**Episode #20.wav**

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

**Speaker 2** [00:00:05] So what's up?

**Speaker 1** [00:00:07] How are you doing? I'm good. You good? Yeah. We're in summer. We are through Friday.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:13] There's a little bit of a different feel to summer.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:15] Yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:16] Thinking about something the other day I was thinking might be interesting. Might be a long winded start, but. You know, you think about this is going to sound strange, but for some reason in the summer we sort of behave differently. We have a different mindset and we have different habits in the summer than we do in the winter, in the fall that aren't actually completely tied to the weather. They're just sort of a mindset, right? And we have different patterns of behavior based on all kinds of things. And I was thinking generally about habits, what they are and how you break them and how you even see them. As for what they are, which is that they're habitual, for lack of a better word. Yeah. And the patterns. And I was thinking about you and I. You always talk about. When something's a pattern, then you can start to think about it as a habit or distinguish between that and a habit.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:09] Yeah, I know. That's so interesting. So that's what we're talking about.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:15] So what have we learned?

**Speaker 1** [00:01:16] So our habits.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:18] Well, I think I think we have behaviors and then we have patterns and we have habits. And I guess we should sort of suss that out and distinguish between and among them, you know, how do you know the difference?

**Speaker 1** [00:01:29] All right. So, yeah, so in systems thinking. Probably one of the more popular concepts. So it's best drawn. So I'll draw some familiar on the whiteboard here. So it's sometimes called the iceberg idea. And you know, this is the surface of the ocean and you might have like a little iceberg. And here's you in in this ship over here. Right. And you don't want to be the Titanic, so you want to, you know, but most folks. Tend to focus on events that are happening on the surface. So this is like this this level is kind of the events. You could think of it as the information level. You know, that kind of thing.

**Speaker 2** [00:02:23] So for people who are looking at this, they need to picture the ocean. Yeah. A part of an iceberg peeking out.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:29] Peeking.

**Speaker 2** [00:02:29] Out. And a boat does kind of come in towards it. But all the boat is is that top part? Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:35] You tend that tends to be what people's sort of action reaction life is all about. Right. Is like they tend to, you know, have an action reaction to this stuff on the surface. And that stuff is like the events that happen in our day, the the information that we're experiencing, the feelings that we're experiencing, that type of stuff. Right. And we just and it's like act and react and it's all about kind of doing, you know, it's all doing up here.

**Speaker 2** [00:03:06] And it's all and it's into the two things that are directly in front of us that we can see. So what we're focused on is what's right in front of us and what we what's in our view.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:14] And that's right. And and the idea is that there's much more to this thing. Than meets the eye. And so there's there's there's a whole, you know, huge iceberg underneath that's much larger. I mean, think about an ice cube floating on your drink. Yeah. The part that peaks out is much smaller than the part that's underneath.

**Speaker 2** [00:03:39] Right.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:40] So what is that part that's underneath made up of the the next sort of layer that you might want to think about is what we call patterns. And patterns are just these instantiation is this up here above the water is, you know, instantiation creations. Yeah, you might think of that as in instances of things, events, confirmations, occurrences, instances. Well, pattern is just instances of things that repeat themselves. Right. So something happens and then that same thing happens again and that same thing happens again. The same thing happens again. Our ability to recognize patterns is really important. Yeah. So we want to not just see the events or the instantiation, but the repeating patterns. Right.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:31] Right. And it's not always easy to see.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:33] Yeah. It's not always easy.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:35] So a little while ago, you were giving an example in another conversation about, you know, if you end up that you're you're dating the same person over and over again. Right. But you're not seeing it. You're not seeing the pattern of of who you are attracting or who you know or how you're.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:51] That's a great example because a lot of folks, if you stay at the events, instantiation information level. Then you're not literally dating the same person you're dating John, and then you're dating Bob, and then you're dating Frank. And John is not. Bob is not Frank. Right. So at the instantiation or the event, the informational level, the part above the surface, you're like, No, those are three different people. Right. But at the pattern level. Is where you can see how Jesus, John and Frank and Bob, you know, they all kind of are basically the same dude. You know, they're the same or they have the same. They treat me in the same way. We have the same dynamic, blah, blah, blah. And that's where you see the pattern, right? Right. And if you can do that, that's great. If you can get below the events, the instantiation and see the patterns. Right. And a pattern is any time it's more than two. Right. So like the example I always give because it's such a visceral example is on 911, when the when the first plane hit, everybody thought, that's terrible. An accident happened where a plane ran into a building. When the second plane hit. That's pretty much all anybody needed to know in order to establish a pattern. Right. This is something different than an accident. Right. So a pattern is the smallest pattern is too instantiation repeating. But there could be multiple patterns. But then there's another whole world underneath patterns, which is structure. Structure. The structure of the system, the system structure, And in in the system sciences, what we talk about is that system structure determines the behavior of the system. Right? Right. So if you're if you're sort of noticing a pattern where you have a similar dynamic with in your dating, let's say. Yeah, that's always a good one for you. Right. So, I just keep getting in these relationships where it's dysfunctional in this ex way. Right. Right. Well, something about the system structure that you're setting up is leading to that behavioral pattern.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:09] Just because I think this is this is an interesting example, but structure determining behavior. I mean, I think another thing that we've talked about is even when you go to the DMV and they've got those those partitions to make the line. So that structure is actually determining the behavior by which patrons are going through. Yeah. So analogously, you know, it doesn't have to be a physical thing, right? But that there's something that is causing you to choose a certain way.

**Speaker 1** [00:07:39] That's right. Yeah. And you would never choose that unless that structure appeared, right? You would never serpentine throughout the front counter unless there was a structure there to determine the behavior.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:49] I understand, but that doesn't. But you're saying it's not always a physical structure?

**Speaker 1** [00:07:53] Well, I mean, technically, it's everything's sort of physical at the end of the day, but by the time we'll do that, that's a little bit more deeper. But but I mean, it is it might not always be obvious. I mean, that's the biggest problem is that that the events, the information, the instantiation tend to be obvious or at most obvious, you can see them, you can touch them. What's happening in front of you? Yeah. Whereas the patterns are not entirely obvious all the time, which is why we miss them. And the structures are even less obvious, which is why we miss them even more. Right, right, right. And there's something that's even more or less obvious than that, which is beneath the structure level. So at the base of the of the iceberg, way down at the bottom is mental models. Right. And so, you know, these mental models are driving the system structure and the system structure is driving the patterns and the patterns are driving the events.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:56] So talk a little bit more about I think people might be wondering how are mental models causing the system structure? That's a that's kind of a hard concept to to think about because, you know, you talk a lot about mental models, but we've never related them to.

**Speaker 1** [00:09:12] You know. Yeah. So one way to think of it is like there's a concept called lock in, in complexity where systems get locked in, right? And so we, we've seen this at the at the cusp of the electronic car. The electric car. Yeah. Revolution. Right in the very beginning when when electric cars first it was can can we even produce electric cars that are like viable. Right. But then it was like, wow there's a there's a viable electric car. But what is not viable is the system structure, which means I can buy an electric car, but I can't drive across the country. I can't drive from here to DC. I can't drive 400 miles or something like that because there was no system structure. Right? And and if you think about it, the reason there was no system structure is because everybody believed everybody's mental model for a long time was you needed cars, you needed gas, road gas, cars. Yeah, gasoline cars. Right. And so then based on that mental model, obviously every I see, you know, every so often you would place there would be opportunities for gas stations, I guess. Right. But there was no there was no mental model to say, well, we need electric charging stations because we have electric cars. And so for a long time you could actually get electric cars, but you didn't have really the system structure in place to get charging stations, right? So the system structure determined that behavior. And then people said, okay, now we have to work not just on the car part, we got to work on the the network of places that are spaced a certain amount apart, basically on the distance of the, you know, the charging time of the car and things like that.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:02] Yeah, I get it. I get wires.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:03] And so now we build that system structure. Well that, that comes from a mental model that a collective mental model of this is, this is now possible you could drive across the United States in an electric vehicle.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:17] Yes, I get that. So another way. So I think that's a great example. And I was thinking about a large corporation we worked with where they were shifting from an industrial organization to a digital industrial. That's right. So that's a mental model. That's a shifting and that's going to require.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:32] Different.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:33] Structures, different structure.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:34] Absolutely. I understand. So they they could have that mental model first and then it becomes clear what they need to do. But boy, a lot of work has to take place to build the structures to move from an industrial, mental and industrial set of systems. Yeah. To a digital industrial set of systems. Interesting. And then those systems are going to create patterns and those patterns are going to create behavior, you know, instantiation and events and all the things that they want to happen up there.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:03] So then I have two questions. Yeah. What's the danger of staying up top? At the event or the surface business.

**Speaker 1** [00:12:11] That was a quick answer. Yeah. Total cluelessness. Yeah. Nothing. The danger of. Of staying up top. Is that you don't realize that the movement of that top part of the iceberg is almost entirely dependent on the thing underneath hitting things or being affected by the currents of the ocean underneath. And so you might be paddling and working really hard to say, I'm on this little piece of ice and I'm going to paddle. What would get let's all of us paddle real hard to get over there. But there's a huge ocean current going the opposite way that's got this under underwater sail, essentially. That is, you know, much stronger than you. So the the aside from cluelessness, it's that you're going to, you know, the things that you want to occur, the effort that you put into those things occurring aren't going to happen the way that you want them to happen. You're not going to get the results that you want.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:17] Because there's all this underneath that you're not seeing is actually shaping what's happening at the surface that you're not aware of.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:23] Yeah. Or worst case scenario, you're the Titanic. That's right. I mean, that's even worse than just general cluelessness and not getting results. Total devastation is the worst thing that can happen, which is you go, there's just a little piece of ice. Let's bump it out of the way and then move the Titanic. Everything is fine.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:43] We could just go for a swim.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:44] Yeah. That's not good.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:46] So then. Okay, so that was my first question. My second question is. Okay, so. So say I understand that that I am in essence living at the surface level and I'm just reacting to events. Yes, that's how I'm living my daily life. How do I get how do I as a person learn to go down a level and look for or see the like? How do you do that? How do you see the patterns?

**Speaker 1** [00:14:11] Yeah. So there's there's one more level here that I would underneath mental models is this this the mental Gorgon is organizing structure of DSP. Yes. And if you were to think about your question is how do I kind of penetrate this veil, this surface and go deeper and deeper down to here from from here to here, right? And the answer. Is awareness. Yes. Right. Which in in science is just called metacognition. Right. Right. Which is just being a little bit more aware of how your thinking or how you're building these mental models, which is what DSP gives you. It gives you this awareness. So DSP is going to help you see the patterns, see the structures, see the mental models, and then possibly distinguish between one mental model and another. Choose a different mental model and then build structures around that, build patterns around that, build events around that differently. So one word awareness. I mean, awareness will get you everything.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:21] Yes. And we build awareness by intentionally focusing on how we're thinking things through the mental models we're building, slowing ourselves down. Is that where you're heading?

**Speaker 1** [00:15:33] Yeah. So that's really interesting because. Because when people think about awareness, this is one of my my soapbox, the pet peeve kind of kind of areas. Which is which? When think people think about awareness. They get real, like peaceful and meditative and reflective and they start using words like that. And that's all great. Like meditation is very powerful. Being peaceful is very powerful. Being reflected is very powerful. Taking time, going for a hike, you going for a walk and smelling the daisies Very generally. Yeah, exactly. But but what we wanted, what we want to understand is that's not the only way to gain awareness.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:18] Right?

**Speaker 1** [00:16:20] If you practice. Seeing the way that you're building mental models, you can actually increase the speed and aggressiveness with which you. Articulate and visualize your mental models and so you can visualize your mental models while they're happening. You can visualize other people's mental models while they're happening. And it can be a very fast, very active, very purposeful desk. Right. So it's not always a lot of people think, you know, I'm going to do, do, do, do, do, do, do. I'm going to live in this active this this stimulus response world. And then I'm going to take a break. I'm going to take a vacation. I'm going to go medic. Yeah. Yeah, right. Yeah. And that's one way to handle it. But it's really not the operational way of awareness, because what you're doing is you're changing the context that you're in. Well, yeah. It's. It's easy to be calm when you're sitting in a mountain retreat. Right? Where it's not easy to be calm is when the bullets are flying and the, you know, the craziness is happening or the, you know, at the office, the politics and all that. That's where you want to have sort of that whole set of of events slow down because you're fast at it.

**Speaker 2** [00:17:44] Yes, I understand.

**Speaker 1** [00:17:45] That makes sense.

**Speaker 2** [00:17:46] Yeah, I guess what I'm getting at is. I think a large part of our daily life is almost autonomic, like we're going through life just in pattern, established patterns of what we do, how we think about things. And we're sort of just going through life in a in a in an unaware state. And I remember one time I was driving, I was going down to I was used to being a book club. And we had just read the book Flow.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:18] Which you sent me.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:20] And I was running late, which was a pattern of my to be late. And then that lateness was causing me to feel.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:29] Stress, stress.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:30] So then I'm driving and literally driving down the hill to meet the book club and I'm driving too fast. And I took a moment and I thought, I'm driving too fast. And then I had a moment where I said, I'm driving too fast because I'm running late, because I'm not paying attention to my own. You know, all of these patterns of what happened in the day earlier that caused me to be late. And it was such a pivotal moment for me. And you just need to slow down because you're going to get there. And it was literally and it was it was because I remember always feeling that way a long time ago, not recently driving, like, always being late. And it's just that it and so when I say slow down, it's not literally slow down. It's just it's a it's an instantaneous moment of pause. Well, what am I doing?

**Speaker 1** [00:19:22] Yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:23] And why am I doing it? And how is it serving me to be this way? And to me, you have to do that before you get to where you're saying.

**Speaker 1** [00:19:32] Well, I think that is what I'm saying. That's a perfect example of what I'm saying. Like, it's that's different. I mean, what you just explained is it is a perfect example of what I'm saying because. What I think people tend to do is they go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go. Right. Fire! Ready, aim! Fire! Ready. Fire! Ready, Aim. Fire! Ready, aim. Stay in at the top. Above the surface. In the events world. In the stimulus response. Doing, doing, doing world. And then they go. Okay, I need to take. I need to take a pause, which is the weekend or obligation. So. So that the hustle and bustle of the doing world is always separated from the calmness of vacation of, let's say, the weekend. Unless you have kids in sports and you know, or the meditative retreat or the time. But what I'm saying is you took a pause right in the middle of it. Yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:33] You're saying that pause has to happen every moment? Yeah. Not only on the weekend or at a retreat.

**Speaker 1** [00:20:38] When it's happening.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:39] When I'm literally crawling down the hill, worried for my life because I'm acting irrationally.

**Speaker 1** [00:20:44] You got to pause in the crazy. Yeah. So that you can get some crazy. No, no, no. In that crazy. Well, it could be, you know, in the in the craziness of life. Yes. You've got to take a metacognitive pause, which can be like if you get good at it, it can be almost instantaneous and get good at taking those instantaneous pauses and going, what do I do with like, why am I doing what I'm doing? Why am I saying what I'm saying in this meeting? Why am I doing what I'm doing as I'm eating? Why am I yeah, working out this way? Why am I, you know, pushing this stretch in this way? Why am I doing what I'm doing when I'm with my backhand? Whatever it is that's important to you, why am I dressed in the way I'm dressing? You know, like whatever is important to you? Yeah. Having these little metacognitive moments interspersed throughout the day rather than seeing them as like, there's the weekday and there's the weekend. Right, right, right. There's the. There's work and there's vacation. Yeah. And I'm saying let's sprinkle in the metacognition into life.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:52] Yeah. I think what's interesting about that because I remember I came back and I and I talked to you about that and. And it was when I sort of started to learn this concept because I had recognized a pattern. And then I think you asked me a question, Well, what are the structures in your day that cause you, that lead you to be in that spot where you're running late and you're in, you're feeling crazy and you're driving too fast and. And that was a moment for me where I saw that connection that you were talking about between the structures and the patterns of behavior that I was exhibiting.

**Speaker 1** [00:22:25] Right.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:26] So then you have to go back and say, well, what are those structures and what do I need to change?

**Speaker 1** [00:22:30] Yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:31] You know, allowing more time to get ready, you know, not trying to fit too many things in 1 in 1 hour. You know, there were a million little changes to the structure of my day that caused me to not always be late anymore. Yeah. You know, because I anticipated that pattern.

**Speaker 1** [00:22:47] And that is that really gets at it. It sort of take these things here. The patterns, the structures and the mental models that. Is what we call a habit.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:02] Stick on an.

**Speaker 1** [00:23:03] Animal. Well, habits are habits are habitual. Instantiation of things that are based on system structures. Right? That are based on mental models. And so if you want to change a habit, you know, there's kind of two ways to deal with habits. You're trying to build new habits. Or you're trying to break existing habits that you. That you don't like. So in the case of. In the case of your. You are rushing all the time and driving. Yeah. You know, there's a whole set of mental models and system structures and patterns. Yes. And events. Right. That happen. The events are your rush. You're driving fast. Rush into the next thing. Yeah. But the next thing is in book club. The next thing is, you know, school drop off or. Yeah, this meeting or that meeting or whatever. Right. And. The pattern is I'm always doing that. Doing that thing all over the structure is, you know. You know, there could be a lot of structures that you have too many things You're trying to pack too many things into. Like you're not managing your time, you're not managing your priorities. You're doing a lot of different things. And then the mental model is, okay, I have to do all these things. I need to do all these things. I'm a loser if I don't do all these things, whatever it is.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:25] Mental health.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:26] Yeah. And and so that's the that's the sort of maladaptive habit. Yeah. And then what is the adaptive habit? That is another set of mental models. Driving system structures. Driving patterns. All right. So I'll give you an example. Yeah. Some of this. That's very simple. Yeah. Yeah. I know people have probably learned by now that I am neurodiverse, you know, with ADHD and lots of things. Autism, things like that. It's going to sound crazy, but it's. It's actually really difficult for me to. Make brushing my teeth. Yes. A habit. Right. And and so I have to I have to really think about the structures that are in place. Well, I found a structure. Which works. And that is that. And it's a strange set of structures. One is it has to be an electric toothbrush. Okay. Two is it has to be a certain toothpaste that's not too spicy because it, like, hurts my mouth. It hurts my brain through my mouth. That's the best way I can explain it. Yeah. And then it has to be in the shower, right? Because you had a toothbrush. Has to be in the shower and the toothpaste has to be in the shower because they have an economy of movement. Yeah. Yeah. And. And I'm always trying to create economy of movement. Yeah. And so when I do it that way, it works. But if I have it some other way, it doesn't work. Yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:02] Because that's a structure that's causing your behavior. Yes. And that is what works.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:07] So that mental model of how to create those structures and have those structures in place versus a different mental model, the mental model most people use is you've got a little cup next to your sink and it's got a toothbrush in it and you've got your toothpaste there and it's like an extra peppermint or whatever. Yeah, And you brush in front of the mirror. Well, that doesn't work for me.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:28] No, because. Because a non a, I guess neurotypical person who has control over their focus just goes and forces themselves to brush their teeth.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:38] That's right.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:38] But when you don't have that focus, you have to co-located with another necessary function. Yes. Which allows you to have and then you're getting a benefit of the economies of your movement. And so you're incentivized like, yeah, I can do that. Yes. So that that's actually a great example of the structure determining the behavior.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:56] And so I'll give you another example. You know, we had a whole episode on Goop.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:01] I remember.

**Speaker 1** [00:27:02] Well, of course, you know, everybody. I don't know very many people that don't like bread, for example. I can I can resist Skittles and, you know, sugary things like that that aren't terribly attractive. Yeah. But, you know, probably bread is the harder one because bread empirically is delicious. Right. It is. But what I had to do was. Really rebuild the mental model around Brad where I said to myself, Brad, every time I see Brad, I'm going to imagine bread as Goop coming out of the in the factory in a tube. In a tube, like a tube of toothpaste with bread, like huge, huge perspire of bread goop. And what I did was I retrain my brain to think negatively about bread. Right. And so that's working at the mental model level. Then also not making a rule that there's no bread, also not shopping for bread and all those kind of structural things you can do. And then you change the pattern, which is changing the, you know, the almost surface level habit and you change the instantiation. Yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:13] Now, that's interesting. So then if I were to say, well, okay, I have this habit.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:17] I also came up with the word goop. True too, to kind of put like a negative. You know, you want to you want to, you want to take if you if you want to build the habit, what you want to do is make it like really positive, really accessible, really easy, really whatever. And if you want to break a habit, then you want to you want to kind of make it make it like difficult to put things in your way to stop you from doing it, make it tangibly disgusting, you know, or something like that. Come up with metaphors that that tap into your emotional centers of disgust. Yeah. You know, things like that.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:00] I had a I had a friend who was who really loved smoking. Cigarets.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:06] I love smoking. Cigarets. I don't smoke Cigarets. But Cigarets are are wonderful.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:11] No, I don't think so.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:12] But to smoke, they're absolutely horrible. Hate them. Well, yeah. They're horrible for you. Yeah, Obviously, we shouldn't smoke. I'm not saying that, but, I mean, cigarets themselves are sublime.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:29] I appreciate your perspective. I personally have never enjoyed or are. I grew up in a nonsmoking household. To me, I have a different mental model of it, probably. But what I was saying was I had a friend who loved smoking.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:44] Yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:45] And really, really had a hard time quitting. And then when I guess his wife got pregnant and she said, you have to.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:53] Quit smoking, like, well.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:54] You just you have to quit smoking. And he just he didn't believe he could. So he went to this actual therapist who was meant to break habits. That was all he did was help people break bad habits. And the first thing he said I was I remember talking to him after he went to a session was take a piece of paper and add up how much you spend on Cigarets in a day. Multiply it by week by month by year, and then make a list of all the things you wish you had today that you could have bought with all that money. So that's a negative. That's what you're saying. It's a really negative associations opportunity cost.

**Speaker 1** [00:30:32] And it's also working at this mental model level, right? So that you can then change the structures, right? So a habit is a pretty stubborn thing by definition. Right. And it has all these layers to it. It's got event instantiation, it's got pattern, it's got system structure, it's got mental model structure. So that's why they're difficult to undo. So you got to hit it from a lot of different places. It's a web of causality. It's not a single cause. Right. So, you know, yes, he's got to add up all the cost of smoking, but that's not going to break that habit. He's going to do 20 other things in his life to make it more difficult to smoke at that key moment when it's almost impossible not to smoke. Right. Right. Like it feels absolutely.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:23] Essential and.

**Speaker 1** [00:31:23] Essential that I go smoke, You're going to die. And at that moment, you've got to create a bunch of difficulty, right? Right.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:31] Including structures.

**Speaker 1** [00:31:32] Including structures to create difficulties. Get in your way. Right. And the more you do that, the more you're going to be able to overcome that really difficult moment that is emotional and visceral and all these kinds of things. And the same goes for trying to build a new habit. For a new habit. You got to remove all those barriers, right? And make it really easy to make that healthy choice or make it easy to. But in order to do any of that, you've got to understand these levels of the instantiation level, the pattern level, the system structure, and then most importantly, the mental models and how you're organizing them and how you can organize them differently, how you can disrupt your mental models in a different way. Because a lot of times the reason that a habit is a habit is because you can't imagine doing it differently, right? You can't imagine a mental model being organized differently. If you can imagine it being organized differently, then you can commit to that. You can make that attractive. You can make this mental model, this old mental model that's spurring the current habit, and it's unattractive. Yeah. You can build the structures, put the structures in place that make this model one easy and this one difficult. Right. You can pay attention to the patterns of where you're going to go off the rails over here and block and where you're getting on the rails and reward, you know, those kinds of things.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:07] So when you when you originally were talking about this and you were talking about that this path is the path of awareness. It's metacognition. And when you when you take this these ideas relative to habit, what you're saying is. If you think you have a habit that's let's say in this case, bad for you. You have to be aware of the behaviors that you engage in, why you behave in them, what structures are facilitating you to have that bad habit. Rework the structures. You'll get different behavior. Yeah, that's why people remove cigarets from their house. They remove bread from their fridge.

**Speaker 1** [00:33:45] Yeah. I mean, you have to see the pattern first. Yeah, right. And then see the system structures. And I know that sounds like maybe a little strange. Like you have to see the pattern. How could you not see the pattern? But a lot of people don't see the patterns in New Zealand to see the pattern. Like because if I drink, I'm not an alcoholic. But if I drink and drink and drink in it, then it's consistently causing problems. And I'm not picking on my kids and I'm not doing this. And. Yeah. You know, then all of a sudden, at some point, that becomes a pattern. Yeah, right. So the instantiation alone isn't enough. But if you never recognize the pattern, just like in AA, like one of the first, the Alcoholics Anonymous, like, you know, the first thing they they need you to do is say, hey, I'm I'm an alcoholic. Well, that's yeah. Calling out the pattern. They're not saying I drink alcohol or I drink alcohol. They're saying I am an alcoholic, which means drinking it. I am in a pattern. Yeah. That's why it's so critical, because it means you're below the surface. You're below the event instantiation. Yeah. And that's the critical moment where you can start some healing or some change or whatever. This this isn't just for habits. I'm just putting.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:06] No, I know.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:06] Context. Yeah. Yeah. Then once you see the pattern, then you can start to say, okay, what system structures merely ensure that this pattern is not going to change. Yeah, right.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:17] Let's talked a little bit. We've talked a lot about it. The pattern is structure, a little bit of mental models. Let's talk a little bit more at this deeper level. So let's say, for example, you recognize that you have to stick with it. I have a pattern which I'm literally drinking every day and I finally realize it. And then I realize the one of the ways I can start having that pattern is I, you know, I changed the structure of my day. I remove the alcohol from my house. There's just different things I do to try to get myself not to not to drink. Well, maybe my mental model is what I need. Alcohol to manage my stress. Which means then I have to replace that mental model with. Maybe I need to start running to manage my stress.

**Speaker 1** [00:36:02] Yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:03] Right. So it's just that mental model shift, but at the very basic level, because in the beginning you talked about DSR being being that elemental thing. Well, that's a distinction, right? That's a distinction. What I need and what I want. And so I guess what I'm wondering is. We should talk a little bit about how these two things relate to the whole thing. Right. Why is the SRP at the base of awareness?

**Speaker 1** [00:36:27] Yeah, because mental models, mental models we see Am equals. Ill mental models are made up of information. And the way that information is organized and SRP is are the ways that all humans organize information. Right. So again, with the information is up here at the top, but how we organize that meant that information determines what our mental model is. And so, you know, we're going to make certain distinctions. Like, you know, you mentioned that there's drinking and then there's stress and then there's the relationship between the drinking and the stress. So the stress leads to the drinking or something like that. Right. Or the stress leads to the. Smoking or whatever. Whatever it is. Right. Okay. Well, you know, so this this is really an effect of some other thing. Right. And there's a relationship there. Well, you know what is leading to the stress, for example? Right. So we need to think about the relationships and the parts of the whole that lead to the stress. And is there something we could change about the way that's organized And and like you said, can we can we have stress lead to a different behavior like working out instead of smoking or drinking? So can we get rid of smoking, get rid of drinking and do some working out or go for a run? Okay. Those are different ways to deal with stress. But just replacing this for that, you know, that's one solution. Just replacing, running, you know, drinking with running. That's a solution.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:10] Yeah, I mean, it's a reactive solution.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:11] But yes, it's it's somewhat reactionary and it'll it'll have a possibly positive effect. But is there something we can do on this side with this these set of parts that these causes that are leading to the stress in the first place?

**Speaker 2** [00:38:26] Because this is the problem. This is the problem. These are outcomes of this.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:31] Yes. And this is a mental model. So this.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:35] Yes. Sorry. I'm pointing out the stress. The stress is the problem. The drinking and the smoking are an outcome. Yes. Or a reaction to the stress. So what what you are saying is that it would be yes, it'd be better to work out or run. But you still have the causal thing of the stress. So go back behind the stress. Right. What are these three things that cause the stress and work on these?

**Speaker 1** [00:38:56] And is there anything you know, why is it that I mean, in the same way that you might be addicted to smoking or drinking or exercise or whatever. Are you addicted to stress?

**Speaker 2** [00:39:09] See, that's weird, but.

**Speaker 1** [00:39:10] Yes, right. I mean, you know, like as a again, as a neurodiverse person, I use stress all the time because we have trouble with transitions. Right. So for me, inside of an activity isn't difficult. But first, transitions can be deadly. Like, literally, just like. Yeah. Moving from this project to this project? Yes. The switching costs for a neurodiverse person are immense. They're difficult and that's very difficult. And sometimes you have to use things purposefully to get you over that transitionary hump.

**Speaker 2** [00:39:50] So another way to think about that is you use stress as a means to create your focus to shift. Yes. Right. And so there's this running joke in our household. That's why we get in the airport every morning, every time at two in the morning, no matter what time. And for the pilot, we're literally at the airport because that's that that cost for you is high. And then the thing that's interesting, though, is once you've switched your focus, then you're hyper focus. Yes. Right. So the transition is the hard part. But then then I got to get to the airport. I've got to get the airport. I've got to get to the airport. And then we're all sitting there before the coffee is brewed.

**Speaker 1** [00:40:26] Before the stores are open.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:27] Waiting way out of the flight. Yeah, exactly. But it's part of our charm now. That is part of our fun. We look forward to it and we joke about it, which is good.

**Speaker 1** [00:40:36] Well, I was just thinking that the one thing the research says on on this is that that. Increasing awareness will increase your success in all domains. It's really. Yeah, that's right. It's really quite remarkable that something as simple as metacognition, simple awareness, like just expanding your awareness of what you're doing in the moment. And I really mean that like in the moment, expanding your your awareness of what you're doing and why you're doing it in the moment rather than. Taking a meditation retreat. I'm not against meditation retreats. I'm not against going for a walk, you know, yoga, whatever. Yeah, right. Vacations. But those are those are different. Like that's to decompress and that, you know, gain perspective and all this kind of stuff. What I'm talking about is awareness in the moment. Awareness like I think of it as ready, aim, fire instead of fire. Ready, aim. Right. It's ready, aim, fire. The ready is a moment. Yeah, and it can be very fast. But you don't go. Fire. Ready, Aim. You go. Ready, aim, Fire!

**Speaker 2** [00:41:51] I would also say I think doing that in the moment, I mean, my memory of barreling down that hill in my car was probably 15 years ago. And because I had that moment in the moment, I will never forget it. I mean, it's literally something I have. And literally when I'm going somewhere and I'm starting to feel that way up and I can remind myself, remember that.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:15] Know.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:15] 15 years ago, you don't want to be that. You don't want to go back there. That was a bad pattern.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:21] That's right.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:22] Yeah. And it was not good for me.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:23] So I think and that's where a lot of our life happens is in the moment. Yeah. You know, so and so. Always waiting for some, some relaxing, you know, reflective moment in order to be calm and peaceful and all these things. That's not that's not very pragmatic for a lot of folks. What's pragmatic is awareness in the moment. And and and what our research has really shown is that you can you can build with a with not very much effort, you can build the ability, the skill to have greater awareness in every moment. Yeah. Without that much effort. Yeah. And it will have a dramatic impact on you. It'll really transform the way you live your life. Yeah. And it transforms your relationship to yourself because you actually kind of become your buddy, your own best buddy. And then you're never in. Then you're never lonely because you have your own best buddy with you all the time.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:29] That's true. And you know, it's funny, as ever since that time when I sort of saw myself barreling down that hill in the car and I sort of at that moment that that awareness came at me stepping outside of it for a second and looking down now. And I'm doing things that I find like, I don't know, random things. I'm kind of looking at myself from up above. I'm like, what is what is she doing? Should she be doing that? Is that a pattern? Is that a good at, you know, like, where's that headed? And so this this sort of I know you always this third eye thing, which is a little alien.

**Speaker 1** [00:44:00] Like you've got a Jane Goodall that you.

**Speaker 2** [00:44:02] Can observe yourself. I'm a student of yourself. Yeah. Pay attention to your patterns.

**Speaker 1** [00:44:06] Think about yourself as, like, a very interesting primate. Yeah. And then another part of yourself is Jane Goodall hanging out in the bushes, watching you and being like. What's that? What's that guy doing all like that little monkey doing over there? What's he up to? But he's you, you know, or she's you or whatever, and just put in a little part of your brain on you. Yeah. To be. And being curious. I mean, really being curious, not judgmental because a lot of our the part of our brain that's on us is very judgy. Yeah. You don't want to be the judge. Jane Goodall wasn't sitting there judging primates from the Bushes. She was, like, fascinated with brilliance. Brilliant. Yeah. I mean, she's easy on the best scientists, and she. She's, like, fascinated by these. By these monkeys. By these primates. Right. And so, like, you're the primate and you're Jane Goodall. In your own life. Yeah. And be fascinated by yourself, because you're an interesting critter. Yeah. You know, we're all interesting critters, and we do interesting things and for interesting reasons. And we. We very rarely. It is extremely rare. That we do things for no reason.

**Speaker 2** [00:45:24] That's interesting.

**Speaker 1** [00:45:25] We're never I guess we're never doing something. Anything for no reason. There's always a logic to it. Yeah. It might not always seem that way, but there's always some underlying logic to why we're doing what we're doing. Because we're trying to. We're trying to realize something or get something or bring something about or, you know, our mental model of the situation might be wrong. And so then in, you know, in hindsight, it looks illogical and silly. Yes. But at the time, it makes entire sense. Total sense to us to what we're doing.

**Speaker 2** [00:46:04] Yeah. So if you kind of take that step back, you might actually see a difference. Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:46:08] Yeah. That's cool. So is that. Was that what you wanted to talk about? That was a completely in a totally different direction than what you were talking about.

**Speaker 2** [00:46:18] No, that was exactly what I wanted to talk about and much, much more. And so I. I personally find this conversation fascinating. I'm hoping that everybody else did, too, which means it's time for us to wrap.

**Speaker 1** [00:46:33] Up for the first few.