



The RISC Course

Session #3 – The True Source of Upset

Session Transcript

[0:00:00]

Christian: All right, everybody. Welcome once again to the RISC course and to our living room here. Sonika and Christian.

Sonika: We're very excited to be with you guys again today.

Christian: We are really excited to be with you again today. Thanks for joining us. We're going to have some fun and growth and learning today. Yeah. Come in. Let's get settled.

Sonika: Yeah. This is actually one of our favorite classes. For this particular course session, you're going to want to make sure you got a pad and a paper accessible to you because we're going to be -- sorry for this thing. Oh, pen and paper. Yeah. A pad and pen or a pencil because you're going to be doing some bookwork here a little later in our course.

Christian: We recommend you do that on every one of these sessions, but for tonight it's particularly important because you'll be definitely using it. I can say on a personal note, by the way, the model and the material we're teaching you tonight have been one of the most important pieces to my life, really, to freeing myself from my own reactions and from other people's stuff around me. It's been huge. So I'm really excited that we're going to share this with you.

Before we jump in, however, we are going to do a little recap.

Sonika: Yeah. So we just want to make sure we kind of tie in what we've done so far. So if you remember in the first session we explored how to make a distinction between what has happened up until this point and what you want to create going forward into the future. We talked about the power of our words in the

creation process. Remember, we said we're never just observing. We're always creating.

We talked about connecting in with an image of your own full potential and your partner's full potential, and beginning to see yourself in that way, to identify yourself as that, and to reinforce that. One of the biggest breakdowns a lot of people have in relationship is they keep bringing in junks from the past, kind of superimposing old stories, you could say, about each other, and then interacting with each other with a bunch of junk and space, complaining for change. So seeing each and identifying as your full potential allows you to really start fresh at creating what you want to create going forward.

So we actually want to give you a chance to play with that because it is so essential. So for those of you who are here with us today with your partner, if you'll just turn and make eye contact with your partner, and say out loud -- we're just going to give you a minute, a minute and a half each, to just share your acknowledgement, your full potential image of the other person. So you're just going to say, "You are so powerful. You're so confident. You're so present. You're so loving and tender and sensitive. You're such an incredible lover, incredible man." So you're just going to speak this person's full potential. A minute and a half each. We'll give you a half time signal so you'll know to switch.

Christian: Make sure, while you're doing it, to stay connected with your eyes, with eye contact the whole time. We're going to add touch. I know you can't see that. You can hold each other's hands. For those of who you are on the line by yourself here, still do it. You have two options. Either imagine there's your full potential partner in front of you or you simply speak it as if you're speaking to yourself so that you are amazing and you are powerful is spoken about yourself. But we still recommend you do it out loud.

Sonika: All right. So go ahead and make eye contact. Decide who's going to go first and just say you are, all the qualities and characteristics of their full potential and best self.

Christian: We'll call out the time to switch. Go ahead. Say another couple of you ares. The person who's been listening say, "Thank you so much for seeing that. Thank you for seeing and saying that." All right. Deep breath everybody. And then go ahead and switch. The other person now go. You are, all the good qualities about them. If you're by yourself, you get to do it one more time about yourself. Go ahead. Say a couple more you ares. The person who's been receiving say, "Thank you so much for seeing that in me. Thank you for saying that."

[0:05:05]

Sonika: All right. Great. Go ahead and just take a nice deep breath. And just notice how you feel when you speak that way about your partner, when you speak out loud. So it's really essential. One of the first homework assignments that we gave you - we hope you're still doing it every single day. Three appreciations before you go to bed makes all the differences in your relationship.

Christian: Yeah. As a matter of fact, we gave it as homework for this session, for this RISC course. These homeworks we hope you never stop doing them. It's that kind of homework. Just so you know, Sonika and I still do that. We still do that and we still share appreciation. We had a couple we taught this material to still do that to this day, even years after.

Awesome. So let's go back to the brief recap here. Eric, if you'll put up the slide with the review.

Sonika: So we did want to review here now Session 2.

Christian: Go ahead and advance one more, Eric.

Sonika: So in the last session we talked about the importance of the things we don't like and the things that aren't working, and that they're telling us something about what we're creating to create going forward. So instead of getting stuck in complaining, which is what most of us tend to do, now we're going to use our complaint to get in touch with what we want and to start getting on with having it.

So the first step to that is you want to get in touch with what you don't want.

Christian: Which is typically pretty easy.

Sonika: Right, because that's stuff that's right in our face. And we used the don't want to then translate that as quickly as possible into what we do want. And then the next piece, which is the most essential, is to get in touch with why do you want that in the first place.

Christian: Yeah. How you feel, what is the feeling experience that you're really after. Actually, that's your true motivation. If you can play it one more time, Eric. Why do you want that? Okay.

And then lastly, to take that now when you have put yourself in the state and identified what's your true motivation, what is it you really want, how to take that state and put it into action and put that into your life so that the actions you take are infused with what you truly want as opposed to all the stuff you don't want.

How we suggest you do that is what you practiced last time, and hopefully you've been practicing here, is what we call living in the question. If I were -- fill in your blank -- connected, free, powerful, what could I say, what could I do right now. The first thing that pops to mind, you actually go take that action.

Sonika: Yeah. Remember that trying to get your partner to do something so you can feel a certain way doesn't work. It's never worked. It's never going to work. That's the complaining for change strategy that we were talking to you about in the first session. If we want to create a shift and change in our relationship we got to take responsibility by first connecting in the flow, what we don't want, what we do want, what's the experience we're after.

So now instead of me trying to get you to give me an experience of intimacy, for example, or connection, I come in being that myself. If I were connected right now what would I do, what would I say? And from that place I could produce a space within which intimacy can show up. I take actions consistent with a partner who isn't being intimate. And from that place I allow you to slide into joining me. So instead of resisting me which is what you get when you complain, now I'm kind of sliding into being intimate and I invite you to join me there. You're much more likely to join me from that, from doing it in this particular way.

Christian: Yes.

Sonika: So we hope you had some really good experiences with that. We'd love to hear more about what your experience was on the RISC forum.

Christian: We really appreciate all the material and activity and thoughts and experiences that you have shared on the forum. We're just thoroughly enjoying seeing the life on there and how you practice and use it and ask us questions. That's awesome. Please keep doing that.

Sonika: All right. So let's move on to Session 3.

Christian: Our today's session, we call it The True Source of Upset. So we're going to take some time, obviously, to talk about that and to talk about how we -- actually, how I think about it is how I gain some control over my own reactions, over my own feelings and moods and why I feel like I do. This model we'll be teaching you today will help you gain some control over that.

[0:10:09]

Instead of having this experience that is so awesome, having a relationship which is "Oh, man, I just love it when you're awesome and everything going well. I just feel great," but then all of a sudden here I am just minding my own business, being a good guy, and then boom, you say something or you do something or you don't do this thing or you don't say this thing or I expected, and now I feel it's terrible. So you'll see here as we go along how to do that. We'll give you a very specific model.

Sonika: So we're going to start here first with a pretend fight that we can refer back to here as we teach you this material. So I want you to imagine that we haven't been together for quite a while here.

Christian: All day maybe and this is after a long day, we both been doing our separate work things. Here we are reconnecting late at night. All right. I'm going to stand up. All right. Here we go. All right.

Sonika: Hi, honey.

Christian: Hey, honey. How's it going?

Sonika: Hey, it's so good to see you.

Christian: Yeah. You too. You have a good day.

Sonika: Honey, can you just focus? You're always in your phone.

Christian: I'm not always on my phone.

Sonika: You are to.

Christian: Hang on a second.

Sonika: It's exactly what I've been talking about.

Christian: Hang on a second. I'm just doing this. So let me just finish what I'm doing here and I'll be right with you.

Sonika: Just forget it.

Christian: What?

Sonika: Forget it. No.

Christian: Just let me finish this, all right? I'll be right with you.

Sonika: You have all the time in the world. I'm out of here.

Christian: Oh, God. Geez.

All right. You can come back now.

Sonika: All right.

Christian: Familiar type of interaction to anybody? Sorry. We're scrambling around here to get ourselves seated.

Sonika: Let me kind of take this apart and explore what's going on here in the background. So we don't actually know what is going on for him or for her. So we're just going to --

Christian: Speculate.

Sonika: -- speculate. What are some possible things that might be going on that would have him stay at his phone and have her get pissed off in him doing that?

Christian: What might be going on? We'll start with what might be going on with him. Eric, if you'll put up the next slide. You can just follow along bullet by bullet as I speak here. So we could speculate what might be going on with him is he's angry about something or he's doing something really important on his phone. He's just a bad listener or he doesn't care about care about his wife, period. He hates being interrupted. He likes his phone more than he likes his wife.

By the way, I want you to know, all these suggestions, these are suggestions that we have gotten several many, many times from different audiences that we sent this to.

He's just dense. He's just a guy. He just doesn't get what's required. He's playing Candy Crush. He's flat out avoiding intimacy. He's dishonest. He's doing something on there. He just doesn't want to tell the truth about. He's texting his mistress and feeling pretty shitty about it.

Sonika: He's closing out all of his porn sites.

Christian: Yeah. So we could speculate much more but those are some possible options.

Now let's speculate what might be going on for her that she would show up like this.

Sonika: That she would get pissed off and react that way. So maybe she's feeling depleted. Maybe she's feeling impatient.

Christian: She's just interrupting him. She's just a thoughtless person. She's thoughtless.

Sonika: I got put my glasses on to read this. She is really pissed off about other stuff that she is bringing into this conversation. So he's not actually interacting with what's happening right now but a bunch of old stuff that's showing up in the conversation. She's just looking for an excuse to nag him. She just wants to be heard, want some attention. Maybe she wants to share something that's really important to her. Maybe she has no respect for him whatsoever. It's all about her. She wants all the attention.

She knows he's just goofing off and she's sick of it. Maybe she really wants a divorce and she just has told him. She's looking for anything that's a good excuse to tell him. Maybe she's trying to tell him she got tickets for a ball game or something.

Christian: Yeah. Like a really big surprise plan that she's super excited about.

Sonika: Notice when something like this happens, and we don't really have any idea what's going on in the background, we can assume or we can speculate about what might be going on. So let's table this for a minute. We're going to come back to this.

[0:15:10]

We want to talk about a model that most of all of us have gotten exposed to probably in science class when we were kids.

Christian: Psychology classes. It's the model for human behavior, period. So it goes like this. Stimulus response. Eric, you can put up the next slide. You might've seen this before in any of those classes. Stimulus response. That's how we humans behave. It still might be the most widely accepted model for why humans behave the way they do. We take in multitudes of stimuli through our senses and we have a response.

A stimulus is anything. It can be wife comes and says something but it's also I opened up a newspaper and I see there was another terrorist attack. That's a stimulus. I had a reaction to that or maybe I hear on the news that in our town they're going to lay off 500 people at the place where I work. I had a reaction to that. Stimulus reaction, stimulus response.

- Sonika: This whole Cartesian reality is kind of built around this whole stimulus response model. I'm kind of walking around, minding my own business, and I just see stuff, hear stuff or I feel stuff and I have a reaction or a response to something that is going on around me. It's the stimulus that produces my experience.
- Christian: Until that happened, until I read the newspaper that 500 people are going to be laid off I was feeling just great. Until you walked in and said, "Hey, I could never have any time with you" I was feeling just great and minding my own business.
- Sonika: Yeah. So in this example, this pretend fight, the stimulus, you could say, for her is him not looking up at his phone, not dropping his phone and giving her his undivided attention. He stayed looking at his phone. That was the specific stimulus.
- Christian: For him the specific stimulus is he's doing whatever he's doing on his phone here, and she comes in and starts talking to her. That is the stimulus.
- Sonika: Now, we actually prefer, instead of using the word stimulus response, we prefer stimulus reaction.
- Christian: You'll see here how we illustrate that. We just want to make that clear as we go forward that we say stimulus reaction because we think response signifies a more deliberate response is how we interpret that, whereas a reaction is more of a knee-jerk type of reflex reaction.
- Sonika: We actually used the word reaction because if you think about it, we're reacting something old. It actually happens so fast. It really isn't consciously thought. It's not a conscious move we make on our part. We just find ourselves in reaction.
- Christian: Please note in this model for human behavior, what produces that reaction is the stimulus. It's like an equation so that if we would like to modify how we react to things, how we feel -- well, the proper variable in this case is the stimulus. It's logical that that is where -- to modify something.
- Sonika: Right. So the only way for me in this example, for me to not be pissed off is to get him to quit looking at his phone. I want to change the stimulus which is what most of us do in relationship when our partner does something we hate. They leave their socks on the floor. They don't help with the kitchen. They come late. They lied to us about something. They don't keep any agreement. Our tendency inside this model is to try to get our partner to be different, get them to be on time, get them to help in the kitchen, get them to quit looking at their phone, get them to tell the truth, get them to keep agreements.

That is where we put all of our attention. And our partner is doing the same thing to us. So they're trying to get us to quit doing that stimulus that pisses us off or hurts us or make us cry. This model is what we all live inside of in our relationship world.

Christian: So here. Let's hash this out a little bit more. Stimulus reaction. There are two parts to any reaction. So there's an emotional. If you'll advance the slides a couple of times here, Eric. There's emotional reaction and a behavioral reaction.

For purposes of this model, how we teach it, we recommend you use, for the emotional reaction we recommend you use one of the four feeling words, angry, sad, hurt, scared. Those of you who are familiar with the ManKind Project, you'll relate immediate to that because we use that there as well. We call them the primary colors of negative emotion or negative feeling emotion.

[0:20:07]

For a behavioral response, it could be different examples. Maybe in this case what she did was start yelling, talking back which is like a fighting response. You could walk out the door. She did that as well which is like a flight response, we call that. Sometimes it could be just to shut down. Basically your behavioral response is what you do. The emotional reaction is how you feel. There's always those two both.

Sonika: So using this fight as an example, so the stimulus for her was him not looking up from his phone. Her emotional response is to feel pissed off, I would say. Anger was her first response. Her behavior was to yell which you could put in the fight category. And she walked out which you could put in the flight category.

Christian: For him the stimulus was he's on the phone, she come in and start talking to him. His reaction was, I would say in this case, he felt frustrated than angry. That would be just anger. His behavioral response was to say, "Come on, just give me..." He started to talk back or argued for her to be differently. All right. Cool.

We're going to also bring this up on a little easel pad in the background because we're going to be using that as we move along.

Sonika: All right. So we're going to ask you to this on your own **[0:21:41] [Indiscernible]**. So we have stimulus reaction.

Christian: **[0:21:47] [Indiscernible]** remember to lean in towards the microphone when you talk.

Sonika: All right. So hopefully you guys can hear me while I'm writing here. The stimulus, he doesn't look up from the phone.

Christian: Or he's on his phone.

Sonika: Her reaction is emotional, we would say is --

Christian: Anger. Her behavioral reaction is start yelling, you could say in this case. First yelling then walk out. Both are behavioral responses.

Sonika: So if we were doing the stimulus reaction on a piece of paper, this is what it would look like.

Christian: Eric, if you advance the slide -- no. Don't do that yet because we have a few more things before we'll show you on the slide as well.

So here is the thing. In actuality we say this model is not accurate. Even though we're mostly not aware of, there's something that happens in the middle, between the stimulus and the reaction, in a fraction of a second.

Sonika: How we know there's something else going on in the middle is because every - if it was the stimulus that produce that reaction in every single person who ever walked in to talk to somebody when they didn't look up from their phone would have the same exact reaction. They would yell. Walk out of the room.

Christian: But you know that's not the case. You could have 10 different people experience a very similar situation, and they'd have 10 different responses or maybe three of them would all get angry but somebody else would be just laughing about it, somebody else wouldn't even pay attention to it, somebody else would do who knows what. They would not all have the same because there's another variable in the middle. What do you think that might be?

Go ahead and advance the slide a couple of times, Eric. What you'll see here in a moment are -- these are the words you could say are in the middle. We hear this when we present this to an audience where you can talk back. People raise their hands and say these different words. So you can do it again, Eric, for the next one.

You can see what's in the middle. We hear things like something you made up, a belief, a thought, a story, an interpretation, a conclusion. We would say yes to all of them, either of them because they basically mean the same thing, a belief, a story, an interpretation or a conclusion. We prefer the word make up because a conclusion I draw is something I had made up. I might've made it up a long time

ago based on all kinds of evidence but it's still something that I made up or I took somebody else's make up and I accepted it as mine.

[0:25:01]

Sonika: So if you remember, when we first did this pretend fight and we wrote up all the stuff that he might be thinking and all the stuff she might have going on in the background, really, they're different make ups for the same stimulus. He is a jerk who is thoughtless and has no idea how to provide for his wife is one make up. Another make up is he is a very responsible, dedicated man who only does that when something really important is happening.

Christian: He's super focused to finish a job so that he can turn around and be totally present with his wife or you could make up about her like we suggested that anything from she's just angry about other stuff, she wants a divorce and she's just looking for a reason to nag at him because she doesn't respect him in the first place, those are all make ups. Other make ups are she just wants to connect. She just wants to be heard. She loves him so much. She just wants to be with him. She's got a big surprise for him that she was so excited to tell him about.

Sonika: Now, notice that depending on what you make up in the middle produces a different response. So if she made up that he's a really responsible, dedicated, incredibly good man and good provider and he does that when something really essential is going on, she's probably not going to be pissed off, yell and run out of the room. She's probably going to say, "Oh, sorry to interrupt you. Let me know when you're finished." And maybe wait there patiently or go off and do something until he's done trusting he'll approach her when it's appropriate, when it works for him.

Christian: If what she puts in the middle is she concludes he's really doing porn and texting his mistress and he doesn't give a shit about me -- pardon my French -- she's going to take a different action. She's going to maybe do what she did. She's maybe going to file for divorce, whatever.

The point is that what gets put in the middle, the conclusion we make are the make up in our terminology, is what dictates your course of action entirely.

Sonika: So the other thing we would say about this here which is like the most important part, is what we think we're upset about is the stimulus, what we think we're upset about is the stimulus.

Christian: I want to say the reason why we think that and why the stimulus reaction model is so widely accepted is because that is in fact most people's experience.

Sonika: That's what it feels like because it happens so fast.

Christian: That's what it feels like because it happens so fast.

Sonika: But what we are really upset about is not the stimulus. It's what we're making up. So the bad angry feeling I have is connected not just -- it's not the stimulus that's producing that. It's what I'm making up about him not looking up from his phone that produces the bad feeling. What I'm really upset about is what I'm making up. It is not the stimulus.

Christian: You could illustrate for yourself. Right now you can simply think to yourself, think about your partner or somebody dear to you, he doesn't care about me, he's more interested in his phone than he is in me or my wife doesn't respect me, my wife always nags at me, she doesn't even care what I do. Just think that to yourself and feel how that feels in your body. You could do it with your kids too. I could just sit here and think my kids are never going to turn out, never does what he's supposed to, he's going to turn out as a loser.

I feel sick to my gut thinking that. Nobody can think he doesn't care about me, she doesn't care about me, nobody can think this stuff and feel good at the same time. It's impossible.

Sonika: So think of a stimulus in your own relationship. So think of something -- it's usually pretty easy -- think of something your partner does that drives you nuts. We gave some examples earlier. They don't pick up after themselves. They don't help around in the kitchen.

Christian: They just look at the phone while you're talking to them.

Sonika: They interrupt.

Christian: They get upset when you want to talk about the future. They don't help with the kids when you ask for help with the kids. Whatever it is. Something that annoys you, you feel hurt, sad, angry about.

[0:30:00]

Sonika: Actually, write this on a piece of paper. In this next slide here we'll give you an example of how your paper would look like. So you just want to do stimulus, make up, reaction.

Christian: Put that on a piece of paper.

Sonika: What you want to do here next is under the stimulus column is write down what the specific thing is that drives you nuts that your partner does. You want to make sure it's a specific observable fact.

Christian: Under stimulus column you make it as factual as humanly possible. So I would not put under the stimulus she got so mad at me. You could argue about that. That has some of my make ups in it just like you would not say he betrayed me because that has some of a makeup in it. So you got to get specific like she said you're always on your phone in a high volume. That's as observable fact as I can make it.

Sonika: Right. He didn't put down his phone.

Christian: Actually it'd be even more precise to say he was looking at his phone as I started talking to him.

Sonika: As I continued talking to him. So you want to have it be as factual as possible. It's pure data. All right.

Next, you want to look at -- so we're going to do the make up last. So now you want to jump over to the third column and write down, first of all, what is your emotional response or your emotional reaction when that stimulus happens?

Christian: Remember to use one of the four feeling words, angry, sad, scare, hurt, just one or a few of those words. Sometimes it's more. I felt angry and hurt.

Sonika: I'll tell you why we recommend you use those four words is because a lot of "feeling words" are really make ups. I felt like I wasn't important is actually not a feeling. It's a make up. I am not important. That would actually go in the middle. So we want you to keep to these four feeling words to keep you out of that trap of putting your make up everywhere.

Christian: Yeah. I know. That is typically what happens. When start about relationship stuff, typically what we do is we get out make ups all over it. We say, "Well, you ignore me all the time and I feel like you don't even listen to me and you don't even care about me." That in actuality, you said nothing about how I feel and a whole lot about what I make up about the stimulus that I've been observing.

Eric, if you'll put the table there back up again, the piece of paper, stimulus, make up, reaction.

Under reaction you put first your emotional response, angry, sad, scared or hurt, and then your behavioral, what did you do or what do you normally when that

happens. Walk out the door, start talking back in a loud voice, slam my hand on the table in anger.

Sonika: Give my partner the silent treatment.

Christian: Stop talking and just go do something else. In a moment we're going to give you a little more time so you can do a couple of these from your own examples.

Sonika: All right. So now you got stimulus, you've got reaction, your emotional reaction, and your behavioral response. Now slow it down and look at what are you making up in the middle. Often there are several things we're making up in the middle, sometimes 10, 20 things in a split second. I don't matter, I'm not important, I'm never going to get what I want, our relationship isn't going to work for me, I'm not a priority, I don't have my needs met here.

Christian: Yeah. You could say a man in my situation, in our little demo here, would make up something like I can never get a break, she doesn't really care about or ask what I'm doing, she doesn't even see that something important is going on, I'm not respected, she doesn't consider my contribution. All of that stuff goes with this same stimulus.

Another way you could ask yourself to figure out what it is you're making up is what do you think it means. What do you think it means when she does that thing or says that thing? I don't think it means all the stuff I just said.

[0:35:04]

Sonika: So see if you could come up with the example that you just picked if you come up with just a couple of make ups that are happening split second fast in the middle that are actually the source of your feeling, not the stimulus. Sock on the floor is just a sock on the floor. What do you make up about that? I do everything around here all by myself.

Christian: He doesn't care about me. All he cares about is money. He doesn't care about our relationship. I'm the only one who does everything around here. I'm not supported. I'm by myself. I have to do everything on my own.

Eric, bring up the table one more time in case we need a last reminder here.

Sonika: Let's open this up for some questions before we actually have you do a couple of more examples yourself. So any questions about this new model or how to apply it or how to make sense of it?

Christian: How to ask a question is you can either do it on the chat. So there's a chat function on your screen. You can ask it by chat box and Eric will relate it to us. Or you can, in the Q&A box, you can type share, just type the word share and hit the button, and then Eric will bring you on so you can ask us in person here.

All right. I'm just going to repeat that. If you have any questions -- it's okay if you don't -- but if you have any, you can either share it in the chat box on the webinar screen here or you can click the Q&A and type the word share, and Eric will bring you on so you can ask in person.

Sonika: Now, I want to just make a point here while we're waiting to see if there are any questions, is often what comes up for people when we first present this model is "But what if it's true? What if he really doesn't care? What if I really do have to do everything by myself? What if he really doesn't keep his agreements?"

So we're not saying that there isn't a basis for your make ups. All make ups are cocreated. The question we would ask instead is do you want it to keep being true? Do I want to keep arguing to be right for how you or somebody who is not this full potential being, this person who keeps not showing up, keep not doing what I like, keeps being this way I don't appreciate?

Then we can uncover what we're making up. It opens up the possibility, which we're going to get here to, to perhaps make up something else that produces a different response, it produces a different possibility. But we got to first notice what are we making up by default so fast and moving with our partners like it's just true and it's just the truth instead of "Oh, wait. This is just my unconscious habit of thought, habit of make up."

Christian: Eric, it sounds like we have a question.

Eric: Yeah. I'm going to go ahead and bring Bjorn into the room and see if this works.

Christian: Welcome. Hey, Bjorn. Can you hear us?

Bjorn: Yes. I can hear you. I don't know if you could see me. I switched on my camera. Let me just ask the question or the comment first. The comment is I really like what you're saying there because there is a process in between but the process is actually very complicated. Okay. Hang on. I can't get my video going.

Christian: We can hear your voice loud and clear.

Bjorn: Okay. Good. So I struggled with a couple of things. The word make up, I'd rather do process because I have to hear the words, react and do all the things in between to get to my reactions. So there's actually a lot happening. What I think

typically is happening is that it's easier for me to get my own reaction to use blame. I blame the other person for my reaction, for my feelings.

[0:40:03]

I'm not aware of that process that happens in between. It's very important to be aware of that process. It's a complicated process.

I also like the word response rather than reaction because there's the word action and reaction. Response offers a potential for choice which is actually the thing to get to, I believe, in the end so that I have a choice and own my own reaction in that process. Those are my comments here.

Christian: Awesome.

Sonika: Well, that's where we are getting to. So we want to get ourselves to the place where we can respond rather than do these knee-jerk victim reactions.

Christian: So we can deliberately respond rather than mindlessly react.

Another great thing that we're totally agreeing is that this is indeed a process. what's great about this is that this is a way to slow down what seems to most people be an instantaneous happening. You just say that thing and I just feel **[0:41:08] [Indiscernible]**. This way you can actually get to slow it down enough that you can see "Oh, it is actually a process." There are actually several steps that happen, particularly the one in the middle I have some control over.

Bjorn: Right. I like the word response because in English there's another add on which is response ability, ability to respond which does get to the choice piece.

Sonika: Yes. Exactly. We can't get a choice. We can't get to shifting our response, getting us to a point where we really can respond until we know what is going on automatically in the background. You'll notice as you do this -- so we're going to actually support all of you out there to actually work though a couple of examples, at least three if you can, stimulus, response or reaction, make up.

One of the things I've noticed as I've done this for 20, 30 years now, is my make up are familiar. They're almost always the same. The fight might be about socks or the movies or dishes or how we sleep or how you snore, pretty much you can pick anything. It all boils down to the same thing which is some of version of I feel like I'm not enough, I don't matter and I'm not going to get what I want here, I'm not going to get the connection I really desire.

Christian: Yeah. Thank you for sharing, Bjorn. Those are awesome comments. We will put you back to doing the exercises on your own here in a moment.

Sonika: Yeah. So it is great to slow down this process and see what are those common recurring make ups in the middle so that even though the content changes the fight kind of stays the same or the issues stay the same because we're almost always bringing the same sorts of make ups to the issues or the triggered reactions that we have.

Christian: Eric, if you'll put the table back on again, the stimulus, make up, reaction table there. That's what your paper should like at this point. So go ahead and work. We'll give you like five minutes to work through these examples. Start with the stimulus, then the reaction, then what do I make up about that or what do I think it means.

Sonika: You would notice in the make up column that you got way bunch more stuff to say in that column than you might in stimulus and reaction because as we already said, there are often many, several make ups that we're having about one stimulus.

Christian: So ahead. See if you can work through at least three of them. We'll give you about five minutes. We'll call up time signals and then we'll get back together. All right. Take another minute before we come back together. Go ahead and begin to wrap up. All right. Go ahead and put your pens down for now, and turn your attention back over here.

All right. So we're just making a fresh sheet here behind. I'm not entirely sure if you can see that -- stimulus, make up, reaction.

Sonika: So what we would like to do is actually get one of you out there to give us an example. So we're actually going to work this through then add in another step here. So if there is a volunteer out there, tell us your stimulus, your reaction and your make up.

[0:45:12]

Christian: How you do it, a reminder, is on the Q&A button on your webinar screen, hit the Q&A button and type share, enter, and Eric will put you on here so we can hear you.

Sonika: Do we have a brave volunteer out there?

Christian: Really, all you need is something that triggers you.

Eric: All right. We've got one. I'm going to bring -- if I can find him -- I'm going to bring Patrick in.

Christian: Awesome. Thank you, Patrick for stepping in.

Okay. All right. We can hear somebody. Okay. I'm here. Awesome. Thank you, Patrick. All right. So we'll do this. Why don't you pick one example and start with what is the stimulus, like what happened.

Patrick: Okay. The stimulus is that Cindy gets involved in projects and then leaves some o of the projects and the materials, the raw materials, around the house when she's not working.

Christian: Okay. Great. What might the raw material be specifically?

Patrick: It could be wool or it could be Styrofoam balls.

Christian: Okay. So you see, for example, wool that's laying somewhere. Is that right?

Patrick: Exactly.

Sonika: **[0:46:52] [Indiscernible]** project.

Patrick: **[0:46:54] [Indiscernible]** bag of wool, that sort of thing.

Christian: Great. We'll call it project materials for the show here. Project materials in your house. Is it on a specific place? On a table or in the house?

Patrick: **[0:47:12] [Indiscernible]** in the living room, on the table or --

Christian: **[0:47:16] [Indiscernible]** on the living room table. You'll notice I'm trying to get as specific as possible. Okay. Great.

Patrick: Okay.

Christian: So when you see that how do you feel? What's your immediate feeling?

Patrick: Anger.

Christian: Great. Thank you. Angry. What do you do? What's your behavior?

Patrick: Currently I avoid it. I have pointed it out before. Currently I just avoid it. I've accepted it, I guess.

Christian: So you would say you just do something else or --

Patrick: Yeah. I ignore it, I guess.

Christian: Okay. So you're trying not to look at it and do something else. By the way, what Patrick is sharing is that at other times I had a different behavioral reaction although the emotional reaction might've been the same than angry.

Patrick: Yeah. Previously I would argue about it.

Christian: Yeah. Awesome. You can also know -- by the way, it's also interesting for everybody -- I appreciate your example here, Patrick. You said, "I think I've accepted it," but you can also get that -- if the feeling that gets produced when you see that is anger, then there's something in there. How we use this process, how I use this to day, this process, when I have an experience that I come in here and see whatever my kids use in the middle of the floor, when my response is anger, my reaction is anger, I immediately think "Okay. Great. I know it's not the stimulus that produces my anger. So what am I thinking about this?"

Notice we hear this objection in the space already. Yeah. But what if I really don't want those shoes to be in the middle of the floor or I really don't want that wool in my living room table? This doesn't mean you can't do something about the stimulus but this is the place to start, to have some choice in productively dealing with the stimulus if required. Okay. Great.

So what do you make up in the middle, Patrick? What do you think it means?

Patrick: Well, the story that I tell myself is that she doesn't care that clutter bothers me. I can't read my own writing. Hold on. And that I don't matter.

Christian: Yeah. That I don't matter. I appreciate you sharing it in that order. The first one, she doesn't care that clutter bothers me. Even if you hadn't said the next one that I don't matter, you can see it's actually inherent in the first one. It really means she doesn't care about me which really means I must not be very important, which really means I don't matter. So thank you.

[0:50:18]

Sonika: Anything else?

Christian: Anything else? Yeah.

Patrick: Yeah. Another reaction -- I think early on I would get angry. Now I also have some sadness in there.

Christian: Yeah. That's more tied in with the ignoring as opposed to the arguing from anger before. Yeah.

Sonika: What do you make up about the sadness? Is there another make up in there? I don't matter.

Christian: She ignores my concerns.

Patrick: Yeah. That I don't feel a way to get around this. I don't feel like there's a way to explain to Cindy how it matters.

Christian: Right. So notice what you just said, notice that the -- you could say the conclusion or the make up in there is there's no way to make this work. There's no way for me to communicate what's important to me. There's no way I can have her understand my desires and priorities and what's important to me.

Patrick: Yeah. No. That's it. Thank you.

Christian: Yeah. So all of you out there, even though you're all sitting out in different parts of the world, all of you, you can think about if you were harboring that thought about anything about your partner, she doesn't care about me, there's no way I can make my priorities and my desires and what's important to me understood to him or her, just think of that and notice the feeling that gets produced as you do that. You'll immediately feel exactly what Patrick is feeling, some version of sad or angry.

Sonika: So reminder here too that it's not the stuff on the table, it's not the stuff on the living room table that's producing his feeling. It's him thinking this that gets started by seeing that. He takes the stimulus. He makes up something. I don't matter. My desires don't matter. There's no way to make this work. And that is actually what's producing his anger and sadness. He's either arguing about it or ignoring it as a way to deal with, as a response to his make up.

Christian: Patrick, would you say it's correct that you have had those thoughts, I don't matter, my desires aren't important, that you have had those thoughts before your ever started seeing wool on your living room table?

Patrick: You mean before I met Cindy or just --

Christian: Yeah. Before you met Cindy or before you ever saw stuff on the table?

Sonika: It could be as a kid.

Patrick: Yes. I would say. Yes.

Christian: So why I'm asking that is because that is typically the case for all of us, that the things that we are making up, concluding about, any particular every day stimulus is typically a bunch of make ups or conclusions that we have already brought with us from earlier times. Right now we're not going to go into where that all came from. We just do bring that source with us as baggage of human beings, you could say.

Sonika: One thing we noticed from our years and years and years of doing this -- so you guys might want to write this down -- is almost always in the make up when we feel bad is some version of I am unlovable, I'm not worthy, I'm not of value, I don't matter. So it's some version of there's something wrong with me. The other one that we hear often in the middle is some version of I'm not going to get what I want.

Christian: Which is reflected in what you say, for example, Patrick, there's no way I can make her understand or I can get what's important to me across which is another -- you could say the overall version of that is I'm not going to get what I want.

Patrick: Yeah. There's another piece that just came up for me, and that is that clutter does distract me. That's a reality for me.

Christian: Yeah. So that's totally fine. So we want to honor that for everybody. It's totally fine that you have a preference, and you might keep this preference for the rest of your life to have empty tabletops instead of tabletops with stuff on it. I have that preference in life too, and I'm going to keep that preference.

[0:55:07]

However, it's really important to start if we just go by what we normally do is I walk into my living room, I see stuff on the table, and I just feel angry. I tried different things. It doesn't work to my liking. I tried maybe to modify what I'd do about it but I still feel angry. That's not up optimal for having a relationship with somebody. It's also hard for me to take a productive action that might actually work coming from a place of being angry.

It's really important to notice that it's not the clutter on the tabletop that produces anger. If that were the case, every human being who walk into that room and saw clutter on the table will all feel angry.

Sonika: Including Cindy. All right. Good. So we're going to put - so stay with us here because we're going to tease this out a little bit here. So what is right about

there being something in the middle is that we have the possibility, and I've kind of alluded to this earlier, to potentially make up something else that feels better.

So we want to share with you, actually, a quote. This is from Viktor Frankl.

Christian: Yeah. You guys all know who Viktor Frankl is. In case you don't -- Eric, you can bring up the slide with his quote. In case you don't, he is a psychiatrist from Vienna. He spent three or four years in the Nazi death camps during World War II, and survived to tell the tale. He since **[0:56:49] [Indiscernible]** logotherapy out of his experiences.

He said, so you're going to read on the screen here, "Between stimulus and reaction, response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

Please take note that this man is -- this is how I think about him at least -- this man has lived through stimulus that is probably the worst human kind has ever -- any human being has ever experienced, if you've lived through the Nazi death camps and been subjected to the treatment that he was. Those are all stimuli. If a man like this can say, "Between stimulus and response there is a space, in that space is my power to choose my response, then I think, well, I can definitely do it with the level of stimulus that I'm subjected to in my life."

Sonika: Yeah. It's really great. We'll play with this clutter question as an example here because it's a really powerful one which is that, again, it's not the clutter that is producing the anger. It's this belief that I don't matter, I can't get what I want here, I can't create an environment that feels good to me, I can't create a win-win with my partner or come up with something that feels really good to both of us.

So the next question to explore here in this conversation is do I want to keep having this reaction every time I see a ball of wool. Do I want to keep having that response? If the answer is yes, then have it. You don't have to change a thing if you don't want to. But if you want to feel better, then you can start to play with what else could I make up about a ball of yarn or wool in the middle of the table that would produce a different feeling.

So we're going to kind of play with this a little bit. So I'm somebody who also **[0:59:12] [Indiscernible]** clean. I used to live with somebody who was a slob. There was always stuff everywhere. It drove me absolutely crazy just like you, Patrick, so I can totally relate. I started playing with this whole okay, so what am I making up.

One of the things I came to is I was making up that I couldn't relax until it was all cleaned up. That was one of my make ups, that I didn't have any choice. I was pissed off at the people I was living with because they could choose to do anything they want to and leave the mess there. I was really mad about that. So when I slowed it down like well, what else could I make up that would be more empowering and feel better about having a mess in my space --

[1:00:03]

I'll just tell you a couple of things I made up which were really powerful for me. One thing I made up was that these things were giving me an opportunity to learn how to be at choice. How could I choose my response or choose what I did with my time so I wasn't compelled I have to clean first in this angry victim place, but I could instead be a choice about how I wanted to spend my time? Did I want to clean it up? Did I want to go do something else?

I also made up that it was giving me an opportunity to play with coming up with win-wins with the people I was living with like how could I come up with some kind of workable solution.

Christian: I actually remember another thing you said that you were making up about that is every time I see the stuff on the counter it's an opportunity for me to stay in there about what's important to me. So to not let my, as we talked about in the first session of what a great relationship or marriage is, is to live out that your desires are as important as mine and mine as important as yours. I'm not going to betray yours for mine nor mine to yours or vice versa if I said that right.

So another make up Sonika had about that is that every time I see this it's another opportunity for me to stay in there about what's important to me.

Sonika: I'll tell you, another make up that I had which was probably the most impactful actually, it was that it means the people I love are near. My kids are part of a divorced family so I have my kids half time. The house stays spick and span when they are not here. When they're here and there are messes around it's because they're here.

I was very struck by, actually, that a friend of ours, Steven and Lokita Carter, I don't know if any of you on the line knows them, but they were tantra teachers. Her husband was brutally murdered a couple of months ago. I remember she posted up on Facebook this picture of his shoes in the middle of the floor. She said, "I can't bear to move his shoes."

Christian: Really, what was in that is when we were together my make up about his shoes in the middle of were he doesn't care about me, he doesn't care about what I

think is important. Now that he's gone there's a totally different make up about it. There's a make up that wow, that -- what you said -- that is a signal that my man or my woman or my kid or my partner is here, living, breathing, being in my life.

Sonika: Which translates to I matter. Wow. Here she is. She's living with me. She's in my space. You could make up she's really creative. She wants to keep it out so she can make sure she gets back to it. What she's making over there is stuff for the family because she really loves them. She's trying to make something for the holidays. You could play with what else you could make up so when you see that same ball of wool it produces a different response. Can you get the possibility of that?

Patrick: Yes.

Sonika: So just to be clear for everybody here as well as for you, Patrick, is you want to make up something that is --

Christian: Believable.

Sonika: Yeah, it's believable. It's a bridge to a better feeling. You can't run all the way over.

Christian: When you see the ball of wool, it's not going to work for you to make up well, it's because she's really Santa Claus and she has 8 million presents to make. It's not going to work for you. It's so far fetch that it's not real. You could maybe begin to at least try to entertain -- and please notice, we're not going to tell you, any of you, what you should put in the middle. We just want to empower you to find something that produces a better response for yourself.

So you could maybe begin to entertain some of the ones that have been brought up here. She's a really creative person. She's trying to do her best to contribute to the family income. We don't know your specifics.

Sonika: Or she wants to do it in the living room so she can be close to me.

Christian: It means that she's really here.

[1:05:00]

I have a partner who is a creative being, who loves making things. That's part of what I love about her. You might also come up with, for example, whenever I see that, it's an opportunity for me to, one, appreciate that she's here, and secondly, also go for what's important to me. I realize I might not have found a good way

yet to come up with a win-win to deal with the wool of yarn and Styrofoam but that doesn't mean there isn't one that exists as we're going to talk about that in future sessions.

Which one could I begin to entertain? Which one could I like? It's like trying on a piece of new clothing. You try on a new make up. You try on a new belief. Notice that these beliefs are -- these are the controllers of your life because where we experience life is over here, is in our reactions, it's how we feel and what we do, that's how we experience life. As we've illustrated, it's dictated by what we put in the middle, by what we make up about the stimulus in our lives.

Sonika: So out of all these examples we just were kind of throwing them out -- if we had different a forum we'd have everybody else be chiming in with some options as well. Is there one of the things that we suggested as a possibility that kind of stood out for you like you know, I could play with that one?

Patrick: Honestly, I don't remember the texts of all the different ones but the sense of moving to the place of acceptance that I got from the suggestions that you shared is really helpful. It really help to pave a - actually, thinking about it now, the piece about well, she's here and she is creative and she does these things because she loves to do them and share them, as she's telling me -- a lot of time they're done in the winter in front of the wood stove, that sort of thing. Yeah. It's really helpful to -- the potential for reframing. Thank you.

Sonika: That's really cool. The other thing you could play with too, another make up, is this is an opportunity to get to know her better. Why does she leave it out? What is it that has her not be affected by it being out? What is your experience when you see something like that and you -- what has you call it clutter versus a creative project? To kind of slow it down and get a little more information about what is in the background.

I know this was really powerful for me to find out that what was going on with the people that I was living with who were slobs, was finding out that they felt compelled to leave it out so they could get back to finishing it, that they didn't want to have it go out of their awareness that it was something that had to get done. One person, it was just never done. Another person, it just didn't really matter to them. They never really saw it. With our son, he just doesn't see the dirty clothes on the door, it doesn't occur, it's not where his value system is, he puts his attention in other places.

So there are opportunities to slow it down and also get to know each other more and have her understand more what goes on for you when you see something out of sorts and out of place, and what it gives you when it's all put away. When we understand that -- so it's kind of the same thing about what's the experience

we're after -- then we can start to play with what can we design together to cocreate a positive experience so that maybe she has it out at certain times and puts it away at certain times to cultivate a different experience between the two of you.

Christian: We're going to open it up in a moment for other shares or questions.

Sonika: Thank you, Patrick, so much for your example. Thank you too, Cindy.

Christian: Big high fives to you. Thank you so much for volunteering.

Patrick: Absolutely.

Cindy: Welcome.

Christian: All right. So if any of you have shares or comments or questions you can either use the chat box or if you hit the Q&A function there on the webinar screen, you can type share and Eric will bring you in. While you do that I'm going to say a couple of things that we often hear.

People will often say, "Yeah, but if I do that." So basically you're just saying I should stop caring about clutter or I should just make it okay that my house is a mess. No. We're not suggesting that.

[1:10:09]

By doing this you're not giving up any of your power or freedom to take whatever action you deem appropriate at all. However, we would hope -- and what this gives the ability to do is to take actions or to have, as Bjorn suggested, the ability to respond on purpose and deliberately instead of this knee-jerk angry, knee-jerk sad which will dictate your behavior. You can still have the preference of a house with nothing on the counters. You can still have the preference of whatever is important to you. Whatever you discover you make up, you can either keep it, discard it altogether or modify it. The litmus test to the yardstick we use is do I like what this particular make up produces.

Sonika: Yeah. We're just going for feeling good.

Christian: Yeah. We have all kinds of make ups that we love, that we're going to keep. When we say your desires are as important as mine and mine are as important as yours, we made that up. We like what it produces but it's not like it's written in stone by some god out there that is not negotiable. We came up with that.

Sonika: Just about the clean-clutter thing, we have a preference for things being clean, that is always what we go forward, it's still something we value. We can have things be a mess -- used to be when I had family for the holidays I was running around cleaning all the time and not really being with people. Now I can actually be with people, allow the mess. I'm more at choice than I ever used to be. So it's still in my preferences but I get to feel good even when I don't have the stimulus be exactly how I want it to be

That's where there's power. That's where this whole responsibility piece comes in where I have the ability to choose my make ups and choose my response. You can also use living in the question that we gave you last week as a way to play with that, how would I be with this stuff in the living room if I knew it meant that she was here, if I knew it meant she loved me and wanted to be close to me, if I knew she was feeling really supported in our relationship to be completely as creative as she would like, that she feels supported and freed up that she gets to just be that way and do that when we're hanging out together in an evening.

Christian: You're still welcome to basically raise your hand by using the Q&A function or the chat function. While we wait for anybody who would like that, Eric, you can advance to recap here and then we'll give you the homework assignment for the week here.

So basically, the first thing is own your make ups. It's basically to say, "Oh, yeah. When I notice that you get mad at whatever and I get mad back, oh, here's what I made up, and I'm just going to take responsibility for that, basically own it like oh, yeah, I did make up that you don't care about me, that nothing I do ever works. I am making that up."

Sonika: I'll tell you, that is so much more powerful than saying, "You don't care about me and you're leaving a mess. When I just saw this on the table I made up that I don't matter." It's very different to communicate like that with your partner. They're going to hear you in a very different way than when you're doing new statements.

Christian: Right. No matter what you do, you don't have to be a slave of your stimulus.

All right. So secondly, go ahead and investigate the source of upset that is your make up. So you do this process. Stimulus, make up, reaction or we actually still have the word belief on there. That works too, stimulus, belief, reaction. I still do this five times a day. I'm out in the world. I go to that café. The coffee doesn't taste how I want it, I feel a little piece of anger. I ask myself, "Oh, I wonder what I'm making up." That's interesting. I investigate this, play with taking on a new story. What's your story or your belief or your make up and what could you change it to? Invent something that feels better.

So you can put out number three here, Eric, and then advance to the last slide which is your homework for the week. So put up the last slide here, Eric. First, whenever you get triggered or have a feeling about something, use this process. Stimulus, make up, reaction. Secondly, find a better feeling make up that you could try on. It's just like trying on a new piece of clothe. It's just in your mind that it starts. Try on a new make up.

All right. We're going to put on our last call here for anybody who'd like to share or ask anything --

Sonika: Questions, comments.

Christian: -- go right ahead. Use the chat function or in the Q&A box, the Q&A button, put the word share, and Eric will bring you on.

Eric: It looks like we have one brave soul. I'm going to bring Trevor in here.

Christian: Awesome.

[1:15:37] End of Audio