**Episode #27**

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

**Speaker 2** [00:00:05] Hey. Hey. How you doing?

**Speaker 1** [00:00:07] I'm doing great.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:08] I'm really excited for today. We are going to be talking only about one thing, distinctions.

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

**Speaker 2** [00:00:16] Identity other distinctions.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:17] That's the only kind there is.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:19] I know. And I really, I think it would be really good for us to provide a more in-depth discussion of just one of these patterns of thinking.

**Speaker 3** [00:00:32] One of the four DSR and P distinctions, systems, relationships, and perspectives. But you're saying we're just going to talk about distinctions.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:41] I know. I just want to talk about that because I think it'll be really useful for people to understand distinctions at a slightly deeper level.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:50] Cool. So are we going to do ones on?

**Speaker 2** [00:00:53] We will, we'll do one, you know what, we will, we'll a set. Okay. One of D, one of S, one R, so we'll call them deep dive.

**Speaker 3** [00:01:00] Okay, deep dive in the distinctions.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:02] So, let's start with what we know. What we know about distinctions, and I know when you and I first started all of this, we were looking to find evidence of existence and effectiveness. So, lets talk a little bit more about how we started with that.

**Speaker 3** [00:01:22] DSRP is a mathematical formula, and it makes certain predictions. And so we wanted to see whether those predictions have an empirical basis. And one of the predictions it makes is about distinctions. And it says a bunch of different things about distictions, but one of things it says is it's that they're universal but that the mind of all people are constantly making distinctions, but also that nature itself, meaning reality, is also making distictions, and whether or not your mind is making the same distinctions that nature is, kind of, that's the point, is the more aware you are of your distinction-making, the more you can be of, oh, am I making the distinctions that are occurring in reality, or am I make slightly different ones?

**Speaker 2** [00:02:21] But when you say universal, you mean everybody all the time is making distinctions when they're doing anything. I'm choosing between coffee and tea. differentiating my five children named George, whatever it is.

**Speaker 3** [00:02:36] whatever it is it's george foreman's we're on we're

**Speaker 2** [00:02:38] We're always making distinctions.

**Speaker 3** [00:02:40] always and not just, not just we're not just talking about conceptually in the mind. You are making distinctions when you're making concepts or ideas, but you're making distictions when you are touching things. You're making distensions when you're tasting things. Your tongue, your taste buds are making distinctions. You are distinguishing when you hearing things, when you seeing things. You're distinguishing between one thing and another. And so the basic structure of a distinction is identity, the thing, and the other or the not thing. And so we can think of a distinct as being not a thing, but actually kind of like a fence between two things. Like a boundary. A boundary between, a line between two thing. So when we make a distinction, what we're doing is sort of saying, This is something. And when we call that something out, we're by definition creating a not thing, even if we're not aware of it. And we often are not aware that. So a lot of these things that I've just mentioned are all predictions that DSRP would make about distinctions, that there's an identity component, that there is an other component, that people are doing it all the time, that nature is doing it, all the times. and a bunch of other stuff and that the other is also an identity.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:09] Yes, okay, so.

**Speaker 3** [00:04:10] things like that. So those are all predictions that the theory makes, and we wanted to test whether or not those things turned out to be valid or true.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:19] So just to slow it down a little bit so that we're, you know, for the audience, when you say there's an identity and there's another, and there is the thing and the not thing, And just to give a very simple example, there's Laura. And there's not Laura.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:37] I'm no more.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:38] Which is you and this water bottle and this computer and the sun everything that isn't me. Yes is all not Laura

**Speaker 3** [00:04:47] And also, when I said the other is also an identity, you can think of me as not Laura, but, and that would be one way to conceptualize me. I am not Laura. But you can also realize that I am not simply defined by Laura, by not being Laura. I'm also defined as Derek. Which is the identity side of me, not Laura, is the other side of me. And everything in the universe has this structure to it. And everything in your mind has this structure to it. And it provides almost like the breathing of cognition. I mean, that's how pervasive distinction making is. You cannot think of anything or about anything. without distinction. Yes. You're always making distinctions, whether you like it or not.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:50] Okay, so then how do we know or what what do we give some examples of how we know they exist in nature, for example?

**Speaker 3** [00:05:59] Yeah so there's many many many studies that show that distinctions exist across the various disciplines and we've done, we're not going to mention all of them because there's hundreds of them. But whether it's you know physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, astronomy, economics, business policy, basket weaving, you know it doesn't really matter skateboarding, you know, whatever discipline. or sub-discipline you're in, and whatever phenomena of nature that discipline or subdisciplin is studying, there are distinctions. And so, as a few examples we can give you, one is fetuses in the womb are actually making distinctions, so this is pre-language, pre-birth. we are making distinctions. And we know this because studies have shown that babies actually have familiarity with their mother's voice, for example, because they've heard it in the womb. They have familiarity with the poems or songs that a mother or father sang to them in utero, right? So they're aware of those things from from being in the womb. So they're making a distinction between a song that they know and a song they don't know. Right. That they heard in the wound.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:36] Right, which gets back to what you were saying, which is we make distinctions of all five of our senses.

**Speaker 1** [00:07:40] All five of us.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:40] So you're saying there's the auditory, you know, you're making distinctions based on what you hear. Yes. And then there's also obviously distinctions you touch and see and things like that. Absolutely. It also reminds me of, you can't remember if it's penguins. Yes. Is it penguins? Penguins.

**Speaker 1** [00:07:59] Penguins, yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:01] Penguins, I think we saw this documentary about, there's penguins and there's thousands and thousands of penguins.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:07] Yes. Penguin colony, 40,000 penguins. And roughly 15,000 of those are juvenile penguins, and they actually can, the parents and the juveniles can distinguish essentially their voices, the voices of the penguin, the pitch and everything. In a sea, of Penguin Voices.

**Speaker 2** [00:08:38] A big C.

**Speaker 3** [00:08:39] A big city, 40,000 of them are doing penguin squawking or whatever, and they're able to tell which one is theirs and go find them and call them in and regroup with each other. So penguins are making distinctions. These are just a few of many, many, examples of distinction making happening across nature.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:06] We could write a lot I mean, there's

**Speaker 3** [00:09:07] Yeah, there's...

**Speaker 1** [00:09:08] So many examples. So many.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:09] How do we know then, okay, so you said mind and nature, so you're saying we know they're in nature, obviously. How do you, how do we test that it's in the mind? How do know that it is in our minds?

**Speaker 3** [00:09:22] Yeah, so there's a number of studies that we've done where we're testing a number of different things. So first we're test are people making distinctions without them being prompted to do so necessarily. Second, we're assessing whether or not when they make distinctions, are they making distensions of this structure of identity other, right? And again, without them knowing that they're doing it, without being prompted to pay attention to those structures, are they naturally, cognitively building distinctions with these structures?

**Speaker 2** [00:10:04] Okay, so let's give an example. So one of the things that we did was called, it's the world famous dog food burger study. Basically, there was an image of a dog and a tree and a burger.

**Speaker 1** [00:10:16] A hamburger. A cheeseburger.

**Speaker 2** [00:10:18] people were asked to check off which of the labels applied to each one. So there was dog, not dog.

**Speaker 3** [00:10:26] Yeah, dog, burger, tree, and then not dog, not burger, not tree. Yes. They check which ones are which. And it shows that people understand, without any kind of prompting, that you can call a tree, a tree. That one seems obvious. But you can also call it a not dog and a not burger. Right. Right. And vice versa for the other ones.

**Speaker 2** [00:10:53] Right, and so what those results showed, statistically and mathematically, is that people can, they can and they do make, they see an identity and they can see the other. Yes. Right? And so that was the first piece of what we did.

**Speaker 3** [00:11:07] Yeah, and that might seem kind of a little esoteric, but what you have to recognize about these distinctions is the way that we're defining things, what we're defining, and no matter what you're trying to define, you could be trying to find your customer. What is and is not your customer? You could be defining your vision. What is, and is, not your vision? You could defining a goal, a task, what's involved in. the task and what is not involved in the task. That's right. So, you know, what sounds somewhat theoretical, like distinctions are made up of identity and other, is really just an overarching universal structure for every single time you define anything and everything. You are performing this cognitive act. You are preforming this structure. Yes. and often times We don't know that we're doing that. That's the important part. And when I say often, I mean, like most of the time, most people are not aware of the underlying structure of what they're doing all the time. Yes. When they're defining completely unimportant things and when they're finding completely important things.

**Speaker 4** [00:12:30] Yes.

**Speaker 3** [00:12:31] It doesn't matter. There's no distinction, ironically, between silly things that are kind of irrelevant. You're still distinguishing with that structure. And then the most important things in your life that you're distinguishing, your goals, what your marriage is constituted Even just like

**Speaker 2** [00:12:50] Well, even just like who you are.

**Speaker 3** [00:12:51] Who you are, who your friends are, what job you're going to do in life, you know, all those things are requiring this identity other distinction making.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:04] OK, so then we saw that people can and do make identity. Then we wanted to test or see where they might have difficulty with the other, the concept of the other. So we did, if you remember, the orange polyhedra.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:23] This is like a cube.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:25] There was an image of an orange queue.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:27] on a white background.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:28] on a white background and people were asked to click on the cube, the cube or the white space or not the cube. Or not the white

**Speaker 3** [00:13:41] So what we see is a statistical heat map of their clicks. What we were able to learn about this is, first of all, like you might expect, people have a very easy time clicking on the cube, when asked to click on the Cube. They have a a very easy time click on the white space. when they're asked to click on the white space, right? They have a slightly more difficult time clicking on the not. and the night wait space.

**Speaker 2** [00:14:22] They had the hardest time clicking on the not cube. So on the white space, their numbers were slightly lower. But on the object, it went down to 50% of people who could actually click it.

**Speaker 3** [00:14:37] what's happening there is any time it's object oriented, click on the cube is an object. Click on the not white space is an object. Yes. Right? Because you're clicking on the cube. That's the only other thing that you can click on. So in those two cases, the click map was much more concentrated. Yes. Right? Yes. when asked to click on the white space. the other, or the not white space, I mean, or I'm sorry, the not cube. Yes. Which is the white space.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:15] Yep. You get.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:17] those are the hardest, but still you had great success in all four conditions.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:24] in the not object it actually went down 30 percent.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:27] 30 percent.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:28] What you're saying is, we are very object-oriented in our thinking. So it's easier to recognize an other, an other if it's an object. But if it is not an object and it's the other, we struggle more with that.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:44] sure. So for example, if we're asked to find Waldo, yeah, pretty easy. Whereas Waldo if we asked to point to the goat, pretty easy to point a goat because it's a it's an object. But if we're as to point two customer value. That's not an object oriented concept or distinction. So the the is going to be much grayer. In your teams, for example, when you're dealing with things that are not kind of object-oriented. In science, we call that construct validity, right? It's very easy for us to all point to a goat or point to book because they're objects. But much more difficult to say, what is empathy? What is customer value? What is some of these more complex ideas? They certainly exist. but they're much harder to find the edge that defines them, right? It's much fuzzier. And this research sort of showed that in very clear terms.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:55] Okay, there's one other one that I think we should talk about, which is the Rorschach. We had a funny inkblot shape, and we asked people to...

**Speaker 3** [00:17:07] Yeah, the Rorschach is kind of a classic psychological test where it's an ambiguous symmetrical image and people sort of put their mind's eye on the image. So you might be thinking about something and that influences what you see. Also the image has a symmetrical nature to it. So you could see people or you could clouds or you can see animals or objects and all kinds of things. And what people did was really interesting because what we found is that there was tremendous diversity in what people saw. Yes. Right? So if you look at the individual level, there was tremendous diversity, meaning people saw all kinds of different things. Yeah. Right? So they distinguish the same thing very, very differently. if you look kind of statistically across all of those individual answers, what you see is a pattern that they see the same categories of things, the same groupings of things. And so what that tells us is that while people can make dramatically different and diverse Distinctions when seeing the same object. Yeah, they also do so very similarly.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:38] in the collection.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:39] In the collective.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:40] Because because I think we had in that in that sample we had 375 people I think if I remember correctly we had hundreds of different distinctions at the individual level. But then they all categorized up or grouped into a person an animal a thing or something else. Right. And and and they were kind of equally distributed among the top three. Yes. Which is interesting. Thank you.

**Speaker 3** [00:19:09] Things like two people or two frogs or something like that.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:13] So in other words, we all make different distinctions that the individual, but collectively, we have the same sort of categorical groupings across us, which is interesting. So mind, nature, and then I guess you were talking a lot about predictions. And I guess one of the things that seems necessary to say or obvious in some ways is that when you have an identity, Thank you for watching!

**Speaker 3** [00:19:38] You have another.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:39] You have another.

**Speaker 3** [00:19:40] and vice versa.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:41] and vice versa. So other means there's an identity, identity means there are other. What are the problems with identity other?

**Speaker 3** [00:19:48] Well, so we fall short. So it's pretty important. I mean, not I don't want to skip over the prediction part of things because because it's very important to understand that when you have an identity, whether you like it or not, and whether you see it or not, whether you're aware of it or not, there's another, right? You can't have an identity without another and vice versa, right. And also the prediction that when there's an The other is an identity and the identity is an other, which is what we said earlier. Those are all predictions that turn out to be.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:26] True, yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:20:27] and the reason that's important is because those represent things that we don't see. So think of it this way, imagine if you didn't know that for every valley there was a mountain, for every Valley system there was The truth is that, you know, where there's a ridge, there's valley and where there are valleys, there's ridges and these things tend to come together. They coexist. They coexist, right? You can imagine there's no in-breath without an out-breath, right, I mean, except maybe the last one or something like that.

**Speaker 4** [00:21:05] It's sad.

**Speaker 3** [00:21:06] It's kind of sad. Well, even that one, you'd have an out-breath, I guess. The idea is that when you have an identity, there's always an other. There's always an other, and a lot of times that other is something that we're marginalizing, something that were ignoring. Sometimes in systems thinking, we call those others externalities. Yes. Right, we create things that. are kind of in our mind external to the system, even though they're not actually external to the systems, but we make them external to system. So as a result of them being externalities, we don't consider them. And then when things don't work out the way we planned, we go, Wait a minute, what happened? And we don't ever consider. those externalities as part of the equation because we made them an other from the get-go. Right. So this, whether it's marginalization, whether externalities, those kinds of things, we're constantly doing this.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:16] downstream that's usually problematic. So, you know, if the other is a whole group of people, for example, that's a problem. If you're not seeing or if you're purposely marginalizing them because you're claiming the identity, then that has a lot of downstream effects. So let's go back to the research on our strengths and our weaknesses in distinction making.

**Speaker 3** [00:22:40] Well, in very simple terms, we see the identity way more than we see the other. Yes. So we're biased towards the, in distinction making, every distinction has an identity and other. Yeah. But most of the time, we see identity but not the other, Right? Yeah. So there's this massive bias towards the identity and away from the other Well, that's a bias. And that's bias that's coming into play all the time because we're making distinctions all the times. So just being aware that wherever there's an identity, there's another, will help you to just do like a quick check and test your distinctions, challenge your distincions, right? Right. Make sure that you're not creating externalities. Make sure you're that you are not marginalizing other ideas. Make sure, for example, that you not creating echo chambers. An echo chamber is a form of identity bias, Right because what you're doing is you're saying These are the messages that I agree with. And these are the message that I disagree with. These are not messages. And I'm only gonna like things that are part of the message. Well, over very short order, you only get that message. And then you start to believe that this other message doesn't exist. Because it's not part of your world. You're not hearing it, you're not seeing it out of sight, out of mind, it doesn't exist.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:14] So you believe this is all?

**Speaker 3** [00:24:15] So then you start to believe this echo chamber is reality, and that's very dangerous.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:23] and you're not challenging that at all.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:26] You don't even think to challenge it anymore because you don't even see the other as a variable. So what DIO or Distinctions Identity Other, DO, what that does for you is it tells you, hey, whenever you have this identity variable, you have other variable. Yeah. Quite literally, this other variable, and you should pay attention at least for a millisecond to the possibility that that other variable is important.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:53] Yes, and just as a side note, we did research on 35,000 people. Yes. And we wanted to see what their thinking process was, their thought process was. And interestingly, of the 35,00 people, the one thing that almost half of the people did, well, first of all, half of people got stuck. They didn't even know what to do.

**Speaker 3** [00:25:19] Yeah, so one way to think about this is, because 35,000 is like a big number, you know, or whatever. It's a lot. But imagine having 10 people that work for you. And imagine that you ask those 10 people to work on a problem that you're having at work or wherever. And what this research showed is what those 10 people, your team of 10 people, will tend to do and tend not to do. Yes. So like you said, Duh. Out of those ten people, five of them get stuck immediately. They're just completely stuck.

**Speaker 4** [00:25:55] Yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:25:55] They don't know really how to think about the problem that you've given them. Yeah, they're just kind of stumped. They're stumped, yeah. Five of them immediately start calling out some identities, making some identities. None of the ten challenge the identities that they make.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:14] Meaning the identity is identity, they don't consider that there's anything other.

**Speaker 3** [00:26:18] they don't consider that there's anything other than the identities that they came up with. Right. So right off the bat, what that means is you're pretty locked in to your initial starting condition. Yes. Right? Yes. Where the five people are stuck, the other five people are working on the problem and their initial starting, the things that they lay down at the beginning probably aren't gonna get challenged. Yes. And yet, there could be a ton of assumptions there. Yes. in those initial what's initially laid down as thought. starting assumptions could your whole effort, because nobody's checking them, nobody's challenging them. So I often say, you know, put your ideas on the table and just whack them with a stick, you know? And that identity other helps you hit it with a sticks, so does the rest of DSRP. But yeah, you don't kind of hit it. With a stick. See if they break. Yeah, if they're, are they made of fine china or glass and they just crack, then and you know. I'm saying that metaphorically here with a stick, you know, challenge your initial ideas especially because the rest of your thinking is going to be based on those initial ideas that you lay down.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:40] Right. And the simplest example of what you're talking about is, I don't know how many times you have a team working on something and you invest a lot of time and money and energy and you get to the first result. And you realize at that moment that you all were thinking about something different. Like you all thought the project was something different, so you didn't check the distinction that you were making about what the project actually was. So everybody proceeded down a path with a different identity of what that project was or wasn't. You invested time and money and then the downstream effect is you've totally missed each other because you didn't start from the beginning with a clear distinction.

**Speaker 3** [00:28:23] Yeah, you might not have even agreed on what all the terms, all the identities meant. So then not only do you have untested identities, you have different people thinking those identities are different things. And so one way to think about this is take the words that people use. Well, in any group of people, they could be using the same words and think different things. Absolutely. or they could be using different words and think the same things, in which case you have a miscommunication also, or you could be using the same words for the same thing. And that's where you wanna get at, is that, like, are we actually using the same terminology to describe the same mental models or the same distinctions? Do we mean what we mean? Are we drawing the line in the same place?

**Speaker 2** [00:29:21] Yeah, we're thinking the same thing relative to language. So when I say Project X and you say Project X, we are thinking the same thing.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:31] thinking the same thing.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:33] a distinction for me.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:34] Yeah, or customer value or whatever it is. Or, you know, a few years ago, I don't know, there was that thing on the internet about is this dress blue?

**Speaker 4** [00:29:44] Oh, yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:45] when you see blue and when i see blue are we talking we use the word blue but are we taking about the same blue right right or is it are you talking about kind of a greenish blue and i'm talking about kind about uh... bluish blue or see

**Speaker 2** [00:29:59] See, even now I know the exact flu, I'm thinking.

**Speaker 3** [00:30:01] Right. Exactly.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:02] Interesting. Okay, so the last thing I think that maybe we should expand on a little bit is the idea of predictions. You were saying that, you know, there are predictions relative to not just DSRP, but distinctions. You're talking about the patterns, the elements, the interdependencies.

**Speaker 3** [00:30:21] Yeah, so we can predict that every identity is going to have another. Yes. We can predict that every other is going to have an identity and we can predict that every other is an identity and that every identity is another. Those are all predictions we can make based on simply DIO, Distinctions, Identity, Yeah. And that's important because it gives us new variables to think about. If I think about something as an other, meaning it's the not customer, let's say, then that's very different than thinking about that not customer as an identity in and of themselves that has a particular perspective on your product or on something. Right? Does that make sense? Yeah, that does make sense. One is that they're just not this thing. and the other is that they're their own thing. That matters. How you think about that other matters. That's right. Because that identity, that other as an identity has agency and that agency could affect the process of whatever you're trying to figure out.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:32] Well, what's interesting to me is two things. One is, in the study of the 35,000 people, we are actually the most, at only 50%, we're the best at making identities at distinctions. So we are, actually, of the four, DS, R, and P, we most frequently will actually engage with distinctions when we make them.

**Speaker 3** [00:31:56] With the identity part of distinctions, yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:57] With the identity part, with that caveat. Yes. And also we did another study, which was another 1,100 people, where we actually found that we're actually overconfident in our thinking skills.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:11] at Dunning Kruger.

**Speaker 2** [00:32:12] but specifically also pretty overconfident in our ability to make distinctions.

**Speaker 3** [00:32:17] So we think we're better at them than we are.

**Speaker 2** [00:32:19] So then the question is shifting from the existence of the pattern to the efficacy of being aware of the patterns.

**Speaker 3** [00:32:29] The only other prediction that we should mention is that, and this one gets a little complex, but in order to make identity other distinctions, you must utilize part-whole systems, action-reaction relationships and point-and-view perspectives, meaning there are interdependencies between the D pattern and the other patterns. the S, R, and P. Okay. And so the research, there's about 27 different studies that showed these interdependencies, and that's pretty important.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:10] So when you say we can't make a distinction without, for example, part-hole systems, one of the things we do is we understand what something is by thinking about what's part of it. what's not part of it. So that's how S can play into distinction making.

**Speaker 3** [00:33:27] Yes and the fact that in order for a distinction to exist at the very minimal you have two parts an identity and another. Yes. So by definition it is a part whole system to make a distinction. Yes. And you must relate that identity to the other and the other to the identity. There's a relationship between them. Yes so by definition you are relating something.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:53] And obviously there's a perspective.

**Speaker 3** [00:33:55] And there's a perspective because you're highlighting the identity and low lighting the other. And so you must be taking a perspective. And that's just to be like, you know, blue coffee cup. Just to say blue coffee. Not to mention all the other complex distinctions that we're making, but something as simple as I see a blue coffee cup.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:19] Well, and another powerful example is the whole idea of us them.

**Speaker 3** [00:34:24] So to us them as identity other right structure

**Speaker 2** [00:34:27] So to us, there's a them, but them is also an us that sees a them. So you've got this, you know, I'm the identity, you're the other. But to you, you are the identity and I am the other because of your perspective.

**Speaker 3** [00:34:40] Yeah. And again, across the disciplines, you're going to see this identity, other structure. So you have us and them, you have figure ground in Gestalt theory, you have noise and signal, right? Or signal and noise, you know, throughout, across the disciplines you're gonna see these repeating big ideas that reflect identity, other structure. Yeah. Not to mention All of what we're talking about is related to actually forming one's own identity. So it has tremendous psychosocial implications about how do we have identity formation as humans. Right? Right? How do we differentiate our company or our product from others? How do differentiate ourselves from our siblings? You know, all these kinds of things. all these identity forming. mechanisms are all identity other interactions. And so we're seeing that across a wide swath of things whether you're talking about you know quantum physics or physics or chemistry or biology or psychology or sociology all the way up the up the ladder of disciplines.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:58] Yeah, and the fact that they're universal across all of those things and across all humans. Then we wanted to think about, in our research, what is the value of being aware of identity, other distinctions? Yes. And we set out to test that, to see the evidence for that.

**Speaker 3** [00:36:19] Yeah, so we knew, for example, we know from meta-analyzes, which is kind of the gold standard of scientific research, which has a bunch of researches coming together and doing a meta-analyzes across all of them. It's the research of the research. Yeah, research of research. Yeah, it's very meta. So, we know, for example, from meta-analyzes of meta-cognition, which is super-meta. Double. Metacognition just means thinking about thinking or awareness of one's thinking that just increasing metacogniton in a very general sense, like if I just get you to be more attentive to what you're thinking about without even teaching you any kind of specific metacogative skills, Just the bringing awareness to your thinking can have massively important effects. In lots of domains, personal, professional, etc. So we know at a very general level, increasing metacognition increases effectiveness across all domains. Now, we take that to a much more tactical, technical. practical level, right? You know, this is kind of 100,000 foot level metacognition. Now we zoom into 1,000-foot level where the rubber meets the road metac cognition, which is things like distinctions, identity, other. So what we wanted to see is, does being aware of the structure of one's thinking, not just bringing awareness to one's, thinking, but having tactical, technical awareness of these structures, these DSRP structures, does that increase your ability to think more complexly, to solve problems, et cetera, those kinds of things? So we've done numerous studies in that world.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:21] Yes, and if you remember, when we designed those studies, we were very careful to test only one pattern at a time.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:30] to isolate the power.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:31] to isolate the pattern. So in terms of distinctions, the research, you know, we had a sample of, I want to say, a thousand people in the fish tank study.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:43] Yeah, I think 1,200 people or something like that.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:46] And the basic idea was we were we were testing whether or not awareness of just one pattern would increase, like you said, the robustness or the complexity of one's thinking about something. So we showed participants a fish tank.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:04] picture of a fish tank. Yeah, again, we're just we're just getting them to describe a scene. So in the pre treatment, we have them just describe what they see, which means before they learn before they learn the before they get they learn the distinction, identity, other pattern, we asked them to describe the scene, then they get a in this particular study, they got text. that described some of the aspects of distinction identity of the basics of it. And we did this for all four patterns and none of those texts took more than a minute to read. So we're talking about a minute of, somewhere between 30 seconds and one minute of reading is the treatment about distinction identity other as a structure. And then they're asked to describe the fish tank.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:04] and they wrote their answers.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:06] Yes, they wrote their answers.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:08] we were able to statistically analyze the complexity of the language they used before and after learning the pattern and analyze it in terms of cognitive complexity based on a lot of the research in language as a proxy. and what we found was pre and post.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:27] Highly statistically significant increases in cognitive complexity, so their ability to make more refined, more detailed distinctions increased. Just from a minute. From less than a minute of reading. That's cool. And we saw it across all four patterns, D, S, R, and P, but we saw that in D.I.O. pretty significantly.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:54] Right. So for distinctions, we found, in that case, the increase in cognitive clinics. But you also mentioned increases in problem solving. Yes. And so that's our more recent research.

**Speaker 3** [00:41:08] Yeah, so at some point, what we saw was people were not practiced in the art of distinction making with identity and other. Yes. And we saw that. we could move people from simply recognizing the i to recognizing the o and using that recognition of both of these variables to challenge the eye. that we could actually have an effect possibly on problem solving in more complex scenarios. So the fish tank example, it's a complex scene, but you're not really asking, you're just asking the person to describe what they see and they describe it with increasing complexity and detail after the treatment. They see more essentially. But what we wanted to do is test if we taught them a cognitive move that was the process of being better at making distinctions, being more aware and also having the technical know-how of making a better distinction. Yes. If we taught then that cognitive move, that mental move, would they be able to solve a complex problem better? policy issue or some community issue or something that people were having. And so, again, we had a similar set up, which is we had people read a problem and describe how they would solve this.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:04] Describe how they would think it through. And then we showed them a one-minute video teaching them the move, which we can show, which is the is-is-not list, the DIO list. And then asked them to describe how their thinking had changed when having learned that move.

**Speaker 1** [00:43:27] That's right.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:28] then we analyzed all of that text, quantitatively and qualitatively.

**Speaker 3** [00:43:32] That's right. And we had people look at which ones were more complex. We analyzed it according to different algorithms and things like that and found a in the case of DIO, that was actually the highest of the five moves that are a Pareto law for cognition. DIO received the highest and It was something on the order of 5.501. It was 5.5.

**Speaker 2** [00:44:01] four, five, one, increase.

**Speaker 3** [00:44:03] So over 500% increase in their ability to solve complex problems. from a one-minute intervention of the mental move. So this is a little different than the pattern. The pattern is distinctions, identity, other. The move is called is, is not list or DIO list, same thing, different names. That move, I can show the move if that's helpful.

**Speaker 2** [00:44:32] I think we should. We should do a couple things.

**Speaker 3** [00:44:33] So that move, you could do it with cards like we do here. And it basically just has the structure of you have an is, and you make an is list and an is not list. That's why they call it is is not list or identity DIO list distinction identity other list. Basically, what you're doing is you're making a structure that's like this. So here's the distinction. The distinction is between what, you know, X is and X is not. is not. Right. Right? And all you're doing is making a list of x is not this, x is not this x is, not this. x is this, X is this. X is this. So for example, a great example would be what is fruit? Now you could say fruit is oranges, apples, blah blah blah. But what we really want to get at with is is not list is what is what fundamentally distinguishes fruit. From not fruit. Yeah, and if you do this long enough or you have enough Understanding of fruit what you'll what you really actually come down to is it has seeds Yeah, right if something has seeds It's a fruit. Yeah, if it's vegetative It's not a fruit.

**Speaker 2** [00:45:52] Yeah, and it seems to me, Derek, that what will be interesting is, what that means is, you don't have to have the same number. No. This could be one vertical distinction, and there could be more qualities of not fruit, and only one thing that distinguishes fruit, and I think it's also important to point out that this move. is getting you to see, literally see, the other. Yes. That's why it's an important move. That's what it's important. Because you're literally, it's on the table, you're seeing the other, we know we tend not to see the other so this move is designed to get you to see both parts.

**Speaker 3** [00:46:30] And the other co-defines the identity. So the identity makes more sense when it's compared and contrasted to the other. And for example, if you're trying to get your team on the same page, being able to see what the project is and what the product is not is going to get them more on the page than just saying what the projects is. That's right. Because they're going to have this like, real contrast the example where the distinction see the distinction is here the identity is here the other is here but the distinction that you're after is actually the difference yeah right and so Is, is not, list, move. Is, not, lest. So we write it like that or DIO list is another term we use. This move, learning this move is going to dramatically increase your abilities to make detailed specific distinctions, to get shared understanding of those distinctions to clarify distinctions in arguments and miscommunications and communications. So you're going to be able to. Say, wait a minute, when you say blah, blah, blah, what do you mean by that? Because I'm maybe hearing something different. Yeah, I mean, how many times do I say blah?

**Speaker 2** [00:47:56] Yeah, I mean, how many times do I say, oh, I thought you meant this.

**Speaker 3** [00:47:58] Yeah, exactly.

**Speaker 2** [00:47:59] And you're like, no, I meant this.

**Speaker 3** [00:48:01] So this is gonna help you with communication, interpersonal conflict, intrapersonal conflict. What do I think about something that I'm confused about? It's gonna help get your team on the same page. It's an absolutely critical cognitive skill. And if you practice this move, and I really mean practice it because you have to practice it to get good at it. What you're doing is you're burning the neural pathways so that your brain just naturally does this all the time. And in that way, once you start practicing it, you're gonna just be faster. You're gonna get to the critical distinctions much, much faster because your brain's gonna know how to do it.

**Speaker 2** [00:48:46] Right, but I would correct that a little bit, which doesn't happen often, which is it's not just that you're faster, you're fast at seeing both. Yes. Right? Because we're fast in making identities. We're really fast at doing this. But this makes you fast at both of them in that moment, knowing this is the distinction I'm making. Yes. But make it intuitive and it's more robust because it's the I and the O, not just the I. because we know we're gonna do I all the time.

**Speaker 3** [00:49:13] And you'll be able to, with a little bit of practice, you'll able to do both as fast as somebody that's just doing the one. That's right. And that's important because you're gonna immediately see the error that nobody sees. Before you wait two weeks to find out the error. Exactly. Right? Or you wait a million dollars later and you find out the error That's happened. It happens all the time, right? But you're going to see that error happening right up front. Hey, guys, we're not seeing this whole other thing over here that actually needs to move over and be a part of the identity. Because sometimes in this process, you put something over here and you go, I don't know. That's kind of part of this thing. And you change the definition of the identify as a result of being forced to do the identity and the other.

**Speaker 2** [00:50:11] Well, and I think that this is the first step to actually building a shared mental model. It's getting the distinctions clear, making sure that everyone's on the same page. Yeah. It literally means having the same mental model before you execute on it.

**Speaker 3** [00:50:27] Yeah, it's it's so costly. Like this is one of the most costly things. And there's a there's a thing in science called chaos theory, which just means sensitive dependence on initial conditions. And I know that's kind of a maybe a little too nerdy to bring into the conversation. But, but in a sense, all of our cognition is sensitively dependent on the initial identities that we lay down. Right? So You know in a meeting we go, what do we all think of this and Joe says blah and Frank says blah and Sally says blah. And all of a sudden we're down the road on blah blah and blah.

**Speaker 2** [00:51:10] Well, I think another way to put it is, it's the frame.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:12] It sort of becomes our destiny, and what distinction identity other does is it makes it so that doesn't have to be our destiny.

**Speaker 2** [00:51:23] Yeah, meaning you can correct, you can course correct before you're off course.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:26] Yeah, and before it costs you a lot of money and a lot of time and a lot of frustration. I can't do I mean, you know, we've had so many executives tell us we would have totally done this and not found out about it until six months from now. Yeah. Right, we would've just gone with these assumptions which were completely wrong. We weren't all thinking the same thing. And we wouldn't have known that we weren't thinking the thing until six month from now, after we had spent the money and the time on the project that we're not even on the same page on. Yeah. And I, you know, of course, look at all the. dysfunctional communication and the fighting and you know, in the world, which almost entirely has to do with you're using a term differently than I'm hearing a term, right? And you mean something completely different. And I don't check because I assume that my identity is your identity.

**Speaker 2** [00:52:26] We do that all the time.

**Speaker 3** [00:52:27] Not you, I mean people. We catch those things, which leads to much, much less conflict.

**Speaker 2** [00:52:37] Yeah, so I guess there are two things, as we sort of wrap up a little bit, is I would say, like, for me, I challenge myself, you know, after listening to this, go outside and see what you can make an is-is-not list out of. Just see it everywhere. Practice it everywhere, and like you said, it will become faster, and it's not just that it will be faster, it's more complete, and, it ties into what you said about the system 1, system 2.

**Speaker 3** [00:53:07] Yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:53:07] remember how did you.

**Speaker 3** [00:53:09] Yeah, economists work on system one system to system one is autonomic. It's really fast. You don't have to do anything to get it. And it only has one tiny little downside, which is wrong a lot. Yeah, right. It is kind of a big downside. System two thinking, it takes its the downside is it's slower. It has, you know, increases in its accuracy. But it's much slower. Well, we live in fast paced environments, so we need to be right and fast. right, slow and mostly accurate or fast and wrong. Those are bad choices. We need to be fast and right. And the only way to do that is practicing and burning the neurons of these structures, of the DIO structure and four more moves that we've discovered in our research. Those are next, yeah. We'll do other ones there. But if you practice these, and I mean really practice them, practice them with cards. DSRP cards are a great tool, but you don't need cards. You can do it in your notebook. You can write is, is not, make a list, blah, blah blah, blah, right? You can do it on your notebook with pen and paper. You can deal with posted notes on the board, right. So these are all accordion. Put is, is not. These are all. And then we can make little ones if you want.

**Speaker 2** [00:54:43] Yeah, I like that.

**Speaker 3** [00:54:44] You can do it with post-it notes. You can it with sugar packets. Ah, your favorite. Right? If you're sitting at a diner and you're trying to describe something to somebody at a lunch or something like that, you can do with sugar packets and say, well, are we saying that this is this thing in or out? Yeah, where does it fit? Where does it it fit, right? And then eventually, you'll just do it. naturally in your head with or without these tactile efforts. But you have to practice it. What we've learned in 25 years of research is that you can't just learn these things conceptually and then expect that when you're in the thick of it, when you are in the shit, when you in the stressful situation that you're going to think this way. Because you're only to think this way if you practice thinking this way. So put it on your mirror. I have a, you know, as you know a dry erase next to my toothbrush and I put things on the mirror. Practice it. Practice when you're in the car. Practice it when you are in the shower. Practice with everyday things. Stupid stuff. Like you know what is and is not a plant. What is and not a, why do we call this a glass and this is a mug you know when when what do I have to do to this thing before it becomes a mug.

**Speaker 2** [00:56:14] put a handle on it.

**Speaker 3** [00:56:15] Yeah. Okay. Interesting. Like that's maybe that's what it is. So if it was like a really tall, slender glass, and I put a handle on it, do you think people would call it a mug?

**Speaker 2** [00:56:29] Mmm, maybe.

**Speaker 3** [00:56:30] Interesting, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:56:31] Unless it was made of something that got hot when you put hot.

**Speaker 3** [00:56:33] If it was like crystal glass with a tiny little handle.

**Speaker 2** [00:56:36] No, probably not.

**Speaker 3** [00:56:37] No, people probably wouldn't call that a mug, right? So that's really interesting.

**Speaker 2** [00:56:42] I'm thinking of.

**Speaker 3** [00:56:42] Like, yeah, like what how is it that we so clearly because we've been around them, you know, we know a mug when we see a mug, but what do we actually mean by a mug? It's it's probably short, short, it's got a handle, squat, and it's made out of some kind of more insular stuff, right? Yeah, that's right. And we're making these distinctions all the time without really knowing what goes into them. And is is not move kind of elucidates. It peels back the curtain on our distinctions that we're making. It lets us to see how the sausage is being made. Yeah. Right? That's right. It lets a see the behind the curtain. Yes. It's very powerful.

**Speaker 2** [00:57:26] So we're coming to a close. Oh, we are. And I know it flies by when you're talking about fun stuff. Yeah. I think there are a couple of things that I would sort of take away from this. One is remember that you tend to see the identity. So look for the other. Two is challenge the distinctions that you're making. And I think most importantly, it's you can get better at them, but only through practice.

**Speaker 1** [00:57:53] only through practice.

**Speaker 2** [00:57:53] Right, that you need to practice, practice, practice, and then it's all gonna come into place.

**Speaker 3** [00:57:59] Yeah, and it doesn't take long, like if you start practicing this move, within a day you're going to start seeing yourself think differently. Within a week, people around you are going to perceive you differently. And within two weeks, you're just going to be darn good at it. And you're going to think to yourself, how did I make it however old I am? How did I made it through life? without being aware of this. This is crazy, like it's all around me. Everybody's doing it and nobody knows about it. You know, I gotta tell everybody about this thing because they're doing it all the time and it'll just be so clear to you that it's happening all the times everywhere you go. You know there's this identity bias happening. Nobody's looking at the other and it's causing, it's wreaking havoc on like all kinds of teamwork, all kinds marriages, all kinds you know. every problems are coming out of this very simple structure that is very easy to learn and practice

**Speaker 2** [00:59:01] and it will transform your thinking.

**Speaker 3** [00:59:02] For sure.

**Speaker 2** [00:59:03] And I'll see you next time.

**Speaker 3** [00:59:04] And it's that starting point to your thinking, that's the other part that's so influential about D is it's, it's the starting point. And so later we'll teach you about perspective and part-whole and relationship, action, reaction and all these other patterns, these other three patterns and the four moves that are so important to this move that we just showed you. but this move kind of starts it all off.

**Speaker 2** [00:59:29] Yeah, I think that what you said about the sensitive dependence on initial conditions, it can't be overstated, I mean, it's really, really critical, I would say, seven or eight times out of ten when we're talking to people and they say, oh, my God, if I had just thought differently at the beginning, everything else would have been different, whether it's a professional situation, a personal situation, if just thought about what was the distinction I was making. Yep. and communicated it and built a shared distinction, it would have been completely different.

**Speaker 3** [01:00:04] Yeah, Plato said, well begun is half done. And, you know, that really applies here if we can check our distinctions, especially the ones that are influencing the beginning of our thinking, because we kind of get locked in. And then you're never going to think this thought that's over here. Right. It's a foot and a half away this thought, but you're ever going to think it because you're not even going to look there because you got kind of pigeon holder locked into this one route. at the very beginning because you didn't challenge your distinctions.

**Speaker 2** [01:00:35] That's right.

**Speaker 3** [01:00:35] And that's how echo chambers form and that's how bias forms and all kinds of super costly stuff, personally costly and professionally costly.

**Speaker 2** [01:00:44] Well, and invisible stuff.

**Speaker 3** [01:00:45] and invisible.

**Speaker 2** [01:00:46] that we need to make visible. Yeah. And that's how we do it.

**Speaker 3** [01:00:49] This is how we do it.

**Speaker 2** [01:00:50] Alright.

**Speaker 3** [01:00:51] this is how we do it oh we should never get me and you singing we can't sing on youtube can we no can you spoof it didn't we just spoof that isn't that allowed

**Speaker 2** [01:01:03] That was a direct replica of the song.

**Speaker 3** [01:01:05] Yeah, but I sang it, so it's an original, it's like a cover. Is that a wrap? Did we do DIO is is not list?

**Speaker 2** [01:01:18] I think we've done it.

**Speaker 3** [01:01:20] That's the move. We've done it. The move that matters.

**Speaker 2** [01:01:22] and hopefully that has been useful.

**Speaker 3** [01:01:26] Yeah, that's just one of five moves that we found are an 80-20 rule, which means that you put in 20% of the effort, you get 80% of results in cognition. That's one of 5 moves that are part of that 80- 20 rule. So you know, learn these other four and you're going to start to see that they interact with each other and they're just really powerful and they have a huge effect on people.

**Speaker 2** [01:01:50] All right, that's a wrap.

**Speaker 3** [01:01:51] That's a wrap.