

Coaches Rising presents...



Catalyzing Your Development

Module 1 – with Doug Silsbee

Joel: Welcome, everybody. My name's Joel and a warm welcome to the first module of the Upgrade Your Interior course, Catalyzing Your Development with Doug Silsbee. I'm going to hand you over to Doug in a moment but I'd just like to say a couple of things first. If you haven't read the course guidelines on the webpage, I just invite you to do so as soon as you can. It contains a lot of practical information about how to get the most out of this experience. And I've really loved seeing everybody introduce themselves in the comments section at the foot of that page. So if you haven't done so yet, I'd like to invite you to do so after this call.

I'm really excited about this whole experience and I just want to invite everybody listening to participate as fully as possible. If you bring your whole being to this journey and take on the practices that the teachers give, we're really sure that it's going to create excellent conditions for transformation to occur. So this teaching session's going to last for about 90 minutes and it's going to be followed by a 30-minute Q&A session where you'll get the chance to ask Doug the questions you want to. So I'm going to hand you over now to Doug Silsbee. He's a leading light in the field of coaching, the author of Presence-Based Coaching and The Mindful Coach, two awesome books and he's a really great guy. So over to you, Doug.

Doug Silsbee: Thank you, Joel, and good morning or good evening or good afternoon, depending on where you are. I recognize some names here and we have people from Europe, we have people from the West Coast, people from the East Coast, quite a collection of humans gathered here for the first session of this great course that Joel and Laurens put together so I'm really pleased to be here. So let's just begin by doing a little centering practice together and I'll teach this in a particular way. And one of the things that we'll be asking you to do in between some of the sessions is to take on some field work. So just as coaching works by having a conversation and then putting things into practice, in the design of this course, we've incorporated some of that same

principle. So we'll have some content, conversation, some practices live in the room and then you'll be doing some field work that will prepare you for the next conversation.

So the centering practice that we'll be doing now and I will provide a handout to you after the session is one of the pieces that we're going to encourage you to do really multiple times a day. So I'll talk about that a little later. But right now, simply gather your attention. And if you have things in your visual field that are requests that are nagging at you, that are pulling you, like a computer screen or a to-do list, turn your chair around and face out the window. Really claim the space for yourself, wherever you are, to wholly be fully here. Now I'm going to invite you to bring your attention into your body, into the realm of sensation. So we'll do that first by feeling your feet. You can do this either sitting or standing. If you're sitting, feel your feet pressing down on the chair. If you're standing, feel your feet pressing down into the chair. We are creatures. We are bodies and gravity presses us down so that provides us with sensation. So let your attention flow down, finding your ground, finding something solid under you.

At the same time, extend up, being the length that you are, pressing out the crown of your head, feeling your legs. Feeling down and extending up at the same time. Let your jaw be soft. Let your shoulders just hang. Take a couple of breaths, following the sensation of the breath, feeling your chest rising and falling with each breath. Sense behind you, the space behind you, and know that your history, everything you've ever learned, every experience that you've ever had, all of that is in you right here and right now. All of that has made you exactly who you are and you really couldn't be anybody else. Feel that history as it lives in you and know that you have everything you need. And take a couple of breaths, following with your attention the sensation of your breath coming in and out.

I have a friend, Charlie Lehman, who teaches 6-year-olds design technology and he says he has these 6-year-olds come into class every morning and they sit down and they center together and he says to them, to these kids, he says, "Children, if you learn what to pay attention to and what to focus on, you can be anything you want in life." And so that's what we're practicing here. We're practicing choosing what we pay attention to. We inhabit, most of the time, this really busy mental world, to-do lists, and plane reservations, and logistics of meetings that we're preparing for and we live in our heads, in our cerebral cortex. And so centering is a practice of dropping our attention into the body, in the autonomic nervous system, accessing the realm of sensation. When we do that, we come into neutral. There's a settling down. There's a resourcefulness that we learn to access. And what we'll discover as we go along here is that, in fact, that place of center, that place of being present with ourselves is the only place from which we can choose something new. This becomes a central move when we're talking about upgrading our interior, when we're talking about being able to mobilize an action in a new and different way or to create change, is we have to have a

neutral place within us that we can access readily where we can choose a new behavior rather than being driven by our habits.

So, what I'd like to do—the way I'd like to organize this call—So I have four themes that I'd like to speak to briefly and I'd like to talk for a few minutes about the first two and then you'll be in breakout groups and little groups of three which this technology that Joel and Laurens are using allows us to do. And so Joel and Laurens will set that up and then you'll be speaking intimately in an intimate conversation with two other people and the chances are you won't know who those two people are but all of a sudden, you'll be in this little conversation and I'll give you a topic to explore. And then you'll have about seven or eight minutes to explore that topic and then we'll come back into the main room and I'll ask for some people to share what your experience was. So we'll have a little bit of conversation. Then I'll talk about the other themes, we'll do a coaching demonstration. I'll ask for a volunteer and I'll do a live coaching demonstration with somebody. And then you'll have another small breakout group to explore that content a little bit. We're not—I know most of you are coaches and we're not primarily teaching coaching methodology here, yet because coaching is in the lineage of most people on the call, it provides a vernacular, or way of structuring a conversation that I think will reveal of these things so that they're useful.

So two of the themes I want to speak to—First of all commitment as the fundamental act of leadership and then secondly, the interdependence of our commitments and our developments. So I'm going to speak briefly to each of those, have a little bit of time for questions and then put you into your groups of three.

So, first of all we say that commitments are the fundamental acts of leadership. And we define leadership in this work broadly. It's not just if you're the CEO of an organization. But we all are leaders in our own lives. We all set a course or a destination and we move towards something. And so commitment is how we put ourselves into action, is we declare a preferred future. This is what I want to create. I want to build this business or I want to grow this aspect of my business or I'm going to get married or I'm going to start a business or I'm going to acquire this other entity as part of growing what we're doing here. Any of those are commitments and they're commitments in the world that will be visible by other people. And so we call those projects. And when we declare a commitment and we enter into a project, it changes everything because we have to organize ourselves differently in order to be successful at that. If I declare the commitment of being married to somebody or bringing a child into the world or launching a business, I have to be a different person than I was but it changes the game that we're in.

And what we can count on is a couple of things happening. One, when we declare a commitment, we can count on the world not always cooperating. So the world shows up. The world shows up as inarguable facts and some of those facts support us in our commitment and some of them get in the way. So that's one thing that happens is the

world acts on us. And the second thing is that our habits show up, the little stories that we have about how we're not good enough or people might see us or our fears. All of those things show up. And so making commitments can be scary because it invites the world to push back and it invites our habits to be revealed. That's the bad news and the good news. So commitments are the fundamental act of leadership and when we make a commitment, it puts us into our own development. The bigger the commitment, the stronger the commitment, the bolder the commitment, the more it puts us into our own development and so we can talk about project as the commitment in the world and curriculum as the self-work that goes along with it. Make the commitment to be married and that puts us in the curriculum of having to recognize and take care of our needs while also integrating those with the needs of somebody else. If we enter into the project of having a child and we also, consciously or not, subscribe to a curriculum of not getting much sleep at first and having to be selfless in taking care of this new being. And then we have teenagers that we didn't anticipate when we decided to have a kid in the first place and now all kinds of curriculum comes up around teenagers who are challenging every aspect of our being. And we might not sign up for the curriculum—we might not think we're signing up for the curriculum when we enter into that commitment in the first place but it shows up.

We enter into the project of building a business, whether it be a coaching business or a mergers and acquisitions business or a financial consulting business—whatever business we're in, we also have to do the self-work of coming to terms with our own limiting beliefs and habits and competencies and behaviors that we have to build. So to paraphrase Pema Chodron, we develop ourselves in order to fulfill on our commitments and we make commitments in order to develop ourselves.

So the first thing that we're going to talk about in these small groups is what are you up to in the world and what commitment does that point you into? Or what curriculum does that point you into? So, for example, many years ago when I made the commitment to write a book, that was the project. And the curriculum that I was also committing to was I had to learn how to organize my time right. I had to be much more disciplined about my priorities in order to make that work. I had to project manage a whole group of people with specialized expertise around production and design and artwork and manufacturing and marketing. I had to come up against the limits of what I knew and be willing to enter into learning to flesh that out. I could identify probably six or seven different areas of developmental curriculum, all of which engaged the instant I made the commitment to write the book.

So what I'm suggesting here is that we enter this developmental journey by choosing a particular commitment to work with and by consciously identifying the curriculum, the self-learning that puts us in. If you do that here in this first call and the field work will be set up to support that, then you have all these great teachers coming up in the next five calls that will provide you tools and resources that will help you engage with that curriculum, working with your gremlin, Richard Strozzi-Heckler's work around the arc of

somatic transformation, Henry's work with purpose. But your curriculum, your developmental curriculum and the project that you are in will provide the entry point into all that work and then you can do—you can use all these different tools and methods from these teachers to engage with that.

So what I want to do in this call is provide you with a couple of tools but also really to invite you to land on a particular commitment and a curriculum that that commitment puts you in because that will be what you can work with over the next six weeks of the Upgrade Your Interior course. It's the practice field for this work.

So, let me stop there and if anybody has a question about what we've talked about so far, press 1 on your keypad and Joel will bring you into the room and you can ask that question where everybody can hear and then at about—we'll take a couple questions and then we'll move into the breakout groups. So does anybody have a question so far about these two themes of commitment as a fundamental act of leadership and then the interdependence of our commitments and our curriculum?

J: Okay, I'm going to bring in Deb. Okay.

D: Hi, this is Deb. Hi, Doug, how are you?

DS: Hi, Deb. Great. Great to see you and hear you.

D: Same. Same. My question is are you suggesting that we stick to just one commitment? Keep it to one?

DS: I'm suggesting that—I mean, we are all engaged in multiple commitments in our lives but I think if you try and engage with too many commitments, it will become diffuse and there will be—you know, I think it's your deferment around this but what I would suggest is if you pick one commitment and really work with Upgrading Your Interior around that one commitment, then you'll learn some principles and tools and strategies that you can extrapolate to others. That make sense, Deb?

D: It does, thank you.

DS: The danger is if we—those of us who are perfectionists in life, and I count myself among that unique group of sufferers, then we want to do it all and so we enter and we say, "I've really got five commitments I care about a lot." And then we get spread so thin that we don't really experience much change around any of them because we're paying attention to everything and so—make the choice for yourself but my recommendation is we build capacity more effectively by focusing and really getting traction around something than trying to change everything. Is that okay, Deb?

D: Yeah, that's great. Thank you. I'll let myself off the hook this time.

DS: Oh good. That in itself might be a practice, huh? That's great.

J: *At this point, Doug asked the live participants to work in groups of three. If you're listening to or reading this at home, I'd invite you to grab a piece of paper and a pen and just write about what comes up as you reflect on Doug's questions.*

DS: What is a project that you're up to? Some sort of an external commitment in the world that is really important to you, that counts, that's a big deal. That's a little edgy for you. It's new and success is not guaranteed. So name that project and then along with that, name the curriculum, the developmental curriculum that making that project puts you in. In other words, what competency that's new for you are you going to have to develop in order to be successful at this? And what habit do you have that gets in the way of that competency? So really three things. What's the project? What competency is required of you that you don't yet confidently have? What habit is going to get in the way?

So, for example, I might say to my colleagues, "Well, I'm Doug and I'm from Asheville, North Carolina. The project that I'm in is bringing forward a new course with Henry Kinsey House, who is one of the other faculty on this. And this is a very exciting project. One of the competencies that we're going to have to develop is the capacity to work together and really embody ecosomatic leadership as we design the course and bring it forward in every aspect of the course. And so there's a competency that I have to build there in my collaboration with Henry. A habit that gets in my way is that I have particular ways of doing things and organizing myself that isn't that and that I live these principles some of the time but not all the time. But I really—my curriculum really is to bring a claim of this work into the design of the program as we're doing it and to live that in every interaction around this new curriculum that we're bringing forward." So, like that.

J: *You can pause now to reflect and write about what comes up as you think about Doug's questions.*

DS: Okay. So what I'd like to do is just invite two or three people to share what's emerging here in terms of the relationship of the commitment that you're making and the curriculum that that commitment puts you in. So if you're willing to share, just press the 1 on your keypad and let's hear two or three examples. Erica, you are live. Go ahead, Erica.

E: Okay. Erica from Ottawa. Do you want to know what we discussed or really what we're seeing the connection is?

DS: Yeah, just briefly, what's the connection? What—give us a snapshot of a commitment that you're in and what's the learning that puts you in.

E: Okay, so the commitment that I'm in is—I made it very particular to something that I need to do. It's bringing forward the idea of same-sex marriage within my religious congregation and community.

DS: Great. All right, significant commitment. And what—how does that put you into your own development, your own curriculum?

E: That puts me into my own development—is that it requires that I actually become more successful at speaking for what I believe in out loud in the face of opposition, opposition that might really lead to my exclusion and leading to a lot of judgment of me. And so what I have to get over—the habit that gets in my way—so there's a relationship between my ability to do that and new habit that I need to develop or a habit that I need to get over which is that I am a people pleaser and it's really important to me to be seen—to be accepted by my community and be seen as being a reasonable, sensible human being.

DS: Great. Okay. Perfect. Thank you. So that's an eloquent example. So here we have a commitment in the world and most coaching clients enter into coaching because they have some sort of commitment that they're up to in the world. And we can see that that commitment requires Erica to embody certain new competencies and that she has a habit or a way of organizing herself that's going to make it challenging to build that competency. If we are a people pleaser and we want the whole world to like us, it becomes—we challenge that by having to take a stand for something that other people might find difficult. Okay. So what you've done there, Erica is really to articulate the developmental territory for yourself, the competency, the habit that's going to get in the way, and the relevance of both of those to the commitment that you're up to. Okay? Make sense?

E: Makes a lot of sense.

DS: Great. Thank you, Erica. Jillian, you're live.

J: Yes. Thank you.

DS: Yeah. Go ahead.

J: What I was noticing is that—yeah, with surveying the landscape of all the various projects I'm involved in and feeling into where I felt I needed to work and I thought, well, this is all very familiar territory to me so I just wanted to make that comment. It's just that I'm working all the time and up front. And the one that I decided

to focus on, just because the most leverage, is really at this transition point in my life, I've just turned 47 and left my partner and am entering menopause—is really looking at creating a foundation for the next era or the second half of my life in terms of the work that I do in the world and getting increasingly focused that what I do and what I do well and what is less easy for other people to do well and what the world needs, all of which I've been good at. But the part that I have not been good at is to increase the percentage of work that I do that's actually tied to bringing in money because I do a tremendous amount of service work in the world. And so that's—I'm curious about that "habit" because it's, like any habit, enmeshed in so many other things and I just wanted to know if you had any thoughts about it.

DS: Yeah. Well, so we could have a whole conversation about that but increasing the percentage of work that you do in the world that brings in money, that sounds like it could be a project, sort of like an external commitment. So there's some competency that you presumably have to build around that. Maybe it's about making requests. Maybe it's about creating a clear offer that is going to be relevant to people who would pay you for it. You know, I don't know what the competency is. And then there's the habit of—there's a way you are organized to be of service which hasn't traditionally for you brought in money. And so there's some way that you get rewarded or some way that you feel good about yourself that will need to change or shift somewhat in order to produce this income that's important. Does that make sense?

J: Yeah. It just helps me to feel the next layer. It's very deep and it's not just about me. It's about a lot of dysfunction in the world and so that's part of my confusion. But definitely, I think, given what is and what I'm trying to grow in terms of changing it around me and create economy around what I do but also play the system as it is and develop more effective habits.

DS: Yeah. So from what we've said so far, Jillian, what would you speculate, then, would be a relevant competency? What's the competency that you'll have to develop in order to make this shift towards producing more income?

J: Well, I think I'm more at the meta level of just the project, of the competency being becoming increasingly clear about my worth and value and being focused on attracting relationships which have much more remunerative potential. That's the competency.

DS: Okay. Yeah, so we can be at the meta level and at some point we have to operationalize it and so competencies become things that we're doing in the world that's making a request or articulating what that offer is. So I want to encourage you to be pragmatic around it because it's the development of that pragmatic competency that, in fact, moves us forward in relation to the bigger commitment. Does that make sense?

J: Yeah. Yeah, and I wasn't trying to be difficult. It's more that I was just kind of feeling it go at the meta level and yet, from there, from that foundation, it'll definitely shake out into more focus around the actual—what you're calling competencies.

DS: Yeah, great. Good. And then for you, Jillian, what would you see as the habit itself? Like, what's the way in which you are wired that makes it hard to do that?

J: That I have 20+ years of just working and working and working and hardly having any of it tied to bringing in money and it's very normal for me.

DS: Yeah. So you have a well-developed normal that doesn't produce much income. Yeah. So, again, coming to a very granular level, part of what there is going to be to work with there is, you know, you have a whole narrative about what's worth doing and a way of sort of organizing yourself within that in the world. And there are things in that that you'll have to build on and some things you might have to let go of in order to make that change. That good for now?

J: Yeah. Thank you.

DS: Yeah. Thanks. So what I want to point to here is the third theme. The third theme is that we—starting really early in life, we go through this process of conditioning. We learn what works, what gets us what we need. And that shapes us in a particular way. So we have this whole history. We have a culture that we grew up in and the set of socioeconomic conditions that we were born into and we have a gender and we have a race and we have conditioning from school and all of that shapes us in a particular way. And we build from that a—what we could call a habit nature. And a habit nature conditions our responses to the world. So, for example, with Jillian I'm going to mix this up a little bit because I don't know Jillian. But she's engaged in all this service work. And to make a claim that what she is doing is worth money and to ask for that is a different way of organizing herself so she has a habit, a way of being in the world that's been pretty successful. And what's required developmentally is not that she stop doing that but that she, in a way, transcend that and include this other piece about how does she get remuneration for what she's doing?

So we begin to see how the commitment puts us into confronting our own habits. There's this developmental impulse or this developmental stream that runs below the surface and it's there all the time and when we begin to pay attention to it—and that's what commitments put us in—when we begin to pay attention to it, here are these opportunities to wake up. So Jillian might run into an opportunity for paid work and then she might feed this narrative about what's worth doing that she's practiced for 20+ years. And she will have to engage differently with that narrative.

Erica may have a chance in her spiritual community to take a stand for same-sex marriage and there's some part of her that wants to be liked, that wants to lay low

around this. And that conditioning or that habit of laying low is there for really good reasons but it doesn't support her in the commitment. And so what we're building in this is the capacity to witness, to pay attention to our conditioning or pay attention to our habits so that from a resourceful inner state, we can choose new behaviors, we can practice these new competencies that we're building. So what we can count on—the good news is this. Let me say it this way. The good news is we have everything we need. We're a perfect reflection of our entire history and everything that's ever happened to us. And because commitments put us into new territory, there are going to be some ways in which our habit nature doesn't support us in this commitment. So Jillian has a way of organizing herself in service that doesn't serve getting paid. Erica has a way of organizing herself as someone who is like and who gets along with people and who's acceptable but that doesn't necessarily support taking a stand for a principle that in some segments of her community might be unpopular or might risk that approval that she seeks.

So when more present, we can witness in the moment how these habits arise. We don't try and change the behaviors or do away with the habit, we simply come into relationship with the habit. Come into relationship with the habit. And when we are present and centered, when we see our habit arising, that gives us a choice point. And we can see our habit on the level of the narrative or the story we tell ourselves. We can see it on the level of our emotions and we can find it on the level of sensation. So if I'm taking a stand for something that might be unpopular, the narrative might be, "Oh, if I say this, people aren't going to like me or I won't get invited to this other event." The emotion is a feeling of anxiety or fear. And on a level of sensation, there might be activation in my throat, energy in my throat or a tightness in my chest, a tightness across my chest, a sense of rising energy or my gut might clench. All of these are phenomena that are associated with that particular habit. And what I'm suggesting is that the competency is to observe this habit as it arises, observe the habit that could stop us, build a relationship with it so that witness it and we don't give it power.

Let me stop with this. I'll see if there are a couple of questions and then I'm going to ask for a volunteer client for our coaching demonstration and we'll work together for about 10 minutes and see if we can bring this to life a little bit. So first, any questions? If you have a question, press 1 on your keypad.

What we've been talking about really speaks to the field work that I'm going to ask you to identify this competency and this habit that gets in the way and then to do a witnessing practice over the week between now and Henry's conversation in which you pay attention to this habit as it arises. So I'm going to ask you to do a little witnessing. And the witnessing is this. I want you to make a conscious choice if you are willing or not willing to be a coaching demonstration client. So here's what usually happens in these situations, as the presenter asks for a demo client and then everybody waits to see who puts their hand up. And as soon as somebody puts their hand up, the rest of us are sort of off the hook and we don't actually have to decide about whether we're

willing or not. So what I'm requesting is that you make a conscious choice about whether you're willing or not. So the way it'll look is if you're willing to be called on and do just about a 10-minute demonstration working with this notion of habit, then press 1. If you're not willing, then press 2. You can do either one, but I'm asking that you make that decision. Either you're willing or you're not. So press either the 1 or the 2 on your keypad now.

All right, there's a lot of willingness in this group. Joel and Laurens, you've got some people that are really showing up here. And if you're not willing, that's really okay, too, because this is how you're taking care of yourself. So because we have such a short period of time here, I'm going to invite Erica to work with me a little bit. So, Erica, thank you. Everybody else, I'm going to thank you for your discernment, whichever way it went. And Erica, the reason I'm choosing you is because we have a little bit of background. We've got a little bit of information about you in the room so we can go right to it a little more quickly. So thank you.

So, here's what I would invite us to do, is to play with this notion of the habit. This habit of being liked and how that might impede your taking a stand for same-sex marriage in a community in which you want to feel acceptance and belonging. Is that a reasonable synopsis there?

E: Absolutely.

DS: So what I'd like to do is—we could call this paying attention to the phenomenon or paying attention to the habit as it arises. And let's play with it a little bit and just see if we can bring it to life and discover some way in which you could be a little bit more resourceful with it for those situations. Is that okay?

E: Sure.

DS: Okay. So could you briefly describe, Erica, a situation in which you would want to take a stand but it would be hard?

E: So working with what I've already said, can I give you a bit more detail?

DS: Yeah, a little bit more detail.

E: Okay. So actually it's very present for me because I'm serving in my community on a search committee for a new rabbi for our congregation. So we recently went through an interview process on a weekend and the candidate indicated that this isn't—that the same-sex marriage notion is not something he'd be willing to take our synagogue on a journey for.

DS: Boy, this is live, isn't it?

E: Very live. And he went so far as to suggest to the search committee that it wasn't an issue for our congregation and I have worked really hard for a year already to raise the profile of it as an issue prior to this. So there was collective—you could feel the collective relief in the room when he said that almost. So very—so it's very much an issue where there are some people who are inside but not a lot, because it's really got to affect you personally, I think, to be entirely committed. It's an easy issue to dismiss within the religious context, especially since there are challenges to the notion within the religious context.

So, anyway, what I became aware of is that in order for me to, in a separate conversation at another meeting, it's going to be important for me to address at least at the search committee level and perhaps even within my congregation, the extent to which I believe it's not something that we should give up on and it's going to be really hard also because this particular candidate was very dazzling in many other aspects. So it's going against the group.

DS: Yeah. He was dazzling and he said something that came as a relief to other people and sort of let them off the hook.

E: Right.

DS: So, I get why this is very present and immediate for you. So let's get really granular with this. When you're in that moment of deciding whether to take a stand or whether to speak up in this search committee, what happens to you? What happens in you?

E: What happens in me, that will take a bit of exploring. But, first of all, at a thought level, I think I very quickly parse the value to me—the risk to me to speak against the grain, the group. And I'm highly sensitive to the energy and whether it's accepting or rejecting. I feel that in my body immediately.

DS: And where do you—can you feel that right now?

E: Yeah. So it's sort of a—

DS: How do you feel it right now?

E: So I feel it right now by kind of an anxious energy sort of going through my body and affecting sort of in my chest region. Sort of butterflies and nervousness.

DS: Butterflies and nervousness. Yeah is there an emotional quality to it?

E: Yes, it's anxiety and fear. Worry.

DS: And then talk a little bit more about the sensations. Worry, uh-huh. Talk more about the sensation. What's the sensation of that, of the butterfly sensation in your chest?

E: I don't know if I'm being—I don't know. So you mean to really get in touch with that?

DS: Yes.

E: It's like a burning—a shakiness and a burning and a heat.

DS: Shakiness and a burning and a heat. And where, precisely, is the shakiness and the burning and the heat?

E: At my heart. Going up to my throat.

DS: This is really live and really immediate right here, isn't it?

E: Yeah.

DS: So I want to make a general comment. So this is both to you and the group. In a way, the nervous system doesn't know the difference between us being in a coaching conversation and you being in a meeting with the search committee. And so here we are and your habit is triggered in real time as you talk about this other situation. And so we could have a conversation in the abstract about strategies for that conversation but what I think's much richer is that here we are and your nervousness, Erica—we're working with this in real time. So here's the—and what I'm inviting you to do in describing it is that you can actually witness this habit as distinct from being run by the habit. As you describe it, you're forming a relationship with it. Can you feel that?

E: Well, it's—yeah, in that it's more—it's more—yeah, alongside me in awareness than before when I might have just. Yeah, when it was just there.

DS: Yeah. It's almost as if by naming it, you make it a phenomenon that can be witnessed as distinct from an experience that you're lost in.

E: Yeah. I see that. I can see that.

DS: So now what I want to invite you to do is to find some place in your body that's not anxious or afraid, that's not shaky or burning. Some place that is calm and relaxed and centered and strong.

E: Okay.

DS: Where is that place?

E: That's lower down in my abdominal region.

DS: Your abdominal region. So what—can you describe the sensation of your abdominal region?

E: Kind of nothing. It's just calm. It's just there. It's just content. Like, there's no alive sensation, if you know what I mean. There's no—it's the opposite of what's in my chest.

DS: Right. Is it the opposite in the sense that it's, like, numb or is it alive but calm?

E: Yeah, alive but calm, I would say.

DS: Great. So let your—

E: And I know enough to know that when I'm doing something that's absolutely right, then it's my abdominal area that feels heat and warmth.

DS: That's great. So your abdominal area, then, is a resource for you in this.

E: Yes.

DS: So what do you notice as you sort of broaden your awareness from your abdominal area to the whole of you? How are you different now than before I asked you the question about where's the resource?

E: Well, I've taken my attention away from my heart, you know, the anxious piece, part and I've moved it down to the calm part which is sort of having a calming effect.

DS: So when you check back in with your chest and the anxiety and the fear and the burning and the shakiness that were there a few minutes ago, is it still there? Is it different? Is it changing?

E: It's still there but much less alive than it was.

DS: Okay. And what do you feel in your abdomen now?

E: Well, I'm now more aware of it and it's sort of coming more alive as I sit here.

DS: So, Erica, from this awareness, from this resourced place, what actions could you take from here that wouldn't be available when you were triggered?

E: Well, I'm not so sure what exact actions yet, but I can see that I would be able to access rational thought more clearly so that if I can use that, I might be able to—once I've prepared what I need to say—step into saying it more articulately than I would if I was in anxiety.

DS: The thinking is clearer.

E: Yes.

DS: You can organize your thoughts differently.

E: Definitely.

DS: And what about the actual action? What about the act of taking the stand? How does the shift in your—what we could call your somatic awareness, your body awareness—how does that inform the possibility of taking a stand?

E: Well, it makes it easier to think about from that place, certainly. I think that's as far as I can go for now, though.

DS: Okay. Great. So how are you right now, Erica?

E: I'm fine and I'm very aware of the potential of using that strategy to give me courage. And certainly to use it to diminish the fear and anxiety that's in my chest.

DS: Do you see that, in a way, what you did—you didn't, like, tell the fear to go away. You didn't make an enemy of it. You simply paid attention to it and then you shifted your attention and accessed a different place, a different resourcefulness.

E: I totally see that. Yeah.

DS: So what I'm inviting you to do here is to see that in this few minutes of conversation that we've had here, are both the habit—like you had an experience of the habit that you named earlier—and you have a competency that you can practice.

E: Yes. Yeah, it's very clear to me. Like, I've never thought about before that as a strategy at all.

DS: Right.

E: It's sort of—it's quite powerful in that it seems so quick and more instantaneous than anything I've thought about doing before, which would have been, okay, you know, leave the situation, analyze it and calm it down.

DS: Right. Right. Yeah. And, you know, all we can do in life ultimately is work in real time. You know, all we have is the present moment and so that competency, that action of taking a stand—you're either going to do it or not do it in those moments, in that search committee or wherever it is. That's the only moment in which we can mobilize ourselves. So we can sort of talk about it in the abstract but the competency can only be enacted in the present moment.

E: Yeah, absolutely. The actual taking action. So I totally see that using that as a way to, in the moment, give me the courage to say what I need to say in the moment and, yeah. That absolutely makes sense, which frees me to take action as opposed to just keeping it as an abstract notion that I can speak to continually.

DS: Yeah, great. Beautiful. Does this feel like an okay place to complete?

E: Absolutely. Thank you.

DS: Yeah, good. Thank you. So Erica's very resourceful and very willing to play, which is wonderful. So what she revealed for us is here's what a habit looks like in real time. There was a narrative around it, a narrative of parsing the value and the risk of speaking against the grain in a community that she really wants to be accepted in. And the experience of the emotions that went along with that, the anxious energy, the fear, the worry. And then physical sensations, a shaking, a burning sensation, a heat. So she was able to witness in quite a level of detail, this habit arising. And then she could access a resourcefulness in her body from which she could imagine and take, or potentially take, a different kind of action. So it's a shift from being run by our habits or driven by our habits or undermined by our habits, whatever you want to say it, to witnessing the habit, recognizing that habit is not us and then replacing it with some competency of our choosing that helps us move towards our commitment. That's what we're building here.

J: *At this point, Doug asks the live participants to work in groups of three again. So if you're listening or reading at home, I'd invite you to do the same thing as last time. Grab your piece of paper and pen and write about what comes up as you reflect on the questions that Doug is now going to give you.*

DS: Talk about your habit and talk about—share with your partners, when does this habit show up? How does it get triggered and what happens at the level of narrative, emotion and sensation when it gets triggered? Identify for the habit that you named earlier, and you may see it a little bit differently after the last few minutes of conversation, but for your habit that gets in the way, how does that show up on the level of story, emotion and sensation? I want you to describe it in a granular way. You don't have to go through the same coaching process that I just did with Erica but I want

you to tease apart your habit and get as granular as you can about how this shows up and what triggers it.

J: *You can now reflect and write about what comes up as you think about Doug's questions.*

DS: So everybody is now back in the main room. And I want to—we're going to open it up for questions and answers and discussion in a couple minutes here. What I want to do is to sort of move from this into seeing what the field work is and where we go from here and then we'll just open it up for conversation.

So at this point you should have identified a commitment and a competency that you're building and a habit that gets in the way of that. And you should have sort of a—at least an initial description of how that habit shows up, like how does it get triggered and how does it show up on the level of narrative, on the level of emotion and on the level of sensation?

Now what we're going to ask you to do for field work is to really anchor that a little bit and sort of put some language on each of those things and then to engage in two practices between now and Henry's session one week from today. The first practice would be the centering practice and so that—what we would ask you to do is 10 times a day to center yourself, to bring your attention into sensation, let your body settle in, take some deep breaths, extend up into your length, drop your attention down into your ground, your base. And to do that 10 times a day. Now my prediction is that some of you are thinking, "I'm too busy. I don't have the time to do that 10 times a day." And I want to anticipate that and push back on that by saying it actually doesn't take any additional time. So I know that you all have full plates but what I'm asking you to do is not to introduce a whole major new activity. I'm asking you to practice gathering your attention as you're doing what you'd be doing anyway. So you can center yourself before doing your emails or during your emails. You can center yourself in a meeting. You can center yourself during a conversation with your spouse. You can center yourself before a coaching conversation or during a coaching conversation. So I'm not asking you to do another whole set of activities here. I'm asking you to practice organizing your attention so that when you do whatever it is you're doing anyway, you're doing it with a level of presence, a level of awareness, a level of resourcefulness and creativity that comes from the inner move of centering. So it's doing what you're doing anyway but with a greater level of attention.

So I will send you—or rather, Joel and Laurens will send you as part of a followup to this call, the audio links, a transcript of this whole session and a set of handouts that will include some instructions for centering, so you'll have that. So request number one is that you respond to the questions on the worksheet. Request number two is that you practice centering 10 times a day. And request number three is that for the next week,

you engage with a—in a witnessing practice around your habit. And this will take a little bit more time but not a lot. So the request here is that at the end of each day, in a journal or on a notepad, that you would write down some notes each day on some instance in which that habit arose. So, for example, with Erica’s habit around being liked and sort of laying low and not taking a stand, I would ask her to reflect each day on when that habit showed up and then there’ll be some questions in the materials that will move into sort of a granular description of exactly what triggered that habit. How did it show up on the level of narrative, emotion and sensation? The idea is that in this witnessing practice, we’re learning to recognize the habit as it shows up. We’re catching the habit in the act. And what I want to suggest is that most of the time, we’re being run by our habits anyway. We’re just not aware of them. We’re laying low or we’re gathering attention or managing other people’s view of us or we’re being safe. Whatever it is that we’re doing, we’re doing it automatically. And what we’re doing through the witnessing practice is making visible—is making visible what it is that’s happening underneath the surface. We’re not trying to change behavior. We’re simply trying to become aware of it. So if you do that rigorously for a week every day, you will have new understanding about how that habit shows up, how you can recognize it when it’s there and how you can begin to form a relationship with it rather than being driven by it.

So all of the instructions will magically show up by email, courtesy of Joel and Laurens sometime in the next day or so. So let’s for now open it up for any questions about anything that we’ve talked about here.

J: Here we go. We have Yani.

Y: Yes, hi. It’s Yani. I was wondering—so the idea as I get it is to—I feel, let’s say some anxiousness and uneasiness in some part of the body which is kind of gathering my attention and then I actually find some other area in the body where I’m feeling calm and getting a sort of distance to the predominant feeling. Then my question is would that, in some way, star to release this anxiousness in one part of the body or is it just like moving attention somewhere else and it’s still going on unconscious from the previous part?

DS: So, Yani, that’s a great question. So a couple of answers. One, it can be helpful sometimes to release that energy. And if we’re nervous or anxious, it can be really useful to move and sort of dissipate that energy. There’s a lot we can also do with the attention. And so one of the things that happens in the neural system is when we bring—when we look for some place that’s not activated, when we look for some place that’s calm and settled, that that actually helps dissipate and discharge that nervous worry energy. So it doesn’t automatically sort of go away, but what Erica reported out is after bringing her attention to her abdomen, which was calm and settled, when she brought her attention back up to the places that previously were activated, the sensation was still there but it wasn’t as intense. And that’s pretty common. We see

that pretty commonly. So I think one of the things that's important is we're not trying to change the behavior or get rid of the activation or get rid of the energy. What we're trying to do is to build a relationship with it.

Somebody that I did some work with recently said this really beautifully. He said, "The cure is not in stillness. The cure is not in quieting the overactive mind. The cure is in facing the raging fear itself and cultivating the capacity to be present with it." And so really what we're doing here is we're building the relationship with our habit so that we can enter a conversation with it, we can witness and we can honor them. But we don't have to be run by them. Does that respond, Yanni?

Y: Yeah, sort of. And moving my attention to an area that is calm would give me that space from which to start building the relationship. Is that correct?

DS: Yeah, exactly. And from that space, we can imagine, when—let's see, when our nervous system is less activated and more neutral, we can imagine and execute actions that we can't imagine or execute when we're sort of being run by the activation. So the trick, then, is to remember that through what we pay attention to, we can access that resourcefulness. It doesn't mean that that other reaction's going to go away necessarily. But we're sort of putting it more at arm's length where we can witness it and observe it and have a relationship with it and tolerate it rather than being driven by it.

Y: Yes. Thanks.

J: We have Patricia. So, Patricia, you're now live.

P: I am.

DS: Hi, Patricia.

P: Hi, Doug. I saw you at Hudson a few years ago. Really remarkable. Thank you.

DS: Oh, at Hudson. Oh, okay, right. Yeah, great.

P: You answered this in part with the previous person's question. But I understand how this habit shows up. You have the narrative, you get to the story, you understand the emotion, and then the sensation. Can you talk a little bit about where the attention shift goes? You talked about building a relationship with our habit but not to necessarily focus on the habit. So how does the attention shift part work? Is that clear?

DS: Yeah, I think so. So the—it's like there's some little other part of our awareness that's choosing what we pay attention to. So we can think of this split attention. There's one part that's doing and acting in the world and there's another part that's witnessing

the doing or acting. And that part can choose what we pay attention to. So we can pay attention to our habit. We can pay attention to—a lot of practice our suffering. We make a case for our aloneness in the world or we make a—we gather evidence for our lack of competence and the way we do that is simply by paying attention to a selective set of data that’s always available to us that reinforces our lack of capacity or our lack of competence. When we start to realize that our energy follows our attention, then when we choose what we pay attention to, we’re actually sort of directing our energy. And so Erica was a great example of that. Like, she was in this full-blown reaction that just by describing a situation out there in the world became real for her in this moment. But as she chose to pay attention, and, you know, my question directed her attention there initially—but as she chose to pay attention to where her body was calm and settled, then that’s what came to predominate. That’s the energy that sort of became more of an organizing principle for her in that moment. And in that moment, she could imagine a different kind of action.

So did that respond?

P: Yes, that was helpful. Thank you.

DS: It’s really stunning how what we pay attention to begins to sort of govern the nervous system. And when we’re not paying attention, then what governs the nervous system is our defaults. And so, you know, using Erica again as an example, as she has practiced for a long time being acceptable and she’s probably really good at it because she’s organized around that. But to take a stand for something that’s controversial in a community that doesn’t want to look at it requires a different way of organizing herself. So we, like we started off, that commitment puts us into a different kind of curriculum, a curriculum of taking a stand, a curriculum of negotiating with the habit of being acceptable. And what we always find when we’re coaching people and when we’re working with ourselves around leadership issues—we always find that stating some sort of a commitment, some sort of a declaration of a preferred future, it always confronts some place in us that was comfortable in the way things were, that always puts us in the development work.

J: We have Carolyn. She has her hand up and I hope she still has a question. Hi, Carolyn.

C: Yes, hi.

DS: Hi, Carolyn.

C: Hi. My question is, you know, you were talking about, you know, the quote about the raging fear and going through that. My issue seems to be more with numbness when things come up and so then it’s easy just to go a different direction.

Yeah, so I—it's not the intense emotions, it's the numbness. Any thoughts on working with that?

DS: So, can you give me an example of numbness? That gets in the way of what you want to do in the world?

C: Yeah. I'm working on building a bigger, more essence-based coaching practice. And, you know, but I feel like my life is good generally. It's not like I'm being driven by need for money or driven by whatever. So then some days, I'm just, like, "Yeah. Life is good and maybe I just won't work on this or I won't go that direction." And sometimes I have a hard time accessing those emotions. When I tune into my body, I'm just not feeling a lot. I'm probably more in my head at those points than in my body. But it's easy just to kind of disconnect from the big dream and drift another direction than to just go right after it.

DS: Yeah. Well, so this could obviously be a longer conversation but I—a starting point is I would be curious about how it's causing problems for you because it—if I take that at face value, I would say you sound like somebody who's enjoying yourself and that you're not feeling a lot of pressure and how envious many people would be of that. Now if, on the other hand, you're not accessing sort of—

C: Aliveness is what I want.

DS: You're not able to access your energy and your aliveness.

C: Yeah.

DS: Yeah. Then that becomes a little bit more of a problem. And it could be accessing energy and aliveness so that you can take action or it could be accessing energy and aliveness so that you're, you know, happy and fulfilled and joyous as you're doing what you're doing. So that's sort of like a pragmatic aspect and a fulfillment aspect of it.

C: Yeah.

DS: Yeah. Is it both of those or more one than the other?

C: Yeah, accessing the energy and aliveness? Well, I think it's actually both. Both for my everyday life and also to move the project forward. And I can tap into it at moments and then I really get a head of steam and go, but my, like, habit that is not supporting me is drifting away from that energy and aliveness.

DS: Yeah. Yeah, that's great. So I would say a couple of things. One, tune in next week because Henry's going to have some really juicy, great stuff for you around

purpose and organizing real purpose. And then secondly, I would invite you for this week to do a self-observation around being curious about, like, how do you shut that down? So you might, for example, for your self-observation practice, for your witnessing practice, you might each day write down, well what happened—what was the time today that I felt the most numb? And what was going on there? So it's like you're being curious about what that habit is and how it shows up and what's the narrative and emotion and sensation that goes along with that? And so that would be a first step and a second step would be to flip that around and do a witnessing practice around the energy and aliveness. Like, when is that most there and what triggers that and how did that energy and aliveness show up?

C: Thank you.

DS: And as you center yourself, center is a place—if you really take on the centering as a practice, center is the inner state from which you will be most able to detect energy and aliveness. So you could put that little overlay—add that to your centering practice. So you do the things that are in the instructions, which are pretty basic. And then you add that piece of, like, okay, where in me right now—where is there energy and aliveness? It's like the question I asked Erica. Where is the most alive place in me? And bring your attention there and feel it. Stay there with that. Watch how it grows and changes. You know, there's energy and aliveness in you or you wouldn't be here. You know what I mean? So go looking for it. Be curious about it. Find out where it is. You know, how does this organism grow that?

C: Ah.

DS: Yeah.

C: Yeah. Yeah. I love it. Thank you.

DS: What a great curriculum piece to be working with.

J: So I think we have time for one more question and I wanted to bring on a dear friend of mine, actually. He's on the call. How are you doing Janne?

Janne: Hello, yes.

DS: Hi Janne.

Janne: Hi, Doug. Good to be talking to you.

DS: Good to talk to you. What's your question?

Janne: My question involves—if I look at the question of commitment, I always find myself second-guessing whether this is the most important thing. Like, it's a—perhaps it's something that will be more covered in Henry's session about the life purpose but it seems like I sort of find myself second-guessing myself more generally in life, like is this what I should be putting my energy into? And that's a huge drain on my ability to move my life forward.

DS: Yeah. So would you say that it is a habit of yours to move in lots of different directions at the same time and sort of to get yourself overextended or would you say that it's a habit of yours to second-guess yourself?

Janne: Hm. Like, I'm inclined to answer both. Like, I do find myself, like, working on a number of projects at the same time, and at the same time, I'm doubting whether the ones I'm putting my energy into are the most important ones.

DS: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know if this is true for you but some of us have habits of saying yes to every single request that comes along. And some of those requests come from other people and some of them are self-generated. But if we are such a yes-person and we say yes to all these different things, we can end up doing a lot of things, some of which don't really matter very much to us. So it can be really helpful to engage with that on a couple of levels. One is to do some discernment about well, why are we doing the things we're doing? And which ones really matter? So we sort of do a triage of what's important and we—and then the second thing is to build a capacity to say no. And this is a—somebodies cannot produce a no. I don't know if that's true for you or not but the capacity to say, "Oh, this isn't something I'm going to do anymore" or when a request comes in, even if it's somebody we really like but it's not what we think we should be doing, then we build a capacity to say no to that person. We take care of them at the same time but we're saying no to the request. So there's a competency around—a couple of competencies, I think, that are important. One is discerning what is it that we are called to do. We have this whole range of competing commitments and there are some things that are really purposeful for us and this is part of what Henry's going to be talking about next week. And then secondly, the capacity to sort of—once we know what we're organizing around, what things, what commitments are we in that really serve this and which commitments don't serve us? And then the competency of saying no to things that are inconsistent with that or that pull us off track. So what, of all that, seems relevant and useful to you?

Janne: You more or less put things in order for me. Like, the first one you mentioned seems the biggest one and the last one does not seem to be a big issue for me.

DS: So you're pretty good at saying no?

Janne: Yeah, pretty good, yeah.

DS: Yeah. Good. So the first one is around the piece about discerning what is purposeful for you?

Janne: That is correct. That's the big question I find myself tackling over and over. And also, I sometimes wonder whether I'm using that as an excuse to avoid engaging with things. I don't know.

DS: Yeah. There's a—I have a way of thinking about purpose which is probably in a small minority in the coaching community but I actually don't think that we have some anointed purpose that's lying under a rock somewhere and if we roll over enough rocks, all of a sudden we're going to discover what it is and, you know, all of a sudden our life goes from the search to having arrived and figured out what our piece is. I think purpose is more sort of something that we unfold during the course of our life. And it goes back into this project/curriculum thing again. Like, we make a commitment and we do the best we can at that commitment and if we're really do our development work, we have to lean and become different people through fulfilling on that commitment. But at that point, we're then—because we've developed, we're more able to discern and now we can imagine a different commitment than we could imagine before we did this self-development work. So it's this constant iterative process of make a commitment, do the curriculum work, the self-development work so that we can fulfill on that commitment, and then from this newly developed self, we can imagine a different commitment. And my experience for myself is that that's the way purpose unfolds. It's more trial and error. It's more, "Oh, this is how I imagine this right now. I think I'll do this thing." And then that unfolds and then we imagine the next thing. But I think what makes that really juicy is the process of paying attention moment by moment, like what feels purposeful and what doesn't feel purposeful. And that might be a really interesting witnessing practice for you to work with over the next week in preparation for Henry's session. Like if you reflect at the end of each day, well, what did I do today that felt the most purposeful and what did I do today that felt the least purposeful and how do I know? How do I know the difference?

Janne: Yeah. Yeah, that rings very true and I sort of feel energized about the idea. So thanks for the input on that one.

DS: Yeah. So we're all researchers. We get to be the scientist and the lab rat.

Janne: Yeah. Thank you.

DS: Yeah. Thank you.

Joel: So I know we promised to go on for half an hour with the Q&A. I just want to maybe ask if anyone's got a really burning question which is going to be succinct as well, then I'd like to invite-to give you the opportunity to be able to ask that. So if somebody wants to press number 1 on their keypad if they've got a really burning

question that they really want to ask and we'll get that answered for you. And if that's not the case, then maybe it's a good place to kind of round things—

DS: Tara's got her hand up there.

J: Oh, yeah. I can't see that on my screen. Tara—Oh yeah. Okay. Okay, Tara.

T: Can I ask it? Yeah?

DS: Tara, you're live.

T: Okay, hi.

DS: Hi.

T: If I—it's kind of the reverse of what we've been doing, but if I have easy access to my bodily sensations and I'm working with somebody that doesn't, can I use myself as a resource and check in with what's going on with me and reflect that back to them as a possibility? Or would you leave that alone? How would you—if there's somebody having difficulty with the access sensations.

DS: Yeah. You can, but a couple of caveats. One, it's important to be discerning or to not assume that what we're experiencing is the client or is something going on with a client. So the danger is we start to confuse our own experience with that of the client. And so we could offer here's what we're experiencing and then ask what she's experiencing but we don't want to—We don't want to assume that our sensation experience is necessarily relevant data for the client. It might be. It often is. But we don't want to assume that.

And then secondly, we always want to keep in mind that what we're trying to build is competency in the client and so if our own data, our own sensation can provide a mirror for the client and invite them to witness themselves, that's great. But it's problematic if our data starts to be a substitute for the client's own data. That make sense, Tara?

T: Yeah, it does. Thank you. Yeah, it's a struggle when they can't access anything. I don't know—I don't feel competent yet in terms of how to help them get there. And maybe I just need to be with that for now.

DS: Right. Yeah. Well, a couple things. One is to start small. And so we might start with something like have somebody say something sitting down and then say the same words standing up and projecting their voice out and then asking them to report how they feel different. So we're creating distinction. So there are a lot of different ways of creating distinctions. And that builds a client's somatic literacy. And the second thing is—it's really important to meet the client where they are and so sometimes—Sometimes we are called upon to expand our range of how we work with people. So if

somebody—not everybody’s going to go there. And few people are going to—Few clients are going to arrive at the level of somatic literacy that you have, Tara. And so the danger becomes because that comes so easily for you—the danger becomes that that becomes the way you coach or the way you work and then you’re narrowing yourself, maybe unnecessarily. So the question becomes, like, how do we expand the range of how we meet the client so that our interaction with them is as relevant to them as possible.

J: I think that’s probably a great place to bring this to a close, bring the call to a close. Do you want to say any parting words, Doug?

DS: Well, just thank you so much for joining this course. It’s going to be a great ride over the next six weeks and I’ll be involved in the whole thing as sort of a participant. Just, I’m honored by the opportunity to launch this and I’m looking forward to some great sessions with some great teachers over the next six weeks. So thanks again and you’ll be getting some handouts from me as well as other resources from Joel and Laurens.

J: Beautiful. Yeah, I just want to say a big thanks to you, Doug, for your presence and your skill in working with people. It’s beautiful to see that. I just have a couple practical things. I’ll keep it very brief. Just to remind you there’s a comments section at the foot of every individual download page. You can leave your comments there about, you know, what’s coming up for you as you reflect and relate to these topics and practices. It’s a great place for you to connect with one another. And if anyone out there still wants to join a learning group, please reply to us. Get back to us and just let us know that you want to do that and with your location so we can put you in a geographic group. And again, I just really want to invite you to get down and do these practices that Doug’s shared with us because I think they’re beautiful and powerful and it’s going to set us up very well for next week’s call which is with Henry Kinsey-House, *Discovering Our Life Purpose*. And I just want to say thanks very much for tuning in and we’ll speak to you then and wish you a very good day and good week. Okay, thank you.

DS: Okay. Goodbye everybody.