**Episode #17**

**Speaker 1** [00:00:01] Welcome to the Cabrera Lab Podcast.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:07] How you doing?

**Speaker 1** [00:00:08] I'm doing awesome.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:10] I'm happy to be here with you today.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:12] I too am happy to be here.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:15] I have been thinking about something that I'm not sure how to articulate it perfectly. Not that I have to be perfect. But it seems to me lately, I see a lot of people escalating and taking things personally in everyday conversations, more so than it used to be more in the sort of politically charged conversations or conversations about world peace and things. Like, I feel like there's more. I don't know, I don' remember where I was, but I thought, I was having a conversation and then I thought instantly, oh that person is taking that personally and I had no, no intention. Yeah. And I think you said something to me when I was talking to you about it, about, well... You're not in charge of other people's feelings. Yeah. And I just, I wanted to chew on that a bit because I think it's a very interesting idea and I think is also a very unusual idea. It is? Oh yeah, I think so. I think the norm is, I say you hurt my feelings. You're responsible for.

**Speaker 3** [00:01:19] X, Y, Z. Do you think people actually believe that?

**Speaker 2** [00:01:23] I think so. Wow. Is that not normal in your mind?

**Speaker 3** [00:01:27] Well, I guess it's normal, but it's definitely not the way. I do not think that. I do NOT think. You are responsible for other people's feelings. Feelings are things that you do. They're activities and actions that you take.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:53] When you say that you mean, when you say it's an action I take, if you're speaking to me, you're saying something happens and then I feel something.

**Speaker 3** [00:02:05] Yeah, you know, it's funny, maybe when I was younger I experienced it this way, but I have visceral memory when I was... Probably 17 or something like that. I don't know how old I was, but a pretty visceral memory of reading a book that at the time was a... kind of an impactful book for me. It was called Way of the Peaceful Warrior. Oh yeah. By Dan Melnudin, I think. And ironically, many years later, like when I was 45 or something, I read it again, and it was not at all impactful. But when I 17, it was like the right book at the right time. The timing then. The timing was right. But... There's the scene, I'm not gonna tell the whole story, but there's the seen in it, and Dan, the kid in the book is friends with some guy who's friends with another guy who owns a restaurant in town, and he really loves this restaurant. He's all around it, he puts his heart and soul in it. And one day the kid, he's a gymnast, and he's jogging, and it's nighttime, and there's light, you know, fire, engine lights, and smoke, and the whole fire, the whole thing, right? And he's jogging by, and this restaurant is on fire. and the owner is standing out front and he runs up and he says, oh my gosh, what's happening, you know? And the restaurant's burning to the ground. And the owner, I'm probably gonna tell the story that we're not exactly right, because it's an old memory, but the owner... kind of goes like freaks out like has a big freak out like anger frustration all that stuff

**Speaker 2** [00:04:00] screams.

**Speaker 3** [00:04:02] And then he's done with it and he goes, he turns to the kid and he goes, the kid says, are you okay? He goes, oh yeah, I'm fine. Uh, I I'm going to go travel the world. And I remember reading that and it was just like, like it is something lit up in my brain and it like, oh, you, you have total ability to change how you feel about things. you don't have to feel a particular way. You don't have to. Feel the way people say you have to feel about something interesting and when you're feeling something if you you can have those feelings and then once you've had those feelings once you

**Speaker 4** [00:04:46] You know.

**Speaker 3** [00:04:46] let them out or whatever you want, express them, then you can take a completely different trajectory.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:55] Interesting. There's a lot in what you do.

**Speaker 3** [00:04:57] There's a lot in there. Yeah. And I think that's that to me that's you're having feelings and you're you have agency over those feelings sometimes sometimes the feelings come and you don't have a whole lot of agency but you can have agency in the way you express them and that can change the agency that you have the more you express them. So what what he did was it was going to be very difficult to not feel anything right so he had feelings. probably didn't have a whole lot of agency in those feelings, but he had the agency to express them, not hold them in. He expressed those emotions, and then he was done with that expression, and then, he was able to have a different set of possibilities.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:46] I see. I mean, there's another, I mean yes, you can imagine if it were a movie. Yeah. There's another plot which is he doesn't express them. Yeah. He walks down to the neighborhood restaurant. He's still angry, but he hasn't expressed that anger. He projects it on the next person he talks to. That's right. Then that person feels whatever they feel. They project it on them. You know, it's like dominance. That's Right.

**Speaker 3** [00:06:10] That's right. That's why we have to distinguish between feelings and thinkings. I mean, feelings are like, you know, when we have feelings, it's like a water, water in a jar. And we and if we keep them in the jar eventually gets full. if we don't express them, then we have to let some of that water out. And so if we have an appropriate place to express them or we don' ever feel that there is an appropriate place to expression them, then what we'll do is we'll let a little bit of water out here and a little there, a little. And so that's called projecting your stuff onto... life and I think most of what people experience in the world is people just going around projecting feelings that they had about something else on the current situation or the current conversation or the instantiation or the whatever you're saying to me right now like do you want a coffee and all of a sudden I'm having feelings about it.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:15] So you've got the bottle. And so you have these small ways where you let a little bit of the water out. But the other alternative is you don't and then the pressure gets so big that the whole thing.

**Speaker 4** [00:07:25] Oh yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:26] Explodes and that's where you have really bad situations, right? Yeah, interesting

**Speaker 3** [00:07:31] So, I mean, ideally, we want that to just be empty and have an emotion and then express an emotion, have an motion and then process or I call it metabolize because you want to metabolize your emotions the same way you want to metabolize your food. And I call them metabolize, because we don't always want to express, right? That's like, you know, you're putting out. Sometimes you want it just metabolize it, right.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:00] Meaning processes.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:01] Process it in whatever way you will process it. Yeah, and then poop it out But but you don't always want to vomit it up on things, right? Because then you're then you can understand then you are expressing on everything and not everybody

**Speaker 2** [00:08:14] because metabolizing is internal. You're processing it in and then you're letting it out.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:18] Yeah, and sometimes it has to be expressed, right? And sometimes it just, you know, either way it's metabol, that's why I use the word metabolite.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:26] Yeah, but how does that relate to what you said at the beginning of you're in charge of how you feel and you're in charge of, you know, how you how you express those feelings?

**Speaker 3** [00:08:37] Well, I don't, I wouldn't say literally you're in charge, meaning you're totally, you're in total control. No, you are not in total control of what you feel. I feel things all the time that I'm not in total control of. Yeah. You know, like for example, predictably, predictably as a neurodiverse person, as an ADD person, when I have an exciting weekend or an exciting day or an exciting week. right? And exciting anything, which is like most weeks, right? Something is stimulating and I'm having a good time and I am really into it and all that stuff. When that thing ends, I know what's coming.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:21] We all know.

**Speaker 3** [00:09:21] there's going to be, because I had the dopamine and then there's gonna be a dopamine drop. And so I'll have a bunch of emotion, which when I was a kid, I didn't understand. Right. Right. And it was just this weird feeling of like, everything is low.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:38] and that's a biochemical thing.

**Speaker 3** [00:09:39] That's because I don't have enough dopamine and the contrast between the dopamine of the exciting events versus the not. And when I say exciting, I mean, dopamine is kind of an interesting thing. I mean it could be that we had people over, you know, and it was an exciting conversation. It was a stimulating conversation, right? It wasn't boring. Mm hmm. Then I'll have a drop. and I won't have total control over those emotions, those things that I feel. But now I know, and I can be metacognitive because I can use my thinking with my emotions, and I could say, oh, you know, this is a knowable thing. I'm gonna go through this. I'm going to feel this for a little bit. I just need to feel it. I need to be aware that it really is just a neurochemical thing. Yeah. And then you don't have any control. And I probably am not going to have a lot of control over it, but I can metabolize it. Now, if I'm not aware, if i'm not using my metacognition on that moment, and this is what happened when I was much younger, then what I'm going to do is I'm gonna say, well, without knowing it, I'm low dopamine so I need to do something that gets me more dopamine, so I'm gonna go get in an argument or cause some kind of chaos or go do something dangerous.

**Speaker 4** [00:11:14] Mm-hmm.

**Speaker 3** [00:11:15] or whatever so that I can get out of that dopamine fog. Or lack of dopamine fog, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:11:21] Yeah, because that explains a lot about risk and stimulation and why you sometimes see, for example, teenagers. Teenagers will do things, engage in these risky behaviors like driving in Jeeps, hitting mailboxes with baseball bats, because they need that dopamine, right? They need that stimulus, they need to fix that dip, but they don't know it. But what you're saying is you can use your thinking to be aware of your emotions.

**Speaker 3** [00:11:58] Your thinking is what helps you metabolize and in some cases express and in some cases change it into a different form, your emotions.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:09] change it in a different form, what do you mean by that?

**Speaker 3** [00:12:12] In the case of this example I'm giving you, I'm given this example because I'm just sharing that sometimes you do have control over what you feel. But sometimes you don't. Sometimes it's like a chemical, and you don' have a lot of control. It's gonna feel like it's happening to you. It's going to feel like it's happened whether you like it or not. And so some of the way that you think about those things and frame them and the perspectives you take, like when I realize that I'm just having a neurochemical dip, then all of a sudden I'm like, oh, this is just like literally you just have to ride it out.

**Speaker 5** [00:12:54] Yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:12:55] It'll change. You don't have to do anything. You just have to kind of ride it out. Yes. Right? And not only that, I now know cognitively that it's gonna happen. And so we can plan for it. We actually do. You help plan for with my schedule. Yes. So you know that if we have a high, then we can't have a nothing on a Monday. We have to schedule something. We gotta schedule something to keep me the dopamine up. So there's ways you can manage it and metabolize it and those kinds of things.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:29] Well, that's interesting. But let's talk about the example of when you do have a little bit more control over your emotions, because I think that would be equally interesting to people, right? So when you're standing in that moment and you have a feeling, talk through that. Like, how do you actually have that control, that agency over it? And what do you do with it?

**Speaker 3** [00:13:50] Yeah, I mean, again, it's just that it really, so much of this comes down to metacognition and awareness. It's like, if you say something, I'm mean, you could literally say, you look blue. Okay. Now I could, I could that could hurt my feelings. It could. Right? And even our language is so terrible about this, right? That could hurt. My feelings. Right. Right. It's not that I'm, my feelings are hurt.

**Speaker 5** [00:14:18] I understand.

**Speaker 3** [00:14:19] Right? It's that that thing is causing the hurt of my feelings. Right? What you said, which means you, you know, you and what you said is causing the hurt. Yeah. The question is, well, why, why am I feeling anything about that? Right? Is it because I think it's true that I'm blue? Are you actually blue? Am I actually blue in my life? Is it bad to be blue? Like, I don't know. And I don t mean it's probably confusing because blue is a metaphor for sad. But I'm just saying like If if somebody called you a jerk that might hurt your feelings. Yes, but if somebody calls you You know

**Speaker 2** [00:14:57] A banana. Your what? A banana!

**Speaker 3** [00:14:59] A banana?

**Speaker 2** [00:15:00] Like, I think you're a banana.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:02] I think you're a banana. You'd be like, nope, I'm not a banana, right? So the fact that it's so ridiculously not true makes it so you don't have any feelings. The fact that somebody says something that might actually have some truth to it, maybe you have some feelings. Well, why are you having those feelings? Because maybe you believe that at least some portion of what that person's saying is true, right? Or. you feel embarrassed or you feel, you know, whatever.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:34] or you feel that person's just being me.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:36] Or you think they're just being mean, but if somebody is just being mean, then why should that cause you to?

**Speaker 2** [00:15:43] Is there the one being?

**Speaker 3** [00:15:43] There's another one being mean.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:45] They're the one that looks bad.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:46] So you can choose, in those particular situations, you can choose to say, well, if somebody's being mean, why should I feel anything about it?

**Speaker 2** [00:15:55] In other words, you reflect it back on them.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:57] Right, I now know that that person's being mean. It seems factual. Maybe I check in and I find out, oh yeah, they did mean, they did intend to be mean in that particular situation. And so why would I feel anything about that?

**Speaker 2** [00:16:17] Interesting, because I think a normative response to that would be, oh, but they're trying to hurt my feelings, right? And so then they have a reaction. Maybe it's even not even the reaction to what they're saying to hurt your feelings, but it's just, oh they're try to hurt my feelings and therefore my feelings are hurt.

**Speaker 4** [00:16:37] Why would you do that?

**Speaker 2** [00:16:37] It's a weird, it's not logical. I understand it's a lot logical, but a lot of people don't associate logic with emotions.

**Speaker 3** [00:16:46] But it's not really logical, it's about what possible benefit and why are you so easily controlled?

**Speaker 2** [00:16:58] That's a good way to think about it.

**Speaker 3** [00:16:59] Right? Like, why am I so easily controlled that if someone is mean, that I suddenly have all these feelings about it? Right. Like, don't I have any choice in the matter? Like they, if they're mean, I feel.

**Speaker 2** [00:17:16] Yeah, that doesn't make sense.

**Speaker 3** [00:17:17] right? Why don't I have any choice in the matter? Because that means if if if it's just an if then statement, right? If they do this, if they say this, If they feel this, if they, you know, whatever, right, then I feel

**Speaker 2** [00:17:32] Right, so there should be a step in between.

**Speaker 3** [00:17:34] It should be, there should be some agency of, I get to have some choice in the matter. And again, we already talked about the issue of, there are some cases where you don't have choice, like in chemical changes in your body and stuff like that. But when it comes to like, you know, social daily interaction and conflict, like you get to some choice of the matter, you don' have to feel. Just not that you ever make bad food because you're a very good cook, but like say you said, hey, I made some chicken and I go, this tastes terrible. Well, you could take that personally and you could be like, he doesn't like my cooking and blah, blah, blah and yada, yada. Or you could like, oh, let me taste it. Let me see. Like maybe it does taste terrible, right? Yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:26] We'll remember the shrimp.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:28] This is one meal that you made that was terrible.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:31] I mean, shrimp cakes, I forgot to take the tails off. Yes. So I ground them up, and then you could taste little tiny pieces. They were crunchy. They were crunch. But not in a good way. So let's replay that moment. So I had it at that moment when you said, these don't.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:46] It wasn't just me, it was everybody at the table that when they bit into it, there was a noticeable crunch and it wasn't because of the way it was.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:54] It wasn't an intentional question.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:55] It wasn't an intentional crunch. It was like a very odd crunch.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:00] Yeah. So in that moment, I could have been like, they don't appreciate me. They don't, you know, they appreciate my cooking. And I could've taken it completely personally and spun off into a whole thing. Or I could be like, oh, They are crunchy. I wonder why they're crunchy. Why are they crunchy? And then I could back end into, oh, I messed up the recipe. And then that's just feedback. It's just feed back. And feedback isn't personal. Feedback is just feedback, but that has to happen very quickly.

**Speaker 3** [00:19:37] Well, that's why metacognition is important and that's why being fast at metac cognition is important because, you know, even if some, let's put it this way. Let's say someone is actually mean. They intend to hurt you and they say something that's also actually true. Do you have the metacog mission not to get mad about the mean part and to accept the true part?

**Speaker 2** [00:19:58] That's hard.

**Speaker 3** [00:19:59] It doesn't have to be hard. It's hard to shoot a basket and make it into a net, but if you practice, you can do it.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:09] So you're saying if a person practices separating out the truth versus the not truth of the comment, or the intention versus the.

**Speaker 3** [00:20:19] Well, what you're actually practicing is not taking it all, all or none.

**Speaker 5** [00:20:25] Oh, yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:20:26] that you're able to separate. Okay, this part is just the mean part, and I'm gonna leave that part. And this part is actually kind of interesting feedback. I'm going to take that, because I actually kind of there's reasons to think that some of what they're saying is true here. And so I'm, I'm I'm to take that and I better myself, but I'm going to leave that part for them, because that has nothing to do with me. There need to be mean, there need to hurt me. That has very little to do with me and far more to do with them.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:00] and they need to process.

**Speaker 3** [00:21:01] And then they can, well they will or can or whatever, but it's just not my, that's not my thing. It's not your responsibility. Yeah. But I can take that feedback and do something valuable with it.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:11] And so, say you get feedback and there's part of it's true and part of is not. I can separate that also. I can say, here's the nugget that's true. And here's a nugget I don't need to consider because I know it's factually not true.

**Speaker 3** [00:21:23] But we take everything that people say as a whole, and we can't break it into parts and be like, oh, well, think of it if you gave me, if I was really, really hungry, and you gave like a hamburger that had olives in it or something, and let's say I did not like olives. Well, does that mean I'm gonna throw out the hamburger? No, I'm going to pick the olives out. Yeah. Right? Yeah. Okay, well the same thing with feedback of some kind, right? Like if there's a part of it that you're kind of like, nah, That's not for me Just take it apart.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:56] And that diffuses the whole thing because you're able to be thoughtful about that piece which is useful versus a piece that is maybe just not true or out of spite or something. And it's designed to have an effect. Yes. And you can separate those things out.

**Speaker 3** [00:22:17] And that's an example of somebody that's like intending to be mean most of the time. I don't think like most people aren't intending to be me and they might just be like saying something and.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:27] Well, that's what I was saying at the beginning, is I see these everyday conversations and people seem sort of quick to respond in a way.

**Speaker 3** [00:22:37] But the point is, let's put it this way, if you have an emotion about whatever it is that they're saying or doing, the chances are that that emotion has more to teach you about yourself than it has to do with what that person said or did.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:58] Okay, I want you to say that again, because that's pretty smart. The chances are it has more to do with

**Speaker 3** [00:23:03] teaching you about yourself that it has anything to do with what that person did or said.

**Speaker 4** [00:23:10] I love that.

**Speaker 3** [00:23:11] It has more to do, it can do so much if you pay attention to it, of teaching you about yourself. Interesting. So if you're paying attention to the when you're having emotion and why you're having emotion, and what thing, what mental model do you create prior to the emotion that causes the emotion, then you will learn so much more about yourself and then you'll be able to remedy that thing, and no longer will that be the case. You will no longer have those feelings when those things happen.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:46] The more you know yourself, the more in control you are in those moments where you don't have to react to everything. And the more aware you are of how to handle all kinds of situations, because you understand your patterns and you understand yourself.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:06] Yeah, imagine like, imagine a person and imagine you could put like, you know, big two by fours through them without killing them. Right? Yeah. So you have this person that's walking around with all these two by force sticking out of them. Right? Yeah. And then you tell them to walk down the street of a busy street. And what's going to happen? Well, people are going to knock into the two by fours and they're spinning you around and then somebody else while you're getting spun around is going to hit another one. You're going to get you're constantly going to be just out of control.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:42] Because you're always being moved.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:44] You're always being moved.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:45] Yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:46] You have no agency of your direction and your vector because you're just, you're bumping into people and they're not meaning to bump into you. They're just walking down the street, but you've got all these two by fours sticking out of you. Imagine if every time you have one of those two by force, you learn and you go, Oh, I can, I could just take that one off. I can take that off. And eventually you rid yourself of all these too by four's and you can move through life with such agility. And fluidity, because you're not constantly being affected by everything.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:19] Yeah, and you're not in a passive or reactive state at all times, right? You're in a more, you have agency, you're more an active, action-based.

**Speaker 3** [00:25:32] So what we want to do is try to get to the point where we don't have any buttons. Yeah. Right? There are no buttons.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:39] Meaning there are no things that easily bother you. Oh. That you react to immediately.

**Speaker 3** [00:25:44] And because you process, why is it that I feel that way? Why is it when this happens, why do I respond this way? Why do I act this way, why don't I feel this way.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:58] And buttons, it seems to me buttons are.

**Speaker 3** [00:26:01] Buttons are the two by fours or whatever.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:03] Yeah, but they also sometimes from they probably come from faulty mentor models from way back way back and you sort of carrying them with you

**Speaker 3** [00:26:11] Absolutely. And you're letting out a little bit of that water. I mean, this is the worst mixed metaphor. So we've got two by fours and buttons and water jars. But you're desperately trying to let a little of this water that you've built up out. And so you're like, this is as good a time as any. Somebody just said, my shirt is blue. And a little bit of vomit there, a little vomit there. And then pretty soon the whole world's vomiting on each other. And that's what it's like being out in the world today, is everybody is feeling a lot about everything.

**Speaker 4** [00:26:52] That's true.

**Speaker 3** [00:26:53] I think we need to go in the other direction, which is like, let's try to, let us try to build a human, you know, like build a bear workshops, build a better way, like your whole job in life is to build a really good human, make a bunch of mistakes and build a human. That's our job in live. build a really good human, as good as you can make yourself. And so, like, let's try to build a human that doesn't react to everything. Let's try building a human that doesn' have feelings every time somebody says something. That has some agency around how they respond and...

**Speaker 2** [00:27:31] You can imagine the downstream effects of that. Would be amazing.

**Speaker 3** [00:27:34] That would be amazing.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:36] I mean, it would be amazing. That would be happy, mind-blown emojis by a thousand. I mean that would be a totally different landscape.

**Speaker 3** [00:27:43] So there's a couple of things that we can hit on here in terms of mental models that might be helpful. The first one is the idea that we call this the... the R quad. R quad, the relational quadratic, so quad just being four things.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:05] So you've got two things that are going to have a relationship.

**Speaker 3** [00:28:08] So you have two things that have a relationship. So there's the relationship, right, the pen. But what we want to do is see that relationship in a quad. And so let's do the paper here. So we got two people, let's say. And then there's this relationship. But we want we want think about it as a quad, so there's there's action and there's Reaction those are related. And then there's the action and the reaction, right? And those two are related That makes sense.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:48] Yeah, so what you're saying is you got two things, two people who are related.

**Speaker 3** [00:28:53] and they're interacting.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:54] And each one has an action and a reaction.

**Speaker 3** [00:28:57] Right, so this person says this and then you think or feel this and then you say this and then they think or feel this.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:03] So maybe to visual, it's more like there's an exchange.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:07] There's an exchange, but we want to blow that exchange up into four things, the action and the reaction, and the action of the reaction. That's the R-quad. And then what we want do is actually think about the internal relationship between our reaction and our action. So we want build a little square out of this thing. So we can draw a square and put the four. the quad here. Does that make sense?

**Speaker 2** [00:29:41] Yes. So.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:44] So here's the reaction and then the reaction. And what we wanna do is think about this relationship that's internal. This is all happening inside the person. This relationship and this relationship between your reaction and your chosen action.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:04] meaning at that moment we do actually have some control over do we act or do we react.

**Speaker 3** [00:30:11] Yeah, I don't love the word control. I use the word agency.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:15] agency.

**Speaker 3** [00:30:16] Right, so we have some agency, meaning we have some control, it's not total control, you don't have total control over anything, but you have some agencies, you have some influence, that what we don't always want is for your reaction to be your immediate action. For a lot of people, their reaction is their action. Right, you say something, I feel something, I tell you that feeling, right? We want there to be a little bit of space between your reaction and your action where you have some agency. And if we open that up and just pause, have a metacognitive pause in there on both sides, this conversation is gonna go completely different.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:02] because each person in that conversation is taking literally a moment to think about how they're going to respond.

**Speaker 3** [00:31:12] And take some ownership, agency, of their reaction. Their reaction is not owned by the other person, and yet it's blamed on the other. Yeah. Right? Your reaction, my reaction is not owned by you. And yet I blame it on you.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:34] That's interesting.

**Speaker 3** [00:31:35] Right? My reaction is my reaction.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:39] but you're gonna blame me.

**Speaker 3** [00:31:40] but I'm gonna blame you for it. I feel this way because, because, because the cause of my feelings is you and what you said. And that is just patently absurd and untrue. The cause of your feeling is a web of causality that probably has a lot more to do with you than with the person.

**Speaker 2** [00:32:03] Right, and it has a lot more to do with whether or not I have that ability to take that metacognitive moment and be thoughtful about how I'm going to respond, react or act.

**Speaker 3** [00:32:15] I don't know when this happened, maybe it's always been this way, I don' know. But it definitely feels like we've moved into a world where if you say something and someone in the room feels something, you're responsible for that feeling.

**Speaker 2** [00:32:30] we have definitely moved into that role.

**Speaker 3** [00:32:32] And that is just not a case.

**Speaker 2** [00:32:37] and it's very difficult.

**Speaker 3** [00:32:39] It's very dysfunctional and it's it's kind of become globally dysfunctional that that if if because what it means is If if there's a hundred people in a room There's a high probability that almost anything that I say could offend one of them

**Speaker 2** [00:32:55] at least one.

**Speaker 3** [00:32:56] at least one right right which means that now now take a hundred people if if i can't say anything that's going to not offend anyone then i can say anything that's right and that's not a good Those are not good statistics.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:14] Well, it means that we have to learn to communicate with each other. And it means exactly the same.

**Speaker 3** [00:33:20] It means we have to take some ownership of our own and agency of our own emotional state and our own reactionary state. Yes. Because those are ours and we need to stop blaming them on other people because there's a web of causality came into it. Now I'm not saying that it's not real, that the emotions aren't real, you know, that you don't have a right to those emotions, all of that stuff. You can do whatever you want to do. Blaming it on another person, your emotion and your reaction on another person is a dysfunctional way to be in the world. Right. And it's going to make it so nobody can get along and nobody can talk.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:08] We're getting there.

**Speaker 3** [00:34:10] You've got to be able to take some responsibility and accountability and agency and ownership or whatever you want to call it for how you feel.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:20] Yeah, and I think that goes back to what you said earlier is I need to purposely metabolize my own emotions and then be out in the world and make sure that I'm having these moments where I'm checking, am I just reacting to react or what am I feeling that I need to metabolize before I project it on the next person and make that I am taking accountability for myself. in that sense, emotionally, like you said, my emotional state and my emotional responses to people.

**Speaker 3** [00:34:54] So another one is called Feelings and Thinkings. And this is one that we could do a whole episode just on this.

**Speaker 4** [00:35:02] Maybe we will.

**Speaker 3** [00:35:03] We could do a whole episode just on our quad. But feelings and thinking is really important because it basically is about how feelings have a structure. and thinkings have a structure. Okay. And that structure is I. So this is I feel. Let's say X and this is a period. This is a, period. I feel X period.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:41] Meaning, that's the end of the statement. I feel...

**Speaker 3** [00:35:44] I feel x period, okay, and thinking is I think Right. Let's say why. Dot, dot, dot. Okay. Like ellipse.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:02] Meaning there's more to that.

**Speaker 3** [00:36:03] There's more, I can say lots more, right? Now here's the important part. According to science, different scholars will argue with you how many things are in X. But generally speaking, if something on the order of 12, 12 possible things can be in X? 12 emotions. 12 emotions? Humans have, generally speaking. 12, 16, whatever, it's a small number.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:30] It's a limited.

**Speaker 3** [00:36:31] It's a very limited set, right? So that includes sadness, frustration, envy, happiness, anger, you know, blah, blah blah, right. But it's a small set of things that you can feel. And we just want to accept them as feelings. I feel, it is a fact that I feel X. Okay, I feel x. I don't have to go on, that's why the period, period. I feel ex, period, I don' have to explain why, I don have to justify it, I just, that what I feel. I. So the agency tells you right there in the sentence, I feel X, period, right? Not because of you or whatever, just I feel x, period. And then you can sit with the feeling. Yes. Now, I think, why? Well, how many things can go inside a why?

**Speaker 2** [00:37:29] You mean the variable Y.

**Speaker 3** [00:37:30] Yeah, the variable Y. Yeah. Well, there's an infinite number of things that I can think. Yeah. Right? There's a universe of things. There's the universe of thing. So that's the real huge difference is this is thinking, this is feeling, this is, you know, eight to 16 things. Yep. This is an infinite number of thing that you can think and dot dot dot because also whatever, I can go on and on and but I don't do that with feelings. I feel X, period. Right. I think Y, dot, dot dot. Now, think about common conversation. I feel like you were mean to me.

**Speaker 4** [00:38:12] That's right.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:14] I feel like you're being a jerk. We use the manipulation of feelings in conversation.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:21] Well, and we interchange the words without any thought. Exactly. My favorite professor in college, when I would write papers, would say, you don't feel this policy XYZ. No.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:32] Yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:33] Right, you think that and that distinction was important.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:37] So you can't really say I feel anything but these 10 or 15 things.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:44] There's a limited...

**Speaker 3** [00:38:44] There's a very limited set of emotions that we have, limited meaning it's not infinite. It's a small set. We could argue whether it's eight, 16, whatever. Or it's a limited set, right, depending on which.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:58] Meaning emotions are different than thoughts. Emotions are constrained by this set, and thoughts are in...

**Speaker 3** [00:39:03] And, and we often will say. I feel this. And the reason is, because we know that feelings are going to be taken more seriously. And so we make our thoughts sound like feelings.

**Speaker 2** [00:39:21] Right, which is a manipulation.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:23] It's also because we confuse feelings and thinkings. I think that's right. And so this will help people understand that the sort of algorithm of a feeling is I feel x period. You don't have to justify it. You don' have to, all you gotta do is feel it, sit with it. And you don't to blame it. You can just say, I feel frustrated.

**Speaker 2** [00:39:45] and then I'm gonna ask you why.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:47] exactly that's exactly right and why why is that because we're always wanting a cause of the feelings yeah but you know where the cause is

**Speaker 2** [00:39:58] It's, yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:59] It's in the eye. Yeah. The cause of the feeling is the eye, I feel. And we always ask, why are you feeling this way? Yeah. Well, how about we just stick with your feeling that way. And then let you feel it. And then we can talk about, well, what are some of the mental models that are leading to this, which is I, that's you, with your mental models leading to that feeling.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:30] Yeah, I mean, and this happens a lot with the kids, right? So I feel sad, and if you stop and you say, okay, I'm gonna sit here with you while you feel sad. We're gonna feel sad together, and then we're gonna talk about it after you've felt it. Because once you've feel it, then you have the ability to be, well, you can think about it more clearly.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:51] And which conversation do you think is going to go faster? I feel sad and you sit with a person in sadness and then talk about it? Or I feel and you go, why? And then you start analyzing it and the person never actually ends up feeling sad.

**Speaker 2** [00:41:08] Or they feel and they conflate the feeling and the thinking and then there's a mess and they can't sort it out. Exactly. And then they say, oh, I think Johnny hates me. Then you can interrogate, well, what are the facts that Johnny hates you or doesn't hate you? I don't want to say rational, but you can be more thoughtful in whether or not that's an accurate mental model. and it's the mental model that preceded the feeling. Right, because I thought Johnny hated me. I felt sad, right? So you have to say what's the thought that preceded the feeling.

**Speaker 3** [00:41:47] I think Johnny hates me, dot dot dot, because he did this, and he did that, and I saw this, and then he said this, blah blah blah, and the thought can get quite complex. But I feel sad, period. But not, I feel Johnny hates me, which we do all the time.

**Speaker 5** [00:42:08] Yeah, but it's right

**Speaker 3** [00:42:10] I feel like the other day you did this, what? You felt that? Because that's not a feeling.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:18] Right. And I guess the point is you have to feel the feeling, you need to feel that feeling, you need metabolize the feeling. And then you can trace back what is the thought or the mental model that preceded that moment. Yes. Then you can go back and test that mental model's if it isn't real. Yes. And that's how you keep them separate. And that how you.

**Speaker 3** [00:42:42] Right, and this can happen kind of in a nonlinear way, right? Because if I have a reaction which is, oh, she thinks I'm stupid, you know, she's talking down to me, and I have feeling, like I'm feeling, you know, angry or something, well, I can say to myself, well how do I know she's talking down to me? Yeah. Is she? You don't. I don't know what to do.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:07] You don't know.

**Speaker 3** [00:43:08] And then I could ask, hey, do you mean, are you meaning to come off in this way? Because I, and you'd say no.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:17] and I would have.

**Speaker 3** [00:43:18] And then all of a sudden, I would dissipate that thought and that dissipate that feeling. Yes. Does that make sense? Yeah. So that's what I mean by metabolize. I don't always have to be angry. What I have to understand is what what is leading me to feel this feeling. And is there any validity to that meant that thinking that I had? Right. That's leading to the feeling. Yeah. Right. Because the thinking might be completely flawed.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:47] Yeah, and just taking that moment and asking that question is what facilitates an actual communication and facilitates actual understanding. Because we're choosing not to react. We're choosing to take a moment and act instead of react.

**Speaker 3** [00:44:04] But I think we've gotten to the point where we're now, we're now having feelings just to express our identity and things like that. We're having feelings so that it gives us an opportunity to say things that we want to say about ourselves. Say more. If you feel like you're not seen, like let's say I'm, you know, I don't know, let's see, I'm a really great horseback rider. I'm just like one of the best, but I don't get any accolades for being a great horseback rider. Yeah. But it's important to me that I'm a good horseman.

**Speaker 2** [00:44:41] It's part of who you are.

**Speaker 3** [00:44:42] in your opinion. I'm just making this up. I know. I'm not a good horseman. But you know, let's say it's important to me that I'm this horseman and you say, hey, you know. I don't know where this example's going, but, but you know, look at those, that beautiful farm. Yeah. And I go, well, that farm is not that beautiful. It doesn't have horses. And I'm kind of frustrated. How could you say that about that farm?

**Speaker 2** [00:45:16] because your identity is because my identity is

**Speaker 3** [00:45:17] Because my identity is, so I'm trying to get to a place where you recognize that I'm good at horses. Right. So I'm going to take any opportunity to triangulate and get it back there so that you'll see me. Right. Instead of just sharing with you, hey, I love horses. The horses are amazing. I love them. I love riding them. I want to talk about them all day. I'm just autistically horses.

**Speaker 2** [00:45:44] Share your ID.

**Speaker 3** [00:45:45] You know, and I love horses. and I'm gonna share it with you.

**Speaker 2** [00:45:51] Yeah, instead of creating situations where you get to feel like you're proactively setting forth who you are and what your identity is. In other words, you're creating conversations that allow you to express that rather than Just saying.

**Speaker 3** [00:46:10] Right. And if I do it by manipulating emotion, then it makes it so that you can't say no. Right. Right. Because you have to take my emotion seriously. Right? Yeah. So if I'm upset about your comment, your innocuous comment about the farm, then all of a sudden you're like, Whoa, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say that about the farm. Did that offend you? Yes. It's very offensive that you think. Cow farms are better than horse farms.

**Speaker 2** [00:46:40] And you're like, how did we get here?

**Speaker 3** [00:46:43] But we're doing that with all kinds of things that surround our identity, right? So then it's very important for us to show our identity rather than just sort of saying, hey, I'm really excited about my identity. We don't have the courage or the bravery to sort of say that. Hey, I am really excited about horses, I love horses. Anything a horse, I'd love. I'm a nerd about horses. I'm ridiculously into horses. Right. And I want you to like horses too, because I love horses so much.

**Speaker 2** [00:47:19] Well, yeah, and and to get angry at you for liking cows is a little bit silly because then they're not recognizing your identity of like

**Speaker 3** [00:47:26] But again, I'm not getting angry at you for liking cows. I'm utilizing emotion to make it so that I can be seen.

**Speaker 2** [00:47:37] instead of just being.

**Speaker 3** [00:47:38] Instead of just showing myself instead of showing up. I'm utilizing emotion to to sort of Flax my identity

**Speaker 2** [00:47:50] Well, so we started this with the whole idea that, you know, we're in a place where people take things personally. We conflate emotions and thinking, you know, all the time. And I think, you, know, if I were listening, I would want to remind myself that it's that moment of thoughtful pause or metacognition that allows you to be choosing. Do you see them as separate and can you?

**Speaker 3** [00:48:20] Don't conflate, distinguish, do the opposite of conflate and relate. So we don't want to conflate we want to relate and in order to relate these two things we have to distinguish them first. So don't conflater them, which is they're all the same, but distinguish them from each other so that you can see the differences between them, the beautiful differences between them. Yeah. and then relate them to see how is my thinking leading to this emotion and then have some agency in the whole process because here's the part that's amazing and this is the silver lining to all this. If you take agency, if you take responsibility for your feelings, you will suddenly have so much agency in the world. Yeah, that's right. You will be so empowered. you will have so much control that you've never felt before. You know, all these feelings of being out of control, suddenly you'll have all this control.

**Speaker 4** [00:49:28] Because

**Speaker 3** [00:49:28] because you'll have control of yourself. You'll pull those two by fours in and you won't be getting knocked around so much. And you'll be able to choose what direction you go with ease and you'll move fluidly. And you will have with less suffering, with less getting banged up.

**Speaker 2** [00:49:46] That's hard.

**Speaker 3** [00:49:46] You will have agency, you will have control, you will be empowered. And all of that comes from just taking a little bit of ownership of that reaction. Instead of saying, my reaction is your fault. As soon as you do that, the devil in that bargain is that you're giving away. the most amazing agency that you possess, which is the agency to choose how you feel, when you feel what you think, how, you know, all of that. Yeah. And you're, as soon as you start blaming other people for how you feeling, you're giving it all away. It's like you're just giving it away.

**Speaker 2** [00:50:37] Well, then you just exist in a reactive state and not an active state.

**Speaker 3** [00:50:41] Well, and you're disempowered. You are disempowering. You're dis-empower-ing yourself.

**Speaker 2** [00:50:45] Because you're at everybody else's mercy in that sense.

**Speaker 3** [00:50:48] and you don't realize your own strength and your own empowerment, your own agency, your own ownership, and all the power that comes with that.

**Speaker 2** [00:50:56] And if we all did that, then we would actually communicate with one another in a very functional way.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:02] Be a cool world.

**Speaker 2** [00:51:03] It would be a great world.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:04] It's a cool world

**Speaker 2** [00:51:06] No, no, no we're not going to end on that.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:09] What is that from, Disneylanders?

**Speaker 2** [00:51:10] It's a small world.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:11] I know, but I made a different song that's called It's a Cool World, but it's a different song.

**Speaker 2** [00:51:18] Anyway, I think this has been very interesting.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:21] Like or subscribe or else. No. And if you feel threatened by that, take accountability.