinctions, and use these words not only for communication but as tools of thought.

Next, there is an aggregate tactic map that applies this vocabulary to state-dependent design decisions. It is intended to help readers move from definition to application by showing how particular tactics become more or less suitable depending on the psychological state, bias pattern, or motivational condition being addressed. In this way, the tactic map serves as a practical bridge between conceptual knowledge and strategic use, helping readers identify which forms of influence are most congruent with a given moment of choice.

Lastly, there is a section on strategies and stratagems that explains why particular tactics work by placing them within a broader level of organization. This section is intended to clarify the underlying logic that gives individual tactics their coherence and direction, showing how specific maneuvers function as expressions of larger strategic patterns related to influence, goal pursuit, and the design of choice environments.

[ECA Glossary](#)

[Quick-Reference Tactic Map](#)

[Strategies and Stratagems](#)

ECA Glossary

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Adaptive decision-making	A core ECA principle that defines progress as ongoing, context-sensitive choice rather than static “change.” Because self and environment are in constant flux, productive problem-solving remains flexible, iterative, and continuously updated.	VI:INTRO/C2
Adaptive reuse	A design feature that identifies a workable function in a problematic habit, tendency, or compulsion and redirects that same momentum to serve a constructive purpose.	VI:C1/5
Affordances	Features of a choice context that make certain responses easier to notice, imagine, or carry out, thereby influencing behavior without requiring direct command.	VI:INTRO/C1/4/5/7/8
Agency	The capacity to act intentionally, whether through behavior, attention, appraisal, or motive. In ECA, reduced agency appears when behavior is governed more by habit, fear, craving, or pressure than by values-aligned choice.	VI:C4
Agentic framing	A design feature that leads an individual to act as an agent of a respected authority figure, out of duty, obligation, or loyalty. This shifts responsibility for actions onto an authority figure.	VI:C6
Ambivalence	A state of mind in which competing motives, values, or goals remain simultaneously active, producing oscillation between incompatible options.	VI:INTRO/C2/5/7/8
Analytic neutrality	A non-directive clinical posture in which the practitioner avoids steering the person toward specific conclusions, choices, or emotional outcomes.	VI:INTRO
Anchoring high	A design feature that sets a performance objective slightly above the person’s current capability to promote skill development without making success feel unattainable.	VI:C2
Anchoring low	A design feature that sets performance objectives far below the person’s current capability, making success seem easy and performance non-threatening.	VI:C1
Approach motivation	The drive to move toward a desired object, goal, or outcome, organizing attention and behavior around pursuit, engagement, and acquisition rather than avoidance.	VI:C2
Arational	Heuristics are neither rational nor irrational. They operate through their own rule-governed, non-evaluative logic that operates independently of explicit causality, formal justification, or right-versus-wrong reasoning.	VI:INTRO/C3

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Associative anchoring	Framing choices in relation to an individual's existing strengths, preferences, or unfulfilled aspirations so that progress feels more natural, relevant, and self-directed.	VI:C4
Authority bias	A state of mind in which perceived authority cues (expertise, status, role, confidence) are heavily weighted, biasing the person toward seeking, trusting, and following explicit direction from authority figures over independent evaluation.	VI:INTRO/ C3/6/7
Autonomous problem-solving	The process of engaging challenges through self-directed effort within a structured environment that supports ownership, adaptability, and meaningful choice.	VI:INTRO/ C8
Autonomous responsibility	The assignment of ownership for action and problem-solving to the individual, within a structured environment that preserves freedom of choice and supports self-directed engagement.	VI:INTRO/ C6
Autonomous stability	The freedom to remain as one is without pressure, while preserving the right to grow on one's own terms.	VI:INTRO/ C3/6
Backfire effect	The tendency to strengthen a prior belief when confronted with new evidence that is experienced as threatening, especially under conditions of defensiveness or perceived opposition.	VI:C5/7
Behavioral economics	The study of how human choice and subjective value are shaped by limited attention, imperfect reasoning, emotional influence, and the structure of the choice environment.	VI:INTRO/ C3
Belief perseverance	A manifestation of confirmation bias in which an initial belief remains influential even after the evidence supporting it has been discredited or contradicted. This persistence often occurs because people retain the original explanation or meaning structure that made the belief seem true, allowing the belief to continue shaping interpretation even when its factual basis has weakened. (See also: confirmation bias.)	VI:C8
Biased assimilation	A manifestation of confirmation bias in which balanced or conflicting information is interpreted through an existing belief framework, causing evidence to be assimilated in a way that reinforces prior conviction rather than corrects it. (See also: confirmation bias.)	VI:C8
Blind spot	A cognitive gap in which information relevant to adaptive choice is not sufficiently accessible at the moment of judgment.	VI:C2
Bounded choice	A design feature that preserves autonomy while constraining parameters of a behavior by shaping <i>when, where, how often, how long, or how intensely</i> the unwanted behavior occurs (a contrast to all-or-nothing optionality).	VI:C3/7

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Bounded rationality	The principle that decision-making is rational only within the limits of available information, time, and cognitive capacity.	VI:INTRO
Change bias	A state of mind in which novelty and transformation are implicitly valued, creating a bias toward pursuing new options or “progress” and undervaluing stability, maintenance, or incremental gains.	VI:INTRO/ C3/4
Change-centric care	An approach to guidance in which change itself is treated as the primary objective, often emphasizing symptom reduction, behavioral correction, or movement away from a problematic condition. In this model, success is typically measured by the degree to which a person alters thoughts, feelings, or behavior in a desired direction.	VI:INTRO
Choice	The integrated capacity to recognize a problem, opportunity, or solution and to move autonomously in a direction that serves the organism’s needs. In this sense, choice reflects the combination of intelligence and agency: the ability to discriminate among possibilities and to act in a way that is adaptive, goal-directed, and self-organizing. Choice does not require fully conscious deliberation, but may arise through pre-cognitive, embodied, or implicit processes that orient the individual toward approach, avoidance, selection, or restraint.	VI:INTRO
Choice agnosticism	A strategic stance of not endorsing any single option, so that autonomy and agency are preserved within a thoughtfully structured set of alternatives.	VI:INTRO
Choice architecture	The structuring of relational, psychological, or environmental conditions in ways that influence how options are perceived, evaluated, and selected. It refers to the design of choice contexts that guide behavior while preserving the individual’s ability to choose.	VI:INTRO
Choice justification	A design feature that prompts individuals to generate and articulate reasons that validate a difficult choice (past or pending) by evaluating, explaining, or simulating its consequences, thereby increasing coherence, commitment, and follow-through. (See also: Prospective justification, Retrospective justification.)	VI:C3
Choice preview	A class of tactics that prompts structured counterfactual simulation (imagining plausible future outcomes) to create a brief “as-if” time orientation that clarifies consequences and strengthens decision criteria.	VI:C3/7
Choice-centric care	An approach to guidance in which the primary objective is not to impose change, but to expand, clarify, and support meaningful choice. It emphasizes the design of relational and psychological conditions that help individuals recognize options, exercise autonomy, and move in directions aligned with their values, capacities, and circumstances.	VI:INTRO/ C1/2/3/4/ 5/7/8/9

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Choice-centric objectives	Objectives that prioritize the person’s experience of meaningful choice, ownership, and self-direction, with adaptive change emerging as a byproduct rather than as the primary aim.	VI:INTRO
Cognitive biases	Systematic tendencies in information processing shaped by prior preferences, expectations, or sensitivities, often increasing attention to options that feel more salient, attractive, or adaptive.	VI:INTRO/ C6/8
Cognitive dissonance	A phenomenological effect in which holding incompatible thoughts, values, or behaviors produces psychological discomfort, motivating preconscious efforts to restore coherence by changing beliefs, reinterpreting evidence, justifying actions, or shifting behavior.	VI:C1/2/5/ 7/8
Collaborative autonomy	A relational principle in which guidance is offered through shared purpose, transparency, and informed consent so that influence supports, rather than overrides, personal authorship and choice.	VI:INTRO
Commitment	A core ECA strategy that makes a chosen habit or intention feel self-endorsed and sustainable so it feels like an ongoing expression of personal will rather than a forced or temporary compliance.	VI:INTRO/ C1/2/3/4/ 5/6/7/8/9
Communication model	A model of influence that organizes guidance through the strategic design of language, meaning, and choice environments so that adaptive responses become more accessible, recognizable, and self-generated within the person’s present state of mind. In this model, the helper’s role is not to fix a broken psyche, but to structure opportunities that engage implicit attitudes, cognition, emotion, perception, and recall in support of meaningful choice.	VI:INTRO/ C9
Confirmation bias	A state of mind in which existing beliefs function as a filter—biasing attention, interpretation, and memory toward information that confirms what is already assumed, while discounting or avoiding disconfirming evidence. (See also: belief perseverance; biased assimilation; subjective validation.)	VI:INTRO/ C8
Consistency bias	The tendency to misremember one’s past attitudes or behaviors as more consistent with current beliefs than they actually were.	VI:C8
Contextualized care	A model of care that adapts intervention to the person’s immediate state of mind and the broader relational, social, and environmental conditions influencing choice, so that guidance fits the realities within which action must occur.	VI:INTRO/ C3
Continued influence effect	A phenomenological effect in which misinformation continues shaping memory, interpretation, and inference even after it has been explicitly corrected or discredited. People may abandon the statement at a conscious level yet still rely on the original explanation when making sense of events, so the corrected information remains active in downstream reasoning. This is why	VI:C8

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
	a false causal story can keep influencing judgment after the person knows it was inaccurate.	
Contralateral states	Opposing states of mind that differ in motivational, cognitive, emotional, and perceptual organization, often leading to contrasting ways of responding to the same situation.	VI:INTRO
Counter-attitudinal advocacy	A design feature that invites someone to argue <i>for</i> a position they initially oppose, broadening perspective and often reducing attitude rigidity by forcing active engagement with contrary reasons.	VI:C1/7/8
Counter-regulation	The natural tendency for psychological functioning to move in the opposite direction of a prevailing state when that state becomes too intense, prolonged, or limiting.	VI:INTRO
Counter-regulation theory	A theory proposing that emotional balance is often restored through automatic shifts into mutually exclusive states, such as relief following anxiety or laughter following fear.	VI:INTRO
Critical thinking	A core ECA strategy of fostering meta-awareness and evaluation of one's thoughts, assumptions, and decision structures, both explicit (conscious) and implicit (unconscious).	VI:INTRO/ C1/2/3/4/ 6/8/9
Cue-based planning	A form of planning in which intended behavior is linked to a specific cue, condition, or triggering moment so that action becomes more likely to occur when the relevant situation arises. Rather than relying on general intention alone, cue-based planning organizes follow-through around recognizable prompts such as a time, place, event, emotional state, or preceding action. (See also: Implementation intention, Implementation proposal.)	VI:C2/4
Data biased	A professional stance of giving greater weight to empirical findings than to personal opinion or allegiance to a single theory when designing choice environments.	VI:INTRO
Decoy effect	A design feature in which an inferior comparison option is added to the decision set in order to make another option look more favorable, easier to justify, or more obviously preferable.	VI:INTRO
Default participation	A design feature that makes engagement the path of least resistance by aligning participation with existing tendencies and structuring non-participation as an active opt-out, creating automatic enrollment in the collaborative process.	VI:C3
Distanced self-talk	A form of self-reflection in which individuals refer to themselves using their own name or non-first-person pronouns rather than "I," thereby creating enough psychological space to reduce emotional intensity and support clearer appraisal.	VI:C2

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Distributed cognition	The principle that cognitive functioning is often spread across individuals, social relationships, and environmental supports rather than confined to a single person's mind.	VI:INTRO/ C6
Doctrine of the mean	The Aristotelian principle that adaptive action is often found between opposite extremes, with wisdom consisting in selecting the most fitting course for the circumstances.	VI:INTRO
Domino effect	A design feature that creates an early success in a parallel domain so its momentum generalizes into increased confidence, agency, and follow-through elsewhere.	VI:C1/4
Dual processing	The mind's capacity to process information through both a fast, automatic mode (system 1) and a slower, deliberate mode (system 2), which can operate concurrently. (See also: incubated cognition.)	VI:INTRO
Dunning-Kruger effect	A metacognitive error in which people with low skill or knowledge in a domain overestimate their competence, partly because they lack the expertise needed to recognize their own limitations. (See also: positivity bias.)	VI:C2
Dynamic opposition	An interpersonal pattern in which opposing positions, motives, or behaviors become linked in a reciprocal and shifting cycle, often allowing each person to move into the very role previously occupied by the other.	VI:C7
Dynamic reversibility	The principle of creating flexible, non-binding conditions in which a person can experientially move in one direction while retaining space for a spontaneous reversal based on emerging needs, motives, or awareness.	VI:INTRO/ C5
Effort reduction bias	A state of mind that prioritizes ease, efficiency, and the conservation of cognitive or behavioral effort, increasing preference for options that feel simpler, more accessible, or less demanding.	VI:C3
Embodied cognition	The principle that thinking and knowing are partly carried in bodily states, sensorimotor experience, and practiced action, allowing the body to contribute directly to perception, judgment, and skillful response.	VI:INTRO/ C4
Emergency reserve	An allowable cushion for slip-ups within a larger goal, designed to protect motivation and support continued engagement when performance is not perfectly consistent.	VI:C6
Empathy-induced dissonance	The psychological discomfort that arises when empathic concern for another person conflicts with one's own self-interest, making selfish, avoidant, or harmful motives harder to ignore, justify, or maintain.	VI:C7
Epistemological relativism	The view that all understanding is shaped by the observer's perspective, making fully objective knowledge impossible.	VI:INTRO

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Escalation of commitment	A commitment design that begins with a small voluntary step and then invites progressively greater investment, each presented as the natural continuation of prior progress.	VI:C1/4/7
Ethical guidance	The ECA principle of influencing with accountability, transparency, and respect for autonomy so that guidance supports human flourishing without coercion, deception, or exploitation.	VI:INTRO
Euphoric recall	The selective tendency to remember the pleasure, relief, or reward associated with a past experience while failing to give equal weight to its adverse consequences. (See also: positivity bias; rosy retrospection.)	VI:C2
False-negative change bias	The tendency to underestimate or discount real growth, leading to discouragement and the mistaken impression that little has improved despite evidence of progress. (See also: change bias.)	VI:C4
False-positive change bias	The tendency to perceive more growth than has actually occurred, leading to inflated confidence or the illusion of progress without sufficient evidence. (See also: change bias.)	VI:C4
First-person perspective	A subtype of <i>perspective taking</i> that leverages mental simulation from an embodied point of view, in which a situation is experienced as if from behind the eyes of oneself or another. (See also: perspective taking.)	VI:C2
Framing	A core ECA strategy of shaping the way individuals perceive and make sense of information by mediating reference points, contextual cues, or emotional coding. (See also: reframing.)	VI:INTRO/ C1-8
Future contrasting	A design feature that compares a values-violating future with a values-aligned one so long-term consequences become more salient and the preferred path gains motivational force.	VI:C1/7
Grit	Sustained passion and perseverance directed toward long-term goals, especially in the face of difficulty, delay, or setbacks.	VI:INTRO/ C2/7
Growth mindset	The belief that abilities are not fixed and can be developed through effort, learning, and adaptive responses to challenge.	VI:INTRO/ C1/4/7/9
Heuristics	Processing shortcuts or implicit rules that people use to make judgments and decisions efficiently, especially under conditions of uncertainty, limited time, distraction, or incomplete information.	VI:INTRO/ C2/3/4/5/ 8/9
History audit	A review of prior choices and their consequences used to improve self-appraisal and promote more realistic decision-making. (See also: cautionary reminders.)	VI:C2

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Illusion of control	A state of mind in which a person overestimates their agency over events, increasing the likelihood of overconfidence, unnecessary risk-taking, or persistence in uncontrollable outcomes. (See also: positivity bias.)	VI:C2
Implementation intention	A design feature that strengthens follow-through by linking a goal-directed action to a specific cue or obstacle using an if-then plan (e.g., “If X happens, then I will do Y”). (See also: cue-based planning; implementation proposal.)	VI:C2/7
Implementation proposal	A design feature that elicits cue-based planning by requiring the would-be beneficiary (of a negotiation) to specify steps and contingencies, thereby testing feasibility and revealing commitment gaps. (See also: cue-based planning; implementation intention.)	VI:C2
Incubated cognition	A critical-thinking stratagem in which continued nonconscious processing (system 1) over time supports later insight, readiness, or clearer judgment. (See also: dual processing.)	VI:INTRO
Indirect suggestion	A form of suggestion that communicates ideas, expectations, or directions through implication, presupposition, metaphor, or context rather than direct command.	VI:INTRO/ C7
Individualized care	A model of care that adapts intervention to the particular person by taking into account their values, capacities, present condition, and life context, thereby making guidance more personally relevant and responsive.	VI:INTRO
Injunctive contingency	A design feature that builds agency over difficult-to-control behavior by prescribing a voluntary action as the means of regulation.	VI:C4
Injunctive reversal	A design feature that converts defiance into cooperation by explicitly prohibiting the desired behavior (or prescribing an undesirable one), so a person who reflexively resists direction is pulled toward the adaptive option to reassert autonomy.	VI:C5/7
Intention-behavior gap	The discrepancy between a person’s stated goals or intentions and their actual behavior—when individuals genuinely mean to act but fail to follow through for a variety of reasons.	VI:C2
Internal locus of control	The expectation that one’s own actions meaningfully influence outcomes, fostering greater responsibility, persistence, and self-agency.	VI:INTRO/ C4
Ironic rebound	The tendency for attempts to suppress an unwanted thought, feeling, or urge to make it more mentally accessible and therefore more likely to return with greater strength.	VI:C7

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Leading from behind	A collaborative stance of accepting the person's current frame of reference and regulatory priorities while introducing conditions that support self-directed initiative, value-congruent action, and growth on the person's own terms.	VI:INTRO
Libertarian paternalism	An approach to societal influence in which options are arranged so as to encourage choices generally known to be in the individual's own interest, while preserving autonomy through the continued availability of alternatives.	VI:INTRO
Loss aversion	A state of mind in which potential losses are weighted more heavily than comparable gains, leading people to prefer avoiding loss over acquiring benefit.	VI:INTRO/ C3
Macro-level choice architecture	The design of large-scale social, institutional, or environmental conditions that shape how groups perceive options and make decisions across populations.	VI:INTRO/ C3/4/9
Maladaptive perfectionism	A pattern of relentless self-demand in which improvement is overshadowed by the sense that more is always required, leaving achievement difficult to internalize. (See also: change bias.)	VI:C4
Mastery agenda	A structured emphasis on incremental growth that shifts attention away from proving worth and toward building competence, thereby increasing persistence, reducing performance pressure, and supporting long-term resilience.	VI:C2
Mastery-based learning	A learning approach that emphasizes practice, correction, and incremental progress until competence is established, thereby supporting the gradual expansion of ability without undue pressure for immediate performance.	VI:C2
Medical model	A model of influence that organizes guidance around diagnosis, pathology, and treatment, with the aim of correcting dysfunction or producing externally defined change in thoughts, feelings, or behavior. In this model, the helper's role is to identify what is wrong and apply interventions intended to fix, reduce, or cure the problem.	VI:INTRO
Mental contrasting	A design feature that strengthens goal analysis and motivation by juxtaposing a desired future with the present reality (especially the obstacles likely to impede it) so positive motivation is paired with concrete readiness to act.	VI:C4/7
Metacognition	Higher-order awareness and regulation of one's own cognitive processes, allowing a person to observe how they are thinking and, when possible, to revise judgment, attention, or strategy in a more adaptive direction.	VI:C2
Micro-level choice architecture	The design of immediate relational, psychological, and situational conditions that influence how a particular individual perceives, evaluates, and selects among options. It operates at the level of moment-to-moment interaction,	VI:INTRO/ C1/2/3/5/ 7/8

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
	where language, timing, framing, expectations, and contextual cues shape choice within a specific encounter.	
Momentary allurements	A design feature that uses a low-priority temptation as a prime to activate higher-priority goals, so the “allurement” becomes the entry point into more consequential action.	VI:C7
Moral licensing	The tendency to treat a prior good deed as justification for later selfish, unethical, or inconsistent behavior, as though earlier virtue offsets subsequent wrongdoing and protects one’s moral self-image.	VI:C7
Myth of resistance	The mistaken belief that opposition or non-compliance is an obstacle to overcome, rather than a meaningful expression of the person’s current motivations, concerns, and choice framework.	VI:INTRO
Naïve realism	The tendency to experience one’s own perceptions, interpretations, and judgments as direct reflections of reality itself, rather than as one possible point of view. As a result, individuals may assume that their perspective is the only rational, reasonable, or fully informed one, while alternative perspectives are seen as misguided, biased, or uninformed.	VI:C7
Natural consequence	The direct, unforced outcome of a person’s behavior, which provides experiential feedback without external punishment or imposed correction.	VI:C2
Negatively calibrated prediction	Any prediction in which negative information is given more weight, creating a pessimistic forecast that leaves some margin for success.	VI:C1
Negativity bias	A state of mind that prioritizes negative cues—sensitizing attention, interpretation, and memory toward threats, losses, and adverse possibilities, and thereby shaping expectations toward risk and downside.	VI:C1/8
No-oriented proposition	Providing multiple options to reject a request, while strategically placing high-value options later in the sequence. Preserve autonomy by giving permission to say no. (See also: strategic buffering.)	VI:C5
Nudge	A subtle alteration in the way choices are presented or structured that predictably influences behavior without restricting options or significantly changing incentives. A nudge preserves freedom of choice while making one response more likely than another.	VI:INTRO
Omission bias	A state of mind wherein people judge harmful actions as more morally blameworthy than equally or even more harmful inactions.	VI:C3
Opportunity cost	The loss of potential benefit that results from selecting one course of action at the expense of another, including the unseen value of alternatives no longer available.	VI:C2

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Optimal choice environment	A relational, psychological, and contextual environment structured to support good judgment, preserve autonomy, and increase the probability that a person will select behaviors aligned with their long-term goals, existing capacities, and personal values.	VI:C1-9
Orthogonal dimension	An independent dimension that operates separately from other psychological states while still modifying how those states are expressed.	VI:INTRO
Paradox of power	The principle that the more overtly one tries to exert control, pressure, or influence, the more likely one is to evoke opposition and defiance.	VI:C5
Peltzman effect	The tendency for safety measures, protections, or regulations to reduce perceived risk and thereby encourage riskier behavior, partly offsetting the intended benefit of the protection.	VI:C2
Permission	Sanctioning a new choice as an authority figure.	VI:C6/7
Permissive destabilization	A design feature in which a person is allowed sufficient freedom to continue along a questionable course so that emerging contradictions, limitations, or natural consequences can weaken overconfidence without direct confrontation.	VI:C2/8
Permissive suggestion	A form of hypnotic suggestion that communicates possibility rather than command, typically through language such as <i>may</i> , <i>can</i> , <i>might</i> , or <i>perhaps</i> . In Ericksonian therapy, permissive suggestion invites a response without demanding it, thereby preserving the individual's sense of autonomy and reducing the likelihood of resistance.	VI:INTRO
Perspective taking	The act of perceiving a situation or understanding a concept from an alternative point of view, such as that of another individual. (See also: first-person, third-person perspective.)	VI:C2/8
Polarization effect	The way repeated reinforcement of one-sided perspectives can narrow judgment, heighten emotional investment, and deepen resistance to alternative interpretations (e.g., algorithms and selective exposure to preference-aligned media).	VI:C8
Positive expectancy effect	The tendency for communicated confidence about a person's future ability or outcome to increase the likelihood that the expected response will occur.	VI:C2
Positively calibrated prediction	A design feature that offers an optimistic but credible forecast about an outcome or trajectory.	VI:C6
Positivity bias	A state of mind that prioritizes positive cues—biasing attention, interpretation, and memory toward benefits, safety signals, and desirable possibilities, and thereby shaping expectations toward opportunity and favorable outcomes.	VI:C2

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Possible selves	Embodied representations of future identity that make potential outcomes personally meaningful.	VI:C7
Pratfall effect	A social-perception effect in which a small, benign mistake by a credible or high-status person increases warmth and approachability, lowering interpersonal threat while typically preserving perceived competence.	VI:C5
Preemptive devaluation	A design feature that discloses a minor flaw, limitation, or self-deprecating point early to lower status threat, invite disagreement safely, and reduce reactive opposition by making resistance feel unnecessary.	VI:C4/5
Priming	A core ECA strategy that uses non-conscious prompts to activate mental associations so certain attitudes, emotions, or actions become more accessible. (See also: reverse prime.)	VI:INTRO/ C5/6
Proceduralized care	A model of care in which guidance is delivered through standardized procedures or prescribed intervention sequences, often reducing attention to the individual's shifting state of mind, contextual realities, and self-directed choice.	VI:INTRO
Prospective justification	A future-oriented form of <i>choice justification</i> in which an individual mentally legitimizes a significant decision before it is made by imagining how it will later be understood as necessary, meaningful, or fortunate. (See also: choice justification, retrospective justification.)	VI:C3
Pygmalion effect	A self-fulfilling expectancy process in which communicated confidence from a teacher, leader, parent, or practitioner increases the probability that the individual will grow into the higher standard being anticipated.	VI:C2/6
Reactance	A state of mind toward oppositional choice that arises when a person perceives a threat to autonomy, often leading to defiance, counter-positioning, or renewed attraction to the constrained option. (See also: reactive devaluation.)	VI:INTRO/ C3/5/7/8
Reactive devaluation	A state of mind that increases the tendency to judge a proposal, idea, or concession as less valuable because of who offered it. (See also: Reactance.)	VI:C5
Reality testing	Actively comparing one's expectations or interpretations with actual outcomes through personal experience. Cognitive behavioral examination based on empirical evidence.	VI:C8
Receptive disagreement	The communication of disagreement in a manner that acknowledges and thoughtfully engages the other person's perspective, thereby preserving dialogue, lowering defensiveness, and increasing the likelihood of constructive exchange.	VI:C7

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Redirection	A core ECA strategy that shifts attention or behavior away from unproductive or escalating patterns toward more adaptive alternatives, without direct confrontation or coercive control.	VI:INTRO/ C2/7/9
Reframing	The process of altering an established frame so that the same information is experienced through a different interpretive lens, thereby changing what feels important, believable, or choice-worthy. (See also: framing.)	VI:INTRO/ C1/2/3/4/ 5/8
Regret asymmetry	A state of mind wherein people regret trying and failing more than they regret sticking with a negative <i>status quo</i> .	VI:C3
Regrets of omission	Regret linked to inaction rather than action, often involving the sense that an important opportunity, relationship, or valued direction was not pursued when it could have been—missed opportunities.	VI:C3
Regulatory priorities	Context-dependent motivational and behavioral tendencies that organize perception, emotion, and action in the service of adaptation. In state-based psychology, these priorities are fluid and can reorganize rapidly in response to changing conditions.	VI:INTRO
Regulatory priorities	The shifting needs or organizing concerns that guide a person's moment-to-moment attention, appraisal, and behavior. These priorities reflect what the organism is implicitly trying to manage or secure in a given context, such as safety, control, belonging, relief, efficiency, or energy conservation.	VI:INTRO
Restricted-use tactic	A high-risk ECA maneuver that falls outside ordinary respectful interaction and is justified only by a compelling safety objective, an existing alliance or duty of care, and rapid repair afterward to restore dignity and autonomy.	VI:INTRO/ C1
Retrospective justification	A post-decision form of <i>choice justification</i> in which a person affirms a prior choice by construing it as meaningful, value-aligned, and beneficial in light of current circumstances. Within ECA, it reduces post-decision dissonance, increases psychological ownership, and supports continued engagement with the chosen course of action. (See also: choice justification, Prospective justification.)	VI:C3
Reversal theory	A theory of human functioning in which people shift between opposing motivational states, with each state altering what feels meaningful, adaptive, or aversive.	VI:INTRO
Reverse positioning	A design feature that deepens exploration of a neglected side of ambivalence by deliberately advocating for the <i>other</i> position, so the person is reactively pulled to emotionally invest in the opposing stance.	VI:C1/5/7

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Reverse prime	A cue, prompt, or framing device that activates a response tendency in the opposite direction of what is overtly suggested or highlighted. (See also: priming.)	VI:C5/7
Rosy retrospection	A memory bias in which past experiences are remembered as more positive, enjoyable, or worthwhile than they were during actual experience, thereby creating an overly idealized view of the past. (See also: Euphoric recall, positivity bias.)	VI:C2
Selective validation	A design feature that affirms a credible or useful aspect of a person's experience (emotion, motive, value, or constraint) while leaving room to question or revise less adaptive interpretations, thereby reducing defensiveness and keeping engagement open.	VI:C8
Self-affirmation theory	The idea that people seek to preserve a valued sense of self, and therefore may resist information that threatens their competence, worth, or control.	VI:C8
Self-determination theory	A motivational theory proposing that human thriving depends on conditions that support autonomous action, effective engagement, and relational belonging.	VI:INTRO/ C7/8
Self-efficacy	A person's belief in their ability to successfully carry out the actions needed to manage a situation, meet a challenge, or achieve a desired outcome.	VI:C1/2/4/ 5/6/8
Self-monitoring	A design feature that directs individuals to self-track behavior or outcomes (e.g., counts, ratings, logs), making automatic patterns visible, measurable, and easier to adjust.	VI:C4/6
Semmelweis effect	The reflexive tendency to reject new information because it contradicts established beliefs or familiar assumptions.	VI:C3
Social comparison	The tendency to assess oneself against others, often using their perceived success, failure, or standing as a reference point for one's own self-appraisal.	VI:C2/4
Solomon's paradox	A design feature that asks someone to advise an "other" about their own dilemma or short-comings, leveraging people's tendency to reason more wisely about other people's problems than about one's own.	VI:C2
Spiral of inequalities	A process in which small initial power imbalances are amplified over time through repeated patterns of deference, compliance, and control.	VI:INTRO
State of mind	A functional condition in which cognition, emotion, motivation, perception, physiology, and memory operate as an integrated whole.	VI:INTRO/ C1-9

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
State reversal	A shift from one organizing state of mind to its opposite, such that the same situation is experienced with a different meaning, emotional tone, and behavioral priorities. (See also: reversal theory.)	VI:INTRO/ C2
State-dependent functioning	The integrated variation in cognitive, emotional, motivational, perceptual, and somatic processes that occurs as a function of a person's current state of mind, thereby shaping what forms of thought and action are possible in a given moment.	VI:INTRO
Status quo bias	A state of mind in which there is a tendency to favor continuity, familiarity, and existing conditions, even when alternative choices may be more adaptive or beneficial.	VI:INTRO/ C3
Steelman argument	A design feature that articulates the strongest, most charitable version of another person's position before responding, increasing trust and enabling higher-quality engagement with the real argument.	VI:C8
Strategic buffering	The use of exaggerated or absolute wording to create a buffer zone for defiance, so that disagreement is discharged through correction of peripheral details while the main idea remains psychologically intact and more acceptable. (See also: no-oriented proposition.)	VI:C5
Strategic proximity	The deliberate placement of an option just beyond reach in order to increase its perceived value, anticipation, and motivational pull.	VI:C3
Strategic surrender	A design feature that reduces defensiveness and preserves autonomy by <i>appearing</i> to yield in a power struggle—creating space for later influence once defensiveness has naturally dissipated.	VI:C5
Strategically	In a manner guided by an overarching plan that coordinates methods toward practical, long-range aims. (See also: strategy.)	VI:INTRO /C1-9
Strategy	The higher-order plan or organizing logic that guides the selection and timing of tactics in service of a broader objective. Within ECA, strategy answers the question of why a particular intervention is being used and how it fits into the larger direction of influence. (See also: strategically.)	VI:INTRO/ C1/2/3/5/ 8
Strawman fallacy	A reasoning error in which a person distorts an opponent's actual argument into a weaker or more extreme version and then argues against that distortion.	VI:C8
Strict behaviorism	A deterministic approach to influence in which behavior is treated as largely moldable through external contingencies, with limited emphasis on agency, personal meaning, or autonomous decision-making.	VI:INTRO
Subjective proximity	The felt sense that a goal is close enough to be attainable.	VI:C2

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Subjective validation	A state of mind in which emotionally compelling or belief-consistent information is experienced as true despite limited objective support. (See also: confirmation bias.)	VI:C8
Substitution principle	The finding that power and choice can substitute for one another because both satisfy the need for autonomy and agency. When one is limited, the other often becomes more valued.	VI:INTRO
Successive approximation	The process of shaping behavior through small, progressive steps, in which each partial success becomes the basis for a slightly more advanced response. Sometimes referred to as baby steps or goal granularity.	VI:C1
Symbolically related	Linked by psychological or emotional meaning such that an action in one context can reflect, rehearse, or affect realities in another. For example, a child’s behavior in play may be symbolically related to tensions, roles, or unmet needs within the home.	VI:C1
Tactic	A specific method of action used to influence how a person perceives, evaluates, or responds in a given moment. (See also: nudge.)	VI:C1-9
Tandem anchoring	A design feature that treats opposing positions as containing equally valid concerns, guiding choice toward a workable compromise rather than an all-or-nothing position.	VI:C7
Temporal distancing	A design feature that reduces the emotional intensity of a negative event by framing it as temporally distant—viewing it from the far future or as part of the distant past.	VI:C2
Temporal self-comparison	A design feature that highlights development by comparing current performance outcomes to past baseline (or a future-oriented trendline), rather than to other people.	VI:C2/4/8
Third-person perspective	A subtype of <i>perspective taking</i> that prompts individuals to view themselves from an outside vantage point (as an observer or advisor), enabling more objective analysis of their actions, motives, and options. (See also: perspective taking.)	VI:C2
Utilization	A core ECA strategy that involves identifying high-value options aligned with a client’s natural abilities, interests, and behavioral momentum.	VI:INTRO/ C1/3/7
Watching eyes	A design feature that increases norm adherence and self-regulation by cueing the sense of being observed—through visual “eyes” cues or contextual signals that one’s behavior could be noticed or evaluated.	VI:C6
Yes-oriented contingency	A design feature that preserves the status quo by integrating new actions as natural extensions of the existing behavior, rather than opposing it.	VI:C3

Term	Summary Idea	Chapter
Zone of proximal development	A learning principle (Vygotsky) that targets the next step just beyond current independent capability but achievable with appropriate support, prompting growth without overwhelming the learner.	VI:C2

Strategies and Stratagems

There are six core strategies that serve as navigation points for ECA practitioners: *priming*, *framing*, *utilization*, *redirection*, *commitment*, and *critical thinking*. These form the backbone of a unique form of influence, which could be described as “leading from behind.” In other words, the ECA practitioner does not get in the way of another person’s initiative, creativity, or need for autonomy and self-determination. These core strategies help us understand why certain types of *nudges* (indirect, permissive influences) work and how they can be adjusted to fit the needs of the moment.

The six broad strategies can also be broken down into numerous *stratagems*. In the context of ECA, a *stratagem* refers to a specific, situation-responsive maneuver nested within a broader strategy. The stratagems of *priming* are designed to selectively activate perception and recall. The stratagems of *framing* either shape or reframe evaluation. The stratagems of *utilization* make strategic use of whatever is already present in the person, the relationship, or the immediate context. The stratagems of *redirection* shift action without direct persuasion or coercion. The stratagems of *commitment* enhance cooperation and persistence. And lastly, the stratagems of *critical thinking* are meant to activate higher cognitive functions in conscious and unconscious modes. Whereas a *strategy* provides the overarching framework for achieving long-term, collaborative outcomes, *stratagems* offer more detailed maps that guide situation-specific maneuvers within that broader strategic direction.

This additional level of conceptual organization matters because it preserves the coherence of the strategic aim while allowing for tactical flexibility. Grouping related stratagems under a single strategy enables practitioners to select among diverse approaches that share a common purpose—fostering more precise, ethical, and effective *nudges* in complex choice environments.

Strategy: Priming

The overarching objective of priming is to activate high value mental associations or frameworks that automatically lead to adaptive behavior.

Stratagem	Definitions	Sample Tactic(s)
Attachment prime	<i>Priming</i> the revivification of early attachment-related experiences, such as feeling nurtured, protected, or a sense of belonging.	
Content prime	Any <i>prime</i> designed to bring specific content to front-of-mind.	Positively calibrated prediction
Contextual prime	Using contextual markers as a <i>prime</i> to alter the meaning of any given choice.	
Contrasting	A prime using strategic comparisons to leverage the conceptual need for reference points (contrast effect).	Anchoring high, Decoy effect, Future contrasting, Temporal self-comparison

Stratagem	Definitions	Sample Tactic(s)
Linking	A <i>prime</i> that uses associative learning to elicit emotional and attitudinal responses by transferring feelings from one context or person to another.	Domino effect, Watching eyes
Reverse prime	A reverse prime is a non-conscious stimulus that triggers a response opposite to the one it appears to promote.	Momentary allurements, Negatively calibrated prediction, No-oriented proposition, Reverse positioning, Strategic surrender

Strategy: Framing

The overarching objective of framing is to shape the way individuals perceive and make sense of information by altering reference points, such as comparisons, contextual cues, or coding.

Stratagem	Definitions	Sample Tactic(s)
Causal framing	<i>Framing</i> a decision within a larger causal chain, either to justify or discourage that choice.	
Cultural/Moral framing	<i>Framing</i> a choice, position, or event within the lens of shared values, cultural norms, or ethical obligations that transcend immediate self-interest.	Agentic framing
Identity framing	<i>Framing</i> a choice, position, or event in a way that aligns with a person's sense of self, whether that be their character traits, aspirations, values, or past actions.	Counter-attitudinal advocacy
Perspective framing	Strategically shifting the perceptual or observational lens through which a choice, position, or event is viewed.	Tandem anchoring
Temporal framing	Framing choices based on different time perspectives whether immediate, delayed, past, present, or future.	

Strategy: Utilization

The overarching objective of utilization is to identify strategic objectives that align with the client’s inherent capabilities and interests, in service of some meaningful, choice-grounded outcome.

Stratagem	Definitions	Sample Tactic(s)
Availability	Utilizing what is already present and accessible by reducing the distance between situational demands and existing resources.	Adaptive reuse, Default participation
Endowment	The <i>utilization</i> of personal ownership and self-related association to deepen the chooser’s felt connection to their own history, patterns, and identity so that all these parts acquire value.	
Scaffolding	The <i>utilization</i> of existing behaviors, thought patterns, memories, and habits and then building on them to meet adaptive challenges.	Permission, Selective validation, Yes-oriented contingency

Strategy: Redirection

The overarching objective of redirection is to guide attention or behavior away from unproductive or escalating patterns toward alternative paths—without direct opposition or control.

Stratagem	Definitions	Sample Tactic(s)
Anchoring	<i>Redirecting</i> attention to a specific, useful element of experience to stabilize engagement and support adaptive action.	
Displacement	<i>Redirecting</i> attention or effort to a different domain (spatial or temporal) in which an urge or drive can be resolved.	
Distraction	<i>Redirecting</i> attention away from a dominant concern, impulse, or fixation, thereby loosening its grip and reducing the urgency for resolution.	
Paradoxical	Paradoxical involves directing a person to intentionally produce a spontaneous behavior, thereby altering its motivational structure.	Anchoring low, Preemptive devaluation Injunctive reversal
Pattern interruption	Any destabilizing adjustment to behavioral habits or thought patterns.	Bounded choice, Permissive destabilization
Substitution	Channeling the energy behind a problematic behavior into a more adaptive or benign activity that meets the same underlying need.	Strategic buffering

Strategy: Commitment

The overarching objective of commitment is to make changes in habit or intention feel like a sustainable expression of personal will.

Stratagem	Definitions	Sample Tactic(s)
Accountability	A <i>commitment</i> in which an individual anticipates being answerable to others (or to themselves) for their actions, decisions, or follow-through.	
Cue-based planning	A <i>commitment</i> to specific situational cues in advance, so that when the cue arises, the desired behavior is automatically activated with minimal deliberation.	Implementation intentions, Injunctive contingency
Rehearsal	A <i>commitment</i> to structured preparation and repeated practice to build competence and increase the likelihood of follow-through on desired behaviors.	Self-monitoring
Self-implemented contingency	A behavior plan in which the client <i>commits</i> to applying micro-incentives or micro-disincentives themselves to influence their own actions.	

Strategy: Critical thinking

The overarching objective of critical thinking is to build up the cognitive ability to understand, reason, and decide.

Stratagem	Definitions	Sample Tactic(s)
Categorizing	Breaking-up the totality of psychological experience into separate categories to organize, evaluate, and make decisions about resources, such as time, money, relationships, and emotional energy.	Steelman argument
Self-distancing	Gaining an outside perspective that would otherwise be inaccessible from within the immediacy of one's emotional or subjective experience (cognitive cooling).	Perspective taking, Solomon's paradox
Critical review	Inviting individuals to examine the reasoning, context, and implications behind their choices, beliefs, or behaviors.	History audit, Reality testing
Goal analysis	A goal-setting process that involves breaking down goals into meaningful, manageable components in order to support intentional and sustainable action.	Mental contrasting
Incubated cognition	A form of <i>critical thinking</i> that involves temporarily setting aside a complex problem to allow unconscious processes to work on it outside of focused awareness.	Choice justification

Quick-Reference Tactic Map for Varying States of Mind

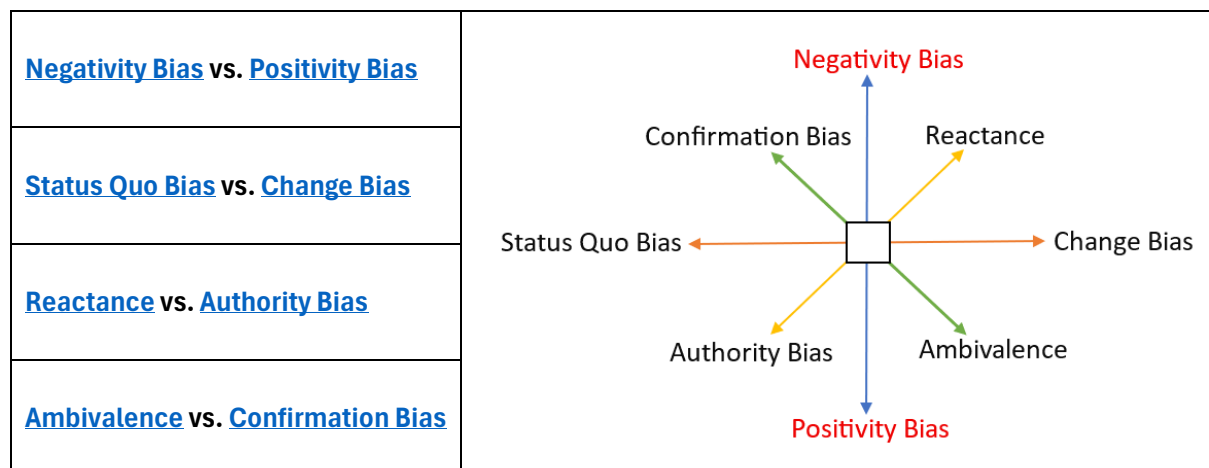
How to Use This Tactic Map

The **Quick-Reference Tactic Map** is a practical bridge between theory and contextualized care. It translates ECA's philosophical principles into specific, state-sensitive tactics that can be deployed in real time.

Each section of the map identifies:

- **The Client's Present Orientation** (e.g., biased perception, emotional tone, or motivational stance).
- **The Corresponding ECA Tactic** most suited to that state (e.g., anchoring low, adaptive reuse, reverse positioning).
- **The Strategic Logic** explaining *why* the tactic works (e.g., primes efficacy, redirects opposition, restores autonomy).

Diametrically Opposed States of Mind



Practitioners use the map not as a checklist but as a *contextual compass*. Begin by identifying which bias or state of mind predominates—Negativity, Reactance, Ambivalence, and so forth—then scan horizontally across the map to select a tactic that transforms the existing bias into a channel for adaptive engagement.

Because contextualized care is responsive rather than procedural, the same client may move through multiple states within a single encounter. The map helps the practitioner pivot fluidly, leveraging current psychological tendencies instead of resisting them. In this way, the tactic map functions as a living instrument of *choice-centric guidance*—one that keeps interventions flexible, respectful of autonomy, and precisely attuned to the moment.

Negativity Bias

A state of mind that prioritizes negative cues—sensitizing attention, interpretation, and memory toward threats, losses, and adverse possibilities, and thereby shaping expectations toward risk and downside.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Feels worthless, fears trying, or absolutely expects to fail	Anchoring low: Setting performance objectives below performance capabilities.	Redirects the threat of failure to the question of ambition.
Rejects compliments, fixates on difficulties, or cannot tolerate optimism	Domino effect: Creating an early win in a parallel domain so its momentum generalizes into increased confidence, agency, and follow-through.	Primes efficacy indirectly by making success feel real in a symbolically related domain, allowing confidence to generalize.
Asserts an inability to enact a skill	Negatively calibrated prediction: Any prediction in which negative information is given more weight, creating a pessimistic forecast that leaves some margin for success.	Reverse primes progress by framing modest progress as minor disappointment.
Feels ashamed, hopeless, or demoralized by their behavior	Adaptive reuse: Finding functional value in problematic habits, tendencies, or deep needs and redirecting them to serve a positive or constructive purpose.	Utilizes available behavior to build self-confidence, pride, and social belonging.

Positivity Bias

A state of mind that prioritizes positive cues—biasing attention, interpretation, and memory toward benefits, safety signals, and desirable possibilities, and thereby shaping expectations toward opportunity and favorable outcomes.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is overconfident yet under-performing	Anchoring high: Setting performance objectives slightly above performance capabilities to encourage growth.	Primes higher internal standards and focus without negating optimism.
Becomes emotionally self-absorbed, defensive, or feels victimized	Perspective taking: The act of perceiving a situation or understanding a concept from an alternative point of view, such as that of another individual.	Activates critical thinking by reducing egocentric appraisal and expanding the range of interpretable meanings.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Enthusiastic but impractical; ignores obstacles	Implementation intention: Strengthening follow-through by linking a goal-directed action to a specific cue or obstacle using an if-then plan.	Commitment converts optimism into cue-based action, increasing the likelihood that intention becomes behavior.
Dismissive of feedback or immune to correction	Permissive destabilization: Deliberately removing or withholding the usual resistance, constraints, or counterbalance that individuals rely on to regulate their behavior.	Redirection occurs when natural consequences prompt self-correction and responsibility.

Status Quo Bias

A state of mind in which there is a tendency to favor continuity, familiarity, and existing conditions, even when alternative choices may be more adaptive or beneficial.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is affected by secondary-gain(s) or suppression leads to ironic-rebound	Bounded choice: Achieving partial control by altering the onset, context, frequency, duration, or intensity of unwanted behavior.	Redirects the size and scope of the distressing behavior, restoring agency, building awareness, and creating a bridge to self-regulation.
Denies any possibility for new choices	Choice justification: Simulating the outcomes of a difficult decision, that was made in the past or that needs to be made in the future, to catalyze incubated cognition.	Focusing on beneficial outcomes activates critical thinking in the form of implicit reevaluation and unconscious goal setting.
Signals the inevitability of status quo behavior	Yes-oriented contingency: The status quo is embraced, and an additive solution is introduced that expands or enhances the existing behavior.	Utilizes established (predictable) behavior as a cue for incremental growth
Values stability over change and has established strong routines	Default participation: Making progress contingent on existing behavioral tendencies (such as a habit, compulsion, or personality trait), so that non-participation requires actively opting out.	Utilizes existing behavioral momentum by making participation the path of least resistance.

Change Bias

A state of mind in which novelty and transformation are implicitly valued, creating a bias toward pursuing new options or “progress” and undervaluing stability, maintenance, or incremental gains.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Blind to progress or believes change is nonexistent	Temporal self-comparison: Highlighting development by comparing current performance to past baseline, rather than to other people.	Frames progress within a growth trajectory.
Difficulties are private, variable, or internally experienced	Self-monitoring: Any means of displaying or measuring behavior to make it subject to concrete observation.	Builds awareness and accountability (commitment) by converting vague internal experience into observable patterns.
Behavior is involuntary or if attempts at direct regulation fail	Injunctive contingency: Framing the regulation of non-volitional behavior as a byproduct of a volitional action (When X is a problem, do Y to achieve Z).	Establishes a plan (commitment) indirectly by linking a difficult-to-control behavior to a voluntary regulatory action.
Dreams big without anchoring in realistic steps	Mental contrasting: Juxtaposing positive fantasies about a desired future with the present reality's obstacles that may impede achieving that future.	Tightens goal analysis (critical thinking) at preverbal levels by emotionally weighting and evaluating possible outcomes.

Reactance

A state of mind toward oppositional choice that arises when a person perceives a threat to autonomy, often leading to defiance, counter-positioning, or renewed attraction to the constrained option.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Feels threatened by authority or is prone to reactance	Preemptive devaluation: Disclosing a minor flaw, limitation, or self-deprecating point early to lower status threat, invite disagreement safely, and reduce reactive opposition.	Redirects critical disagreement aligning it with positive engagement.
Escalates control battles or withdraws entirely	Strategic surrender: Appearing to yield in a power struggle so defensiveness subsides and later influence becomes more possible.	Reverse primes the de-escalation of opposition by removing the immediate target against which defiance is organized.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Rejects proposals without consideration	No-oriented proposition: Providing multiple options to reject a request, while strategically placing high-value options later in the sequence.	Reverse primes feelings of control, making later cooperation feel self-initiated.
Turns defiance into identity or a point of pride	Injunctive reversal: Converting cooperation into an act of defiance by explicitly prohibiting the behavior.	Redirects defiance aligning it with adaptive action.

Authority Bias

A state of mind in which perceived authority cues (expertise, status, role, confidence) are heavily weighted, biasing the person toward seeking, trusting, and following explicit direction from authority figures over independent evaluation.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Needs accountability or moral consistency	Watching eyes: Creating the feeling of having one's choices subject to observation by using visual cues or an expectation that one could be watched.	Primes pro-social values through observation or symbolic oversight.
Self-inhibition or hesitation stand in the way of progress	Permission: Sanctioning a new choice as an authority figure.	Utilizes the need for external validation by legitimizing self-efficacy and autonomy.
Lacks confidence or motivation to persist	Positively calibrated prediction: Providing an optimistic yet realistic forecast about an outcome, behavior, or future event.	Primes expectancy, increasing motivation and persistence by making success feel credible rather than merely desirable.
Feels uncertain, powerless, or unqualified to act independently	Agentic framing: Leading an individual to act as an agent of a respected authority figure, out of duty, obligation, or loyalty.	Frames action as duty to a respected authority, transferring confidence and legitimacy to the behavior.

Ambivalence

A state of mind in which competing motives, values, or goals remain simultaneously active, producing oscillation between incompatible options.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Is stuck between all-or-nothing choices or competing values	Tandem anchoring: The use of continuum-based logic to locate a compromise between polar options.	Reframes polarized options by making a workable middle path easier to perceive and justify.
Is torn between two futures or unable to decide	Future contrasting: Mentally picturing both a choice that goes against one's values and an alternative that aligns with them, while imagining the long-term consequences of each path in vivid detail to highlight the contrast between them.	Makes long-term consequences emotionally salient, priming value-oriented motivation.
Is tempted by self-defeating impulses or compulsion	Momentary allurements: The activation of high-priority goals using low-priority temptations as a prime.	Reverse primes goal activation and value-oriented behavior.
Defends unhelpful behavior with strong emotion or debate	Reverse positioning: Deliberately applying persuasive pressure on one side of an argument to increase emotional investment in the opposing position.	Reverse primes internal re-alignment through the need to win (arguments).

Confirmation Bias

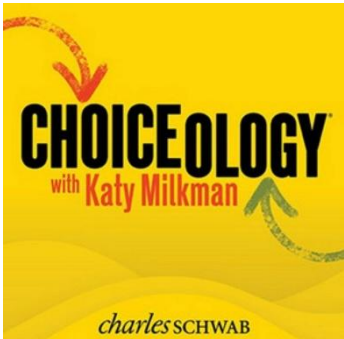
A state of mind in which existing beliefs function as a filter—biasing attention, interpretation, and memory toward information that confirms what is already assumed, while discounting or avoiding disconfirming evidence.

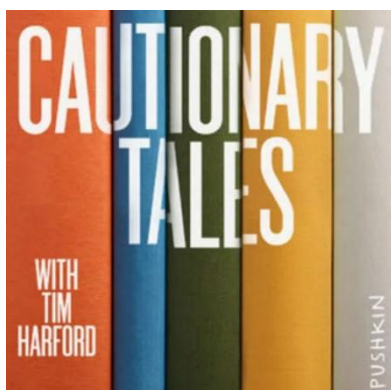
If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Feels invalidated or fears judgment	Selective validation: Selectively acknowledging useful aspects of a person's experience versus challenging problematic aspects.	Utilizes a credible part of the person's experience to reduce defensiveness and keep revision psychologically possible.
Is emotionally attached to a given belief	Steelman argument: Presenting the strongest version of another person's argument to engage with it.	Leverages the need to feel understood by using the best parts of an argument to examine competing ideas critically in a cooperative manner.

If Client ...	Then Use ...	Because
Clings to ideological certainty or habitual self-justification	Counter-attitudinal advocacy: Encouraging individuals to argue in favor of a position they initially disagree with.	Framing an opposing position as one's own creates dissonance through voluntary reversal, encouraging re-alignment with the stated evidence and values.
Has expectations, fears, or assumptions that diverge from observable reality	Reality testing: Actively comparing one's expectations or interpretations with actual outcomes through personal experience.	Activates critical thinking by confronting expectation with direct evidence.

Additional Sources of Information

Below are high-quality, conceptually aligned resources that map well onto Ericksonian Choice Architecture (ECA). These podcasts address decision processes, framing, bias utilization, and indirect influence, giving the reader an overall better understanding of heuristics and social cognition.

	<p>Reel Results Podcast Episode 19 Featuring Dan Short and Ericksonian Choice Architecture</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>This episode of the <i>Reel Results Podcast</i> features Dr. Dan Short discussing principles consistent with Ericksonian Choice Architecture (ECA), particularly how influence operates through indirect communication, strategic framing, and the design of choice contexts.</p>
	<p>Choiceology Podcast by Katy Milkman</p> <p>Overview</p> <p><i>Choiceology</i> is a behavioral economics podcast hosted by Katy Milkman and produced by Charles Schwab. It is explicitly designed to examine how people make decisions, and how those decisions can be improved through strategic design of environments and choices.</p> <p>Episodes typically pair a real-world case (historical or contemporary) with a specific cognitive bias or decision principle, followed by expert commentary.</p>
	<p>Hidden Brain Podcast by Shankar Vedantam</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>This podcast systematically explores implicit drivers of behavior, including framing effects, social norms, identity, and unconscious bias. These are core mechanisms that ECA strategically leverages.</p> <p>Episodes typically integrate cognitive science, behavioral economics, and narrative cases. Also, there is a strong emphasis on how context shapes perception and action.</p>



Cautionary Tales

[Podcast by Tim Harford](#)

Overview

Cautionary Tales uses historical narratives of failure to extract patterns of human error and misjudgment, often tied to bias, overconfidence, and flawed mental models.

Episodes typically draw on economics, psychology, and systems thinking. It functions as a library of negative case studies for choice design. It also aligns with ECA's emphasis on strategic anticipation of bias-driven errors.