Rohini Ross

While you were having your breakthrough moment with Mateo in the other room, what occurred to me in terms of supporting Alicia, it felt really important for me to help her come to terms with the possibility that the marriage might not work out. And I really wanted to empower her and for her to see her resilience.

Angus Ross

Yeah, isn't it so ironic? For here I am having a conversation with Mateo in the other room, where I am witnessing him finally, seeing some light at the end of the tunnel and the possibility that this relationship can work out after all because he's had some kind of meaningful insight? And then, here are you with Alicia, prepping her for the possibility of divorce. It's, I mean, I kind of love the contrast in a way.

Rohini Ross

So there's one part of this, which is going to be clarifying, can he get in? Can you just get into the relationship again, and if you can't, then you need to know that. You just can't. And okay, then we have to work with that. And so if he's in, then all of that kind of comes off the table, because you don't say those things ruin your aim. Now in terms of the future, it doesn't mean that what you know for yourself is that when he gets discouraged when he gets down like he starts to back out. Now, if he kind of sees something that gives himself a new foundation, that allows him to see well, that's, you know, I'm all in, we're married, this is it, it doesn't really serve me to have one foot out the door, then that won't be a problem in the future. So that would be like if he's in helping him get to the clarity that's it then like it's actually easier to be all in, it's actually easier to be two feet in a relationship than to be kind of halfway out the door. it's a lot more work. And so that seems like an important part.

Alicia

Yeah.

Rohini Ross

For both of you. So what I think is also important to get clear on for you is that if he's not able to do that, then it sounds like your decision is clear for you. If he can't call it that you will need to because it's like this isn't fair on you.

Alicia

Yeah, I mean, it sucks. It's sad.

Rohini Ross

Yeah. And I'm not saying that's not that's going to be where it ends up.

Alicia

No, I know. But it's a possibility. That's something that like I do have to be aware of.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, but in terms of honoring yourself, it seems like that's that's you taking care of you. If he's really not able to say yes, I'm in.

Alicia

Yeah, this is just hard because it's like, been with him since I was 22. I'm almost 30. Like, you know, there are so many great memories. And when we didn't have like money or anything, and he wasn't having an income, like I listened to him in the sense that he always wanted to go to Thailand. And I booked us and took us in went on this, you know, there's like, so many times where like, I think there are so many times like, I've like literally like been there to give him what he wants. And like I said, I don't feel like it's always reciprocated. It just, I don't know, it just like sucks. I feel like I put in a lot. And that's what I wanted to do. But...

Rohini Ross

But at least you know that you gave it your all like, to me, if it doesn't work out that you have the knowledge that you put your two feet in, and that you're able to put your two feet into me, that's what's most important. I'm going to explore this with you on the understanding that it's hypothetical, and that we know we're not going there. Right, this is where it is. But what I would say about that is that relationships not working out. There's grief associated with that. But it's not a failure, in the sense that, you know, there's always learning and growth and each person does the best that they can do. And sometimes it just doesn't work out. You know, but it's like, seeing it as a failure means that you did something wrong. Like somehow you failed. But really, it's learning and growth along the way. And then you get to a point where you know what, it's not a fit. This is not a fit if it gets to that point. And it's more of recognizing what's self-honoring, when you get to that point, you know, what's in the best interest of yourself, which is ultimately going to be in the best interest of both of you. Because if you're not making self-honoring choices, that can't be good for the relationship.

Alicia

Yeah, yeah. It's like the thought of starting over to is like, oh, they're just not what I wanted, either.

Rohini Ross

Like, no, what I want you to be open to is if this is for the highest good, right? If he's just not able to get in, that means that's for the highest good to ended because it's not good for you to be in limbo, you know, how painful that is, that you will have the resiliency, you will be okay. And you will bounce back, like you have that within you. You're very capable, competent, positive.

Alicia

I know, I'll get through it. I know like I'll, I'll fight back or bounce back and whatnot. But it's hard. Like, I've spent so much time with this person. And the thing that they're like, not there with me anymore, it's like that hurts.

Rohini Ross

It actually makes quite a lot of sense to me that we ended up going in this direction, because part of what was holding this unhealthy normal in place for them in the relationship is Alicia's fear about the marriage being over. She hasn't advocated for herself because of that. And in this session, I'm really looking at how to support her with honoring herself and making choices that are supportive for herself, even if that means letting go of the marriage.

Angus Ross

Yeah, and in this next section, I was quite impressed by his level of maturity, in the way that she certainly had plans for that.

Alicia

In reality and that is a possibility. And it's some you know, it's something that I've been dealing with and trying to face. And that's where these blobs do come out because it's like, I'm so unclear.

Rohini Ross

Well, it's one of those again, chicken and egg scenarios where it's like you're feeling that insecure, and then the blokes are more likely. And he's like, Yeah, but I can't be with her. If the blow-ups are happening. Like it's never-ending.

Alicia

Right? So vicious cycle.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, so vicious cycle. So what we talked about yesterday, though, is that you can. I think this is what's important you recognizing, like dealing with emotions as hard for you, so that we can help you with that which will be good for you, no matter what happens in this relationship that's going

to go with you. That's going to be something that makes your life better, whether you guys stay together or not. And that's going to be important. I think that's an important focus. As we're getting clear on what is going on in terms of his willingness to really be all in and, and what I would say is, you could only do your best each day and like you can't nobody can predict the future but in order to have a relationship that is viable, you know, it requires commitment.

Alicia

Yeah, I mean, another end like, I hope he finds what he wants, if it's not like with me, and I hope he finds his happiness, because it also faces like, whatever he's going through and where we went wrong. So it doesn't happen again for him.

Rohini Ross

And I, and sometimes, you know, it's just about readiness. Sometimes it's just about maturity. Sometimes people it's not about you, or about even things not going wrong. It's about sometimes people don't have the internal readiness for commitment.

Alicia

You know, it's, it's... I've told him so many times, and like different aspects of life, it was like, You always think that the grass is greener on the other side. Looks like it's not it's gonna be green, if you water it, like, that's just how it works. And when he has said things, like, oh, I see all these other people, or I imagine what it would be like to be happy with somebody else. It's like you think that, you think that but it takes you to do things, like relationships aren't easy, like, you're not going to enter a marriage, which is going to be a blessing, happy go lucky in flying pigs and unicorns like it's. It doesn't work that way. Like you have to make it that way. And I don't think he believes that.

Rohini Ross

I think it's helpful that he's at least willing to have this kind of conversation and be transparent and honest, and kind of get help in his ambivalence, because clearly, that's not working for him, either. Yeah, I know, he wouldn't be doing this.

Alicia

Totally. And it's like, it's confusing when then I get to a point where I'm like, Okay, well, then I'm done. I'm gonna give you what you want. And then he's like, Well, no, I want this forever, I want us forever. And it's like, I don't know what to believe that comes out of your mouth, because like, my story has never changed. But at some point, I do have to learn self respect.

Rohini Ross

Here, I really want her to internalize that if the marriage doesn't work out that it isn't a failure, and for her to not make that mean something about her. And to also not see that the experience of us coming together and working together, to not see that is a failure either. And I think it's very common for people to think that success or successful outcome means that the relationship will work. And in the work that we do, it's much it takes a much broader perspective. And we're really looking at transformation, and healing. And sometimes as part of that process of transformation and healing, the end result is that one or both members might decide to not continue with the relationship, someone might choose to leave an unhealthy situation. And we don't see that as a failure. On our part, we see that as a recognition of the growth and learning. And what's really important is that those decisions aren't made from a place of fear and reactivity. That's what we're really focusing on is helping couples helping individuals come to a place of centeredness, equilibrium, internal peace, and to make decisions related to their life from there, to rewild that inner experience of well being of love and harmony, and from that inner state, take action in their life.

Angus Ross

Yeah, I really like this approach. And apart from anything else, I feel like it will temper some of the feelings that she will probably have. And obviously, she definitely expressed some of those feelings in this section where she got into the sort of negative future fantasy about being alone. But really, at the end of the day, she's gonna leave this intensive with some invaluable information, which will really set her up well, to deal with whatever comes away from this point forward, whether she's with Mateo or not. So I love the idea that you're really trying to sort of share with her that this is going to be really helpful this understanding in how it's going to make life look a whole lot easier, in or outside of the relationship.

Rohini Ross

And even in this section, you can hear that she's pulling back and seeing the big picture more. As you said to me after the session, she was getting more philosophical in her approach and really wanting the best for Mateo no matter what.

Angus Ross

Yeah, I thought that was a really beautiful moment that in the face of all of this falling apart at the seams, she's still able to maintain that sense of compassion as far as he's concerned.

Rohini Ross

And that's really interesting that she has that capacity. And then she has her other moments where she gets incredibly volatile, and just flies off the handle. And so we look at that a little bit more in-depth in the next section.

Angus Ross

Yeah, that's fantastic.

Rohini Ross

Go back to what you were saying about emotions being difficult. What is it that you find difficult when it comes to your emotional experience?

Alicia

Taking things personally, and feeling like I'm judged, or like I had mentioned yesterday, like, I feel like everybody that knows our situation, looks at me either like the monster or starting to slightly see the truth. And I grew up with the idea that like, you don't air your dirty laundry. And I feel like all of mine was. And I was placed into a very vulnerable category, which then kind of shook my world where I was like, I don't know how to act. I don't know why I shouldn't be around. I don't know what's going on.

Rohini Ross

Given how you're feeling now, it seems like you're kind of able to be with your feelings in this moment. Like, how are you doing? I want to check-in.

Alicia

I'm just sad. Sad, because I feel like I've put so much energy and time and love into something that could potentially just go away.

Rohini Ross

Yeah.

Alicia

So quickly, it feels like no, we're really nothing other than a communication mishap. That's like the hardest pill to swallow.

Rohini Ross

When you say communication mishap, what would he mean, which would is what communication mishap,

Alicia

I'm guessing, like just the volatile, like communication that we've had and not been able to communicate and like getting to the point that we have.

Rohini Ross

So like the general volatility.

Alicia

We're like the guardedness that he's always kind of had and not wanting me to get too close if the results.

Rohini Ross

Waiting for the papers.

Alicia

Um, I mean, we wouldn't have those moments. But then he'd bounced back. And I was always be like, okay, we're fine. And that's why like, when this sprung up on me, I was just like, this is like, out of nowhere, this out of left field and like, like I can read in between the lines, I could figure things on the fact that I didn't see any of this coming, like still freaks me out.

Rohini Ross

So what do you make of that? He sees the volatility as a problem, and you don't ,like let's look at that, like, what do you make of that?

Alicia

It's not that I don't see that. It's a problem. It definitely is. Because like I expressed yesterday, like I don't even like going through it. I guess it's the fact that like, we had had that dynamic for some time, it still always bounced back, it was still always strong

Rohini Ross

Wasn't a problem before.

Alicia

Right. And the problem was moments, I recognize that whatever. But it's like, also, the other thing is like so hard to see is like everybody says like we're such a great couple together. And we're so happy together. We clearly love each other so much. And like you can see him like photos, even recently, like the way that we look at each other. And it's not like we care about

each other. And everyone says they have so much fun with us together. And I kind of feel like it did come out of nowhere. Because like when that whole thing came out, the papers and everything we really didn't have like a blowout.

Rohini Ross

But it was something that had been building it sounds like. So the way that you just linked it now it's like if this happens, it's kind of over? Nothing, just a communication thing. If that were the deal-breaker, do you feel like based on what we've talked about the volatility is going to be different in the relationship now, like do you think that that would be a different experience? Based on what you've seen? Do you think you've seen enough for that not to be the same, I guess, is what I'm wondering.

Alicia

Yeah, for multiple reasons, one of which is like I don't want to, like I said, it takes a lot to come down from it. But also like, just to recognize that like, he's not the one making me feel that way. Like it's more so like, it's me. Yeah. And I need to recognize when that happens, and just like walk away from it. Um, it's also just like viewing things a little differently.

Rohini Ross

So you've seen some things that could really make a big difference there, which I think is going to be important for him to hear at some point and Angus, now figure that out. So it's like one way of looking at it. This is you could have been with someone where this kind of volatility was not an issue, like didn't wasn't a problem. It's not like you're, you're wrong, or you're bad. It's just like, they're, they're immune to it. It's not a big deal. That's the case you're with somebody where they're really sensitive to it. And that may or may not change. And it seems like over time, his tolerance kind of decreased. So what worked okay, at the beginning, over time, just like this isn't working anymore. And I'm not saying that you're responsible for fixing this relationship, like I want to be really clear on that. There's clearly his ability to be all in and to be open and committed. Like, that's clearly what's on his side. But what I'm seeing based on, you know, Angus, and I talking and speaking, is that if he's able to make movement on that side, and you're able to really, genuinely be open to being on the learning curve with your volatility, and it's not like a sacrifice, you're not doing it for him, like you actually want that for yourself. You know, it's like they say, with alcohol is that you can't just stop drinking for someone else, like, volatility is not something that you should be changing for him, it should be something that you're like, No, I want to have a different experience with this in my life too, in this relationship. But in general, in relationships, like if that's genuine to you, to me, that's like, there can be a meeting of the minds there.

Rohini Ross

I really appreciate what she's seen. And I really appreciate how willing she is to be on the learning curve. And what I'm hoping that she hears here, and really, what we all need to hear is that it's, it's a learning curve that's never-ending. And I don't mean that in a negative way, or a depressing way or glass half empty way. But it's like we're there's no perfection in this. And with the couples that we work with volatility is a huge issue. For most couples, I don't know many relationships where volatility doesn't come up. And when that isn't an issue, oftentimes, what the couples are struggling with is that they're feeling like they're two ships passing the night, they have a business kind of relationship, and there isn't enough intimacy. And so that's a whole other situation. But for most couples, volatility comes up. And I think it's really helpful to understand that there can be a learning curve around not taking other people's behavior personally, recognizing that we get caught up in our own low mood thinking, and react to that and discharge our low mood on our partner. And we can just see more and more of that and get better and better at not doing that and having less volatility. But it's also important not to shame ourselves around it, and to understand that it doesn't really mean anything about the relationship when that if and when that comes out.

Angus Ross

Yeah, and I find myself totally rooting for her, because I really struggle with volatility myself, and that when I go into a low mood, it's, it's a very easy train of thought for me to get on and then react from that place. And then, you know, generally I say, and do things that I regret later, and probably like her feel the shame over. So for me, it's feels very normal territory, in terms of what she's going through. And, you know, it breaks your heart to see her and having so much love for Mateo. And yet, she is compelled to get on board that train from time to time as I am as well. And it is about, you know, learning how to negotiate that and, you know, hopefully get better equipped to make that decision. No, I'm not going to aboard that train now. And if I do not sell flagellate, you know, afterwards, and just to see my psychological innocence, and to see it, you know, for the rare occasion where he may have aboard that train to see yours. So it's a learning curve, but really, you know, it's the gift that keeps on giving. And for me, and I, maybe I'll spend the rest of my life on that on that learning curve. But for me, you know, it's an invaluable lesson for me to avoid the experiences that I have when when i when i get caught up in volatility, and then the ensuing shame and guilt that that comes in the aftermath of that.

Rohini Ross

Why don't you share about that insight that you had about not getting on that train? That was related to your fear of heights, and then translating that to volatility?

Angus Ross

Yeah, sure. I mean, it's, it's a long story, but get yourself tucked in for the night. I'll try and give you the abridged version. But for me, I had this tremendous fear of heights. And I can cut up actually a large chunk of the story and take you to the latter end of it, which is when I was once driving across a bridge, and here in the States, bridges seemed to have a whole different complexion than they did growing up in England. And maybe that's not so true anymore. But I found myself on certain freeways and then finding myself on certain bridges without any warning, and find myself driving up into the air into the heavens as it were and Because of my fear of heights, I want to drive literally 50 miles per hour, like nobody like to pull over to the hard shoulder ideally, but because it's a bridge, and it's a freeway, there really isn't that option. Don't even know if there are hard shoulders on bridges.

Rohini Ross

Think that you're going over the edge actually.

Angus Ross

And so typically, you know that the mania that's going on inside my head is that for some strange and inexplicable reason, I'm just gonna, you know, do a sharp, bright turn, and drive myself or my family into the water below, or whatever is below the chasm below. And it's obviously it's crazy thinking, but that's just been my mood for many years, I just have this crazy thinking around heights that I'm going to inexplicably jump over the balcony. So anyway, on this one occasion, after some episodes around heights and being exposed to this understanding, there was this one occasion where just suddenly occurred to me what if I just didn't get on board that train of thought, I'm actually feeling the fear. And that's one thing, but generally, what I'm really getting myself into trouble is all the extraneous thought that comes on board. And what if I just chose to ignore that. And the amazing thing was that I actually did manage to pull that off, and did feel the fear. But it didn't stop me from driving like a normal motorist, and getting from one point to the other, successfully without having to drive at 20 miles per hour, and keep up with the traffic. But fast forward about I don't know, two months later. And then I found myself in a situation where I got really triggered by something that you had done and may and was holding you entirely responsible for corrupting my sense of well being. And decided, well, the best thing that I can do now that I've completely lost my neutrality here is that, you know, I should probably extricate myself from the proceedings and take the dog for a walk actually, was my idea. And so I found myself in the process of taking the dog for a walk on the side of this cliff on the trail, and I looked down, and I remembered my experience on the bridge some months before, and it just occurred to me maybe this is exactly the same opportunity for me to ignore my thinking or not get on board that train, like I'm having all these crazy thoughts about my wife. But we're really...

Rohini Ross

You are not gonna share those crazy thoughts?

Rohini Ross

I'm not gann share those crazy thoughts but they were, they were a little bit dark, let us say. But it just suddenly occurred to me is like, you know, I'm feeling my thinking, I'm feeling this sort of this level of emotion. But really, I'm really getting myself into difficulty with the thinking that I'm having. And maybe I'll just leave that alone. And I actually made this choice to leave it alone. And long and behold, within five minutes, I was back loving my wife again, and and, and worshiping the ground that she walks upon, as opposed to five minutes earlier, I was wishing the ground would swallow her up and take her into the depths of hell to never be seen again.

Rohini Ross

Okay, you will share some of your thoughts.

Angus Ross

But yeah, that's my story around heights. But it's just definitely been a point of reference for me now moving forward, where, you know, you'll get to see that it is all state of mind that it is all thought it was, it is all thought born out of that state of mind. And there's the reactivity right there for me.

Rohini Ross

Well, I think it's really freeing and liberating when we see that we can have an experience. And we can have thinking and we may not be able to control, you know how quickly the feelings come in how quickly the thoughts come in. But what you're pointing to in that experience is that even though we can't control that part, at some point, we do have some choice over how much attention we give all of that thinking when it comes in. And that whether it's due to your fear of heights, on the bridge, or whether it's when you're angry with me, you saw that you didn't have to pay attention to that thinking. And what happens with that naturally, when we don't pay attention to it is it subsides, the nature of thought is to change. And so when we don't pay attention to thought it naturally subsides. And so when you're going off into orbit with your volatility, and you leave all that thinking alone, you're going to come back down to earth, and come back down to feeling better so much more quickly. And just seeing how that works is is how we learn that that's how we get on the learning curve. And as soon as we're seeing how it works, and we're on the learning curve, we can't help but get better and better at it. Just living life, we're going to improve and get better at that. And this is for all of us. And so we can all be on the learning curve. And none of us are going to be perfect at that either.

Angus Ross

Yeah, that's right. And you know, I'm not advocating any kind of technique in this respect. For me, it's a choice point that's born out of understanding. And so I just literally and I like to use that metaphor of the train probably because I spent most of my life as a young adult chasing trains in the southern region, British Rail in London and often missing them. But for me, it's a great metaphor because if there is a choice point and about not getting on board that train of thought, and then I can just let it go. And you know, it's a destination that ultimately I don't want to get to. And it's been really helpful for me.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, helpful for all of us, myself included. And so this next section with Alicia really is continuing to look in that direction. making room for humaneness and frailty and relationships.

Alicia

I'll fight for it, even if it's hard. And that's why I'm here.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, yeah.

Alicia

And so that's like, the hardest part is like, I don't want to quit or for like, a husband.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, and I really appreciate how you really are two feet in. Yeah, that's what you got you guys as far if you hadn't been in, it would be done. Be over with. So it's like, you're clearly not struggling in that level over the commitment piece. But it takes both sides to be in. That's the thing, you can't do it, you can't do it all. What's going to be required is a fresh start. Yeah, you know, so, like, he likes to bring the pineapple but, and this is where I'm gonna go back to putting the emphasis on each one of us. So it's like, sometimes he's not going to be able to forget about the past, and he's gonna bring it in, but you don't have to take that on. And you can be like, ground zero, this is a fresh track, and the next moment can be a fresh start. And that's one of your strengths. Right? So you can kind of hold on to that. And if he's on a, just like, you're gonna be on a learning curve with it, he's gonna be on a learning curve with a fresh start being to feed in. So just like, I wouldn't expect you to never lose your temper again and off the handle. He's gonna, you know, have setbacks too. Like, he's gonna get cold feet, or he's gonna bring up the past. But as long as it's moving forward as part of a learning curve, then that's, you know, that's just being human. And so if he stumbles in one of those ways, the idea would be that okay, but then you regroup. You're like, Oh, yeah, right, do over. Let's start again, that's the learning curve.

Alicia

And I think that that's an awakening point to like, practice and realize, like, I could do that, and not take it so hard, not let it affect my emotions, or make me overthink or make me fearful.

Rohini Ross

Exactly. But you just have to see it as like, Oh, I slipped up, I lost my temper, I blame, you know, I got caught up. So when he does those things like Oh, he slipped up, he got caught up and did his behavior that you find really difficult. So it's like room for the humaneness of being on the learning curve. But as long as it's a learning curve, you're going to each get better, you're going to lose your temper less often, if you lose it, it's not going to be as extreme, all of that is going to get a lot easier, as long as you're really staying, staying with what you're seeing, basically, because it will feel so much better to you. Like it will feel easier to you to not take things personally, it will feel easier to you to be like, oh, I'm feeling my own thinking now it's not him, I don't need to worry about him, I just need to take care of myself in this moment. Like that will actually feel like a nicer life to you. And so the learning curve is a positively reinforcing one. It's not like, I'm asking you to do something that makes you feel worse, I'm asking you to say, Hey, this is actually going to feel a lot better for you. And like I said, the byproduct is that it's going to be better for the relationship too.

Alicia

Yeah, I mean, even like, if you were to go down that path, like just thinking like, Okay, I'm gonna go for a walk with a dog and like you deal with your emotions like, exactly, just walk away from it. So I don't get shot in the crossfire and assignments.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, you'll find your ways to do that. Exactly, walking the dogs sounds like a great way to just kind of clear your head not being the not be an escalation of it, and then let him stabilize and let yourself stabilize. So you will get better at doing that earlier. And, and it will feel easier to step away and it will be less compelling to stay in. I think with all of the focus on self help and personal development, it can look like we need to be better people in order to have a good relationship. And I think that we all naturally grow and learn so we do evolve along the way. But what I really hope people are hearing as they listen to this and hope that Alicia and Matteo are getting is that they can have a good relationship, being human and being themselves and that relationships can have room for frailty in our partner, and that we don't have to improve ourselves, to not have any frailties in order for relationship to work. And that we don't need our partner to get rid of all of their frailties in order for the relationship to work. And what happens when a relationship has room for humaneness is that the people in the relationship relax, and they're more themselves and it actually brings out the best in each other. And when a relationship has people in it, that are

putting pressure on themselves to be better, or pressure on the other person to be better tends to bring out the worst in them. And so that's why I'm really emphasizing here, the importance of it being okay to be on a learning curve. And whenever we're learning something, we're going to mess up, we're going to make mistakes, it's not going to be perfect. And like I said earlier, this isn't a learning curve that ends there's no perfection here. So it's okay to be learning. It's okay to be making mistakes, it's okay to not be perfect. And you can have a resilient relationship that has room for all of that, when we understand not to take our partner's frailties personally.

Angus Ross

Yeah, no, I mean, I love the way that you steered her in that direction. And that you got to her to take a look at, you know, the, the idea that we can accept each other's humanity. And in a sense it is kind of interesting to think about how a lot of people are getting themselves into difficulty in relationship get hell bent on trying to tame their partner. And as you say, you know, that never, you know, and you and you, you articulate this in a different way, but it never bears positive fruit. All that happens is that said partner feels like they've been backed into a corner and like a wild animal, what are they gonna do, they're gonna bite, bite their way out of it. So in a sense, to be able to give each other the room to make mistakes, to accept their humanity. That is a growing edge, that's where you're gonna learn. And if you've robbed them of that opportunity, you're doing, you're doing each other a disservice, in a sense. So I love that idea of using that analogy about you know, that we try and tame our partners. Because really, we have to set them free and let them learn by their mistakes. And the chances are, you know, learning by their mistakes, things will improve things generally tend to go haywire when, as I said, before, we get backed into a corner and we just, you know, there are other emotions that come into play, like resentment and this need to react and fight out.

Rohini Ross

And people don't just try to tame their partner, they try to tame themselves too.

Angus Ross

If they do, yeah, absolutely. Sounds even worse, even more pressure. But that self management piece. Anyway, in this next section, I find it quite encouraging, because Alicia is starting to understand that her experience is coming from how she relates to her own thinking.

Rohini Ross

What I think would be helpful is for you to stick to what you're seeing that's fresh and new, and how that relates to the volatility, because we know that that's what freaks him out. And we know that you've seen something around that. So it's actually got nothing to do with him. It's just what you've seen for yourself.

Alicia

I think it's just mainly like just recognizing when people are just going through whatever day to day emotions that they're feeling. And me not feeding into it. And thinking that it's me and taking it personally or feeling judged. And then feeling like I need to protect myself from that. Instead, it's more so like starting to learn and practice and put into action. Like when something like that does come about that I can just let it roll off my shoulder and walk away and just go laugh or play music or something and just like realize it. It's not me.

Rohini Ross

Mm hmm. So not taking it personally. And what and I think this other piece is important. I want to see if you're seeing it is that when that inclination to take it personally or feel hurt comes up what do you see about that now in terms of your own thoughts and feelings? Like...

Alicia

I just can't get it like a platform or I need to walk away and do it by myself.

Rohini Ross

Mm-hmm. And but it's Is there any difference in how you're viewing the other person whose responsibility and how you're feeling?

Alicia

No, it's up to me on how I want to feel about something and something that like, maybe I don't have to talk about in that very moment. And just walk away but also like recognize, like no one has the power over me to make me feel a certain way.

Rohini Ross

Okay. Can you see that? And that is and it's not like, it's nothing wrong with you feeling upset. It's really just understanding where the upsets coming from.

Alicia

Yeah. And it's just going to have to be one of those constant reminders in the beginning when I'm like, at that point, to just be like, it's my choice that I'm feeling this way. Or it's me that's thinking this way and elevating.

Rohini Ross

I would even take the word choice out, because I think it's gonna have you be hard on yourself. It's just your state of mind in the moment.

Alicia

Yeah.

Rohini Ross

Like you don't choose your state of mind at the moment. But you can just be in a stirred up state of mind in the moment. And that's where the hurt and the upset is coming from.

Alicia

Yeah.

Rohini Ross

And, and your responsibility is to take care of yourself. Right. And so taking care of yourself would make sense to walk the dog, settle. If you don't see that it's coming from your stirred up state of mind that it makes sense to stay engaged. But when you really see like, my state of mind is stirred up. I'm not okay.

Alicia

I'm starting to get stirred up.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, then you take care of yourself.

Alicia

Yeah. And I think that's definitely one of those portions were like, it's like the overthinking thing like catching myself. Now it's like to recognize when that happens, and tell myself to stop. And just like, realize where it's right, like, where it's from, and go do something else that will almost distract me in that moment. So I don't give it that energy or give it that way.

Rohini Ross

Exactly. Now, does that feel different? Does that feel different than what you've been doing?

Alicia

Oh, yeah.

Rohini Ross

Yeah. Okay. Because to me, that's a 180 for what you've been doing. Like, for me, it seems really different. And that, to me, handles the volatility piece. Right? So if he's saying that that's what the

problem is, then it's not going to be perfect right away, but you're going to get better and better at navigating that. And, and so it's kind of like, Well, that seems like you're doing your part.

Alicia

Yeah. And I think recognizing now that like, I don't have to engage like it doesn't, it doesn't help sometimes. Obviously, you can assess it too. Like sometimes there has to be an engagement of like,

Rohini Ross

If it is really life-threatening. Yeah, when you're upset, if it's life-threatening. Yeah, you have to handle it. If not, pretty much you don't need to.

Alicia

And I think that I always thought that I just had to engage or justify or yeah, battle it out, or yeah. Instead of realizing maybe the mature thing or the even the better thing for myself is like, for health and everything, just don't go there.

Rohini Ross

Yeah. If you can see that. That's life-changing. Like, I really want to kind of point out what you've seen, which is really profound. Like, this is not a small thing. Even though it's simple. It's not a small thing. Like it changes everything.

Alicia

Yeah. And it does take practice, I'm sure.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, it's a learning curve. So it's like there's a difference between being on the learning curve and not being on the learning curve. So what I would say is before, when you didn't realize that you were feeling or state of mind, and it looks like well, you know, I gotta engage, because they're, you know, they're responsible for my feeling. That's not being on the learning curve, where you're at now is like, oh, I'm learning how to take care of myself. Because my feelings come from inside of me, they're not coming from outside of me. So I'm figuring out how to take care of myself and have more of a subtle mind and how to be with myself, when it gets stirred up, like now you're on the learning curve. So it's actually going to be already even at the beginning stages of that completely different.

Angus Ross

What I really liked here was to hear Alicia suddenly say that nobody has the power over me to make me feel a certain way. So that would suggest that she's beginning to really grasp this understanding in a very beneficial way.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, she's definitely internalizing this idea that her feelings come from inside of her. What I was a little concerned about in this section, and I gave her some feedback around it. But I really want to emphasize that here for everybody else, is that she was starting to get this idea that somehow what we were talking about was going to help her to control her feelings, and not have certain experiences. And so I wanted to make it really clear that that's not what I'm saying what we're talking about, doesn't give you the power to not have certain feelings, we don't control our thoughts. And if we can't control our thoughts, we're not going to be able to control our feelings because feelings come from thoughts. But what this understanding does do is it helps you understand where your feelings come from. That's more powerful than trying to manage or control them. Because that takes an incredible amount of energy and never really works in a long term sustainable way. But when we understand that our feelings are coming from the thoughts that we're identifying within the moment, if we're suffering, if we're feeling upset, we know to take care of ourselves and let our mind settle, so that we can come back to that place of peace and balance within ourselves. Now, that doesn't mean that there might not be something to address in the outside world, I want to be clear about that. But to take care of ourselves first, and address anything that needs to be addressed. Secondly, it's what's important. And I said that in this section where she points that out, and I'm saying that most of the time unless there's a real emergency, you have time to put that oxygen mask on yourself. We can all do that. And when we feel compelled to act immediately, if it's not that crisis situation, that's usually just our emotional energy wanting to discharge because it's uncomfortable, rather than it being the wise thing to do in the moment.

Angus Ross

Yeah, I can, I can see how well first and foremost, I guess, you know, Rome wasn't built in a day. But I could see how she was trying to repurpose this understanding into some kind of technique that she could use in the moment. But I love the way that you caught that and, and tried to steer in a different direction.

Rohini Ross

So hopefully, that's going to take the pressure off, because thought management is just extra pressure. And that extra pressure isn't going to help the mind to settle. And ultimately, when we have a settled mind, we naturally feel peace and well being. And that's all that's required to experience that we don't need to work at those things. Those are our natural states. And that's

why we call our work rewilding. Because we're rewilding back to those natural qualities of the true self that are peace, harmony, well being love. We don't need to create that that's who we are naturally.

Angus Ross

Yeah, no, absolutely. Yeah, that, that self-management is not a good use of personal bandwidth needs to be a little bit economical in that sense.

Rohini Ross

That's right. So next, we'll listen in on our conversation about neutrality.

Angus Ross

Sounds good.

Rohini Ross

Any logistics? You know, anything that's not life-threatening isn't handled in the moment, but any logistics will be handled so much more effectively and efficiently when you're in a neutral place. Yeah, when there's a genuine and a neutral place, like sometimes people, like somebody sent me an email a couple days ago, and it was a text. And she said, You know, it was I had recommended a website designer, just innocently, it's like, Hey, I'm here, this person's designing websites, you're looking for someone. And they sent me this text box, and they've had a bad interaction with them in the past. And then they sent me another text saying, gosh, I thought I was neutral when I sent that text to you. And I realized now like, how unneutral I was. And I'm like, it's all fine. I didn't take anything per se. It wasn't anything to do with me. But it's, it's really good to know what neutral feels like. Because we can think we're neutral like this person did when we're not neutral at all. And as long as we're not neutral, those interactions are always going to go badly. Yeah. Right. So luckily, it was just wasn't important. But it's like really getting a feel for what neutral is. And that it's like, there's nothing on it. There's nothing on it. And so and I work with a lot of executive coaching, Angus and I work with corporations. And that's a lot of the work that we do people have these very tense, hostile, professional relationships, and they think they're going in neutral to work out the problem and they're oblivious to their own reactivity. So that's what you're on the learning curve with is to really be like, oh, neutral is always this. It's never slightly, you know, this is neutral, like a nice feeling. Yeah, relaxed feeling like that's neutral. Yeah, and I think that's not that it is not neutral, and interactions when there's a lot of sensitivity because you guys have had a lot of sensitivity in your relationship, they will go south so quickly.

Rohini Ross

Spending more time in that neutral place in general, like your productivity will go up, your stress will go down, like to see that that neutral that you're describing, is actually applicable to everything. So like are you neutral related to your work project. It plays, Oh there is neutral available there too, because it's just a state of mind. So you could have exactly the same amount of project, checklist, all of the work, but you can be coming from a neutral state of mind or become from a stirred-up state of mind. It's the same thing out there, the only difference is internally.

Alicia

Yeah, I mean, I know I can recognize things like, right in this moment, like, I can enter, work neutral, but then, because other people are stirred up, then my heart starts racing, and then I have to do all this stuff. And then I get freaked out and, and then I'm like, in a tizzy during the day, and I can't bring it back down. And I think what I need to do like initially is just been like, okay, you're there, it looks done. Let's just chill. And then I continue about my way.

Rohini Ross

You can stay neutral, even with other people, you know, whatever state of mind there is like this is what's so powerful. When you see the role of state of mind in your own life is you become less influenced by other people's state of mind, you become more capable of staying in that neutral, clear place, even if other people are there. And like, you know, saying we do a lot of executive coaching work. This is such a differentiator in terms of people being able to progress professionally. Because anyone in leadership that has this kind of skill set is head and shoulders above everybody else, because they can stay in that neutral place in the midst of chaos in the midst of crisis. And it's not like they're having to work at it, they just naturally can drop into a place of recognizing what's going to be most effective and efficient for dealing with the situation. And that they can dismiss all of the noise of the anxious and the insecure thinking and listen to that deeper place of common sense or inner wisdom or intuition. They're just able to stay listening to that more than the noise of all those other thoughts, recognizing that that clarity is available to you, on a day to day write more of that's available to you. And all it requires is recognizing when are you buying into all of the fearful, anxious, insecure self doubt thoughts, and giving them credibility and paying attention to them giving them airtime basically. And when you're in a crisis, those go to the background, you're not listening, you're just listening. This is what's it. So on the day to day, when you're able to be like, Oh, I don't need to listen to any of that. And you just stay with what you know needs to happen. What's common sense? Where intuition guides you to do? your day to day your stress level goes from down there to there so much nicer. Well, I know that I'm guilty of thinking, I'm neutral when I'm not. And it doesn't usually go well, when that's the case. And it makes me think of the times when you might ask someone, Oh, are you upset? Like, no, I'm not upset. And sometimes our reactive thinking can be very compelling

and look very logical, I think we're all pretty good at knowing when we're having very angry, reactive thoughts. But there's certain thoughts that aren't quite that level, that we still think are rational, because they got enough of a rational coating on them to slip under the radar. But actually, they're pretty reactive. And that's what I wanted to point out to her here so that she could start to recognize that when we're neutral, there is a feeling of peace and well being and okayness. Like it's got a good feeling associated with it. And when we're not there, we're not neutral.

Angus Ross

Hmm, I think you're quite adept at recognizing that rational coating. And presenting yourself in a way where you think that you appear neutral, that I might at time question. But you can see how it's so crafty, you know that that sense that we have within ourselves are actually showing up in a neutral way. And we very much are not, and the other party, or almost always will recognize that.

Rohini Ross

Actually, I'm remembering now it happened maybe a month or so ago related to one of our daughters, and I was having a bit of a rant and getting all extreme. And you're like, I don't think you're neutral. And I Yes, I am. perfectly logical.

Angus Ross

And that's funny. Yeah, no, I'm so guilty of that, too, I'm sure. But you know, I can get very sanctimonious about my beliefs and what I have to offer, and think that I'm delivering it in a very neutral way when I'm anything but

Rohini Ross

And what never lies. What we can always count on is the quality of our feelings, it will always tell us the truth. And if we're really honest with ourselves, we'll know whether we're in a good feeling or not, even little children can tell whether they're in a good feeling or not. So it's a really simple way to tell. Are you neutral

Angus Ross

And it is actually kind of interesting to think that you can use your conceptual mind to address the feeling state that one might find oneself in at any given moment. And in a sense, I think for myself, that generally settles me down to just by virtue of the fact, oh, I'm really behaving in a kind of in offensive way. My state of mind must have gone really south. What does it say about my feeling state? And then I look at my feeling state, and there's something very: What should I say? There's something that really allows me to just really feel like I watched those I watched that

sentiment evaporate quite more often than not when I start to even look at it, if that makes sense.

Rohini Ross

So what you're saying is that your reactivity goes down just by paying attention to your feeling strange?

Angus Ross

Yeah, I'd say that my reactivity definitely goes down more often than not, when I just started it when it occurs to me one that my state of mind must be brought into question here by you know, how I'm behaving. And then when I look at my feeling state, or just address my feeling stage, let's say, I feel myself starting to settle.

Rohini Ross

I think that's a really great point. Because when we have the capacity to get reflective, already, we've got perspective, or more perspective. And when we're not reflective, we're usually gripped by our emotional experience. But as soon as we get a bit reflective, we're now having a little bit of distance from it. And it's so much easier to see how we're doing and to not be so compelled by whatever those thoughts and feelings are.

Angus Ross

Yeah, it's, it gives us the opportunity to really bring into question our behavior, particularly when one is feeling reactive.

Rohini Ross

And in the next part, I really start off by looking at how all that's really needed, when we're reactive is the capacity to ride out the emotional experience, that we're not really required to do anything more than simply let it move through us.

Rohini Ross

What I'm asking you to put out of sight out of mind, or insecure thought, self doubt thoughts, anxious thoughts, and there's nothing there's no content that actually needs to pay attention to. If there's anything valuable, your own common sense is going to show you like, Oh, I need to pay attention to that, like, Oh, you know, I forgot to call them like, we all have those things I gotta call. So like, that's common sense. And the natural guidance that comes in as you know what to do. All of that noise is just that it's just noise. Yeah. And the more airtime we give in, it distracts us from our true capabilities. It's kind of like, you know, running with weights on, you can take those weights off, and then you're just running. It makes it so much harder. Yeah, do you see that?

Alicia

I do, for sure. I mean, I see it from so many different perspectives in my life, not just like my relationship.

Rohini Ross

And you know, what happens is that our neutral gets better. What I noticed is like, I get even more neutral, like, even more relaxed, even more peaceful, like, Oh, this is even better than what my old neutral used to be, basically. So it's like, there's an infinite depth of neutral, available to us. And it gets deeper over time. And what that means is you just more at ease. And, you know, do you remember that movie? It's the old movie, the matrix, the scene where the bullets were coming from room, it's like, when you're in neutral whatever chaos is coming toward you. It's slow motion, you're like, Okay, here, here, here, rather than when you're in the chaos. Yeah, you know, so that that's the advantage that it gives you. And in a relationship situation or a work situation, it's no different. Like, I'm not asking you to learn different skills, right? It's the same understanding that's going to be beneficial to you, in all scenarios, relationships with family, you know, personal relationship, friendships, mm work situations. Yeah. Like, it's all the same thing. We're all human beings, living in our state of mind. And the better we get at knowing when we're in a good state of mind, where we're in a bad state of mind, the easier life is, and it's not even about having to change the state of mind that we're in. If we know we're in a bad state of mind, we take care of ourselves and act accordingly. We know we're in a good state of mind like, well, that's fine, no problem. But it's like, Can we know that we're in a bad state of mind? And can we act accordingly? To do what makes sense once we know that we're in a bad state of mind.

Alicia

That's the challenge.

Rohini Ross

Yeah, but when you see it, yeah, and you feel the benefit of it, then it's kind of like common sense. Like, it's not that hard. It's not as hard as you might think it's gonna be right. Even though the habitual habit might be there to get reactive. It's like, Whoa, it feels so much better to not be at the effect of our stirred up state of mind. Yeah, really freeing. Yeah, I can have all of that. Like, one way to talk about is that you have a thought storm. You know, when then the storm clears out. It's like, Oh, I weathered that storm pretty well. Yeah. It could had create chaos. Yeah. And that's what we all have to learn to do is, you know, as adults, yeah, we weather thought storms and see how we can be resilient even in the thought storm and have it not take us down?

Alicia

Yeah, for sure. I think that's definitely like something that we benefit from tremendously and more neutral state. And also just recognizing that I don't have to react, I don't have to, I have to do anything really in the moment other than just let it pass almost.

Rohini Ross

That's it. That's it. You don't have to do anything other than let it pass, and it will pass 100% of the time. And it will pass more quickly. When you don't do anything. It won't feel easier when you don't do anything.

Alicia

It's weird. I feel like we're conditioned to like react to things.

Rohini Ross

We are conditioned to react to things.

Alicia

And then it's like, you know, it's kind of like relearning how to walk in a sense, where you just like, Okay, well don't react. Yeah. And that's something that I feel like, it's just like that overthinking thing, like, okay, don't do that, then, you know, I tell myself, and now it's going to be like, okay, don't react, like just don't go there. Because it just, it does not accomplish anything.

Alicia

Exactly. That's it. And I love how you just said that, you know, your words are perfect. It's like, there's nothing to do, I just let it pass. There's nothing to do, I just let it pass. And if you in order to let it pass, or while it's passing, you distract yourself with something that you do whatever makes sense to you in the moment, while you're writing it out. Not that you can make it go faster, but to be kind to yourself while you're in a thunderstorm. And you'll figure out what that is. And then, as part of the learning curve, it just gets easier and easier to ride it out. You know what was like? Oh, you know, you're holding on to the seat riding on a thought storm. Yeah, like, Oh, God, I had a thought storm. You know? Yeah, like no big deal.

Alicia

Yeah, no, exactly. It's definitely going to be one of those things that is practice. But it's like it. It's better to know that like, I mean, just reflecting on it. Like nothing changed any situation to be honest, even when I have engaged, right, like, nothing changed.

Rohini Ross

No. And it tends to, like I said, it tends to create casualties that make things worse.

Alicia

Yeah. I have anything immediate things worse, instead of just being like, that sucks. And these are my thoughts and regroup, chill out and then maybe address it. If it's necessary to be addressed. Maybe if it's like the second or third time something has occurred, then, okay, address it.

Rohini Ross

Well, you'll know because, like, it's a great point you're making sometimes when we're stirred up something looks like it's a real issue. And then when we're not stirred up, we're like, what was I thinking? Like? Yeah, no big deal even. And then other times, we're like, Well, yeah, I can see that I was taking personally, that's not the problem when we're neutral. But, you know, I still need to, I still want to, you know, communicate about this.

Alicia

Yeah. But I would have appreciated a phone call that you weren't or when you were planning not coming home.

Rohini Ross

Exactly. I see this with Angus, I see this with couples that we work with, like when things are genuinely sad from that neutral place, like nothing on it. It's appreciated, it feels kind and it doesn't feel like criticism, like it's very unlikely to be taken as criticism. When we're genuinely in a neutral place. When we're not. It's gonna be felt like an attack. Yeah. And if we're not thinking we're doing that, It's really because we're blind to the edge that's there. And they can feel it. They're not blind to it. . But so it's just getting that's part of the learning when there are things to talk about. You get that feel for when I genuinely have nothing on it. Yeah, when is it genuinely like, hey, this seems like it would be useful to talk about, but I'm in a totally neutral place about it like and you'll just get a feel for that. And then those conversations, the beginning is going it's the learning is that you might start off neutral, but five minutes in now you're not neutral, you're like, Oh, I can feel I'm not neutral. Now let's let's revisit this. I know that people are starting to put dots together, when they're able to generalize what we're talking about. And so I really appreciate how she's starting to see how what we're discussing related to her relationship with Mateo is actually going to help her in her professional life and in her relationship with family even though we're not talking about that, specifically here. But it's really key to recognize that the understanding that we're discussing related to her husband, is actually the same understanding that's going to help her to go through life in a more graceful and lighthearted way. Because we're always living in a state of mind. We're always experiencing our thinking, we're always seeing our reality created through our thoughts. And that applies to everything.

Angus Ross

Yeah, I mean, I think really logically, for her to see it, for soul to see it universally, it's going to be able to, it's going to make it much easier for us to now look at our relationship and see, yeah, of course, these very same principles apply in this arena, much as they replay in my professional arena to what a great reference point to have. And it's so easy when we're caught up and the stakes are high on the relationship front to really kind of miss the woods for the trees. And in this sense, it's kind of like, yeah, how fantastic that, you know, it is a universal understanding. And it's applicable, applicable right across the board.

Rohini Ross

And oftentimes, what's really helpful is that we all tend to have areas of our life where we see this naturally, we are just naturally able to recognize, well, that's crazy and secure thinking around that I'm not going to pay attention to that, or that's reactive. And so when people start to put the dots together, they can also see like, Oh, well, I would never do that over there. Why do I do it here and it helps them to, to see the areas where they have more blind spots and get caught up more easily helps them to see that because they recognize Oh, it's I'm already doing this year, I already recognize this truth. Why don't I see it here? And it helps them to wake up to that more easily.

Angus Ross

Yeah, I mean, it really seemed to struck a chord with her. So yeah, props to you for that.

Rohini Ross

And it does get easier and easier. And we just kind of look at that a little bit next. So if you kind of just get a feel for for like, Oh, I just need to ride it out. I just do that to me, that's the essence of it. Oh, what I was doing before was not riding it out. Now I could do nothing and ride it out. And you will see how quickly you ride it out? And how much better you feel as a result of that.

Alicia

Yeah, definitely.

Rohini Ross

Yeah. So good for you. effects will be the ripple effects in your life.

Alicia

Like, obviously, I'm sure that there's like, you know, situations in which a reaction is warranted or needed or half. But...

Rohini Ross

If you got a kid that's like, gonna run out in the street, you're gonna react, you're gonna grab them, however you grab them, sometimes kinds of things. But for the most part, life isn't those things. Right. You know, the more that we see, like, yeah, there's certain situations life or death, we have to react, but for the most part, if we're upset, and there isn't that going on, it's better not to.

Alicia

Yeah, definitely.

Rohini Ross

Yeah. So you just see that, and it settles the whole nervous system. Anxiety goes down, stress goes down. Like it's good for everything. Yeah, well being goes up.

Alicia

Yeah, like definitely excited to practice it with like, just work in general as well.

Rohini Ross

You'll just see, yeah, you'll see there's, there's an unlimited amount of opportunities to practice day to day, all day long. There's opportunities to be like, Oh, I'm getting caught up just right.

Alicia

Yeah, exactly. Or like recognizing when I start getting anxious over something or set over something, like, all right, taking, take a breather first, and then revisit.

Rohini Ross

And what happens is your normal when, like, part of the learning curve is like your normal of what it takes to get you upset, like that will change. Like, it's not like it's gonna be the same thing the whole time. It's like, oh, all of a sudden that normal changes, and then it takes like, 10 times more to even get you bothered. No, it's like, and that just keeps changing. And it's like things that, you know, used to be like that and you'd get stirred up. It's like, Oh, no, I see it now.

Rohini Ross

It gets easier and easier. So I just want to reassure you, it's not like it's hard work, but learning to get it. And you're always going to be on the learning curve. It's never ending. but it just gets easier.

Angus Ross

I like how you finished up talking about how her normal is now going to start looking a whole lot easier that it's going to take her, it's going to take a whole lot less for her to get hot and bothered. And that yeah, life will will hopefully now moving forward will involve a lot less suffering. But I do have to say that I found my experience with Mateo was quite enjoyable. And I don't know if I would have had the same level of engagement or hilarity perhaps with young Alicia.

Rohini Ross

Well, Alicia has a lot of heart. So we might not have been laughing as much as you guys. There might have been a few more tears in our room, but I think she has a big heart and is really seeing a lot.

Angus Ross

Yeah, well, undoubtedly they both have big hearts.

Rohini Ross

Is this a competition.?

Angus Ross

I guess it could be.

Rohini Ross

Like, it's we're gonna have to see which way it goes. Is it gonna go down the road of Alicia really thinking she needs to move on? Or is he gonna be able to get both feet in and be willing to make it work?

Angus Ross

We'll just have to wait and see.

Rohini Ross

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