

# Episode 8:

## Understanding Triggers

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**[00:02:48]**

Good morning and welcome to ConneXions Classroom Podcast. I'm Jodi Hildebrandt. It is the morning of August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and we are going to be discussing the phenomena of triggers. So, triggers, probably more accurately phrased, are the outcomes that we experience when we have situations or circumstances that present themselves to us. And triggers are tied directly to your emotions.

So, those of you who know me, you're very aware that I consider triggers your allies, your mentors, your teachers. I even call them your gifts. Your triggers are your gifts. For some of you who have spent time with me, you're probably chuckling because there have been many times when you have experienced a strong emotion, especially those emotions that are uncomfortable, and I look at you in the eyes and I say, "You are so fortunate to be triggered right now, because that intense emotion that you're feeling, though it is uncomfortable, is an opportunity for you to merge with yourself, for

you to become awake and aware to yourself. And so, be grateful that you are feeling that discomfort because it's an invitation into yourself, so that you can better understand you and reframe any kind of distortion back into the Truth.”

So, we're going to be talking about triggers from that angle this morning. Let me just explain what triggers are, first of all.

Any experience, any situation or circumstance that presents itself to you is an opportunity that you're being given to either respond which means be conscious and be deliberate, and make very thoughtful decisions. Or it is an opportunity for you to react.

Reaction typically is unconscious. However, you can react in a very conscious manner. But let's talk about reaction from a position of unconsciousness. I knee jerk, I fly off the handle, I don't consider what actually is being presented to me and I just knee jerk into or away from the emotion that I'm feeling, and I either respond or react to them like they are coming towards me figuratively or I respond and react to it, or him, or her, or that, or those, or you, or even myself.

These reactions or responses are called triggers because those reactions and responses always, always have emotion in them. And emotion triggers us—all of us. We get triggered. Now, emotion is connected to thoughts, and usually the things that get my attention are the emotions that are uncomfortable. So, for the purpose of this podcast, I want to talk about the emotions that I deem as uncomfortable as my triggers. But I want you to understand that emotion is connected to me being triggered, so I can have a pleasant emotion and also be triggered.

However, for most of us, we don't acknowledge that we're being triggered because it feels so good. Like, if I walk outside and have a brand new car sitting out in the driveway, I am triggered but I'm triggered into elation, and joy, and surprise, and happiness, and excitement. And so, I don't see it as a trigger, I see it as just a good thing.

However, triggers are connected to emotions, so I am being triggered, I'm just being triggered into something that's pleasant. So, when things go on, when I have experiences and situations or circumstances that present themselves, and uncomfortable emotions come with it, then I'm very aware that I am triggered, because I am experiencing something, I am feeling something that I don't like.

And so, I'm more apt to pay attention to the fact that I am in some kind of painful, uncomfortable situation. And so, those are the things that we're going to be focusing on in this podcast, are those emotions that “trigger” me to become aware that this experience is uncomfortable.

## **[00:08:08]      Emotion**

Emotion shows up in experiences, and sometimes we act shocked that this emotion is present. We act as though we don't know how to feel about the emotion. So, something presents itself and I'm just so surprised that I feel emotion, though emotion's been with us every second of every moment. Emotion's been with us every hour of every week and every month of every year. And every single breath that we take on the planet is full of emotion.

So, it's always fascinating to see how many of us are so unfamiliar with it, and behave surprised when emotion shows up on the scene, which is as constant as you breathing.

Emotion comes with all of your thoughts, which exist inside all of your experiences. So, thoughts show up in your experiences, your situations and all of your circumstances. And with those

thoughts come emotion, and inside that emotion you will feel triggered if it's something that you deem uncomfortable.

So, emotions or feelings are awesome. They are there to help you connect. Connect with what, you might say? Well, they're there to help you connect with yourself, so that you know what your feelings and thoughts are. But they're also there to help you connect with other people.

So, emotions and feelings invite us to know. They invite us to sense, and appreciate, and empathize with, connect with, bond with the experience you're having and specifically, the people inside that experience. That's very, very important. Your emotions are there to support you to connect. First, connect with you, which means what am I feeling, why I am feeling this, how come I'm feeling this, what am I thinking about how, or why I'm feeling, or what am I feeling? I need to understand all of that, and then I want to be able to connect to another person.

And so, if I don't know what my feelings are, then there's no way in the world I can connect with their feelings. Every experience is an invitation for connection. Every experience that has uncomfortable feelings is an opportunity for connection. So, can you start seeing how triggers are these beautiful gifts that all of us are given, to connect?

Another way to say that is all emotions are opportunities for these fantastic, glorious, wonderful, warm unions to be created of connection.

Yet, today in the podcast, we're going to talk about the societal constructs or the belief systems that uncomfortable feelings which you deem are the emotions that are uncomfortable, so whatever you say are uncomfortable, society or many people's belief systems would say those emotions are bad. And thus, we need to secure ourselves or protect ourselves to never ever experience those bad, not good, unloving, not kind emotions that produce any form of discomfort. Those emotions that create pain, or grief, or loss, or fear, or anything that you deem is uncomfortable. Society, maybe even your family, or maybe even you, would call those bad. We call these emotions that are in or around inside of our experiences, triggers.

So, those uncomfortable emotions that are inside every experience that you have, from the experience of biting your tongue, to the experience of waking up late, to the experience of smelling your child throw up. All of your senses are opportunities for you to experience. So, you are experiencing constantly, there's never a second that you are not experiencing.

And so, therefore your emotions are interwound inside every one of your experiences. And if you feel an emotion that you deem is uncomfortable, is painful, then oftentimes we will consider that emotion "bad," and we'll feel it trigger us, and deem those emotions dangerous and not necessary to deal with. Therefore, we have created these fantastic mechanisms to deal with those unnecessary, unwanted emotions.

Those mechanisms that make us "not feel" are called distractions.

All of us, all of us, I don't care who's listening to this, every one of us has created mechanisms of distraction, because we as human beings don't like feeling uncomfortable. That's just kind of the way we're hard-wired. Nobody likes physical pain, nobody likes emotional pain, unless you're a masochist and that's a different story, you've got deep, deep pain.

But even those people who have learned to be masochistic, they don't like pain either at the core of them. And so, we get to learn that pain is not something that you need to enjoy, you need to have wisdom around pain or discomfort. And the wisdom says this: I am a human being and because I

am human, I am vulnerable, and inside that vulnerability I am bound to have discomfort, I am bound to have experiences physically, emotionally, financially, socially, legally, spiritually—all ways—that are uncomfortable. Period. That’s it.

There’s no way to get through this life and not have many, many, many experiences that are uncomfortable. And so, because of that, if we’re not taught that those uncomfortable experiences are normal and they’re necessary for us, to teach us how to mature, how to become wise, how to connect. Those experiences of pain are there to have beautiful outcomes of connection.

However, if we are not taught that, we will naturally move away from things that are uncomfortable and create mechanisms that make us “not feel,” and these mechanisms are called distractions.

Let me tell a story here. This weekend, I came home from work, and I’m kind of a creature of habit, which means I eat the same thing pretty much every day. Maybe I can’t say every day but most days, I have the same stuff. I’ve got like a variety of maybe five to eight different foods and I kind of stick within that pallet of food choices.

The other night, I came home and I was like you know what, I just don’t want that. And so, I decided to venture out and decided to make myself some pancakes. Now, some of you might be going wow, that’s you venturing out? But for me, yes, that’s venturing out.

So, I went to my back room and pulled a box of Bisquick off the shelf and it had not been opened, and so I opened it up and poured it, and added my water. I was making my pancakes and cooked them all up. It was smelling really good. I put them on a plate and put some syrup on it and I took a bite, and they were super dry. Super dry. So, I put a ton of syrup on it. The pancake just absorbed the syrup. I ate the first one, it wasn’t that big of a pancake but after I ate the first one, I started noticing that my stomach wasn’t feeling right. I didn’t feel like I was in pain. I wasn’t being triggered. But I was aware that something was off, but I didn’t know what. And because I didn’t have pain at that point, I continued to eat.

So, I ate the second one. And by the time I ate the second one, I felt really bloated. And again, I didn’t feel pain, but I just didn’t feel right. I felt like something was off. I know my body pretty well, and I felt some discomfort.

And so, by the time I ate the second one, I would probably say I was triggered. The pancakes were really dry and they just didn’t taste right. And that’s the best I can give you. So, I turned the box around and looked at the expiration date, and the expiration date was eight years old. It said, “Please use by such and such month of 2008.” Now, it’s 2016 and when I saw that 08 staring up at me from the box, I thought, “Oh my goodness,” and I was triggered. I was triggered.

Now, I didn’t have pain but seeing the 08 and knowing it was 2016, I felt scared, I felt panicked, I thought am I going to die, am I going to have to go to the hospital? What in the world did I just put inside my body? Were there weevils in there? I was pretty scared.

And as the night went on, I started feeling physical pain. I won’t go into a lot of detail of what happened. This happened Friday and today’s Sunday, my stomach still is rather achy if you will. I’m still burping whatever it was that I put into my stomach. And so, I was very triggered by 1) seeing the 08 on the box and then 2) I continued to feel triggered because my stomach started hurting and I had diarrhea and just all sorts of physiological discomfort.

So, when I saw the 08, I wanted to distract. I wanted to say, and I probably did say in my head, “That’s okay. They tasted fine. Expiration dates don’t really mean anything anyway.”

Those are all statements of denial. And denial is the way that we all distract. Distract from what?

Distract from the uncomfortable emotions and Reality that are now triggering us to invite us into Reality, which is, I just ate eight-year-old Bisquick pancakes and now I am not feeling well.

So, denial is what allows us to distract from the Reality. So, because I know about triggers, and I know about distractions, and I know how important it is to stay connected to Reality, I told myself the Truth. Even though my head went to these places of distraction to tell myself distortions and lies about the fact that I just ate very old Bisquick mix, I said to myself, “Well, if I get sick, I’ll get sick. And if I need to go to the hospital, I’ll go to the hospital. I don’t think this is going to be something that’s going to send me to the hospital, and if it is, I’ll go. And if I throw up, then that’s a good thing. And somehow, I’ve got to get this stuff out of my body.”

And so, you and I both know there’s only two ways to get it out of your body. And so, I was looking forward to throwing up and having another way to expel this possible fermented substance that I put in my body.

So, when I’m not willing to stay connected, because that’s what triggers are there for, to invite me into connection, invite me into Reality, stay connected to Reality—triggers are there to keep you connected to Reality. I keep saying that.

If I’m not willing to do that, then the only other place for me to go is to use my triggers to distract myself. And distractions come in the form of anything: so, anger, I can start distracting by using anger. I can use laughter. I can use food, sleep, boredom, drugs, lust, sex, entitlement, being right, porn, internet surfing, being a victim, self-harming, focusing on weight gain or weight loss, chewing my nails, having unnecessary surgery, social media, having lots of animals, hoarding, movies, TV, exercise, money, music, reading books, religiosity. You get the picture? Anything I can use to distract from feeling triggered, feeling uncomfortable.

Distractions are used to shift your focus from the original trigger that was in Reality. My original trigger was when I saw that expiration date, I was triggered. That was the Reality. It said 2008 and I realized it was 2016. Boom, I was triggered. But if I’m not willing to stay in Reality, then my distraction will take me out of Reality.

So, triggers say in Reality, “Here’s what’s going on. This was said or this was what was done. This was what went on. Here’s what you think. Here’s what you know. Here’s what you don’t know. You need to check it out, you need to find out the Truth about whatever it was. You need to understand what he, or she, or they mean. You need to find out the Reality, the facts, the objectiveness of the experience. You need to understand your thoughts that came with your feelings, because you may or may not like or appreciate, or want, or desire, or ask for those feelings, but your triggers, your emotions are giving you information about something.” And your responsibility or job is to assess whether that something, that experience, that circumstance is the Truth or if it’s a distortion.

So, when someone is connected and lives the majority of time in honesty, in personal responsibility, in humility, they will feel the trigger, so they’ll feel the emotions that are connected to the experience, and then they’ll get curious about the thoughts and they’ll say, “Is this thought in Truth or is thought in distortion?”

So, when I was looking at the box and I saw the 08, I wanted to distract, I wanted to distort, I wanted to get out of Reality, I wanted to blame, I wanted to have it not be what it was. I had images

of weevils in my stomach, I had images of microscopic things that would harm me. I was afraid and so I wanted to distort.

However, because I try to live a life where I live in Reality the majority of the time, I went back to the Truth, which is—and I've had to maintain that Truth for two days—so I've had a fever off and on for two days, it would come and then I'd kind of sit with it for an hour and then it would leave. Or all of a sudden, I felt super tired and I needed to lay down because my body was sick, my body is sick.

So, your Reality is there to keep you connected to the Truth. So, your triggers are a gift, so what an opportunity it is to be triggered, because triggers tell us something's off, something might be wrong, something is dishonest, something is uncomfortable, something's sad, something's painful, I'm grieving. Triggers are blessings to make you aware that you are feeling, and it makes you aware that you're feeling emotions that are connected to what you think is good.

It means you're connected to what you are thinking. Now, what you are thinking may be a distortion, so the original experience, the original Reality is where you initially were triggered, but because you weren't willing to keep the original experience in Truth, now you're in distortion.

So, you can have triggers around your distortion as well, so what we need to do is, is we need to stop and be willing to look at our thoughts. We need to stop and say, "Okay, I need to become aware of what I'm experiencing because I'm noticing that I'm feeling something and just because I'm aware that I'm feeling something doesn't mean that it's in Truth, it might be in distortion. So, even though I've distorted the original trigger because I keep feeling triggered, it gives me an opportunity to take the experience and get back into Truth.

So, what I mean by that is that, just because you have an experience and you distort it, it doesn't mean that you're lost. It means that you will consistently have more experiences that trigger you, so that at some point you can say, "Okay, stop. What's the Truth? What's the Truth? I'm being triggered again. I'm being triggered again. What's the Truth?"

And the second you're willing to get into the Truth, then you can start moving back into Reality. And in Reality is where honesty is and where personal responsibility is. It doesn't mean that you're going to stop being triggered, it just means that you're going to be triggered by something that is an invitation to come back into connection, come back into Reality.

So, I just think that is so wonderful because triggers are there to keep you connected to what actually is going on inside of you.

So, I say hallelujah that all of us have an opportunity to be triggered, because that allows me to keep looking at what I'm thinking. It gives me an opportunity to once again come back to myself and say, "What do I think about that? Is what I think the Truth or is it distortion?" Because I don't want to live my life—I don't know about you—but I don't know want to live life in distortion. I don't want to live experiences where I'm being deceived or I don't have all the information.

I want to live in the Reality. I want to live in the facts. I want to know what's real, so that I can have Truthful and connecting relationships, starting with myself, and then with others and God or my Higher Power. Because if I'm in distortion, I can't connect.

So, if I looked at that 08 on the box and went into distortion, went into distraction and said to myself, "This isn't fair" and "This isn't right" and "I can't believe this is happening to me" and "I'm

going to sue the Bisquick company” and “Why don't they make the numbers bigger so that you can see them more plainly?” and “It's not my fault that I did this” and “I want to blame them.”

There's no way from that position of distraction/denial for me to connect, because I'm unwilling to be honest and I'm unwilling to be personally responsible, and there's no way to connect if you are not honest and personally responsible. Those two characteristics must be inside you in order for you to connect. That is the goal, is that we are trying to stay connected, and if I am not willing to be honest and I'm not willing to be responsible—you can't be honest and then be responsible; if you're not doing one, you're not doing the other—

So, that will disconnect you, and the goal here is to stay connected. So, thank your triggers, be grateful for your triggers. Even though they're uncomfortable, be grateful because they're always opportunities for you to look at yourself and come back and say, “What's the Truth? What's the Truth? What's the Truth?”

So, without your triggers, you would have no reason to stop yourself and reflect on what's going on inside you. You'd have none. If you didn't feel anything, there would be no reason to say, “Wow, something's off.” If I didn't feel what I felt after I ate that first pancake, I might have had four more, but because I felt off, I stopped. My trigger gave me the opportunity to stop and I was willing to reflect and say, “What's going on inside of me?”

And so, I am grateful to be triggered because if I'm not, I would not be willing to reflect on not only what's going on inside of me, but I would not be willing to reflect on what's going on inside of you.

So, I initially reflect on me, and as I learn how to do that, then I can have empathy for the fact that you're vulnerable, and I can stop and reflect with you, about you.

Another way to language those two things, which is I stop and reflect on me and I also can stop and reflect on you, would be that we would never connect because we would not feel vulnerable or acknowledge our vulnerability. And because we would not do that, we would not ever be able to consider empathy with somebody else or with ourselves. There would be no connection and with no connection, we would live in a disconnect, which means we would disconnect from Reality, Truth and that would happen very early on in life.

So, being able to feel the trigger and stop and reflect allows us to not live in disconnect, because if we lived in disconnect where we didn't feel, it would happen very young, like at one year old probably, a young child. And once we were disconnected, if we didn't have the ability to stop and reflect, we would just stay disconnected, and we would move further and further off the path of Reality and Truth, and we'd never know it! Because all of us would not be feeling the triggers that say, “Hey, you're moving away from Truth, you're moving away from Reality, you're being tricked, you're being deceived.”

Or triggers that say, “Hey, this experience is painful because this person is affecting you a particular way.” You just wouldn't be able to recognize that you're being impacted. You wouldn't be able to recognize that someone's lying to you, you wouldn't feel grief, you wouldn't know that someone was manipulating, you wouldn't feel confused.

So, triggers are incredibly important because it allows you to stop, reflect and stay in Reality.

So, I'm really hoping, and I'm trying very hard to articulate to you, the massive importance of triggers and how triggers are your allies, your mentors, your teachers. They support you, they're your guides right back into you, so you can see yourself. Or you can be given the opportunity to see

yourself, to know yourself, to experience or perceive yourself clearly, to know whether you are choosing to distort your Reality or be in Truth.

Let me describe this diagram to you. I'm going to describe this to you, so you can write this down if you want. Here's what happens, is that you have an experience. So, write experience on the top of the page. Put an arrow down underneath experience, because then after experience, you have a thought. And your thoughts are even conscious or unconscious, according to how awake you are. Underneath thought put another arrow, and after you think something, you have an emotion. Underneath your emotion put another arrow and put trigger.

So, you've got four steps. You have experience, thought, feelings, trigger. And when you have the trigger, the trigger is an opportunity for you to ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" Or it's an opportunity to say, "What am I thinking, what am I perceiving?"

So, your trigger, you can call this your intuition, your gut, the Spirit, whatever you'd like to call that, but it's an invitation to say, "Wait, I need to look at myself. I know what I'm thinking, but I want to make sure that it's in Reality and not in distortion."

So, there's experience, thought, feeling, trigger, and inside your trigger, if you'll stop, you have an opportunity to either see if your thoughts are in Reality or if your thoughts are in distortion.

Let me say that again. Experience is neutral. I know many of you hear that and you're not going to believe that but it is true. Experience is neutral. Now, experience comes with some very uncomfortable outcomes. Let's say you go outside and you see a cat hit by a car, that's an experience and that's painful.

So, I'm not suggesting that neutral experience is pleasant, I'm just saying that experience is not right or wrong, good or bad, it just plays out. And inside your experience, you're going to have perceptions, thoughts. And after those thoughts, you're going to feel something.

Now, your emotions are neutral, too. Your emotions just connect with your thoughts. And after you feel something, if you deem whatever it is that you're feeling as unpleasant, you are going to feel the trigger. And so, right there you're going to need to go back up and look at what you're thinking, and say, "Am I holding this experience in distortion or am I holding it in Truth or Reality?"

So, if I see my cat get hit, I might go in distortion and blame myself, blame the driver, blame the cat. Blaming is evidence that I'm moving into distraction, I'm moving into denial, I'm moving into distortion and away from Reality, because the Truth is, is that my cat just got hit. That's the Reality. And I am sad, and I am upset, and I am scared, and I am confused possibly. Those are very real feelings. But I need to keep it in Reality and not go into a place where I start telling myself things that are not the Truth.

So, your triggers are what I call your big fat juicy gifts, from you to you. Or you can look at your triggers as kind of like your Jiminy Cricket on your shoulder, saying, "Hey, wake up. Wake up and notice what you're thinking and feeling, and therefore what you're choosing and how you choose to behave."

Triggers are loving gifts from your psyche to call you into consciousness and say, "Are you sure you want to continue down that path? Are you sure you want to stay unconscious? Are you sure that you want to think and perceive in distortion?"

Triggers are these gifts from yourself, or you could see it from your God or from your Higher Power, to invite you to know yourself and stay conscious of your choices, so you can continue to choose Truth and Reality and thus stay connected.

So, triggers are usually your first indicator that you need to pause and look inside yourself when you experience any emotion, especially the emotion that you deem is uncomfortable. You could in a certain experience feel that joy is uncomfortable. Maybe you had a child and felt much joy around his or her birth and life, and then they died. The feeling of joy could be contaminated with distorted thoughts. You could hold the feeling of joy in a place of distortion and therefore be upset or tainted around that feeling of joy. So, any time you felt joy, joy would feel bad.

So, you want to look at that. You want to look at the ability to heal yourself and bring that emotion of joy back into the Truth because, that experience that you had with your son or daughter who passed on, you had joy with them. And then, you had another experience, and that was of them dying.

And so, you get to have a separate experience, you don't need to take the joy that you felt with them of them being here for one day or seven years, and say, "Okay, the fact that I felt joy now means it's bad."

So, your triggers. Your triggers are very, very valuable, because all of our lives, we are going to have experiences and your triggers are going to invite you into understanding your experiences.

Now, there's two ways to experience life. The first way is that you are going to experience circumstances and situations that are just inevitable, like me eating pancakes that were expired. That was inevitable. I did not know that those were expired, and so I had this inevitable pain. And then, we also have experiences where if we believe in distortion, if we follow the thinking of deception, we will have what I will call optional pain.

So, there are two ways to experience triggers. There is this avenue of inevitable pain. Or there's an avenue of optional pain. Now, remember triggers are connected to emotions, like triggers are your emotions. So, you can feel your emotion through experiences that are inevitable, things that you cannot control. Or you can experience your emotions/triggers by creating more pain.

So, the inevitable pain, you cannot get away from. It is something that you will experience in this life because you're vulnerable. However, for most of us, even though we're feeling inevitable pain, we heap on optional pain.

So, if you are willing to allow your emotions or to allow your trigger to share with you the Reality of the inevitable pain, and you choose to connect with it—which means stay in Reality—you will experience powerful connection.

Let me say that again. Very important. Inevitable pain is that—it's inevitable. It's going to come, like me eating the Bisquick. I did not know, and the outcome of that choice was I got sick. So, if I'm willing to allow that experience to be present, and I'm willing to stay in the Reality of the experience—the inevitable pain—and choose to connect with it which means stay in the Truth, then I will experience powerful connection.

Now, powerful connection does not mean rainbows, and sunshine and happiness. It just means that I stay inside the Reality and I feel connected to it. I learn from it, I get wisdom from it, I glean from it, I learn to look at boxes that are sitting on my shelf for expiration dates. That's part of the connection.

Or if I am triggered and I'm feeling pain because my thoughts are in distortion, and you're willing to reframe your thoughts back into the Truth, you will experience connection. So, when you're triggered, when you feel emotion, and you're willing to feel the pain of what the disconnect or the distortion is bringing to you—the optional pain—you will experience connection.

Let me say this another way. If you find yourself in distortion, which means that you have gone into optional pain, which means you've gone into distraction, if you wake up and you realize like, "Oh my gosh, I distorted that other experience when I was triggered" and then I'm willing to come back into the Truth and reframe my thoughts and perceptions back into the Reality, where I say, "I'm so grateful they put an expiration date on that box because if they wouldn't have done that, I wouldn't have known what's wrong with me."

So, if I'm willing to be really honest about the Truth, then I will enter back into connection. So, my triggers are my invitations back into connection.

## **[00:47:22] Examples of Triggers**

There's optional and inevitable pain. Both are going to send a trigger to you, to have you think about the experience and frame it into Truth or stay in Truth, stay in Reality.

Here are some examples and there are millions and billions of examples of pain.

So, your baby throws up on you.

Someone sees you peeing in the pool and makes a scene.

You drop your cellphone on the ground and you crack the screen.

You think about your fear of spiders or your fear of mice because one crawled on you. Or a horse or dog bit you.

You are told that your best friend is being left by their spouse.

You wear two different shoes to work.

You explain your situation to the airline agent and they still close the doors and you miss your flight.

These examples are inevitable pain—they just kind of happened to you. That's not you distorting anything. These things just showed up as experiences. So, these inevitable pain experiences that are triggering you, lead or invite you into optional pain. They invite you to say, "Hey, you want to distort that? Your baby throws up on you, you want to distort that and get angry at the baby? Or be angry at the fact that you're a parent? Or blame your spouse? Do you want to put some additional pain into that inevitable pain?"

Or you can stay in the Truth. So, it's very difficult because inevitable triggers happen first. Stuff just happens and if you don't hold it in Truth or Reality, you will be seduced. And when I say seduced, I want you to know that you are choosing, but you will feel like you're being seduced into distortion, into the optional pain.

You'll be invited to think this: baby throws up and you think—here's the optional pain—this always happens to me, I can't believe they did this to me. Or you get caught peeing in the pool and you

think, “I'm so disgusting.” Or I'm worried that they think I'm disgusting. Or, “I always do this, how did I get caught?” Or I think, “I can't believe them, it's none of their business.”

Or my phone gets cracked—inevitable pain—and I go into optional pain, and I say things like, “They make these things so that they'll crack and you'll have to buy a new one. They are crooks.” Or you say to yourself, “I'm so clumsy.”

Or you have this fear of bugs, or dogs, or horses or whatever, and your optional pain says, “These animals or these rodents seek me out.” Or, “Why won't they leave me alone?”

Or my best friend is getting divorced and I go into optional pain and say, “They were never a good fit.” Or, “He or she deserved that.” Or, “She will never get over this.” Or, “What a jerk.”

Or wearing two different shoes to work. Optional pain says I'm stupid, or nobody will ever notice, or I'll tell them that my children distracted me, and I'll blame them.

Or when I miss my plane, I'll say, “This isn't fair. The airline's just into a power play. They don't care about their passengers. They could have waited for me. They're just trying to prove a point.”

Those are all optional pains. Those are all distorted. And so, I can be triggered by my inevitable pain, and I can also, when I go into optional pain, be triggered by the optional pain, because the optional pain is an invitation to come back into the Truth about the inevitable pain.

So, triggers are personal, private love messages to you that are full of discomfort and unpleasant emotions that invite you into a deeper, more profound connection with yourself, a deeper and more profound connection with God, with your Higher Power and other people. They are portals, they are entry points you may choose to enter into, to understand you at a level of personal intimacy that you have yet to explore or discover.

If you are courageous, if you are willing to embark on a journey of self-exploration, you will discover hidden motives and agendas and be able to reframe them back into Truth as to not create optional pain unconsciously.

So, I invite you on this journey to experience connection.