

The steps of the disengagement process

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PLAN

1. Definition of belief
2. Membership Process
3. Apparent resistance to change
4. De-accessioning process

Definition of the belief

Sociological approach to beliefs

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◎ Terminology point

- **What is belief ?**

« To "believe" is to hold a proposition as true.

Belief is a "**psychological state** in which a subject who **assents** to a proposition whose epistemic status is uncertain or only probable" (Engel, 2006).

Definition of belief

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◎ 6 types of beliefs

The religious beliefs

« I believe that God exists and created the world in 7 days ».



Definition of belief

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◎ 6 types of beliefs

Unbelievable beliefs

« I believe that through my prayers I have saved the world from the apocalypse announced on December 21, 2012 »



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Definition of belief

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◎ 6 types of beliefs

Superstitious beliefs

« I believe that breaking a mirror will bring me 7 years of misfortune »



Definition of belief

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◎ 6 types of beliefs

The factual beliefs

« I think it's going to rain, because I can see a cluster of threatening clouds ».



Definition of belief

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◎ 6 types of beliefs

The axiological beliefs

« I think it's good to be on time or it's good to be on time ».



Definition of belief

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◎ 6 types of beliefs

The scientific beliefs

« I believe that Covid-19 vaccines are safe ».



Definition of belief

◎ Terminology point

- **Extreme beliefs**

- Beliefs to which a follower adheres unconditionally (Intensity : 10/10)
- The relationship to beliefs is normatively marginal
- The content of the beliefs seems irrational

Definition of belief

◎ The questions we ask ourselves

1. How can these followers believe in extreme, radical or irrational ideas ?
2. How do we get these followers to **abandon** their extreme beliefs?

Definition of belief

◎ **A model of the break-away process**

Several determining factors :

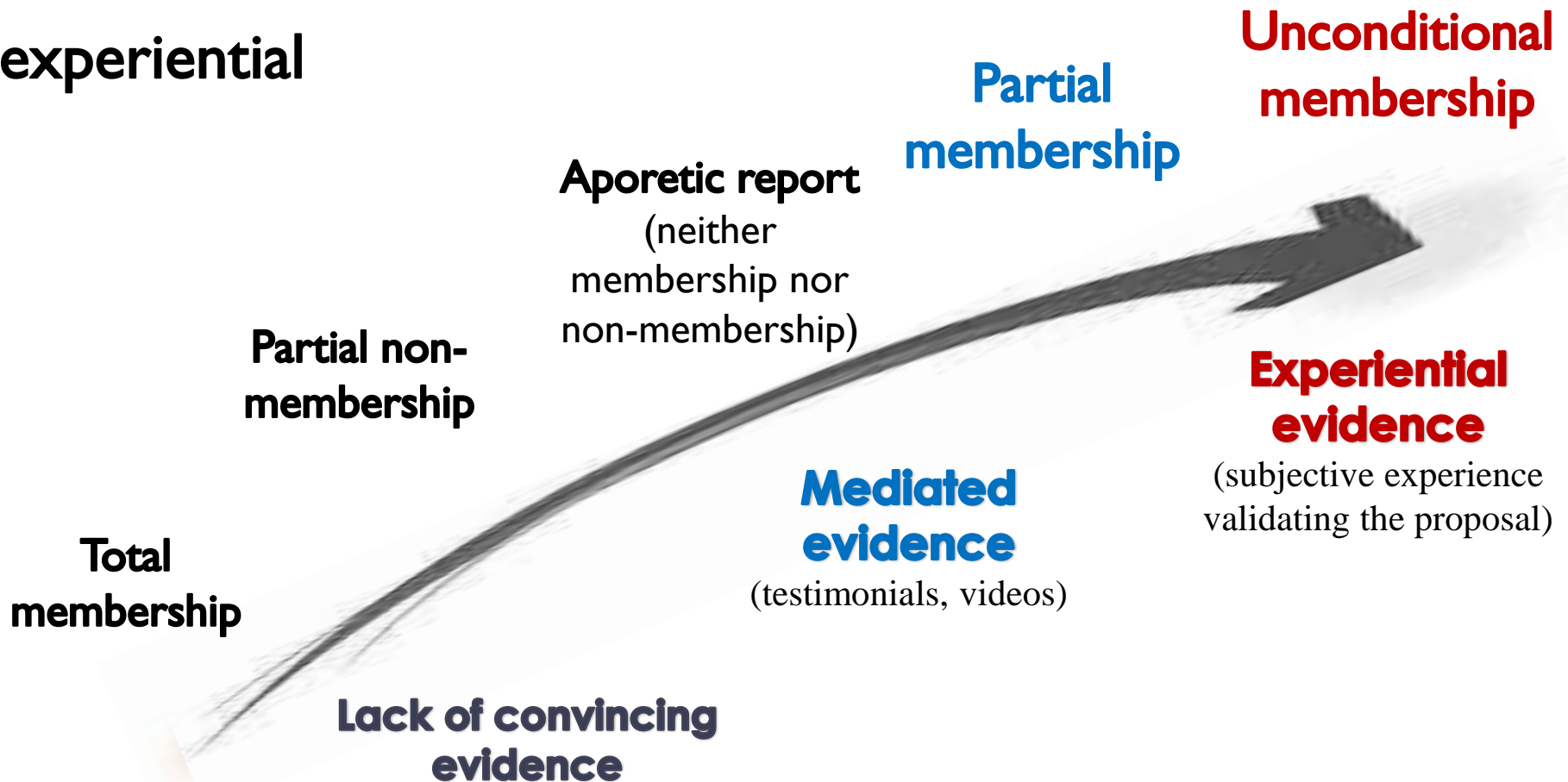
- The doubt
- Evidence from subjective experience
- Conflicts of values

Membership Process

The membership process

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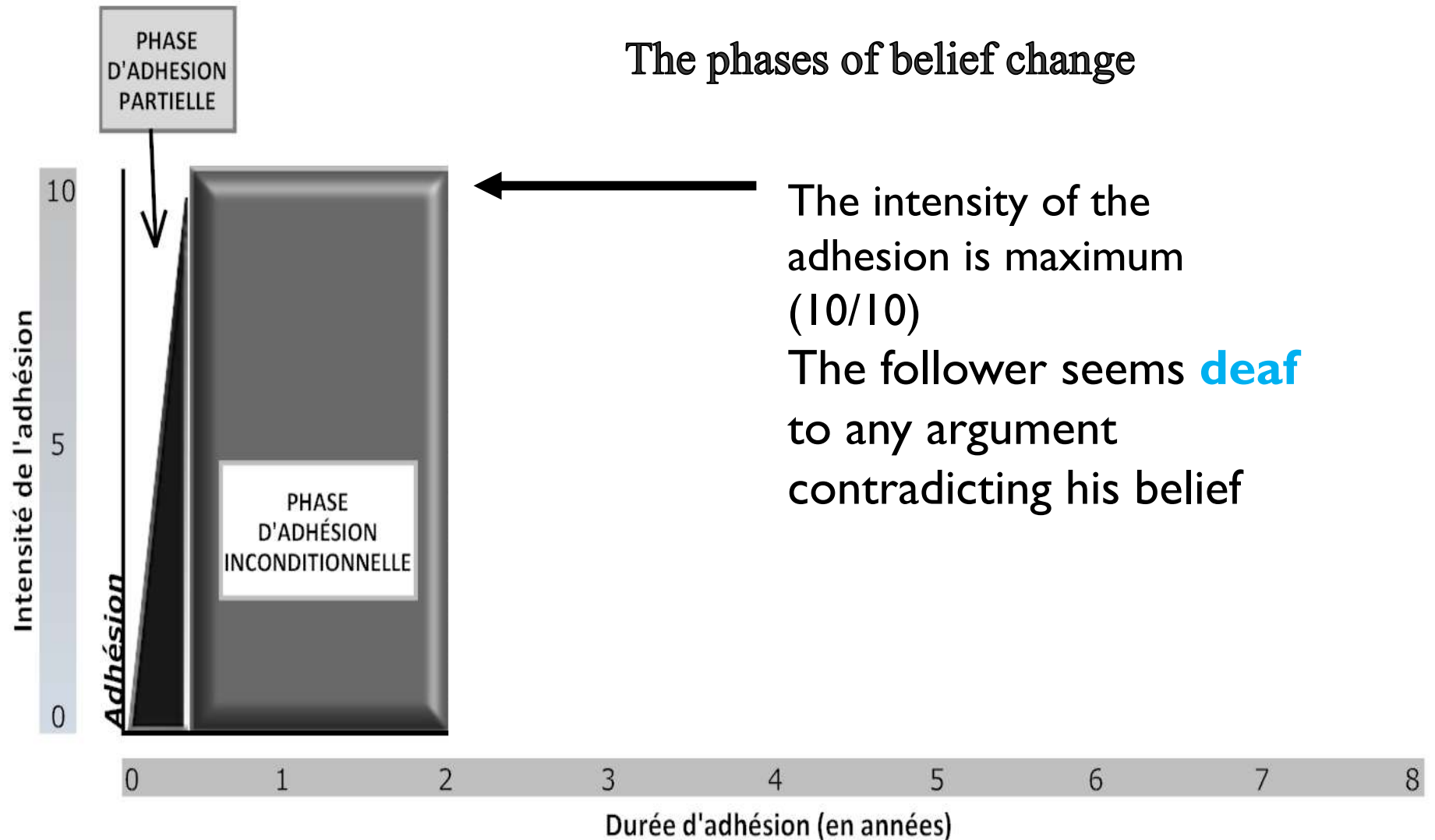
Evidence: mediated and experiential



The membership process

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An apparent resistance
to change

Apparent resistance to change

The **contradictions** experienced by the follower are fundamental in the process of disaffiliation

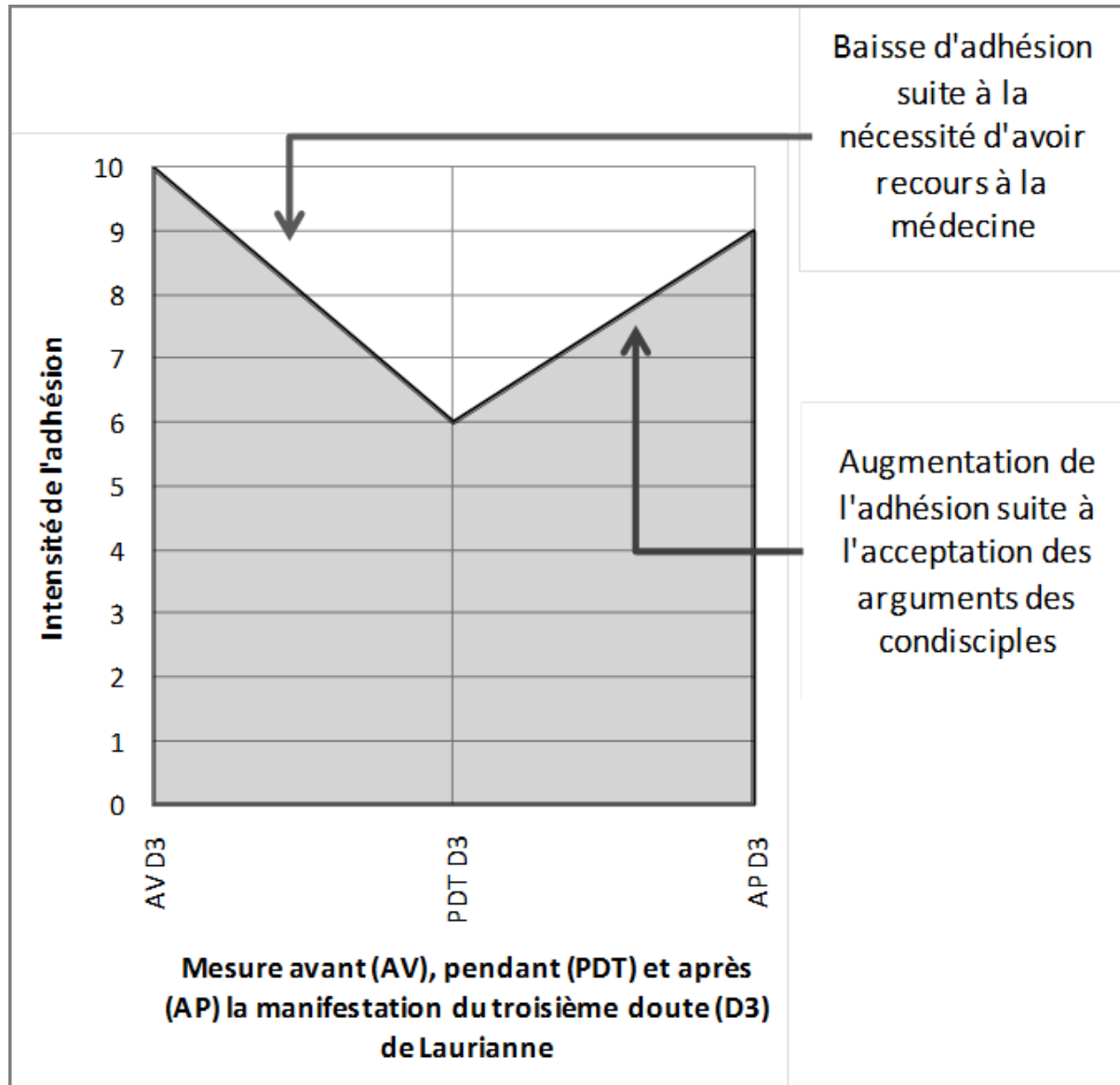
- ▶ Contradictions generate doubts
- ▶ They are of two types:
 - ▶ Factual
 - ▶ Axiological (value conflict)
- ▶ They have different effects on the adherence of the follower

Apparent resistance to change

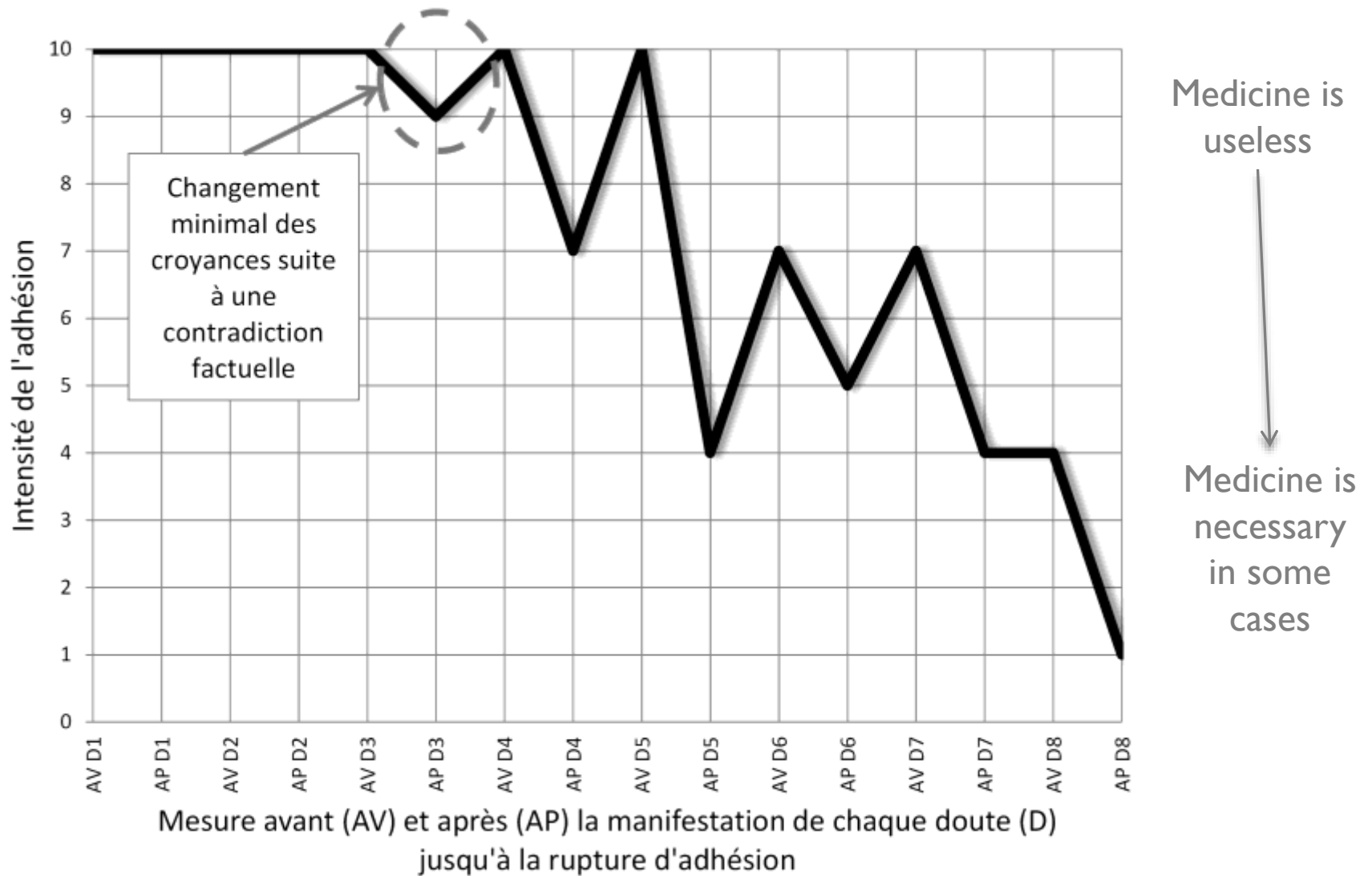
- ▶ The **factual contradiction** becomes apparent :
 - ▶ when an expectation prescribed by a piece of doctrine does not materialize
 - ▶ « Drink this potion, you will be cured of cancer without a hitch", but remission does not occur)
 - ▶ when a prediction is objectively wrong
 - ▶ « You are told that you will give birth to a boy, but you give birth to a girl).
- ▶ This type of contradiction has the particularity of not being able to be challenged : the follower can only see and accept that the child she has just given birth to is a girl and not a boy.

Apparent resistance to change

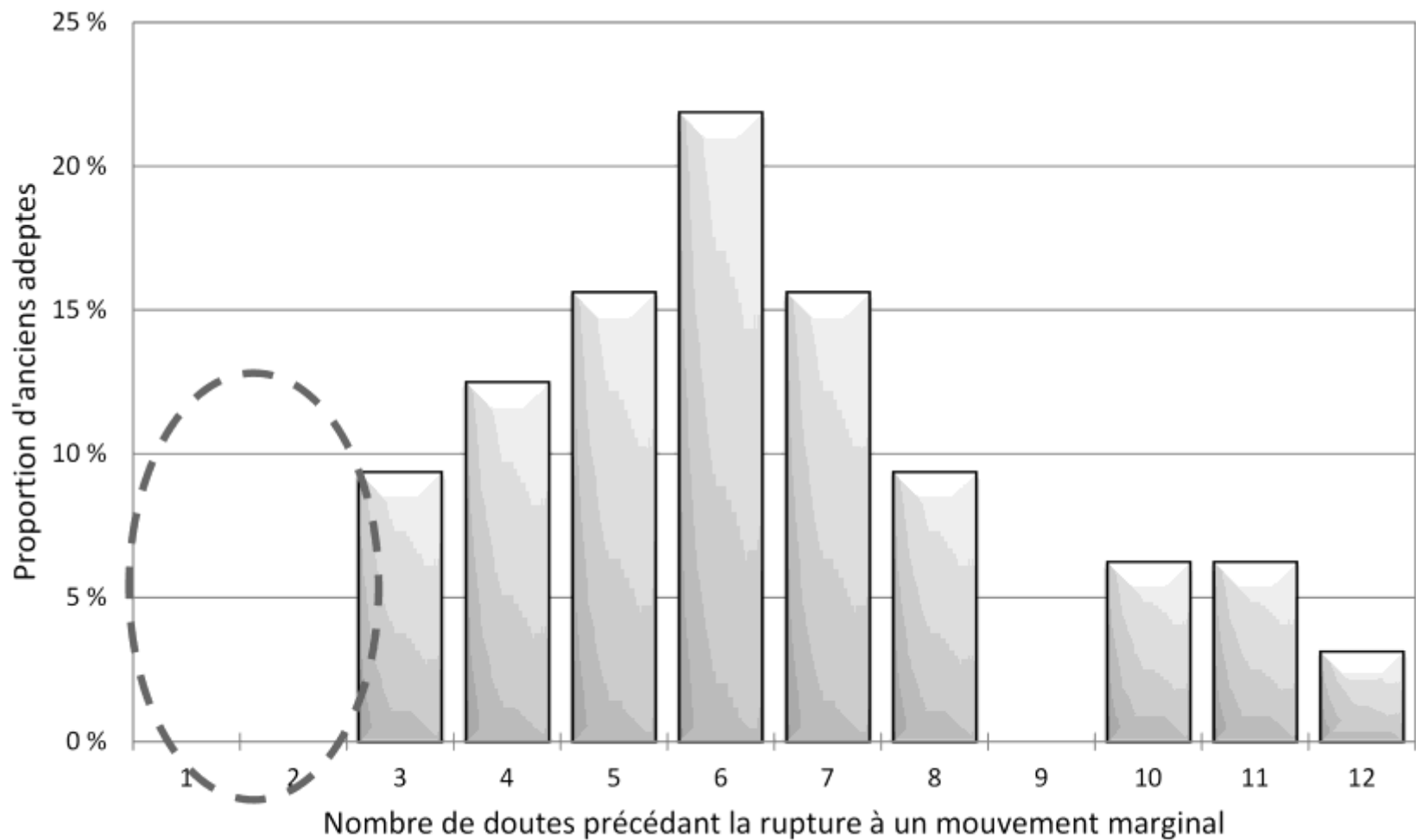
- ▶ The **factual contradiction** seems to cause no change in the belief system of a follower
- ▶ However, it produces a minimal change that the adept perceives, but not those around him.
- ▶ This inflection in his adherence will have a major influence in the process of leaving the belief



Laurianne's disaffiliation curve at the level of her 3rd doubt



Laurianne's disaffiliation curve



Distribution of the number of doubts felt by the followers before the break of belonging to a marginal movement

Apparent resistance to change

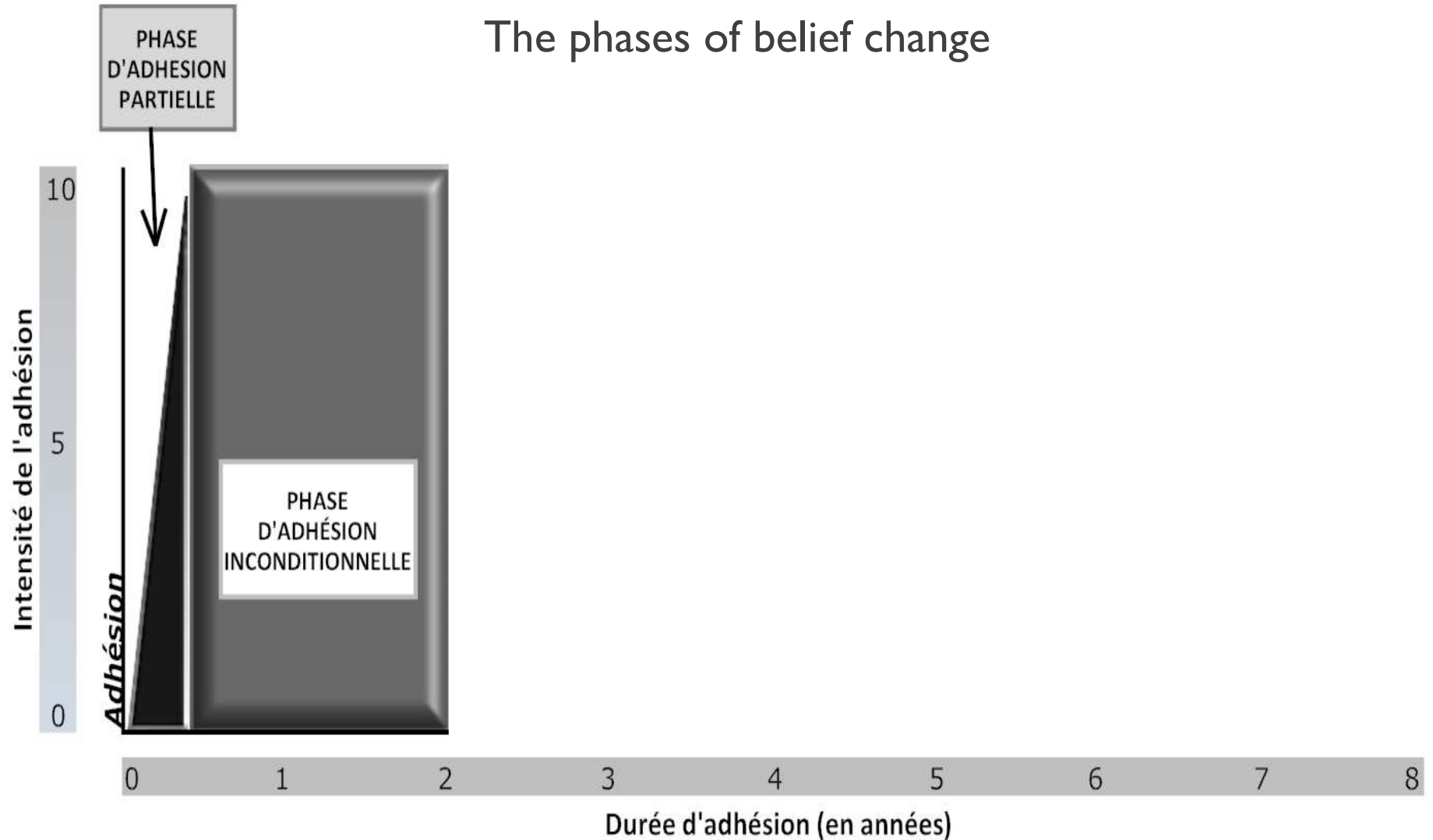
Summing up

- ▶ The **factual contradictions** may produce a fluctuation in the intensity of adherence
- ▶ The **axiological contradictions** (**value conflict**) have a more consistent impact on the belief system.

Process of break-away

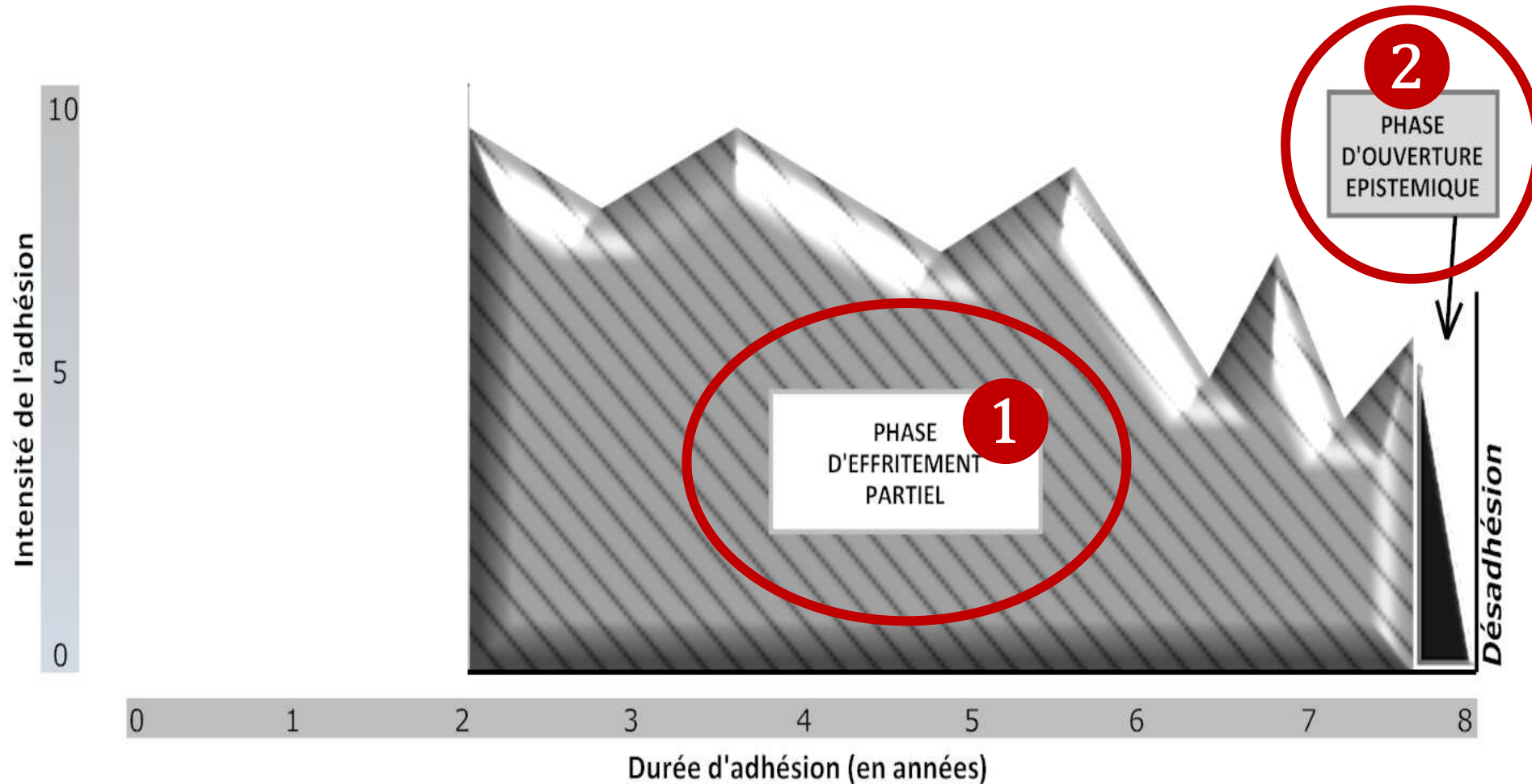
The break-away process

The phases of belief change



The break-away process

The phases of belief change



The break-away process

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The **doubt** becomes recurrent

But it must be hidden : to oneself and to others

The **fluctuations in membership** from initial doubts to the break in membership of the former followers interviewed (median values of all "doubt evaluations" collected)

Partial crumbling phase

**1 - The tipping
point doubt**

The break-away process

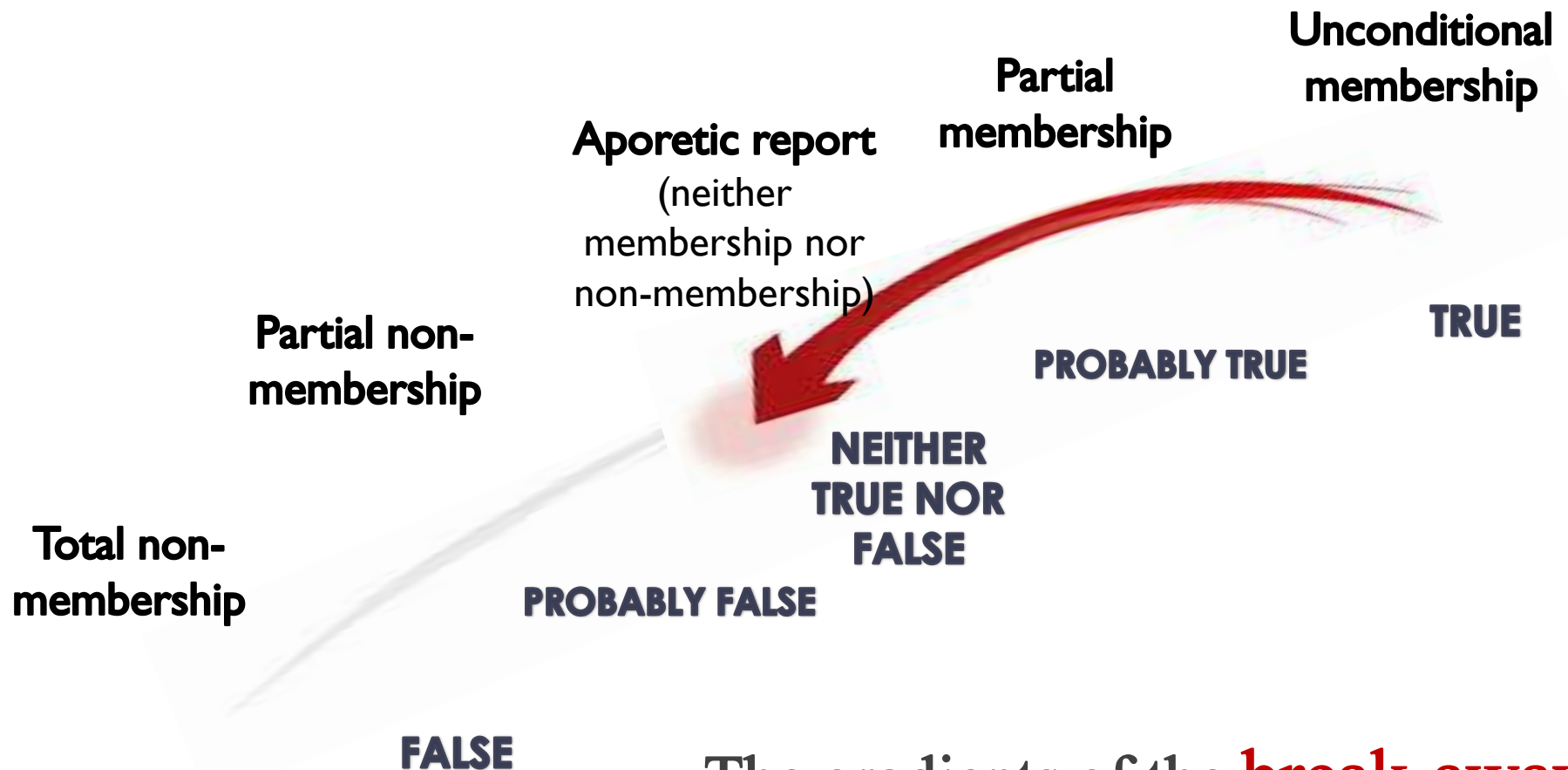
◎ I - The tipping point doubt

- In 73%, it is generated by a **value conflict**
- It occurs most often after the **3rd doubt** intense
- The follower finds his skepticism
- The follower embarks on a "**retroanalysis**" (Sauvayre, 2011b) of all the intense doubts of his or her journey.

The break-away process

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The gradients of **adhesion**



The gradients of the **break-away**

The break-away process

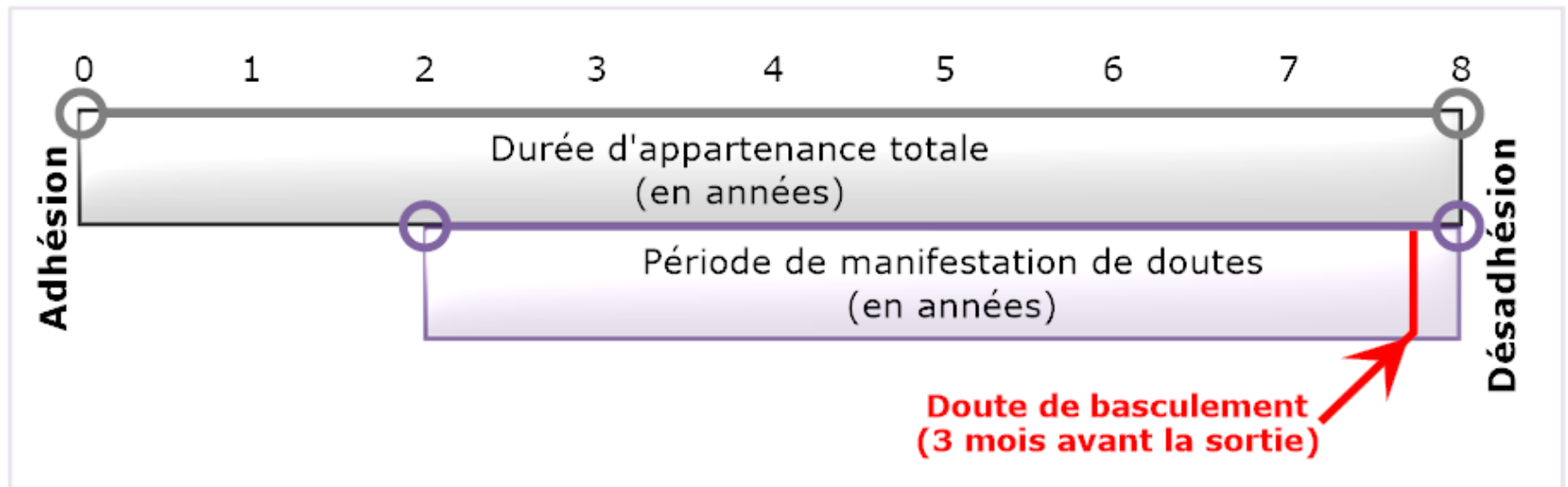
TIPPING POINT DOUBT

Adept 1 : « There were actually steps. After I was certain of all these lies [of the founder] and after I re-read the books and realized that in the books there were monumental inconsistencies that I had not even seen and that all of a sudden because I had accepted to question the probity of the [founder] and I understood that he could be a liar. So, I reread the book and said to myself : “What if he's a liar ?”. And so in a way, I found all the contradictions, the inconsistencies that were in it ».

The break-away process

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Epistemic opening phase

2 - The doubt of
rupture

The break-away process

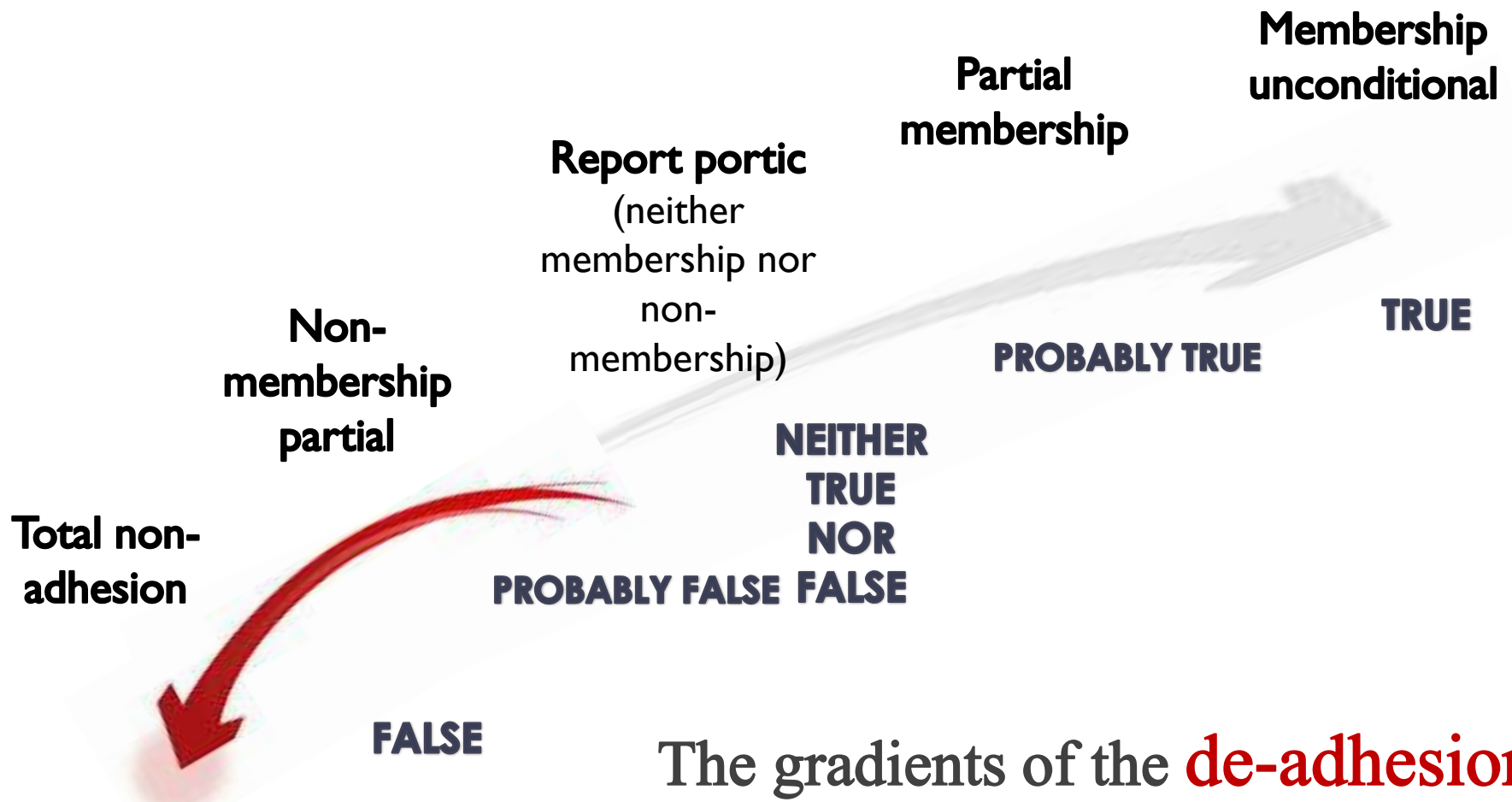
◎ 2- Doubt of rupture

- In 71%, it is generated by a **value conflict**
- It occurs most often at **6th doubt** intense
- The follower abruptly breaks with his membership

The break-away process

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The gradients of **adhesion**



The break-away process

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BREAKING DOUBT : A CLICK

Adept 2 : « Well there, I was already more than sure I was sure I was sure ! But when I saw him [the founder] talking crap at the opposite end of the spectrum [...] it's not good and every time, it was several times, like this, that there were misunderstandings. So, it was a total click ! There, I said to myself, I have, I have no doubt there ! It's a complete joke ! I am an alien in this universe, I have nothing to do with it ! There, ... It wasn't the trigger that started it [the tipping point doubt], it was the trigger that concludes, that puts an end to it [the doubt to break-away] [...]" (Didier).

No questioning of
experiential beliefs



Pyramid of progressive and successive challenges to various membership objects

The break-away process

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To remember

The reasons for entry will become the reasons for exit

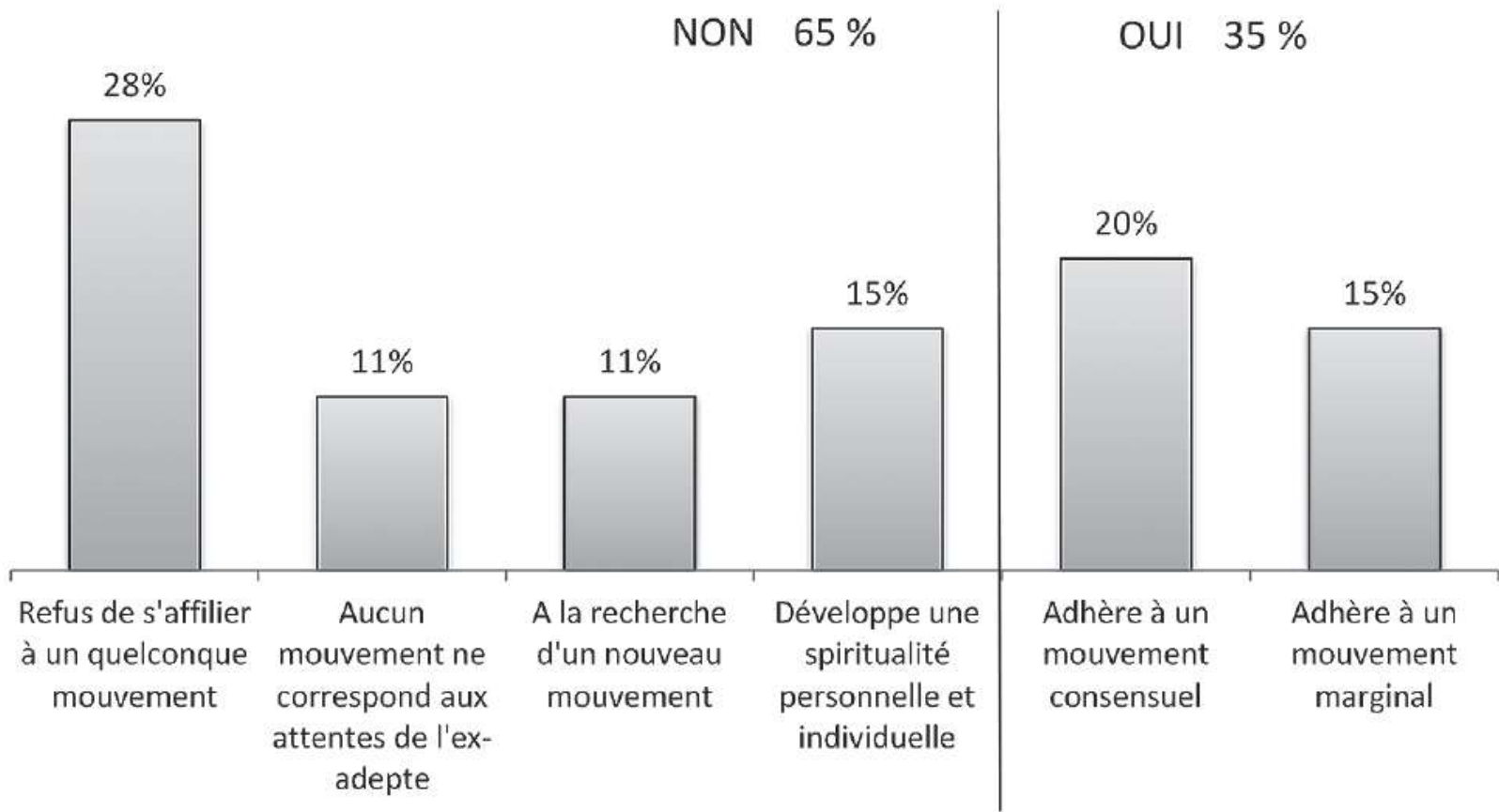
The opposition between the **values** intrinsic to the individual and those of the movement will be the greatest **driver of disaffiliation**

3 - After the exit

After the exit

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Adhésion à un autre mouvement à la suite de la rupture d'appartenance



Evolution of membership following the end in membership of the main movement considered

THANKS FOR
YOUR
ATTENTION

To deepen

<http://romy.sauvayre.online.fr/>

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Croire à l'incroyable



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