



## **The RISC Course**

### **Session #4 – Accessing the Gift in Conflict**

### **Session Transcript**

**[0:00:00]**

**Christian:** All right, everybody. Here we are again. Welcome to the RISC course. We are, as usual, Sonika and Christian. Welcome to our living room.

We're thrilled to be with you today for session four of the RISC course. Today's session is called Accessing the Gifts of Conflicts.

**Sonika:** Before we get started with today's program, we want to make sure you both have – and you enjoy this with your partner – you both have a pad of paper and a pen, because you're going to be referring to that and using that to take notes from today's session. We just want to make sure you have access to that before we get started, so if you don't already, go run and get it. Come right back.

I just want to say first of all thank you so much for being with us here on this call. We're really excited to give you this really revolutionary whole new way to think about and deal with conflict that I tell you for us personally has made all the difference in our lives and relationships. We never have the same fight twice, because we implement what we're going to be giving to you today, this incredible system for how to deal with conflicts as they show up.

Before we jump into that, we want to just give you a moment to, if you're doing this with your partner, look your partner in the eye. Go ahead and just do that right now.

**Christian:** Like so. Just turn and make eye contact.

Sonika: Just share with your partner – one of you go first, we'll tell you when to switch – just one of you share with your partner something you really appreciate about them. What do you love and appreciate?

If you're doing this here without a partner, then you can speak out loud to your partner who isn't here. Or if you are doing this by yourself, speak an appreciation out loud about yourself.

Christian: We'll give you about a minute each, then we'll tell you very clearly when to switch. Decide who's going to speak first. Keep eye contact the best you can. Go ahead. We'll tell you when to switch.

Share one more appreciation. Person who's been listening, say "Thank you so much for saying that. I really appreciate it." Then both of you take a good, deep breath. Relax a little more. Then switch roles.

Other person, now share something you appreciate about your partner. Go ahead.

Share one more appreciation. Person who's been listening, say "Thank you so much for saying that. I really appreciate it." Both of you take a good, deep breath. Sink into your seats a little more. Then turn your attention back here.

Sonika: All right. Great. You can never give enough appreciations. We'll probably start every class off with that, because you just can't get enough feeding each other's full potential.

Christian: It bears repeating to say that of all the homework and tools and tricks and distinctions we give you, we hope that they will all become part of your forever repertoire. If you were to keep one, then you were to make a forever portion of your relationship, we'd probably recommend this particular one. Share appreciations.

We have said it – do at least three before you go to bed every night so that's the last thing out of your mouth before you go to sleep, but ten during the day – awesome. No need to worry about overdoing it.

Sonika: All right. On this call, we're going to talk about how to access the gifts in conflict. We're going to show you how to use conflict, not only to create connection, but actually to create positive change in your relationship and to work together as partners to do exactly that.

Christian: Yeah, and how to deal with the phenomenon that we all know when you want one thing and I want another thing. They seem to not go very well together. How do we come up with something that works for both of us?

Sonika: We've already explored some different ways that you can access the gifts that are hidden in conflicts.

Christian: You can put the slide on there.

Sonika: Right. One thing we can already say from what we've done so far is that our conflicts are telling us what we don't want, and coincidentally, they're also telling us what we do want. They're pointing us in the direction that we want to go.

**[0:05:01]**

You can work through this whole process. "I don't want this" means "I do want something else: the opposite". Why I want that is because I want to have a certain experience.

From there, we can look to see what actions we can take to give ourselves that experience. Remember, we talked about how to do that is to live in the question. If I were feeling this right now, what would I do? What would I say? So that the experience you're after informs your actions.

Thank you. Go ahead.

Christian: No, that's a very important piece to make it actionable.

Thirdly, from last week's session, we talked about how our conflicts and triggers reveal to us what we're making up that is what we believe, which is what dictates our next actions.

You'll also remember that what we're making up is what dictates how we feel. This is also a way to gain some control over our moods and triggers and feelings and reactions, because it isn't – as most of us used to think – it's actually not just because you're annoying and because you said that thing or because you don't want to commit.

That is actually not what creates my anger, sadness, hurt, fear. It is what I – as we call it – put in the middle, which is what I make up. What I conclude. What I believe about that.

Sonika: Right. Again, our conflicts, our complaints, they're telling us what we don't want, what we do want, what we're making up. Every single one of those places is like a portal or an opening – a place where we can go to produce some change.

We're going to give you some other ways to play with that here in today's session. Before we do that, we want to tell you some of our makeups – our beliefs about conflict. We actually have a whole bunch of these, but we're going to give you just a couple of them here today for setting up our conversation today.

Christian: Yeah. Notice when you talk about makeups, these are beliefs that we have made up. They're from many different places. We picked them up, invented them from nil ourselves, but we have chosen to believe those.

First one is "Conflicts are inevitable." They are just a part of having a relationship with two different people that have two different personalities, two different sets of desires, preferences, pasts, everything.

Sonika: "Conflicts are inevitable." Changes the constant, right? Conflicts are always pointing us to change. Things that want to shift.

Christian: Yeah. You could say, the second you are done having conflicts is when you're dead, to put it bluntly.

Sonika: All right. Here's another one. "Conflicts are born of desire, commitment, and caring." Think about this for a moment. If I have a commitment, for example, to be on time, and I am late, I not have a conflict inside of myself. Where that conflict arose from was my commitment to be on time in the first place. If I don't have a commitment to be on time, then it isn't a conflict if I am late.

Christian: If you're to have an appointment with this stereotypical Brazilian person, for example, who doesn't share that value, they have no conflict showing up at 4:15, even though you might have agreed that you are going to meet at 3:30. No conflict. It's not important.

Sonika: The same is true in all areas of our relationship, as well. If I have a value, for example, that we help each other out in the kitchen, I have a desire for that. When you're not helping in the kitchen, I got myself a conflict. What started the conflict to begin with was my vision of what it was I wanted to create. My desire. My value.

Christian: To put it even more bluntly, if you didn't care about anything, you would not have any conflicts. If I didn't care how you talk, when we showed up, what we

did with our life – if I just cared about nothing, no conflicts. But we care a lot about a lot of things.

Conflicts have a positive intent. You'll remember from session two when you went through the what you don't want, what you do want, what's the experience you want, the experience we all want is always something positive. Nobody landed on evil or nasty or malicious. Everything we want has at its root a positive intention.

Sonika: Yeah. Another way of saying that is this next one. "Conflict happens for us." Of all the times we were in the middle of a conflict or a problem, it feels like it's happening to us, right?

We don't really want this thing. Why is it showing up here for? Why do we meet it with a lot of persistence and anger and upset like it shouldn't be? Instead of we really believe that conflicts are happening for us.

They're happening actually to empower and support us to step into a more fuller version of our full potential. They're trying to support us to create something positive, something good, something even better than what we've got right now.

**[0:10:11]**

Christian: Yeah. Erin, you can click is twice for the next two ones, because they go right along with this. "Conflicts are telling us something about ourselves" which we already talked about some – about how to decipher the information that is hidden in conflict. You might add, by the way, that it's tailor-made information specifically to you.

Conflicts are a sign. It's simply a sign in our relationship that something new wants to happen.

If everything was working perfectly and everything was squared away and there was no growth whatsoever, then we might not have any conflicts. But when conflicts show up, it's our belief it's a sign that "Hey, something new is ready to come forth, even if we don't know what that is yet."

Sonika: Here's another one which is an even bigger one here. We're going to play with this some today. That every that you have, every external conflict that you have in your relationship in your life, is really a reflection of a conflict that's going on inside of yourself.

Another way of saying that: Every external conflict is a reflection of an internal conflict. It's just getting put out there so I can work on it inside of myself. We're

really going to bring that home to you today so you can really understand what we mean by that.

Christian: Yeah. We're going to give you a great, simple model that you can work with even after the session here today.

Sonika: We're going to play with some of our makeups here and give you a brand new way to beat the conflict.

The first thing we want you to do here today in this class session is we would like for you to think of a judgment you have about somebody and recommend probably just so you don't trigger each other that you come up with a judgment you have about somebody else, not about each other. Just think of a judgment you have about somebody.

Christian: Your friend, your brother, your coworker, your boss, your mom. Somebody.

Sonika: Great. Once you have your judgment, what I'd like you to do now is just take 30 seconds each to share with your partner your judgment. One of you go ahead and start. It's going to sound something like "You know, I have a judgment about my son for being somebody who isn't disciplined. He doesn't make things happen. He's always wasting time on the computer. He's never really focused. I wish he had a little more willpower and was a little more in action about making things happen."

Christian: Right. You don't even have to share who it is if you don't want to. But for sure, share what is the judgment.

Sonika: It's going to sound something like that. Just turn to your partner – 30 seconds each, share your judgment.

Christian: We'll give you a halftime signal. Go ahead.

All right. That's halftime. First person, wrap up. Then second person, go ahead. Share your judgment.

Start wrapping up your conversations. Stop talking, please.

Sonika: About your judgment that you just shared, we have a question for you which is how are you just like that?

Christian: How am I just like that?

Sonika: Go ahead and close your eyes for a moment and just think about that. How are you just like this judgment?

You might have heard there's this little phrase going around. "You spot it, you got it." The stuff we charge around is stuff that lives in us. Where are you just like this judgment?

If you're one of those people that you're kind of thinking "I'm not like that," sometimes it's not a direct...

Christian: Translation of reflection.

Sonika: Yeah. You know, one of my great ones is I really like things clean, so when I have judgment about somebody who's being messy, I'm like "Well, I'm not messy. I'm clean. I just do that." But when I looked really deeper like well, where do I make messes?

Actually, one way I make a mess is my filing system. How I have things organized. I can't always find stuff. That's one way I'm messy.

Another way I used to create mess is I used to create upset in my relationships being so busy trying to keep things clean all the time. That was another way I created messes in my relationship life.

You might have to broaden your view a little bit to look and see "Where am I just like that?"

**[0:15:01]**

Great. Go ahead and open your eyes. Look at your partner once again. This time, share with your partner – we're going to give you about a minute each – just share with your partner where are you just like this judgment?

Person listening, just receive without interruption while this person explores honestly and transparently how they're just like that. If you're doing this by yourself, just speak it out loud. How am I just like this judgment? All right. Go ahead.

Christian: First person, wrap up.

Then other person, so "How am I just like the judgment I shared?" Go ahead.

Start wrapping up your conversation. Stop talking, please. Turn your attention back over here.

Sonika: If we had endless time here, I would do about six of those in a row. This is something you can do in your own time. Just think of judgments you've had and look at where you're just like that.

We want to let you know another way that shadow shows up. Here, I'll say it this way: our judgments are thoughts. What we experience with other people is telling us something about ourselves.

When I have a judgment about you, it's telling me that I have that same judgment about myself. Somehow, I hold that same quality. Or there's another way that this shadow shows up.

Christian: Yeah. You can put on the slide about that. One is what we just said: how am I just like that? Often, it's an easy translation.

The other one is "How could I benefit from being more like that?" That which I judge is something I don't let myself be.

For example, I used to have lots of judgments about people who are just really out there and big energy. They're just the life of the party. I used to have judgment. "Oh, my God. That guy's so full of himself. Oh, my God. What a big ego."

When I first looked at it, how am I just like that? I'm pretty modest, I think. I don't speak up so loud. But the other side of it is, how could I benefit from being more like that?

Well, I could actually very much benefit, I can see, from being more like that. I'm often so busy censoring myself and my thoughts and my expressions to make sure I do it right and say the right thing and don't look stupid and don't make mistakes that I think way too much instead of just expressing myself freely like those other people do that I have a judgment about. I could stand being more like that.

Sonika: Yeah. For me, around the clean and messy thing, if there were some times when I'm so uncomfortable with messes that it gets in the way of my just hanging out and being with my family, with people I love and care about, just relaxing and enjoying company without feeling compelled to have to stand up and clean everything.

How I can benefit from being more like that is I could benefit from being more relaxed about my environment. Somebody once said it's not like my house is a



showcase. It's a place where we live. How do I allow us to live in our environment?

With the judgment you just shared with your partner, explore now this side of it. How would you benefit from being more like your judgment? Really, you might want to not go all the way to the extreme of whatever it is you're judging, but you'd benefit from being a little more like that. Actually, it would help balance you out a little more or help step you into your full potential more if you were just a little bit more allowing of that particular quality.

Christian: Go ahead and just take 30 seconds to a minute. We'll give you a halftime. Explore that with each other. We'll tell you when to switch.

First person, go ahead and wrap up.

Switch. Second person, share. How could I benefit from being more like that?

Go ahead and wrap up.

Stop talking, please.

Say to each other, "Hey, thanks for sharing that. Good job so far."

Sonika: We really encourage you to do that with a bunch of judgments. I will say, Christian and I – we've just done this so many times, the second we judge anybody now, we're immediately looking right back at ourselves. Where am I just like that?

**[0:20:10]**

You judge somebody who's not clear. Where am I not clear? It's the instant equalizer and the instant compassion maker. We're going to build on that here as we go along.

Christian: All right. Great. Next thing we'd like you to do is just close your eyes for a moment. Tune inwards. Think of a specific conflict in your relationship that you would like to work with tonight. What's a real conflict in your relationship life that you would like to work with?

All right. Good. Hopefully you have one. Maybe some of you could spit out five in ten seconds. That's fine.

Now, for those of you working with your partner, see if you can actually agree on picking one you can both work on.

Sonika: Go ahead and open your eyes and just talk with each other really quick. What's one thing we can focus in on here tonight?

Christian: You always want to go out on Friday nights. I hate going out; I just want to stay home.

Sonika: I want to save money. You want to spend money.

Christian: Yeah. You're always too soft on our kid. I want us to have a little more of a tough love discipline stance here.

Sonika: I want more intimacy, sex, and connection. You don't.

Christian: If you totally can't agree, then the one you can work with is "You want to talk about money. I want to talk about time."

We'll give you another 30 seconds for that.

All right. Hopefully, you got that good enough to move forward. I know we're keeping you pretty tight here, because there's a lot we want to share with you.

Eric, if you'd put up the next slide, please.

Sonika: Normally, how we are in conflicts, especially when I want something different than what you want, it looks like there's you over there, me over here, and we've got this big wall between us.

Christian: As a matter of conflict, that's why there seems to be a conflict: because I want to stay home and just chill and relax. I've been working like a bastard this week. And you always want to go out as soon as we have a weekend.

We can't do both at the same time. I'm always the one who wants to stay home, and you're always the one who will want to go out. Here I am in my circle. That's me. There's you over there in your circle with your position. There's not really a bridge between us. There's more like that sharp red dividing wall.

Sonika: A lot of our conflicts and a lot of our fights are us trying to get the other person to come over to our side, to see it our way, to give us what we want, to come over to our side.

Christian: For that purpose, we use whatever arsenal of reasons and argumentation and evidence that we can find.

Sonika: Yeah, to try to persuade them to our viewpoint. Now, since we've already had – you have already had – practice with whatever this conflict is you're bringing here to tonight's class to work on here, since you've already had practice with this strategy of trying to get your partner to go to your side, we're going to shift it up here. We're going to have a little fun with this.

If your topic, let's say, is about money – one of you spends and one of you saves, and let's say you're always the one that wants to spend it, and I'm always the one who wants to save it, instead of my arguing the same thing I'm always arguing for which is why we've got to save more money, not I'm going to argue the opposite point of view. Now, I'm going to argue for why we should spend money.

Christian: I will do the opposite of what I normally do. I will not argue for why we should definitely save more money.

If you're doing this by yourself, you just take the opposite stance you normally argue for in your particular conflict, and you come up with all the great reasons to defend that position.

Sonika: Yeah, why you shouldn't be more intimate. Why you should have more space. Whatever the opposite is, you want to argue for it.

Have fun with that. We're going to give you a couple of minutes each to argue the opposite point of view and notice what gets produced or what gets opened up for you as you do that.

Christian: Just a note: we're not going to give you a halftime signal. You're not waiting for each other. You're just going back and forth like you're having a conversation or argument.

All right. Have at it.

Sonika: Have fun.

Christian: Take another minute to argue this.

All right. Start wrapping up your arguments.

Come to a close, please.

Sonika: Good. Go ahead and take a deep breath. Hopefully, you had a little bit of fun with this one and even can see the other person's point of view. Take a moment to step inside their world for a moment.

[0:25:09]

It can be a really great exercise to do, especially if that's pretty charged topics, is to fight for the opposite.

Now, we want to tell you a little bit more about what we discovered about this here as we set up where to go next.

Christian: We can't tell you how often we have couples come to us with a typical conflict where it's like that thing that's still up on the screen. Me versus you. Classic examples we see is she wants to commit and get married; me, not so much. I think we should just remain individuals here.

Other one is one person wants more sex, and the other person doesn't really care so much about – as a matter of fact, might not even want it at all.

What we have seen happen so many times – let's say it's the example of one person wants to commit and get married and go for it, and the other person is like "Eh, I'm not so sure."

Now, let's say during our coaching, the person – let's say that was me – who was skeptical didn't really want to commit, gets to a place of resolution in him or herself and is now like "You know what? Yeah. I want that, too. I think we should commit. As a matter of fact, let's move in together."

Guess what happens nine times out of ten with the other person? The one that was originally the cool for commitment? They change. Their position all of a sudden changes. She's all of a sudden now "Well, I didn't mean it like that. I don't know if I'm ready for that right now. I don't know."

Same with the sex example. The person who was reluctant about having more sex comes to a place of "You know, I would like that, too. Let's go for it."

All of a sudden, the original "Yes" person is now "Well, I don't know about that. I mean..." All of a sudden has hesitancy and doubt.

Sonika: What we have really found in our experience with ourselves and the thousands and thousands of couples that we've worked with is that it's like both sides live in both people.

One person is being a voice for a side. The other person is being a voice for the other side. When that person switches, then the other person is like "Oh, my God. I have to make sure that other side gets represented as well."

Christian: It's as if there is a certain balance in the positioning or the representation of these two sides that has to be maintained. The picture on the screen – that is mostly our actual experience, but in our observations and teachings, that is not accurate.

It is not accurate that I'm 100% secure in "We should definitely not commit" and she's 100% secure in representing "Yeah, let's commit and get married and join everything". It's more blended than that.

Sonika: Yeah. Again, we can't tell you how many times we see this. We'll just tell you a couple of short stories here, and then we'll kind of keep building on this.

This is a couple that we worked with who the woman is wanting more connection. She's got two kids from a previous marriage. She really wants another. She really wants a family unit. She wants her lover of three years to move in, and for them to be a family.

This man is reluctant to do that. He also has kids from a previous family. They're already grown. He kind of feels like "Hey, I've been there, done that. I don't want to do that again. I don't want to go join with somebody else's kids."

They actually broke up after that. They were totally miserable.

Christian: They loved each other so much, but over this one particular thing that just couldn't seem to be resolved and seem to be mutually exclusive, they're actually going to end it.

Sonika: We actually worked with them and helped them see that there was actually a place of overlap.

Eric, if you'll put up the next slide, I believe it's the next slide that shows the picture of overlap. Once they could see that they were both wanting more togetherness and also both wanting more space – think about this for a second here.

She presumably is being the voice for "I want more together, more together, more together." He's one the flipside saying "Wait. I want to maintain the space. I want space. I don't want to join." It looks like they're at opposites. That's what eventually had them feel like "Well, we just want really different things. We should split up."

Christian: Not compatible.

Sonika: Not compatible. They're totally miserable with that choice.

We helped them see that well, while she's saying "I want to be more together", there was some part of him that also wanted to be more together.

**[0:30:06]**

Christian: Which he found out when they broke up. He could all of a sudden feel, now he had his perfect individual, no commitments whatsoever, don't need to help with her kids at all. But now, all of a sudden, there's all kinds of connection that he is missing out on. Heartbreakingly missing out on being with her, being in her house, waking up together, which are all, you could say, signs of or aspects of the together experience.

Sonika: Yeah. He got to see where he was actually just like her. There was a part of him that wanted to be more connected. When I asked him this question we asked earlier, "How would you benefit from being more together? What part of you wants more family? What part of you wants that?"

As he was exploring it more, it was really beautiful, because he kind of dropped down like "You know, I have a real tendency to isolate. Being part of her and part of this family is really an opportunity for me to stay connected, just keep coming out."

The other thing that he got to see which was really beautiful is that there were some aspects of raising his own family that he had some regret about. He could see that there was some possibility in enjoying with her and raising her children and helping her with that the he could kind of redo it in a better way for himself and get to heal his experience of raising his own family.

We really got to see the benefit to him of having chosen someone who had two younger children for him to partner with.

Christian: Goes to show that the first diagram we showed with the separate circles – it's a great example of how that isn't actually accurate, because all the things Sonika just shared are examples of how this gentleman wanted a whole bunch of things from the other side, from the other circle.

Sonika: Same thing vice versa. She was actually exploring, what part of me wants to keep it a little separate? She's like "You know, I really like being the primary parent in our household. I like having control. I don't really want to share that with somebody else. I really like that, and I really like having my space. I really like being able to determine how I want to spend my own time without having to consider somebody else's concerns and somebody else's needs." She got to see

the perfection, really, of being partnered with a man who wanted a little more space.

From that place, we invited them – if you'll put the screen up at that same slide again here, Eric – they got to see that they were actually both a match. We want more togetherness, and we want space. We are both both. That is true, we would say, in almost every conflict you have.

If I'm the one arguing for more intimacy, there's a part of me that also feels kind of good about not having intimacy. Some part of me that doesn't want it as well.

Christian: If I'm the one always arguing that we should spend more money and just take it a little more easy and have a little fun, and she's the one always arguing for, no, we've got to save it, put it in a retirement account, make college funds for the kids – that doesn't mean that I just want to spend all our money and having nothing left. As a matter of fact, when I look at it, I would really also like that we have some savings.

I like the idea of growing old and not being on the streets. It would be pretty cool if we could help the kids out at least a little bit when that time comes. Oh, yeah. I have a lot of the other side as well.

Sonika: Same vice versa. If I'm the one who wants to save it all, it's not that I don't want to ever spend it. It's not that I don't want to enjoy my life, that I don't want to pay bills.

When we can take this conflict and instead of it being like "You want one thing, and I want something else, and we're at opposite ends", to expand to include "Oh, wow, we want both of these aspects; we want to save and we want to spend".

Christian: Notice that language. That's important to you. Instead of "You always want to save. I just want to spend a little money.", it's "We want to save, and we want to spend."

Sonika: One of the questions that we've been getting from some of you here on this RISC call is "What do I do if my partner doesn't want to work on this relationship? They're not doing this course with me." You can use that same example here. "I want to work on the relationship, and my partner doesn't."

Christian: That's the original one. You could draw a diagram like the original one, and you put the two positions in each circle.

Sonika: Now, instead, it's like "Wow. We want to work on our relationship, and we don't want to work on our relationship." There's a part of both of us that really wants to make this better, and there's another part of both of us that is kind of resigned about the way it is and doesn't really want to work on it at all – is even maybe thinking about ending it and creating something else. We're both both.

Play with – right now – with your partner if you're doing this with your partner saying "Wow, I want to" – start with the "I" – "I want both of these sides. I want –"

Christian: We would say, in the example of let's say it's the saving and spending money, I would say first "Okay. I really want to spend money."

Sonika: "I really want to save money."

Now I'm going to expand to include both. "Wow. I want to save, and I want to spend."

Christian: "Yeah, well, I want to spend money, and I also want to save some money."

Sonika: Next, we're going to say "We both want to save, and we both want to spend."

Christian: Say it, both of you. I'll say it as well. "We both want to spend money, and we want to save money."

Sonika: Do that now about your conflict. Whatever it is that looks like you're on opposite ends about – and you may not be able to get to see where that's true, we're going to play with that here more in a minute – but just start by saying "Wow. I must want the other side, because I'm with you, and you want the other side, and some part of me's choosing that. I must want both here. I want this and this."

Christian: "I want this and this."

Sonika: "We want this and this."

Christian: "We want this, and we want that." Go ahead and do that. We'll give you a couple of minutes.

Sonika: All right. Great. That is the starting place. You'll notice that when you say "We both want both sides", now you're on the same side. Instead of being opposites, it's like "Oh, wow. We are in this together. Some part of me wants both. I haven't quite worked out how to do both yet, so that's my internal conflict. I haven't figured out how to save and spend. I haven't figured out how to be intimate and



distant. I haven't figured out how to be clean and relaxed. I haven't figured that out. Instead of dealing with that inside myself, I project part of it onto you, and I fight with you about it in the effort to try to work that out inside myself."

Christian: I have an internal conflict about, how tough should I be on my son? At first, it looks like "Oh, you're the softy and just want to take care of everything and bail him out from everything, and I'm the one with discipline and toughness and he 's got to learn from his own consequences."

I don't have all the answers for that. Forget her. Even if I was a single parent and there was no other parent involved, I don't have all the answers for that. I'm not entirely sure in every given situation when is the proper time to just say "You're on your own there, dude. Take care of it. I don't care how you feel about that." and "Hey, man, I want to help you out. Let me take care of that for you. Come on over. I'll help you out."

I don't know that in every given situation, there's an internal conflict that's not all sorted out. Out argument about it shows to me that that conflict is alive in me. When you and I start to talk about it, that space you see in the middle on the diagram where it says "We" – me and you, we – that is where we have overlap.

As you'll see, that is also where the possibility for expansion and new options exist.

Sonika: First part is – and really everything we've been doing so far tonight in this class is all moving in that direction, right? – how am I just like that? Where do I also want the opposite of what I'm declaring I want? Where is that true for me?

I will tell you, with every single person we have worked with, we have never seen a couple where they were not a match – a perfect match – for each other. A perfect match. The person you are with is the perfect person for you to be with, because they are mirroring back to you some unresolved aspect of yourself that wants to be resolved. Once it is, you will be more balanced, and you will be a better version of, you could say, your full potential.

**[0:40:03]**

Christian: You both become more whole versions of your full potential. More whole and well-rounded human beings. And your relationship gets so much stronger every single time you can work a particular conflict in this fashion.

It's actually really great. You might be sitting in front of a computer just like we are sitting in front of a camera and a computer. We're both facing the same way.

Maybe that's how you're sitting out in your living rooms or kitchens, and that's great.

That's actually a great way to process any conflict: literally at your kitchen table, one of you get up, and you go over, and you sit next to each other, and you look at your kitchen table. Maybe you draw this thing on a piece of paper. There you are, looking in the same direction. Both of you shoulder to shoulder, side by side, literally on the same side, trying to figure out "Okay, great. How can we deal with this conflict?"

Sonika: First thing we want you to do right now is together explore where you are a match for the other person's side. Where do you want that too?

Christian: Where is it also true that I want to save some money? Give specific examples.

Sonika: Where is it also true that I don't really want to work on our relationship, or I prefer blaming you than actually taking responsibility and making things happen?

Christian: Yeah. Where is it also true that I would much rather – if we could just not talk about problems anymore, and it would just figure itself out? Actually, literally, before you start, if you're on opposite sides, literally go position yourself so you're sitting next to each other just like we are.

Sonika: Start this conversation with "Wow, I want this, and I want that, and where I can see it's true that I also want this other side is here." Just let yourself honestly, transparently score "Where am I also wanting the opposite side?" Just do that for a couple of minutes.

Christian: Feel free to go back and forth. You don't have to take turns. We'll give you time signals as we go. Go ahead.

Take another minute for this conversation.

Start wrapping up.

Stop talking, please.

Say to each other "Hey, thank you for exploring that with me."

Sonika: I want to just say here about this piece that sometimes it's not so easy to see where we are just like the other side. I want to give a couple example about that, actually.

One common example is one person is committed, and one person isn't. Let's just say I'm the one that wants more commitment. I don't want to be in a relationship with someone who isn't committed.

When you aren't committed, I threaten to leave the relationship. That is another way of showing how I'm not committed to the relationship.

Christian: That's where she owns a portion of the "not committed" position.

Sonika: Because I'm so eager to get out of here if you're not committed. It's another place where I am a match for being with somebody who isn't committed. I'm not committed all the way, either, if I'm saying I don't want to be with somebody who isn't committed.

Christian: I'm not all the way not committed, either, because I'm still in a relationship with you. If I was entirely uncommitted, I wouldn't be bothering with you anymore.

Sonika: We had one couple that we've been working with. It's really funny, actually. It's almost comical, because she's so clear. She wants to get married and have a kid. He's like hemming and hawing, kind of cold feet, not quite sure he's ready for that.

Then she feels frustrated, like "I don't know if I want to be with you if you're not committed, then." She starts pulling away and starts thinking about maybe being with other people. All of a sudden, he's like "I don't want you to be with other people. I want to get married. I want to commit. I want to be in a relationship."

She's like "I don't know if I want that. I might want to be freer and more open." All of a sudden, it's flipped. They're having this whole conversation from this other place. Then she works all that out, and she's like "You know, I'm feeling like I really connected here with you again. I'd really like to move forward and maybe get married and have a kid."

He's like "I don't know if I can satisfy that. I don't know if I want to get married."

It is so, sometimes, painfully clear as the observer kind of sitting back looking at this dynamic. I'm helping them. We are helping them see how they are both both.

**[0:45:12]**

They're both really terrified they're not going to be enough for each other. They're both terrified they're not going to be happy. They're both terrified to

commit. They both really want to be together, and they both want to really step into commitment.

Instead of now fighting with each other about how we don't want this "me-you" thing, they're being able to sit inside of "Oh, wow, we're both really scared to commit, and we both really want to commit. We both really like thinking it's the other person who isn't committed instead of that it's us."

Christian: The process takes as long as it takes for them to find their standing, their solid grounding in themselves individually and then together.

Sonika: If you weren't able in this couple of minutes, because we know we're moving kind of through this fast, take time to really sit and think about "Well, where am I just like that? Where am I benefitting from it the way that it is? What part of me put myself in this position, actually, to help me grow? To help me grow to become more like your side so I could be more balanced? Really play with looking into that more. Where is this a perfect match?

We want to play with a specific example from you here to just kind of sink in and deepen here what we've done so far before we introduce this next piece.

Christian: If one of you have a good example that you're willing to share with everybody here where you seem to be on opposite sides, go ahead and hit the Q and A button and type the word "share" in there, and then Eric will bring you on so we can hear you.

While you do that, I'm going to get out of the way. You'll still be able to hear me. I'm just going to get out of the way so you can better see our diagram here behind us.

If you'd like to share, go ahead and hit the Q and A button and type the word "share" and Eric will bring you on so we can hear you.

Sonika: We just need one conflict that we can play with here for this exercise of looking at conflict.

Christian: If you feel shy about it, you could also just hit the chat – there is a chat function, too – you can hit the chat function and just type in there "spending money versus saving money", "participating in the RISC course versus not participating in the RISC course", "get a divorce versus stay together". Whatever yours is.

Eric: We've got Patrick. I'm going to bring Patrick in.

Christian: Awesome.

Eric: Patrick, you there?

Patrick: Yes, I am.

Sonika: Hi, Patrick.

Patrick: Hi.

Christian: Hey, Patrick. Thanks for volunteering.

Patrick: Yup. Okay. You want to hear the conflict?

Sonika: I do.

Christian: Briefly state it.

Patrick: Sure. Briefly stated, it is that I would like to retire overseas where the cost of living is lower, and Cindy would like to stay in the United States while her dad is alive and where our two sons are now in college and ostensibly moving towards having families and grandkids.

Christian: Wonderful. Thank you for volunteering that great, classic conflict. It looks on the surface of it to be mutually exclusive.

Patrick: Yes.

Christian: I hope you can see Sonika is drawing in the two circles. One of them says "retire overseas where there's lower cost of living"; the other side says "stay in the US close to family".

Patrick: And friends, Cindy's telling me.

Christian: Family and friends. Good point.

Sonika: Family and friends. All right. Cool.

You can see I want one thing; you want something else. It looks like we're on opposite sides. Let's play with this "we" in the middle.

"We want" – just try speaking that out loud here. "We want to retire overseas where there's a lower cost of living, and we want to stay in the US close to family and friends." Just say that together.

Cindy and Patrick: We want to retire overseas where there's a lower cost of living, and we want to stay in the US close to family and friends."

**[0:50:02]**

Christian: Just like that.

Sonika: Cool. "We want both." It looks at first glance like there is no freaking way that's possible.

Christian: Yeah. Can I just say, by the way, that Sonika and I can relate to this example, only it was at the beginning of relationship, not at the retiring end of relationship. I'm from Denmark. That's where I lived when we met. For several years, I lived in Denmark; Sonika lived in California.

I didn't want to move to America. Sonika wasn't going to leave her kids and move to Europe. There we had it. Very similar situation.

Sonika: All right. "We want both." We're going to tie in what we've done here in other classes. Where there is opposites, you could say, is at the level of form. But there is a common experience you guys are wanting out of retiring overseas where there's a low cost of living, and you also want to stay close to family and friends.

What would you say the experience is you're after? Let's just get some experience words for each of you. What's your experience, Patrick, for wanting to retire overseas where there's a lower cost of living?

Patrick: A sense of slowing down. A sense of ease. Less stress, really.

Christian: Yeah. Slow down, less stress, ease.

Patrick: Yeah.

Sonika: Okay. Great. What's the experience you're after staying here being close to family and friends?

Cindy: Connection, roots. A sense of belonging.

Sonika: Love.

Cindy: Yeah.

Sonika: Yeah. I wonder if there's something in there, too, about adventure versus...doing something new versus keeping things.

Patrick: Sure. Yeah.

Sonika: A new experience, and also...

Patrick: New horizons. New experience. Yeah.

Cindy: New experience, and also stability.

Christian: A challenge. A new challenge.

Patrick: Yeah.

Christian: In case you can't see it, if the writing is getting small, Sonika is just writing those words in the overlapping area in the center.

Sonika: What would you say the experience is you're after by family and friends? Staying close to family and friends?

Cindy: We did.

Sonika: Kind of the opposite of adventure.

Patrick: Oh. Well just, again, deepening connection. There's a sense of comfort and trust and support.

Sonika: Beautiful. Okay. Great.

For everybody's benefit here, they both want to slow down. They want ease. They want less stress. They want comfort, trust. They want connection, roots, belonging. They also want to have some love, some new adventures, some challenges. They want all of it. It's not either-or.

From here, now what we're going to play with here – this is the challenging part, and kind of the fun part, actually – is what new form could you create that is going to give you this experience? How could you live overseas and stay in the US? How could you have a lower cost of living and be close to family and friends?

We're just going to play with it here for a minute, and we're going to brainstorm. You might not want to do any of these options, but really, the challenge here – if we had endless time, we would say "I want you to come up with 20 different possible solutions for how you could have it all". Let's just play with that here for a moment.

Christian: Do you want to make a new one?

Sonika: No, no. I'll just put them up here so everybody can see.

Christian: If you have any ideas, just speak up, and we'll help you out.

**[0:55:00]**

Patrick: Nothing's coming to mind.

Sonika: I have some ideas to get you going here.

One idea is you could get a house overseas, and you could live there half the time, and you could be here half the time. While you're here half the time, you could stay with family and friends.

Patrick: Okay.

Christian: We're not saying you should **[0:55:27] [Indiscernible]** any of these ideas. They're just possible options.

Patrick: Oh. Okay.

Christian: All right. I've got another one for you here. It's just a possibility. We're just brainstorming options that might take care of all your desires.

You could rent a weekend place in Canada, right across the border, and just go stay there and try it out for a weekend of a week or two weeks. Whatever you can manage now. Feel it out. Just pretend you're living in a different country. You will be in a different country, but it's close to home.

See how you like it. Just see how you like being away. What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? It's like a little training exercise.

Patrick: Huh. That's cool.

Sonika: You could import your family and friends to this new place.

Patrick: Okay. Wow.

Christian: I've got another option for you. You could invite all your family – or the ones you want to, family and friends – to whatever Thanksgiving or Christmas or any old day come stay with you a weekend at your place and share with them this idea that you have.



"Hey, we want to stay." You'd say it like this. "We want to go abroad and retire, and we want to stay home. What do y'all think?"

Cindy: They'd think he's crazy.

Christian: That might be true, but often, it's a great way to think about coming up with actual solutions is what could we take on just for trial? Just for an experiment? It's just like trying on a new jacket to see if it fits. You might like something about it. You might not like something about it. But at least you'll find out.

Cindy: Maybe we put all our stuff in storage and try it for a two-year commitment.

Christian: Nice. That's an idea. If you want to be even less risky, you could say "We can do a house swap with friends of ours who live in a different part of the United States. We'll do a month-long or six-month-long or whatever house swap. We'll go live in Maine, and they'll come live in wherever you guys live."

Patrick: New Jersey.

Christian: New Jersey. Okay. Great. Wherever.

Sonika: We'll also figure out how could you stay here and pay a lot less? Could you do a duplex? Could you move in with family, and then you're freed up to travel? Is there a way that you could lower your cost of living staying here, and then do trips to other places for adventure?

Christian: Would the money that got freed up by sharing a place with friends, for example?

Notice the form gets set free when you keep your eye on "What's the experiences we're wanting?" Slowing down, ease – which is what I got from thinking about less cost is ease and relaxation that could be produced in many different ways.

Patrick: Yeah. One of the things I've thought about is something similar to that. Retiring with a bunch of friends into a common place.

Christian: Cool. That is an option. If you had five friends in mind or just one, invite them over for a weekend or go book a hotel room in the same place or rent an air BNB with that particular couple or set of friends. Try living with them for a weekend and share your crazy idea.

Cindy: We're having them for Thanksgiving.

Patrick: They'll be over for Thanksgiving.

Christian: They'll be over for Thanksgiving. All right. It's done for you.

Cindy: An annual event.

Sonika: Now, notice in this conversation – I want to highlight this for your benefit and for everybody here on the call – notice how when we expand to include both that all of a sudden, now, all this creativity that otherwise is getting lost in fights is now being spent together in us coming up with solutions we never would have thought of before.

**[1:00:06]**

I'll say something. This is so our experience in relationship is that this middle place of "we" is where there is an opening for something new that wants to be created that we would say is even better than just one side or the other.

Christian: That which has not been created yet. Remember, we said one of our makeups about conflict is it's a sign that something new wants to happen. It seems like at the beginning it's either retire overseas or no, we've got to stay in the US close to family and friends.

But really, it's something new that hasn't been formulated yet. The conflict shows us that there is such a new thing. If we work it like we're suggesting here, we're going to discover what that is. It's probably something that, like Sonika is suggesting, is even richer than the two original positions that we were thinking about.

Sonika: We have seen that so many times which actually has us have another makeup here which is that if my side isn't it for both of us and your side isn't it for both of us, then that means there's something even bigger and better that we haven't thought of yet that is going to take care of both of us. How do we use this process to put our creativity to work to allow new options to show up that we wouldn't have thought of otherwise?

I'll give you another couple of our stories that are examples of this. The couple that I was working with where they're like "I want to be together" and "We want to be together, and we want to be apart" – how can we do that?

Well, God. We can get a duplex where we could be together and we could be apart. We could have one week on and one week off. All of a sudden, there's all these options that can show up inside of "How do we take care of both of those instead of just one?" that is actually even kind of fun.

Here's another example that Christian and I had. There was one point when we wanted to improve our website. Christian came across this company that they were going to charge us \$10,000 to redesign our website.

I didn't want to spend \$10,000 on our website. That just seemed like there's a better use of our money that we could put \$10,000 into.

Christian: I really wanted to have a professional, good, beautiful, clean, efficient looking website. As far as I had researched, you know, you might need to pay that kind of money to actually find somebody who could pull that off.

Sonika: We start with this. We actually did this process. What we got to was that we want to have a brand new website, and we don't want to spend \$10,00.

Christian: There's got to be a better way, since neither of those options are it. There's got to be a better way. There just has to be a way we haven't thought of yet.

Sonika: We just stayed open to that there was something better.

Christian: We kept that space in the middle here open. We have a standing agreement that when there's bigger decisions like that, we keep that space open until we land on something that feels good to both of us. That is our standing agreement. We don't just move forward with either-or if it isn't something that makes both of us satisfied.

Sonika: In the end, what happened actually is somebody sent Christian an email about the possibility of us hiring a virtual assistant who had training in web design and actually offered way more services for a monthly fee. Somebody from overseas, actually.

We ended up hiring this person. We had the best web support ever. In fact, we had way more support in tons of different areas.

Christian: For years.

Sonika: For years. We're still working with this guy. It never would have happened if we had stayed like "You always just want to spend money on frivolous things. You don't care." Or him saying to me "You're always impeding the progress of our business." Creating this big fight about it.

Instead, we use this process. "Well, we want both. How do we stay in there?" What we find – and this is actually a spiritual belief of ours – is that often, spirit is guiding us to create something even better that we haven't thought of.

We actually had a funny experience with our car where – Christian's this big, tall guy. I'm a short little woman. You can't tell, because I'm sitting on a stool. We're trying to make ourselves fit here.

**[1:05:05]**

When we went to buy a new car, Christian wanted to buy this big, fancy –

Christian: We had rented a Chrysler 300 for our road trip. I liked that, that big American car.

Sonika: I'm like "No." I felt like a midget in that darn thing. He really wanted a luxury car. I wanted a Toyota. I just want my Toyotas.

We ended up landing on this brand new GM16 15 Toyota Camry that has all the – it totally took care of both of us. We hadn't come across it yet. We just kept staying in there as we were driving car after car after car, and we found one that totally took care of both of us.

Christian: I'll share one more example, and why I want to say for any of you out there who would also like to ask a question, anything you're sitting with from this class, you can also go ahead in the Q and A function on your webinar screen. If you type "share" or a question in there, then we'll add a little time here in a moment to bring you on as well.

Sonika: What we want you to all do here is the same thing we just did with you, Jacob. What's your partner's name?

Christian: Patrick and Cindy.

Sonika: Patrick and Cindy. We want you to do the same thing Patrick and Cindy just did, which is to come up with – and really, we challenge you – to come up with 20 possible solutions.

Christian: Patrick and Cindy, you still have another 13 to go.

Patrick: We're going to take the ones that came out of this, and then add. Thank you for the jumpstart.

Christian: Absolutely. You're welcome. Thank you so much for jumping in with that.

You know, for all of you, especially you maybe Patrick and Cindy, since we've heard a little bit about your process, it'd be awesome if you'll share your potential solutions on the RISC forum.

Remember, you don't have to commit to any of them. Once you've created ten or 20, it's a great idea to pick one, maybe two. But at least one that you can try on for size. It's really important that you take it on as trying it on for size. It's not the end all, be all, we're totally committed final solution. We're just going to try it out.

Sonika: Yeah. Let me say why that's important is when we look at being here in this opening, what are we willing to do? This couple that's like "Should we live together? Should we not live together?" Well, what are we willing to do?

They actually sent me this really sweet email when I checked in with them after like "How do you feel?" It's like "Well, we are having this really great time. We are enjoying being together and being apart. He came over voluntarily to hang out with my kids. We are going together on vacation to visit our families."

They looked at what they were willing to do. Not where they were different and sort of banging up against the conflict, the wall, but where is the opening? Where is the place of joining? What can we do?

Well, we can't get married right now. We're not going to get pregnant right now. We aren't going to split up right now. What are we willing to do? We're willing to commit for the next three months. You just find the one thing you are willing to do where there is the possibility of taking care of each other's concerns.

"I want to do the course; you don't." What would you be willing to do? I'd be willing to hold your hand while we watch our television show together. If that is the place to start, you start there. That's a little opening. That creates the next opening and the next opening.

As you keep doing that, you keep getting clearer about how to co-create something that really works for both of you.

Christian: Here, we'll say thank you so much, Patrick and Cindy for volunteering. Awesome. We look forward to hearing about how that goes.

Cindy: Thanks.

Patrick: We'll let you know.

Christian: Awesome. Thank you.

Eric, anybody else who would like to share or ask questions?

Sonika: Here's your homework assignment.

Christian: I just want to have Eric show – Eric, if you'd show first the first circle diagram, the one with two individual circles and a wall down the middle. I want all of you out there to first draw that. We want you to remember it. Just draw it so you have it right now. Just copy this. Two circles. Me, you. Wall down the middle.

Then show the next one that has the overlap space. Go ahead and draw that as well. That is exactly what we did with Patrick and Cindy here. You have the visual of this open space. Great.

Then, Eric, if you would advance to the last slide about homework practices. Thank you very much. First one here, you'll see in a moment.

**[1:10:04]**

Sonika: Speak in "we". Have fun with this. I'll tell you, when I first learned to speak in "we", it just changed everything. This idea that really your concerns and your desires are as important as mine. Yours probably are mine, and I don't even know it. I also want the other side.

Play with it. Speak in "we". You can do it about anything. You can do it about your conflicts. "We want more intimacy, and we also really kind of like being separate and independent." "We want to work on our relationship, and truthfully, there's another part of us that just want to rest."

You can play with it with other stuff, too. When one of you marches off to the bathroom, you say "Wow, we are going to the bathroom." Just play with it. "We love onions." You can say that when you know your partner hates onions. Have fun with it.

Play with speaking in "we" and really take on that "In some place, we're two individuals, but we also are more together than we think. There's more connection and alignment than we might realize."

Christian: The second part, if you'll put on the number two bullet here, Eric, is find solutions. Just like we did with Patrick and Cindy here. Explore and find we say at least 20 if you can, but hey, if you find five, that's pretty awesome, too, potential solutions that will satisfy both of you. That would satisfy these desires for what you really want.

Remember, you don't have to commit forever to any of them. Just find potential ones, and then see if you can find one and try it on for size.

Sonika: We would say using this example again, this conflict is giving them the opportunity to figure out how they can reduce their expenses, how they have adventure and challenge, and how they stay close to family and friends all at the same time.

Christian: And have ease and connection and love and relaxation in their lives.

Sonika: We would say it's possible.

Christian: Entirely possible. Any last comments, Eric, on our requests?

**[1:12:16] End of Audio**