

# Function-Spotting with the Choice Point

We can use the CP to help clients (and ourselves) spot the function of any behaviour: to identify the antecedents and the punishing or reinforcing consequences.

**Reminder:** In everyday language, all behaviour has payoffs (or benefits) and costs. When the payoffs of a behaviour lead to it maintaining or increasing, then technically we call them ‘reinforcing consequences’. (But if the payoffs are not enough to maintain the behaviour, then we would not call them reinforcing consequences.)

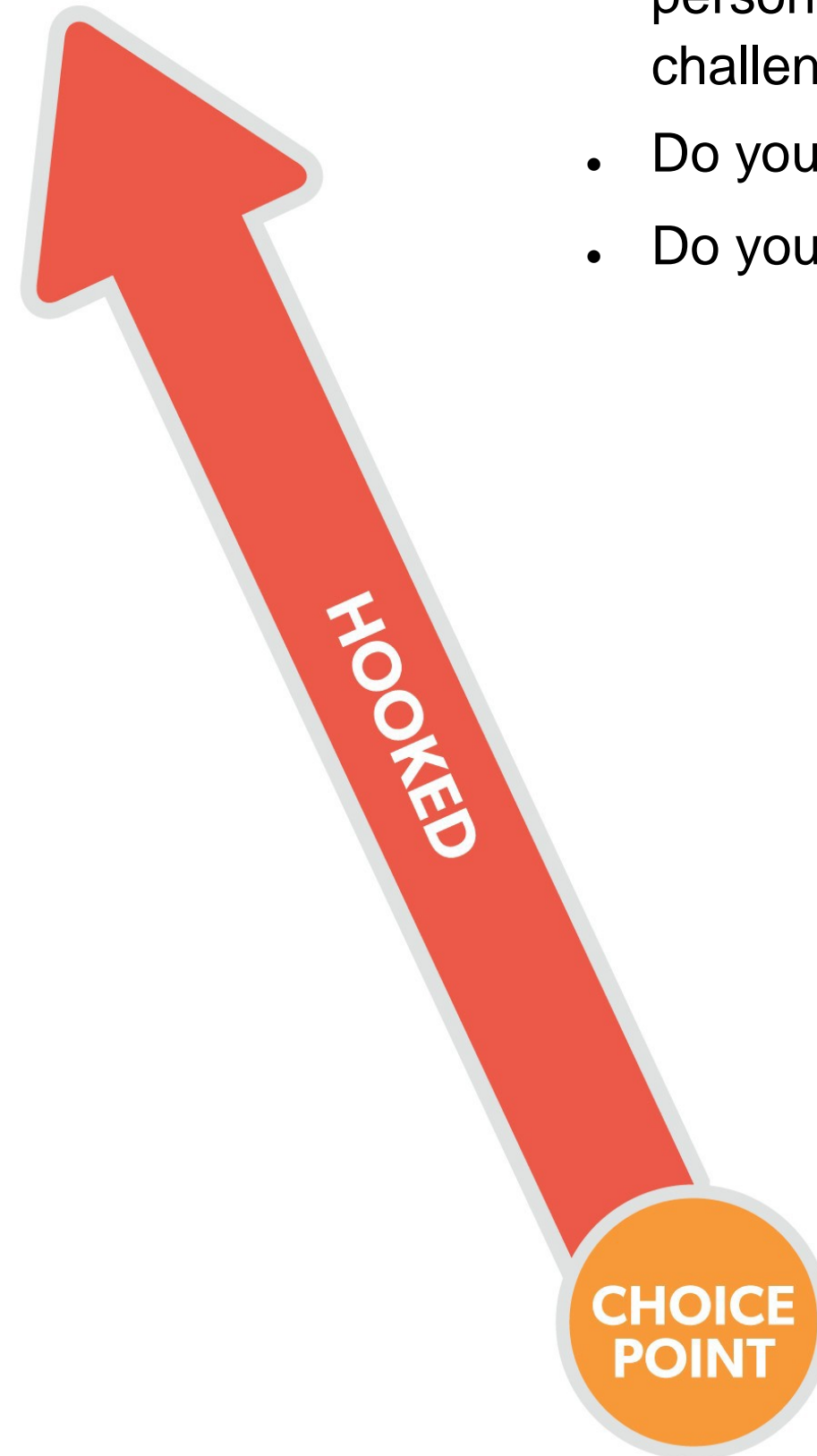
And when the costs of a behaviour lead to it reducing or stopping, technically we call them ‘punishing consequences’. (But if the costs are not enough to reduce the behaviour, then we would not call them punishing consequences.)

We can highlight the reinforcing consequences of an away move by writing in the word ‘payoffs’ up top, and asking questions such as...



## PAYOFFS

- What happens when you do that (or immediately after you do that)?
- Do you feel good or better in some way: relieved, calmer, hurting less, chilled, relaxed, stronger, in the right, standing up for yourself?
- Do you get to escape or avoid something you don't want? E.g. a difficult person, place, event, situation, interaction, task, duty, responsibility, challenge; or some difficult thoughts, feelings, memories?
- Do you get something you want? Do you get your needs met in some way?
- Do you achieve something you want or escape something you don't want?



**Situations  
Thoughts & Feelings**

# Common Reinforcing Consequences of Away Moves.

Away Moves may have many different reinforcing consequences – but they all boil down to some combination of:

- *Get away from something you don't want (behaviour under aversive control)*
- *Get access to something you do want (behaviour under appetitive control)*

Here are some of the most common reinforcing consequences of away moves we encounter clinically:

- Escape/avoid people, places, situations, events, etc. (overt avoidance) Escape/avoid
- unwanted thoughts & feelings (experiential avoidance)
- Feel good
- Get your needs met
- Gain attention
- Look good (to yourself or others)
- Feel like you are right
- Feel like you deserve it
  - Make sense (of life, the world, yourself, others etc.)

Of course, there are many, many other possible reinforcers for any given away move.



# Undermining Away Moves With Workability

We can use the CP to highlight the workability – or lack of it - of any behaviour by writing in the words ‘payoffs’ and ‘costs’. (There’s a printable version near the end of this doc, including those words).

First we identify and validate the payoffs. Then we compassionately and respectfully explore the costs.



**COSTS**

**PAYOFFS**

Workability: validate payoffs & highlight costs

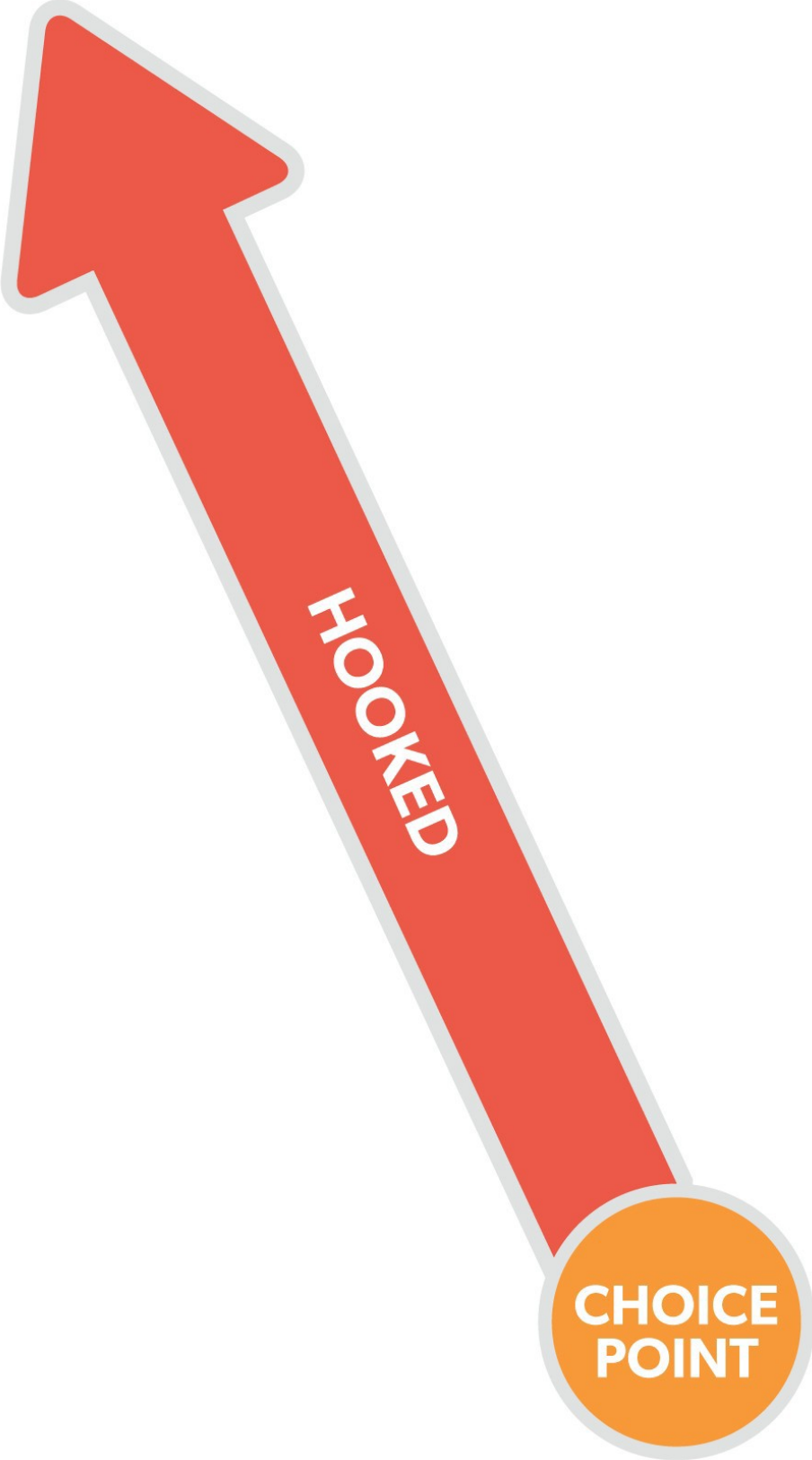
Workability:

**PAYOFFS:**

What are the benefits (payoffs) of these away moves? What do you gain? What do you escape or avoid?

**COSTS**

What are the costs? What do you lose, miss out on? What are the long term negative outcomes?



**Situations**  
**Thoughts & Feelings**



# Motivation For Towards Moves.

We can also use the CP2 to facilitate motivation to start or persist with towards moves.

First we identify:

- a) The immediate payoffs (the intrinsic rewards of living one's values) – e.g. Does this seem more like the person you want to be? Does this seem like moving in the direction you want to go? What are you standing for here? What does this mean to you? What values are you living with every little step? Would this be living life your way?
- b) The potential (not guaranteed) payoffs of achieving one's goals – i.e. if successful at achieving the values-congruent goals specified, what are the benefits likely to be?



## PAYOFFS



**Situations  
Thoughts & Feelings**

Does this seem more like the person you want to be? Does this seem like moving in the direction you want to go? What values are you living with every little step? Would this be living life your way?

Would this be pursuing a meaningful goal? What are the potential benefits of achieving this goal?

# Facilitate Willingness

We can use the choice point to facilitate willingness.

First we identify:

- a) The immediate payoffs (intrinsic rewards of living one's values).
- b) The potential (not guaranteed) payoffs of achieving one's goals.

Then we compassionately and respectfully explore the costs involved: the difficult thoughts and feelings likely to arise; the things you may miss out on or need to give up; the potential risks involved.

And then we can explore: Are you willing to make room for *(this difficult stuff)* in order to *(do this meaningful stuff)*?





Willingness: validate costs & highlight payoffs.

**COSTS**

**PAYOFFS**



**Situations**  
**Thoughts & Feelings**

### Willingness

**PAYOFFS:**

What are the benefits (or potential benefits) of these towards moves?

**COSTS:**

In order to do these towards moves, are you willing to make room for: Difficult thoughts and feelings? Potential risks? The things you may lose or miss out on?

# Motivational Analysis.

When a client is reluctant or ambivalent about changing a behaviour, we can use the choice point for motivational analysis.

Through looking at both payoffs and costs, we can address the unworkability of the old behaviour, and build willingness for the new, more workable behaviour.



**COSTS**

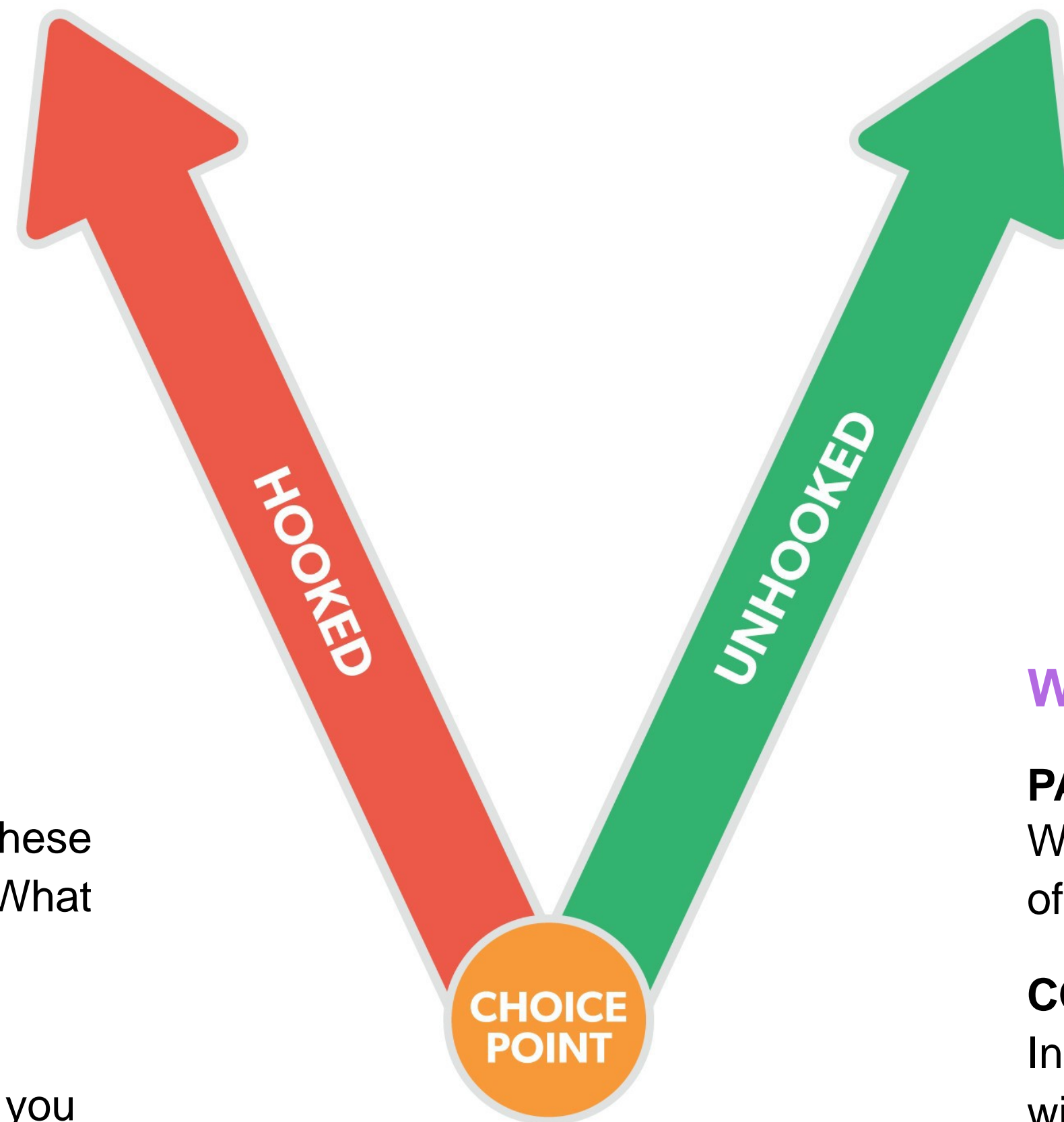
Workability of old behaviour:  
validate payoffs & highlight costs

Willingness for new behaviour:  
validate costs & highlight payoffs

**COSTS**

**PAYOFFS**

**PAYOFFS**



**Workability:**

**PAYOFFS:**

What are the benefits (payoffs) of these away moves? What do you gain? What do you escape or avoid?

**COSTS**

What are the long costs? What do you lose, miss out on? What are the long term negative outcomes?

**Willingness:**

**PAYOFFS:**

What are the benefits (or potential benefits) of these towards moves?

**COSTS**

In order to do these towards moves, are you willing to make room for: Difficult thoughts and feelings? Potential risks? The things you may lose or miss out on?

**Situation(s)  
Thoughts & Feelings**



# Printable versions.

I think the CP2 is best when you draw it out freehand in session. But here are 2 printable versions with costs and payoffs added in; first a full colour version, then a black and white one.



COSTS

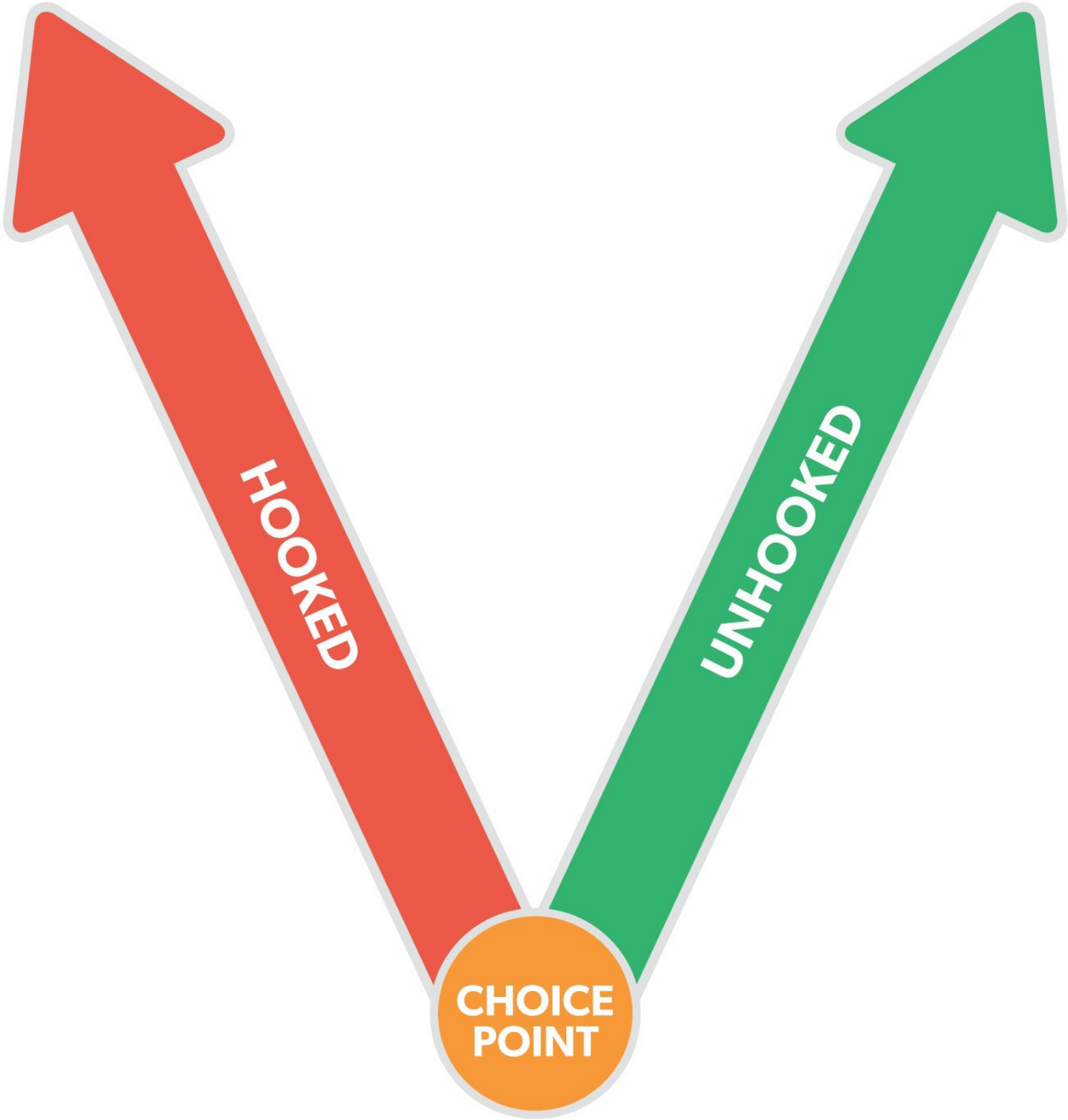
COSTS

PAYOFFS

PAYOFFS

**AWAY**

**TOWARDS**



Situation(s)  
Thoughts & Feelings



COSTS

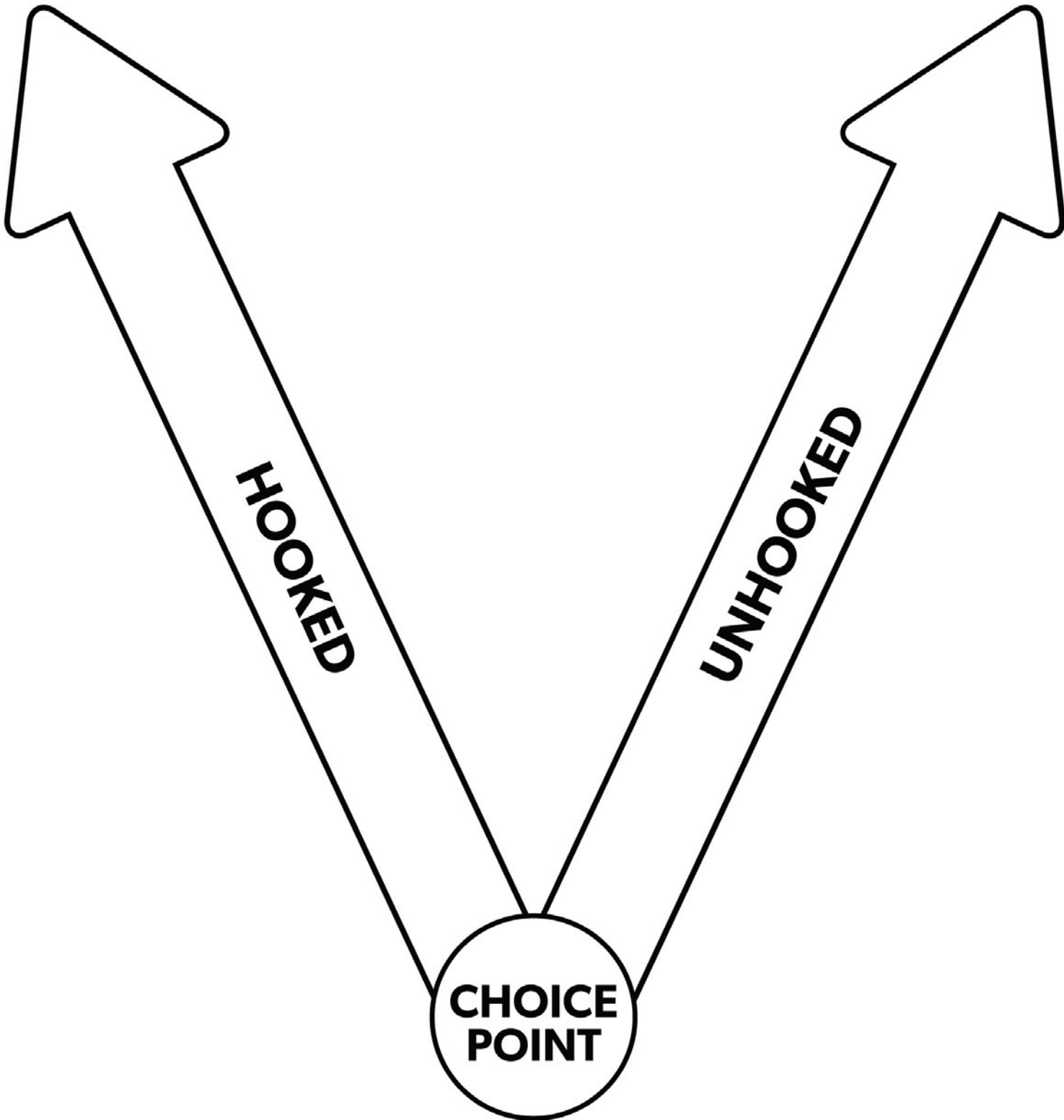
COSTS

PAYOFFS

PAYOFFS

**AWAY**

**TOWARDS**



Situation(s)  
Thoughts & Feelings

