

Coping with silent despair

- Daniel Gomez
- degomez@unq.edu.ar



What is reality?

"At Eternity's Gate"

The concept of *reality* refers to **everything that exists**, independently of a person's perception or interpretation. It is what we consider "true" or "existent" outside of our beliefs, opinions, or subjective experiences.

Although reality remains constant in its essence, the interpretations that individuals make of it are shaped by their perspectives, experiences, emotions, beliefs, and sensory abilities. This explains why two people can experience the same situation in radically different ways, even when observing the same facts or circumstances.

- Wittgenstein : "What you see when you see me?"
- The Van Gogh case : xantopsia
- The Pipo case



What is silent despair

What is not silent
despair.

How to define
silent despair?





“We all live in silent despair”

“It is a normal part of
existence”

“Everyone lies because it is difficult to explain to others, and because it is not what society expects of us. They all feel it, especially when experiencing tragic events in their lives” (i.e. cancer)

“I feel extrange, but I don’t know what it is”

*“ It’s hard for you to get up. But still, you go on every day, hiding it, trying
ot to let anyone find out about the battle going on in the windmills of your
mind”*





Five Stages



Five Stages

Denial

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance



Five Stages

Denial

Anger

Dargaining

Depression

Acceptance

Physician role



Soren Kierkegaard

The inherent suffering that stems from the tension between our desire for meaning and our inability to comprehend life's complexities fully.

Existence is marked by ambiguity, uncertainty, and the absence of absolute truths.

We are condemned to fight with the paradox of being finite beings trying to grasp the infinite.

Zorba, the greek by Nikos Kazantzakis.

Jean Paul Sartre

Bad faith: when individuals evade their authentic selves by conforming to societal expectations.

Despair arises when the individual attempt to find purpose in external distractions, such as wealth, relationships, prestige, or status. Alcohol, drugs.

Facing existencial despair requires accepting the responsibility to create one's meaning and values, even if its painful.






Karl Jaspers

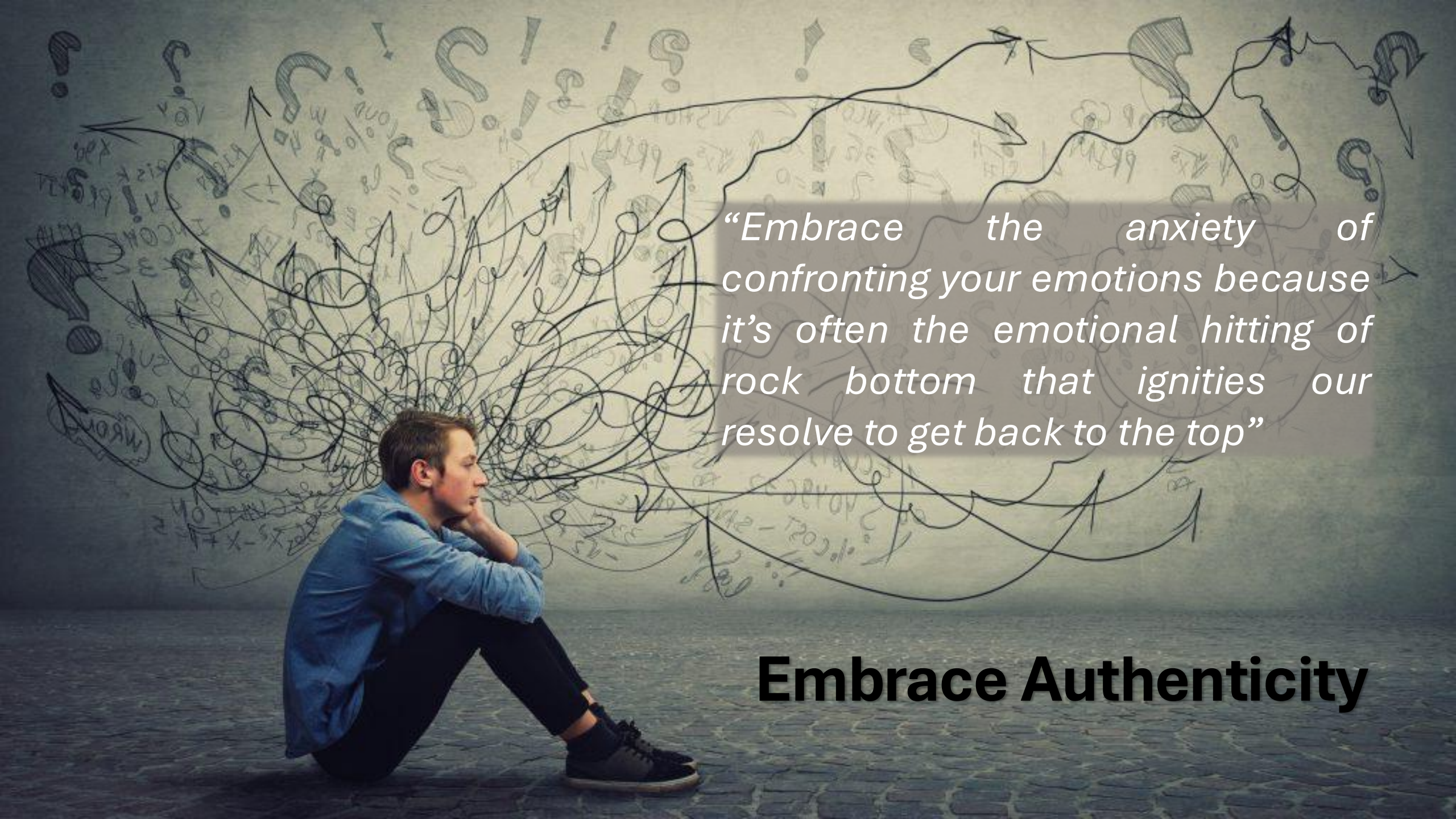
“Boundary situations”

Extreme existential crisis are the best opportunity to confront our silent despair.

Opportunities for profound self discovery and transcendence.



Seek Support



“Embrace the anxiety of confronting your emotions because it’s often the emotional hitting of rock bottom that ignites our resolve to get back to the top”

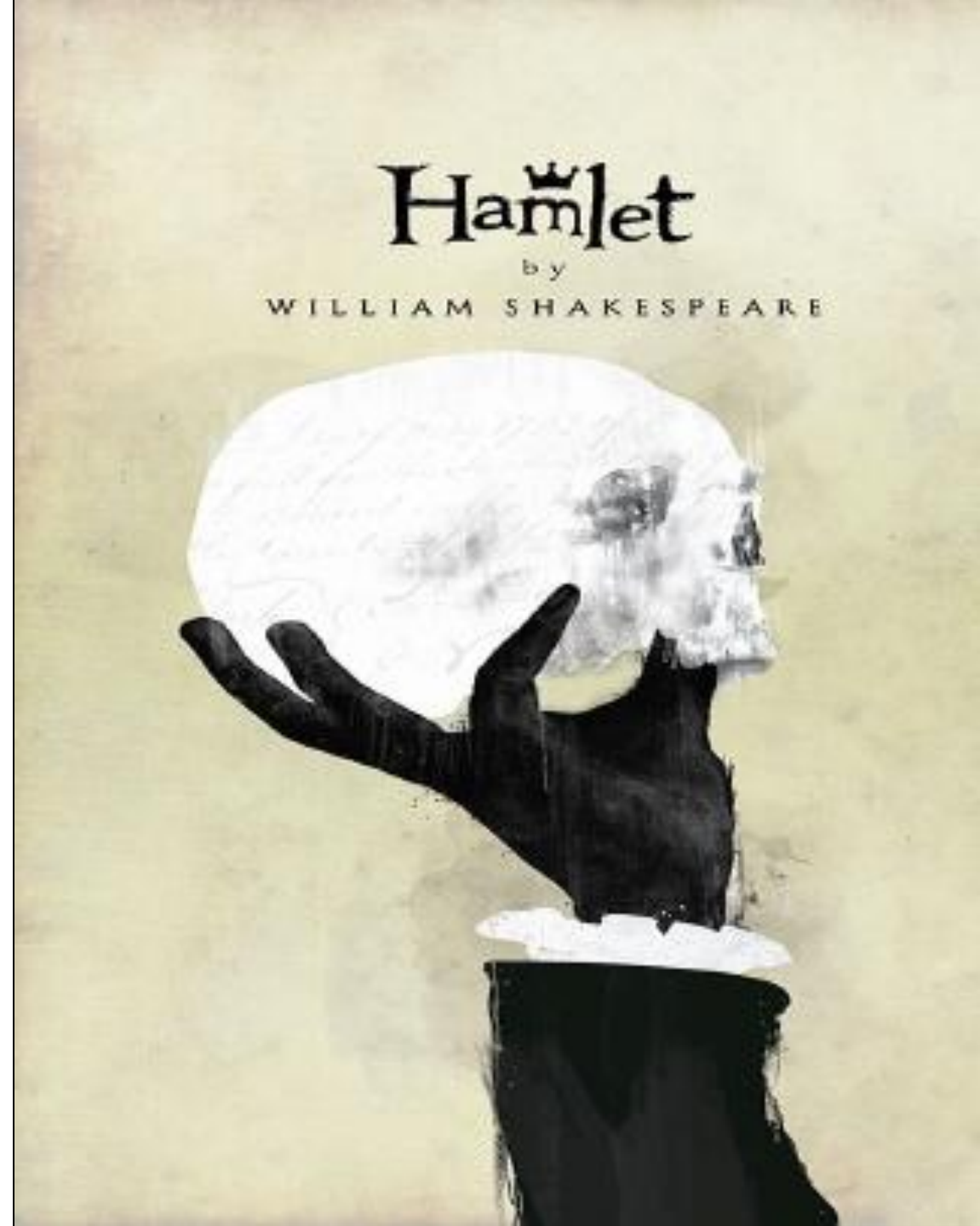
Embrace Authenticity

Confront existential questions

Use your cancer diagnosis as an opportunity to engage with profound existential questions about the nature of life, meaning and mortality.

Hamlet's monologue captures one of the most profound philosophical dilemmas. Focuses on the duality of life, with its pains and pleasures, and death, viewed as a potential escape from this turmoil.

“To be? Or not to be?”



Practice Mindfulness and Self-reflection

A person is seen from behind, sitting in a meditative lotus position on a sandy beach. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and silhouetting the person. The ocean waves are visible in the distance, and a rocky coastline is on the left.

Be present at the moment.

Today is the most beautiful day of your life!

The past are memories. The future are wishes. Only you can live in the present moment.

Creative Expression

Engage in innovative activities that allow you to express your thoughts and emotions.

Can provide a therapeutic outlet for processing silent despair.

Find meaning in the process rather than in outcomes.

In cancer, focus on the meaning and purpose you can derive from the journey.





Kintsugi

“repair with gold”

Instead of hiding the cracks, Kintsugi makes them the most crucial feature of the object, giving them a new kind of beauty.

As the cracks in Kintsugi, our emotional and physical wounds can make us stronger. They add to our character.

They should be embraced not concealed

Kintsugi is a beautiful metaphor for human resilience.



BELIEVE

YOU CAN AND YOU'RE
HALFWAY THERE.
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND
ALL THAT YOU ARE. KNOW THAT
THERE IS SOMETHING INSIDE YOU
THAT IS GREATER THAN
ANY OBSTACLE.

Don Quijote

Written in 1605 by Cervantes, it was a humorous take on the popular knight stories of the time.

An older knight inspired by tales of heroism in pursuit of chivalry and glory.

Sancho Panza was his faithful squire, a simple peasant that suggests a down-to-earth view, balancing Don Quijote's idealistic dreams with practicality and humor.



