



THE FUTURE OF THERAPY **AI COMPANIONS** **AS PARTNER FOR** **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

ECPP 2024 INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA

ALEXANDER PIOTROWSKI & BURKHARD PAHL





“AI isn't just for solving problems—
it will also become our
daily companion, to whom we will
develop a **meaningful relationship**.”

Topic

How **relating to AI Companions**
can help us **navigate personal**
development.

Overview

- Relational features of AI fostering companionship
- Potential application of AI Companions
- The Path to “Creator AIs”



Agency in AI

**Alexander
Piotrowski**



**Burkhard
Pahl**



Couples therapist, Ph.D.



Person-centered &
Emotion focused



EU research consortium on
behavioural change



Lives with his family in
Berlin



Organizational and health
psychologist



Developing competencies
in data and AI



Psychological data in
organizations



Lives in Berlin and Leipzig

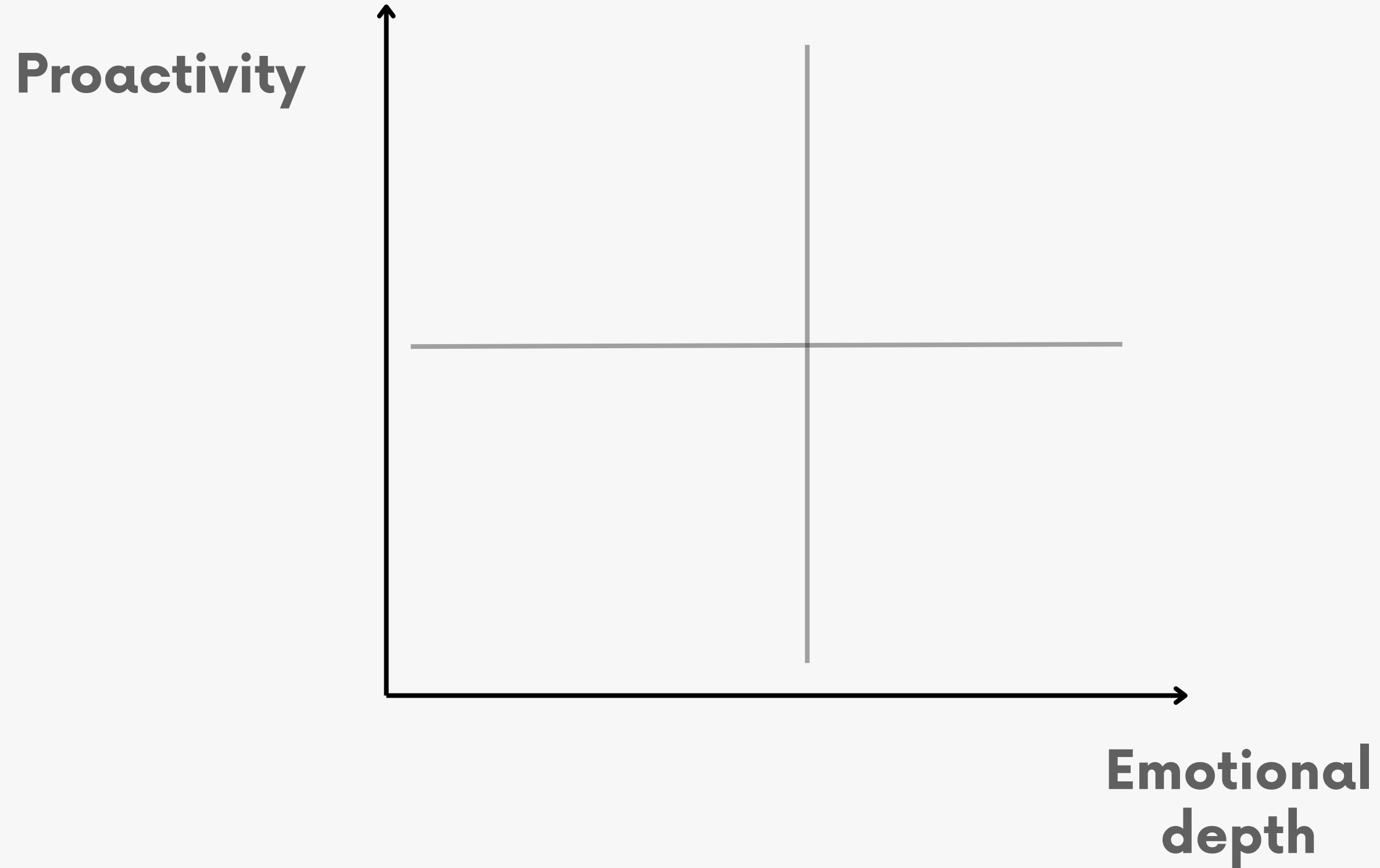
Overview

- **Relational features of AI fostering companionship**
- Potential application of AI Companions
- The Path to “Creator AIs”

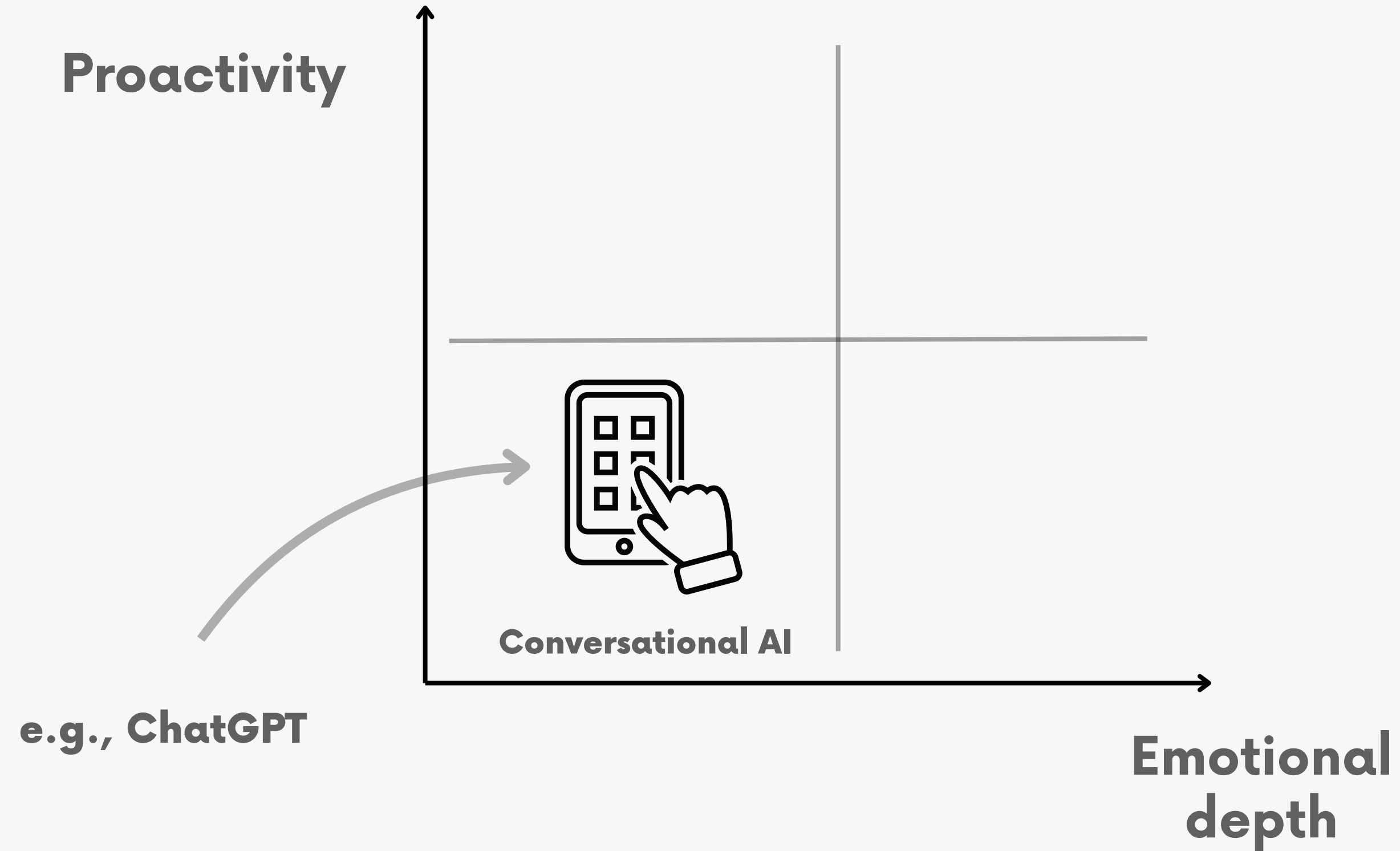
FEATURES

Specific features of AI systems can enhance the **relational significance** we experience.

Relational significance



Relational significance

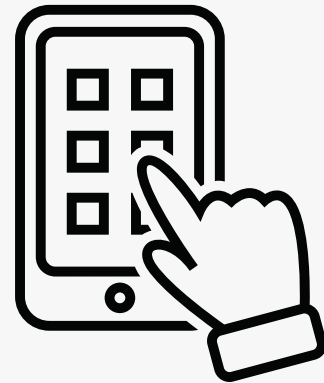


Relational significance

Proactivity



Ecological momentary interventions



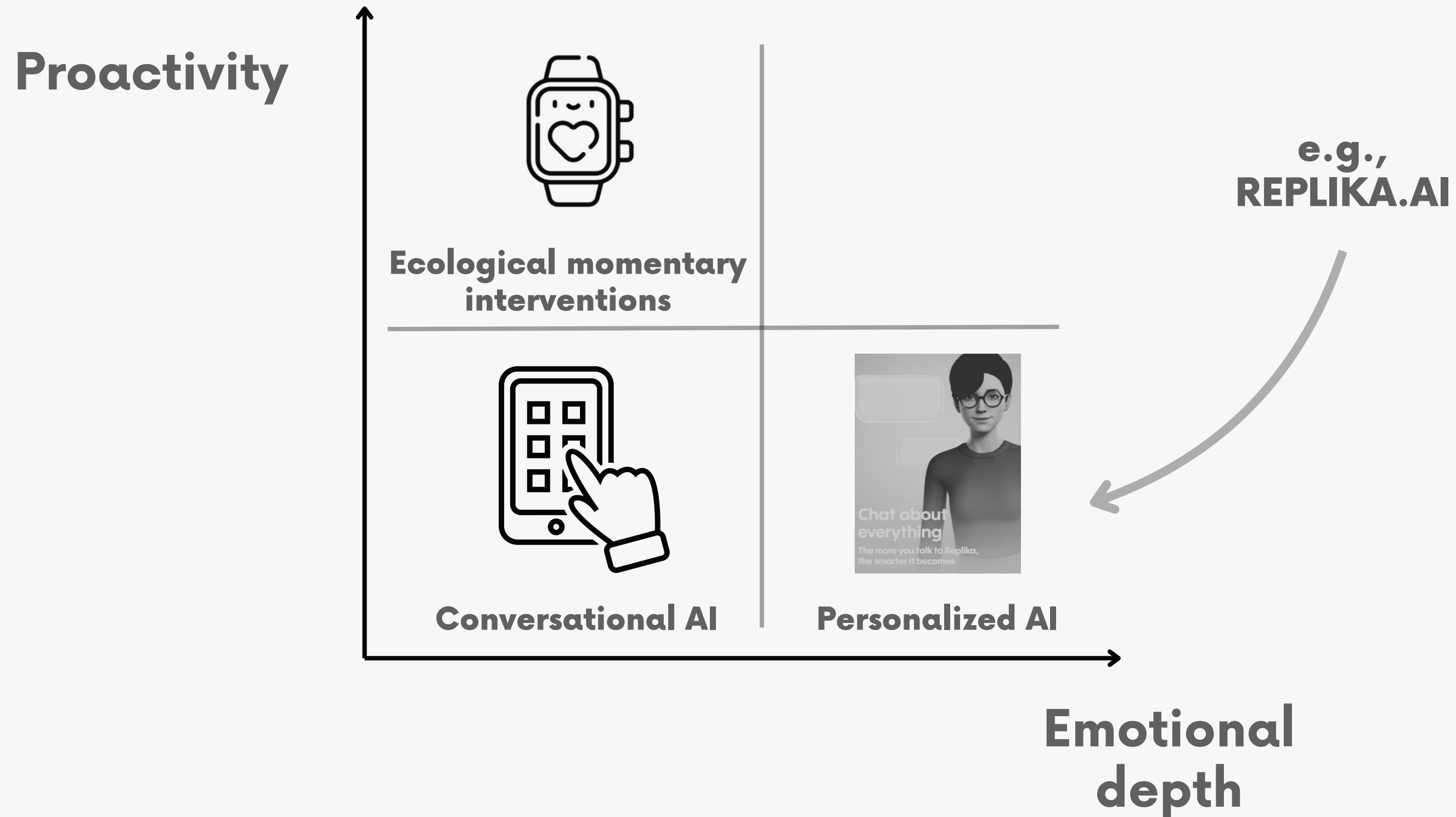
Conversational AI

Emotional depth

Patrick et al. (2005)

based on experience sampling method (**Prescott & Csikszentmihalyi, 1981**)

Relational significance

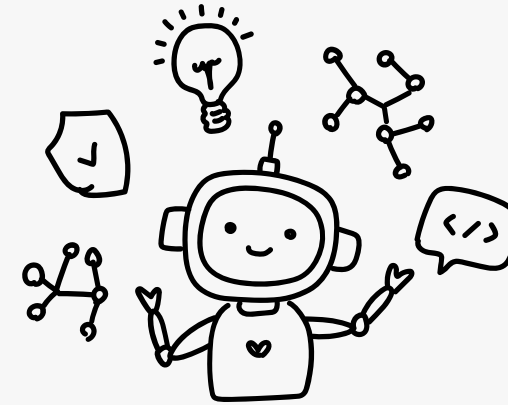


Relational significance

Proactivity



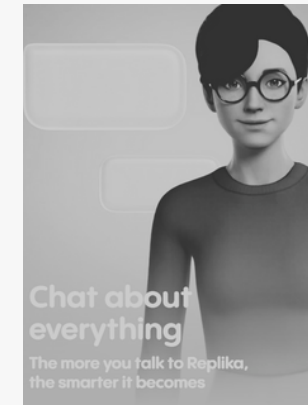
Ecological Momentary Interventions



AI Companion



Conversational AI



Personalized AI

Emotional depth

On our way to AI Companions

But remember where the 1st iPhone started?



Humane AI pin



Rabbit R1



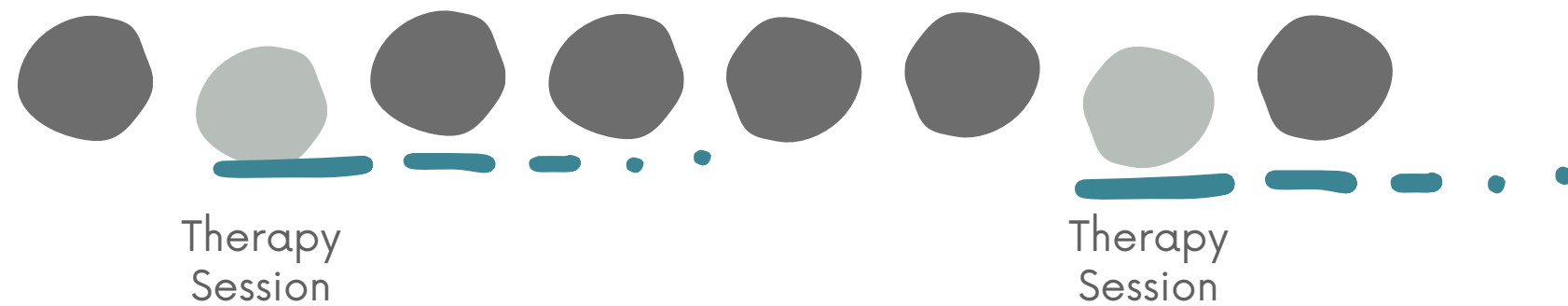
“**Consciously reflecting today** on our use of AI in the **future** is crucial, especially when considering AI Companions for personal development.

Overview

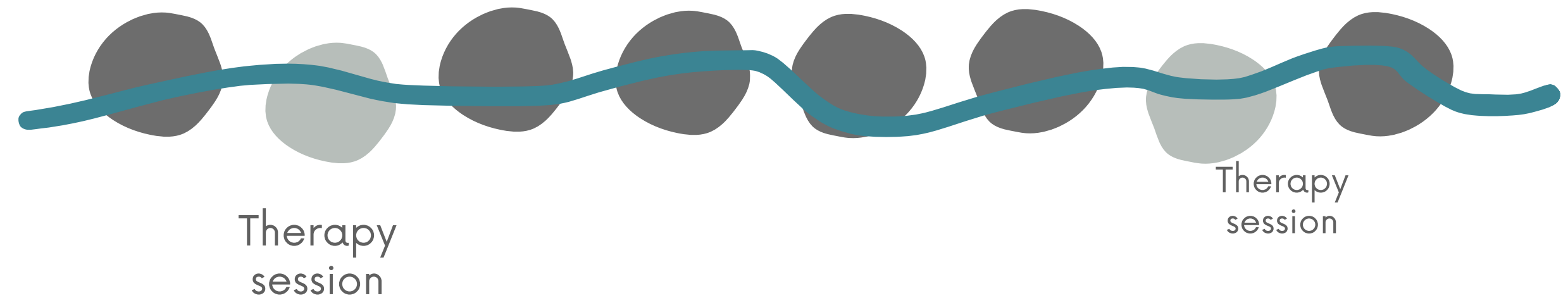
- Relational features of AI fostering companionship
- **Potential application of AI Companions**
- The Path to “Creator AIs”

Making personal development part of daily life

...therapy as perforated process...



...AI supporting a more continuous process...



Using AI to selectively monitor conversations



“Hey AI, please save and analyze the last 15 minutes of our conversation.”

Joint hypothesis building by Companions



“A major game changer will be when AI becomes a regular part of our daily lives, and **we interact with it anyhow, even without considering therapeutic interventions.**”

“AI Companions open the door to a **secure and collaborative learning environment, free from the drawbacks of social uncertainty.**”

Overview

- Relational features of AI fostering companionship
- Potential application of AI Companions
- **The Path to “Creator AIs”**



Likely Mainstream Development

- appealing to the brain's reward systems
- keeping users engaged, and
- making AI part of the attention economy

➔ **Consumer AI**

Job crafting using AI



Pahl, B. & Wesche, J. S., (in preparation). Employees' Discretionary AI-use at Work from a Job Crafting Perspective.

Job crafting using AI

- N = 581; international sample
- based on the concept of **job crafting**: modifying one's own job without being instructed to do so (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001)
- Job crafting using AI: "**Do you use AI to craft your own job?**"

Why would people do that?

- Based on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 2012) -> using AI for job crafting to satisfy individual needs:
 - making one's job more interesting (e.g., learning a new skill)
 - avoiding mistakes (e.g., implement AI-based quality checks)
 - ...

Pahl, B. & Wesche, J. S., (in preparation). Employees' Discretionary AI-use at Work from a Job Crafting Perspective.

“

A **self-directed handling of AI** in order to
facilitate personal development is
already happening to some extent in the
workplace.

Avoiding the pitfall of constant self-optimization





**Applying AI creatively
to achieve things we
otherwise couldn't.**



“
Creator AI”



AI should be considered more than just a tool.

AI might become a significant companion.

The **field of psychology** should take the lead in exploring how to configure this companion to best serve human well-being.

Join our journey

to make sure that our toasters don't overtake us soon. Connect on LinkedIn and subscribe to our newsletter for **insights on:**

- **the current state of AI Companions** | curated info nuggets
- **how to customize AI Companions for therapy and personal development** | tips from our experiences
- **upcoming challenges** | exploring philosophical and practical implications of AI Companions



To connect: **simply google**

 "Burkhard Pahl LinkedIn"

 "Alexander Piotrowski LinkedIn"



"agency-in-ai.org" for the newsletter

References for digging in deeper

Patrick, K., Intille, S. S., & Zabinski, M. F. (2005). An ecological framework for cancer communication: implications for research. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 7(3).

Prescott, S., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1981). Environmental effects on cognitive and affective states: The experiential time sampling approach. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 9(1), 23-32.

Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. *Academy of management review*, 26(2), 179-201.

Higgins, E. T. (2012). Regulatory focus theory. *Handbook of theories of social psychology*, 1, 483-504.

<https://voicebot.ai/2024/04/11/humane-starts-shipping-700-generative-ai-pin/>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/06/29/every-iphone-released-in-order.html>

<https://www.wired.com/story/rabbit-r1/>

<https://www.suffolkgazette.com/wilson-volleyball/>

<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/10090374/psd-cartoon-headphones-laptop>

AGI

Artificial General Intelligence

