



# The **Belief**Closet Process™

*Transforming Lives – One Belief at a Time*

## Clear Your Beliefs Bonus Session 1

### Love: What Makes It So Confusing?' with Carista Luminare, Ph.D.

Lion: Welcome, everyone. I am here with my beloved friend, partner and... what else are we? We're all kinds of things to each other. She's my co-author and co-teacher, Carista Luminare. I'm very, very happy to have you here, Carista, to share your wisdom.

Carista: Thank you. It's a joy to be here.

Lion: In this class, we talked about beliefs that people accumulate in love and relationship through our family and through our parents and our upbringing.

Today I've invited you here to talk about the program that we teach together, called ***Confused About Love?*** And the question: Why is love so confusing? Give us your overview of why love is so confusing.

Carista: Well, why love is so confusing is actually based on the neuroscience of attachment and other perspectives as well. But it all stems back to what was not only role modeled to us in childhood but actually what our specific bonding style, our neurological bonding style was with each parent, the first two years of life before we even began to speak.

Our blueprint for bonding with a significant other is wired into us. And it's not that we're forever victimized by that so it was difficult, we call insecure attachment style, which we'll go into to up ahead, but it does define why we may be very confused that love actually is often mixed with a lot of rejection, a lot of abandonment, shame, guilt. We think that's what love is, we think that's the

norm. Love mixed with these more toxic emotions and experiences of being emotionally and physically rejected or abandoned.

So we then subconsciously choose partners and bond with partners as if that's the norm and that's what we're to expect that love is mixed with these rejecting emotions and self-rejecting emotions as well. So the great news is that this confusion about what love really is and what it isn't based on whether we got the healthy building blocks or not through direct experience with primary caregivers can be rewired, and clarity can be born out of the confusion if you know what to look for and how to heal yourself very specifically and the neuroscience really points to that.

Lion: So does love become simple at some point? We talked yesterday about how every infant knows and wants certain things. They want to be regarded, they want to be held, they want to be loved, they want to be seen. Does adult love become simple or does it stay complex because we're complex beings?

Carista: Well, the need that you're talking about, the need to feel safe and secure and loved 24/7 is paramount for an infant because they can't take care of themselves to depend on someone else, to provide that for them, to optimize what we call secure attachment which breeds self-confidence and self-worth at its best. Kind of like a garden that's well fertilized will generate much more beautiful flowers than those garden that was neglected. It's the same with the fulfillment of the direct experience of love flowing between two or more people.

So, our adulthood is not by necessity an experience of feeling love is complex. It really depends on your understanding as an adult if you got secure attachment and really understand what healthy love is and you attract someone who also had that great blessing, you're going to have a very generative experience of love. It doesn't mean you won't have conflict but you'll be able to navigate to the conflict with much greater finesse.

One of the hallmarks of whether a couple, individually or together, has the ability to have a more simplified experience of love less traumatic, less complex with projected woundology, is if they naturally make each other top priority in the relationship, throughout the relationship, so that this commitment for interdependency actually creates independency and the two together create more simplistic experience of love. It doesn't mean it's not rich with passion and life experiences.

Whereas those who got the confusion, especially if it's mixed with trauma, if one or more of the partners has that unhealed then that will be playing out through the relationship, and the relationship can be a healing container to actually heal each other but it will be more complex.

Lion: So as adults, we can expect a complexity that's not the issue. The issue is whether it's filled with the drama of the wounds and the previous programming and the beliefs and all that. So if you can clear the beliefs of the past, you can have very rich and complex relationship yet it doesn't have all the drama of the wounds being replayed over and over. Did I get that right?

Carista: Yeah. Drama is such a loaded word nowadays. People use it quite flippantly, and I think you're talking about what I call the drama that's destructive is when we, as couples, get into vicious cycles with each other where we keep hurting each other and we want to be loving but we don't know how. We don't want to go into drama and we judge each other for going to drama but we don't know how to actually crack the code and break the cycle.

And so all of that tendency and habit which many of us saw our parents role model as what love does and how we relate can be rewired in very simple ways if one understands the neurology of bonding in their own attachment style.

Lion: Okay. You've mentioned attachment style a few times. So why don't you go into what is an attachment style? What does that mean? Where did the term come from? What's the background?

Carista: Yeah. So, there are in general out there in the mainstream, there's what's often referred to as three primary attachment styles. And then some of us include a fourth and you and I have created a fifth.

I'm going to talk about the three basic ones which are based on 20 years of neuroscience and 2,000 studies on attachment that have really become an explanation for how to explain bonding between two people.

There are four types of programming we received based on how our primary caregivers, optimally our mother and father, responded to us when we were in distress as an infant. And depending on how consistently our primary caregivers bonded with us, co-regulated us, that's what co-regulation means, we developed our attachment strategies.

So there are two major styles with several substyles. The two styles are secure attachment or insecure attachment. So you're either securely attached to someone which is considered what we call healthy love or you're insecurely attached which is considered less healthy or unhealthy dysfunctional love. It is good to look at how -- as I go into this explanation, it's a bit elaborate, give you a real comprehensive in understanding. As I talk about it, just kind of feel where the listener, feel where that feels like what I have with my mother, that feels like what I have with my father. And that includes even if they were absent, and that includes even if you were adopted or you had multiple parents, you had stepparents.

Once you understand your primary attachment connection with each parent, then you'll be able to see what you've been playing out in your adult relationships. Should I go on?

Lion: Yes. It would be helpful to talk about the experiments with children and how they responded to the parent leaving the room, that whole thing, just to get a sense of how they identified the different attachment styles.

Carista: Okay. So, just before I do that, I just want to kind of give an essence for each style.

Secure love, secure attachment is a feeling that I trust you'll be there. You're predictable and I feel safe and secure with you, the majority of the time. Much of the research says at least 80% of the time, no parent can be perfect. They get moody, they get reactive. But it's a sense of you're predictable to be my safe oasis in the desert of life.

Whereas the insecure attachment, the insecure love is I can't trust you'll be there. You're unpredictable. I feel more insecure than safe with you physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually.

Many of us are hybrids. So with the insecure attachment style, there's a low expectation for love and getting a positive response when one needs connection.

This distinction, which I'll go into which you asked me to, is distinction of secure and insecure attachment plays out in all of our primary relationships -- with our parents, with our partners, with our friends, with our colleagues and with our children. In particular though, we're focusing on how it plays out in romantic relationships.

So, in these studies you asked me to talk about, make it simple, they're quite complex. Secure attachment looks like this. The labs were set up where the mother would come and lift her infant, six months to a-year-old which is where the child begins to separate from the parent at six months. The mother would say goodbye to the child. And based on the child's reaction, they were able to determine if the child was generally in secure or insecure attachment.

So the secure attachment child, the mother would hug the child, they'd have a really quick goodbye, the child would feel secure that she's going to come back, and the child would go off and play with the toys. When the mother came back, the child would be excited to see the mother and could depend that the mother would be excited to see them back. They jump into the mother's arms, hug, kiss, and then the child, once it felt nourished and knew it could depend on being in the mother's arms as long as it wanted because the mother wanted to be there for the child as long as the child signaled. The child would sit down and go play with the toys feeling secure that it could be out in the world independent and at

any moment it needed the mother, she would be there making the child the top priority. That's secure attachment.

You want me to go on to the insecure attachment, what they look like?

Lion: Yes. I understand that the child feels secure enough to be without the mother for a while and then when the mother comes back, they run and get a little juice and then may go off and play with the toys again or show the mom something, right? So that makes sense.

Carista: Yes. The child trusts the caregiver will be there and make it safe when they need you and when I show you distress, you'll make me a priority and you'll want to help calm me down. I can depend on you to calm me down. Actually, these children become more independent as a result of being interdependent and they have higher self-worth. We call this dependable love.

The insecure attachment styles are split into two different styles. There's one called anxious insecure attachment and the second one is called avoidant insecure attachment. Both of these styles, the insecure styles, they want connection but they have no clue how to get the needs met without creating these very intense cycles of reaction from the primary caregiver.

In the labs -- we'll first talk about the anxious insecure attachment. The parent comes in, the parent leaves to hug the child and the child gets very anxious. It does not want the parent to leave. And the parent is someone indifferent that the child is anxious and says, "You'll be okay, you'll be okay." Just to stick around and reassure the child and leaves, leaves the child in distress. And this caregiver is inconsistent in really responding to the child's distress, and the child is left feeling the parent will always leave even when they're there.

When the parent comes back, the child is usually very, very upset because historically, that parent sometimes is there when the child needs them to reassure them and sometimes is not.

Because the parent is unpredictable, what we call unpredictable love, this child is not easy to calm down because they're always bracing towards the unpredictable feeling of being abandoned and then connected. So they have higher anxiety and ultimately anger and agitation. They play on older versions in an adult relationship because they can't trust the caregiver or the primary love person will be there when they really need them.

Lion: We're going to break this down into basic beliefs. The secure attachment would be something like, "I trust that you will be there or that I trust that you will come back." And the insecure anxious would be, "I don't know if you're coming back or not, I don't know if you're leaving or not" and that creates the anxiety.

Carista: Yes, and my feelings don't matter, and I'm not a priority for you. When I'm anxious or distressed, it's not going to connect me to you.

As adults, we often call this style the anxious pursuer. They're the ones who create more drama to get attention. They need to feel connected and they test. As a child test with loud distress signals, adults often use anger criticism who are anxious oriented and these are actually deep signs of a need for -- frustration that core needs aren't being met by the other. They feel often very alone and their feelings don't matter.

They feel a lot of anxiety. They're not connected or close because even when the person is there, they're afraid they're going to be rejected. So they've often chosen a partners who's unpredictable which creates a lot of vicious cycles.

Lion: You sometimes call this *unpredictable love*, right?

Carista: Yes. The second insecure attachment style is *avoidant insecure attachment* or avoidant attachment. In the labs, the parents would come in and they would leave the child without any ritual of transition. Just drop the child off and not care the impact on the child about their leaving. There was no sensitivity that the child might need to be loved or reassured if they felt insecure in the new environment or lab, and the caregiver historically doesn't respond to the child's distress or needs.

What's poignant about this style is that we often have a very high value when we see a child left off at daycare or in a caretaking situation and the child just kind of crawled off to its toys and begins to self-regulate. In another words, it's not depending on another. It's self-sourcing. They go, "Oh, that nine-month-old is so independent. Isn't that wonderful? They don't need their mother."

But what the studies have shown is that these children are often, not always but often, in high states of distress because they're too young not to depend on someone. They're too young not to have the reassurance, but they're starting to wire on their own ability to self-regulate because they've experienced so much abandonment and rejection and needing connection, they give up. They start to use inanimate objects like toys. We see teens even now they kind of vacate their anxiety off of inanimate objects rather than relationships.

So these kids stopped putting out distress signals. Yeah. They stop putting out distress signals, and they let go of depending on others for emotional connection. And we call this -- you and I call this unavailable love.

Lion: When the mother uses television or a video game to allow the child to self-regulate, the child still needs love but they're not getting it. Instead, they're getting their entertainment basically where they're getting cared for by the television or the video game, but they may not be getting what they really need.

Carista: Yes. That and even more precisely from a kind of bonding lingo, it's not just entertainment. They're actually getting their need for connection off of something that's not even human because they don't learn early on in life that anyone valued their need to connect when they needed them, when they showed distress more than ever. A parent might change their diaper or feed them, but they're not reassuring if they're in anxiety. They come to a conclusion, "No one cares about my needs." There's the belief. They start to fear rejection.

Lion: Right. So the belief could be that, could be "There's something wrong with me, that's why I'm not getting my needs met," could be "I'm not loved and not lovable." All these kinds of beliefs could come out of that situation, right?

Carista: Yes, because they're fearing rejection and so they suppress their needs for connecting. They don't even know they need to connect. So that's where a lot of those beliefs are born out of, and some of us are hybrid combinations where people have a dominant style -- yeah, go ahead.

Lion: Talk about the third insecure attachment style.

Carista: Some of us are these hybrid combos where we have this dominant style. It can be a combination of avoidant or anxious. Based on each parent, you could have secure attachment with one and total abandonment and avoidance with another, and so we can go back and forth and play out different variations in our primary relationships as we get older.

The third one you're alluding to, the traumatized attachment, is another insecure attachment style. It's often not talked about because unless you're a trauma specialist, you can't easily talk about it. But it compounds the other two. It neurologically actually creates a dis-regulation in the neurology and it's all happening in the brain. But this child in general, they need the closeness and the connection like all children do and all adults do but the parent is scary.

That's the trauma attachment. It makes them need to get away and escape. They want the closeness, but they're frightened of being controlled or being trapped or being terrified. We call this scary love.

So, the caregiver is actually traumatizing or disrupted the child's sense of safety most of the time and often abuse, addictions, parents are alcoholics and rage-aholics, you know, cause this constant fear, terror to the child, threatening them.

Lion: We were just looking at the ACE's study. ACE stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences, and you can find out more by going to [www.acestudy.org](http://www.acestudy.org). This is a 17,000-person study that Kaiser Permanente did with the Center for Disease Control that showed the number of people that had these kinds of adverse

childhood experiences, whether they were abused or neglected or they had a loss of one of the parents.

It's quite stunning to see how they correlate to later adult diseases including addictions, cancers, early death and many children had four or more different of these experiences. The more you have, the more likely you are to die early or to get a disease or an addiction. So, it's an amazingly high percentage of the population that have had these kinds of experiences and how they're correlated to later adult troubles.

Carista: I have the statistics in front of me right now. 63% of the 17,000 members who participated in the study had experienced at least one category of childhood trauma and over 20% experienced three or more categories which they call adverse childhood experiences.

As you said, it's alarming to think that we come into the world with this need for love as the primary nourishment to feel self-worth, self-confidence, peaceful, to grow a healthy neurology, and 63% of us come into childhood trauma. And yet, the trauma attachment notion, most people don't know about and yet they're playing out in their primary relationships, one or more of the partners might be.

How you know you're in trauma attachment as an adult is when the reactions in your relationships with others are disproportionately more intense than the circumstances are really showing or you get so triggered over things that are even hard to track. You get triggered into a trance of reactivity, of fear, of high reactivity that you can't control. Those are usually traumatized attachment reactions and those can all be healed with the right healer.

I know that because I had tremendous amount of trauma and I'm a trauma healer, and the greatest violations can actually be healed and rewired towards safety and security. It takes work.

Lion: As you said, in the adults, if we move from the childhood attachment style to adult relationships, each of these attachment styles shows up in a different way in adult relationships. You just said the traumatic style person would show up with sort of escalations beyond what would be expected from an argument or a problem or an issue.

Tell us a little bit about the other attachment styles and how it shows up in the adult.

Carista: Yeah. Well, the secure attachment, back to the first one, would show up with feelings of just -- your distress is most important to me, I will make -- if you need me to really care for your feelings especially from the cause of the distress, I'll be here as long as you need and it's reciprocal. In healthy secure attachment to

people, that commitment sometimes I'm there for you, sometimes you're there for me.

Now, if one person is in secure attachment, the other is more traumatized attachment, the one with secure attachment has to be patient that the traumatized one doesn't yet have the instinct to necessarily be there as well as they are there. In the avoidant attachment, the basic tendencies are the behaviors would look like they push their feelings away, they're more in their head, withdrawn, they shut down, they get paralyzed, they need to feel accepted and valued but they don't know it.

They actually need to feel I matter and my feelings are valued but they don't even go for that. They go for it's just easier to shut down and hide behind my shield, I never get it right, I'm flawed, I feel like a failure and no one cares about my needs and they're often kind of empty and depressed. Whereas the anxious...

Lion: You're talking about men, aren't you? Is this generally true about men?

Carista: You know, in general, men are more avoidant, but there are plenty of women who are avoidant and men who are anxious, but yes, and yes.

I'm always reluctant to make these generalizations only because the listener will often be the opposite sex and feel like there's some kind of anomaly. In general, in couples work, we find the men are presenting more avoidant because their feelings weren't valued and their need, especially the emotionally highly sensitive men, their need for connection was so diminished and judged that they have a lot of shame.

Lion: Of course, the cultural programming we get as men, as boys, you know, big boys don't cry, not only do your feelings not matter but you should be ashamed of your feelings. You're going to get humiliated if you feel strongly. And so we sort of get trained for that, big men don't cry. They go off and they -- their fathers may have been that way so they model it for us. So I think that it's not just that our parents were not available but that's part of the cultural programming as well.

Carista: I agree with that. The anxious types, just to finish the reflection of your question because I know there's lot of anxious listeners probably anxious to hear what it looks like, the need for connection is extremely important for the anxious and they know it but they don't know how to get it. And they want that feeling I need you validated. They're usually the pursuers.

They are very preoccupied with connection. And if they don't get it, their primary behaviors are they're more the critical, attacking, complaining personalities. They guilt trip, they blow up, they pressure, they probe, they provoke. And their

beliefs, as we said, they feel very alone and shut out and they really feel like my need to connect doesn't matter.

They're usually the more aggressive personalities, reactions. You know, the anger, the frustration, the resentment, the anxiety.

Lion: They're pursuing connection, pursuing contact, and then escalating if they don't get it.

Carista: Yes, exactly.

Lion: It seems to me that each combination, you have secure-insecure avoidance, you have secure-insecure anxious, you might have an anxious and an avoidant together or a trauma, could be with any of those types. Talk a little bit about how these types interact when they're in relationship with each other.

Carista: Well, the secure-insecure or unhealthy love and they usually have low "trauma" and when they get reactive, they know how to regulate and calm each other very efficiently and quickly, and they use all those reactions to get closer.

If you have a combination of avoidant and anxious, it will look like one is attacking and one is avoiding and kind of like one's got the shield and one's got the sword and they get in these vicious cycles. Sometimes, the anxious, the one who's pursuing and escalated, as you say, will get what we called burnt-out anxious, and they'll appear avoidant but they're really protesting that they're getting rejected so much. And so they'll be like, "I don't need you, forget it." But they're in a high state of anxiety. Whereas the true avoidant is just kind of empty and paralyzed and numb.

Then we have two avoidant. It's like two ships in the night. Neither one dealing with their need to connect that they're not even aware of and then withdraw together and kind of ignoring each other. Low drama but no passion, no connection, no intimacy.

If you get a combination of secure and - well, secure and avoidant aren't going to be very drawn to each other unless the secure is really devoted to the avoidant to help them rewire and know that inside this avoidant, there's enough connection that I'm here to help you heal your confusion about how to connect. The secure has to be very patient in that regard and know. Same with someone who bonds with someone who has a trauma attachment, mix trauma attachment into avoidant, it's going to be a quiet, very crystallized fear of opening because it's super dangerous.

So whoever is bonding or trying to connect with them has to understand it's not personal. There's not feeling much trust to connect and they need to learn how to rewire, which is what we teach in our course. You have two traumatized

people. You've got extreme trauma. They don't know what's triggering them, and they don't have a healthy container to process it. And yeah, the anxious trauma is very, very reactive.

Lion: So you started going into where I wanted to go next which was everybody on this call is interested in rewiring and reprogramming and clearing the old beliefs.

Let's start talking about how do you rewire and talk about the fifth attachment style and how the relationship gets used to rewire.

Carista: Yeah. So you and I came up with and particularly because of clients that we each have, people who have one of the four described, particularly the insecure and the traumatized, and can't necessarily make a commitment with someone to have the ideal secure attachment but want to use whatever relationship that they're in, their primary lovership or their primary business partner or with their child to actually use the relationship together to commit to help rewire each other.

In a romantic relationship, it's a commitment, a conscious commitment to use the partnership to heal each other, to embody more love and rewire these historical insecure issues.

It takes a mutual commitment. If you want to do that, a mutual desire and a desire to build your capacity, to learn how to take any reactive cycle of insecurity and use it to actually develop more security with each other. You and I have developed these simple practices to rewire the love life.

Lion: Good. So the healing attachment style is basically a commitment that two people make once they understand these principles to say, "We're going to heal ourselves. We're going to rewire ourselves and we'll do whatever it takes to change our old behavior patterns and our old reactive patterns so that we can both feel more secure with each other." And what's the advantage of that? Can two people who are insecure find security? How long does it take?

Carista: Oh, yeah. The advantage is I learned that this conscious game of learning how to connect to you and reporting my vulnerabilities actually creates a feeling of security and safety, and this is what love is. And then for those who are lovers, it usually opens up the passion dramatically.

The value is basically get to have a direct experience of feeling safe and peaceful in terms of connecting with someone and I can depend on someone. This need to depend on someone, to support you when you're needing connection for any reason, particularly if you're in distress or you want to just reveal your greatest magnificence. This need to be seen and held and heard by someone is a neurological need that we never outgrow. That's what the neuroscience points

to clearly, that many of us who are high achievers and self-sufficient independent, think "Oh, to depend on someone is needy." But the truth is --

Lion: But that's the fear.

Carista: Yes. The fear, and also it's a value in a lot of modern culture. You have to be independent, not need anyone and then I'll find my lover and hold within myself. Not what the neuroscience says. It says this need, the healthy independent personalities in general, are the ones that have at least one person that they could be interdependent with, to hold, them through the challenges of life. Optimally, your lover.

The marriages and long-term partnerships that are most positive in terms of how the partners feel about each other, it's not that they know a whole bunch of techniques but they make each other a top priority, and they have this oasis in the desert of life.

Well, I think it's time for a little self-revealing here.

Carista and I, we call ourselves recovering avoidant, that's me, and a recovering anxious, which is Carista. We've been using our relationship as a platform for this healing attachment. By studying this material and then sharing it with others, what we found is that the cycle time of getting over an argument or an upset has gone from many, many days when we first got together to often just minutes as we apply these techniques. It's like we can be in full-blown upset with each other and minutes later go, "Oh, that was interesting." It doesn't derail us anymore.

I think that's what's really great is that we're spending 99% of our time in loving embrace instead of 50% maybe when we started. I think that it's important to let people know that it takes time and it takes practice but it really can happen. It really can shift. And what I noticed...

Carista: Yeah. I remember when -- yeah. I'm so excited here. Go ahead.

Lion: We're both so excited about this! So what I found in my past relationships was that they were mostly insecure and that I thought that that's the way they were. I thought that's what a relationship was.

Now, it turns out, of course, that I had an insecure relationship with my mother. She was there sometimes, not other times. I happen to take the avoidant path believing that it was better to not need her, to not need to be cared for. I can take care of myself. Whenever I would be in an upset with a former partner, I would go off and process myself. When I was married, it usually took about three days. I would just separate from my wife, just go off on my own and about three days later I come back and say, "Okay, I worked it through, I'm better now."

Those three days were without relationships. In other relationships, things always felt on edge. What I didn't know until I studied this material was that what I really wanted in a relationship was this feeling of being settled and secure, knowing that I'm loved, knowing that my partner is not going to go away in an instant and that I really needed my partner.

This has been a big revelation for me in my relationship with Carista is finding that insecurity is not normal. It's not a part of every relationship. It's just the kind of relationship I had with my mother and now I'm coming to this understanding. When two people feel secure with each other, the passion really blossoms as Carista said. And now you can say what you were going to say.

Carista: Yeah. We could talk about that up ahead.

Yes, all of that is true. It's been quite remarkable me knowing Lion's kind of default insecure style has helped me know what I need to say and what I need to do to optimize, reconnecting with him when he gets triggered in particular being what he calls a recovering avoidant, his need to have his feelings valued, he just assumed no one cared.

Instead of getting preoccupied with my anxiety that he is not paying attention to me, if I first care for his feelings and give him the experience that his feelings matter and he counts in this relationship equal to myself, then he learns that that kind of care is actually what love feels like and his ability to then be generous and care for my feelings is naturally occurring because he's had that experience of being cared for. And he knows me being a recovering anxious, what my basic vulnerabilities are and knows what particular -- what we call security codes in some of our practices, what the phrases I need to hear when I'm triggered and one can learn specific statements.

If Lion, because avoidant by nature will want more space when they're triggered, he knows, say to me, "I need space, I need five minutes. I'll be right back and care for your feelings" and I'm like, "Oh, great, he's going to come back and care for my feelings. I don't have to escalate and be anxious that he's going to abandon me and he needs space, great. He's going to come back." So things like that really start to interrupt the cycles of reactivity and you get to feel, "Oh, someone is actually caring to connect with me."

We have another practice called the Limbic Traffic Light Signals where you diagnose with your partner kind of the state you're in, how triggered you are, mild or significant using kind of like the traffic lights. Green, I'm a go, I'm open, I'm here for you, I'm vulnerable, it's safe. Yellow, you're starting to really trigger me, I'm feeling cautious to be open to you. Red, I feel in danger, you're really making me feel unsafe. And just to report that, if you have an agreement that when the other reports yellow or red and you're the cause of it, you're going to then really stop and look for a moment to create security and connection for

that person rather than your old style of abandoning when you're escalating. And then we have the three number of love languages which we can talk about it ahead.

Lion: We'll get to them in a minute.

A question came in over the webcast, so I thought we would take a couple of minutes for questions.

[Participant] writes, "I know a couple that's adopted a five-year-old who's now six. Does Carista have a book available that I can give them to read to deal with this child's now anger issues that have been escalating? Both parents are busy working during the day and are in their late 40s and new parents. One is a teacher and one is a physical therapist so I think they would be open to the information and the help."

Carista: I have it. It's called *The Primal Wound* by Nancy Verrier. It's a very old classic book, but it's one of the best out there which talks about every child who's adopted has this primal wound of kind of the phantom parent and depending on how their adoptive parents bonded with them early in life or later in life can often make a difference whether that primal wound is significant in the child. But the child needs to work with a bonding early trauma specialist as to the parents and there are many of them. Nancy Verrier is good and there are other ones out there if someone needs to know they can contact me through e-mail which we'll announce at the end.

Lion: If you've been adopted, your mother abandoned you basically so the earliest belief you have is "I'm abandoned" and then you come up with whatever conclusion you have you make up on top of that which might be "I'm unworthy of being loved" or "There's something wrong with me that's why I was rejected." The baby just doesn't understand adult circumstances so all it can feel is this separation, the terror of being separated, pulled away from the mother who it's been growing up inside of for nine months. And so, it's a very, very deep wound for anyone.

We talk about the five keys to creating a secure and passionate relationship, the first key being how your inner child runs your love life, the early childhood bonding which I just shared, the five attachment styles. And the second key, how your brain runs your love life. I'd love you to talk about the triune brain and the limbic response to danger. I think it's a really critical key.

Lion: Sure. I like that topic. For those of you who don't know, I actually got a degree in physiology and human consciousness.

I was studying the brain and consciousness back in 1975 which some of you might have an idea of how bloody old I am, how long I've been at this. And at the

time, a fellow named Maclean had identified what he calls the triune brain, which is really kind of an evolutionary look at the brain structure, and although modern anatomists and neurophysiologists might say it's oversimplified, it still provides a good understanding of how the brain evolved over time.

Reptiles have the same brain we do at the base. The core brain is called the reptilian brain, and then on top of that is the mammalian brain, the limbic system, and on top of that is the cortex. So we have the sort of three layers of brain. It's all much more complicated than that but what you can say is basically the cortex is the thinking brain, the limbic system is the feeling brain, and the reptilian system is the survival brain.

The reptile brain basically has three questions: Can I eat it? Can it eat me? And can I mate with it? That's basically the amount of thinking there is in the reptilian brain. On top of that is the mammalian brain, the feeling brain. All mammals have that structure as well.

So this emotional brain has many, many different structures but the one we're particularly interested in is called the amygdala. These are two small areas of the brain directly inside the temples about an inch on either side. And the amygdala acts like a smoke alarm and a fire alarm. It's basically the danger detector, and it's constantly looking for is there danger out there, is there something to be afraid of.

If it's in what we call the green state, it's looking around and going "Okay, everything is safe. Everything is okay. I'm okay. I don't have to do the fight or flight thing. I'm safe." If it detects the possible danger, it goes into what we call yellow state which is the smoke alarm. It's like, "Hey, pay attention, pay attention, there might be something wrong here." It is alert, high alert, alert, high alert. And then if it actually detects danger or if it's triggered, it goes into red alert, the red state which is "Get out! Get out! Get out!" So when in a theater and that fire alarm goes off, you have only one instinct which is to get the heck out of there, get away from the danger.

On top of that of course is the cortex, the thinking brain. And what's really interesting in relationships is that once the amygdala gets triggered into yellow or red state, it basically blocks the signals from the cortex. It stops the thinking brain.

The most important thing to understand and when you're in the middle of an argument or an upset with your partner is that if you try to logic your way through it, "Oh, everything is okay. No, I didn't say that. That's not really what happened," it's basically useless. It's like that information is not even heard because the alarm is going off and you need to settle the amygdala, the emotional brain first, and then the thinking brain can come back online. So it's as if your thinking brain is offline during that kind of reaction time.

Carista: I'd like to add to that. When you say the thinking brain is unavailable, the reactivity actually hijacks the rational sense. And if couples, as you say, they keep arguing to rationale or analysis, and that's where they often get into the vicious long cycles, the late night cycles or the early morning cycles or any time of the day cycles that they can't get out of, it's usually because one or more of them have gotten their sense of safety or security hijacked. Something is dangerous, unhealthy, unsafe, not safe to be opened. It doesn't have to be extreme to be like you are dangerous. It's more like, you're just not safe to be vulnerable with because when you don't feel safe to be vulnerable, it's a feeling like you're going to judge me or you're expecting me to be perfect or I could be rejected or me sharing what I'm feeling, you're making myself feel too needy or scared to be out of control.

So any of those inner beliefs can sometimes hijack us even if our partner is not provoking us. It's important to know when you're being hijacked though and to then know how to actually go back to green. And that's really what we're focusing on teaching people, the simple building blocks of staying in green and helping the other return to green which is what a secure attachment parent was supposed to do when we crawled away from them. There was in the play space, something that that child six months to 18 months couldn't tell yet if that was a snake, meaning a dangerous object or a rope, an illusion of danger. And when a child starts to separate from the primary caregiver, optimally the mother, father, and they go out in the room and they see this and they start to cry or out in the world, the secure attachment parent will make that cry their top priority and the child can look back to the parent if they're nearby hopefully, and the parent will immediately quell the child all using non-verbal love languages because the child can't be rationalized. It doesn't even understand language. And these three non-verbal love languages are what excite us the most that most couples don't realize they can actually use to rewire each other and go from red to yellow to green.

Lion: So why don't you just tell us what they are?

Carista: Yeah. It's favorite thing to teach people because as a couples therapist it just blows me away before I knew this 30 years of couples coming in in these high reactive cycles and trying to use their rational senses. This was a missing piece for me was to really know how to get them in their limbic centers, their nervous systems in a harmonic rapport before they even share what's in their heart and on their mind. And then when they share, it's just so elegant and quick and the other can be open.

These three non-verbal love languages, that our parents were supposed to use, and some of us lucked-out they did, are primarily: one, the eyes, the use of the eyes. The loving secure attached parent will look to that child and say with their eyes "You are safe. I am here. I am here and you can trust me. I want to be here

for you." And the eye gazing is one of welcoming and reassurance and "I am your rock." Whereas the unavailable parent, the avoidant one wouldn't even look to the child and use their eyes to reassure the child. They may be off doing something else or "You're okay. Don't worry. It's a rope. Don't worry. You're okay" and just not even bother to quell the child.

Number Two: their tone of voice becomes a critical love language. The secure parent would say, "Honey, you're okay" and sooth the child with their voice. "It's okay. It's safe. Oh, you're right. You were right to reach out and need help to make yourself feel safe. You can trust. I'm here. It's okay to depend on someone. That's a good thing to depend on someone when you're overwhelmed. I'm going to reassure you I'm here, yup." Whereas the unavailable parent would yell at the child or just ignore the child. The anxious parent would certainly be -- sometimes they are reassuring and sometimes not with their voice and their eyes.

And the third language is the body language. The secure parent would pick the child up and use their own body and their own touch just to nurse the child and brace the child and really hold the child so the child feels like "I'm safe. This is someone I can count on when I feel in danger and will reassure me until I'm back in green. And then when I'm back in green, they'll just let me go and let me go out and explore the world again because they trust me that I can be independent when I need to be, and they'll be there for me when I need them." We still need that as adults.

When we're in these vicious cycles or these tricky cycles with each other, how we use our eyes, how we use our voice and how we use our touch or body language makes all the difference in the world. So you can say, "I'm listening to you. I hear your feelings." But if your eyes look like the scary mother or your voice sounds like the raging father or the indifferent lover and your body language just shut down, your arms are closed, you're rigid as a rock, but you're saying, "I hear you. I get it," the person doesn't trust. It doesn't matter what you say. It's irrelevant. All those non-verbals are completely clear conflictual message, and therefore all the talking often is heard not. So we say use those eyes, use those voice, use that body language, use the touch if the person is open to touch.

Lion: I'd like to step in here and add that this was a revelation for me because generally, when my partner or girlfriend started getting escalated, I would just basically say, "Okay, I'm out of here." That was my typical pattern and a typical pattern for an avoidant type.

What I learned is that in order to heal this pattern, I have to do what's counterintuitive. I have to go against my normal reaction, my normal instinct, which is to leave, go into my head or leave the room and actually reach forward, reach toward Carista. And when she's upset, if I walk up to her and put my arms around her and say, "It's okay, honey. I'm here. I'm not going away," she

immediately calms down. And if I'm even smarter, I'll say, "Let's go lie down for a couple of minutes and just hold each other." Then we can lie down and hold each other, look in each other's eyes with love, stop the talking, get out of the cycle, and both of our brains calm down and we find love again very, very quickly. So, as an avoidant, this is a counterintuitive move.

How about for you as an anxious? Do you want to mention what happens to you?

Carista: I love it when you do that. I remember, what was that, a week ago that we had a kind of unusual -- we're under a lot of pressure for deadline and so we got into some strange state. We both knew it and I came in and I was kind of escalated a bit and you looked to me like, "I don't know what to do." I heard you and you're still on it. And then I said, "You know what to do." And you stood up and you just hugged me, and you looked me lovingly in the eyes and you just said, "We're okay. We just both got triggered." It was like, "Oh, okay."

What my deepest parts wanted to know was that you were going to -- you cared that -- you first took space that felt was some sense of abandonment and then you cared to reconnect again, and the whole story just dropped out of it quickly. And then for you, your need for space, it was your first reaction, was to honor it. So you did one of those "I need space, I'll be back." And I just was on my marry way continuing to work knowing you'd be back. So it helps me to know how to care for you, and it really helps build trust when I know you know what I need and you actually do it when I'm in a reactive cycle and I don't even have to tell you.

That really builds trust which leads to the passion element of our particular way of teaching. We say the rewiring that anyone can learn to do leads to a sense of security which is kind of the base, kind of the lower brain needing that basic security because I know the woman, and a very intimate passionate woman that if I don't feel secure and safe and I don't know if I can trust my man and he's going to really care for my heart, especially when he triggers me, he's not going to get my passion.

And so what I know you've learned and I've learned also with you is that we don't expect the other to be there in a passionate way if we have suppressed feelings or truths that are not being expressed between us. We've noticed even in some of our most challenging moments that when we take the time to really create that secure connection like I care that you're feeling insecure right now, and I want to do what it takes to help you rewire that with me or with life or with yourself sometimes. It has nothing to do with me. It's how you're treating yourself. Then we get to that level of that base foundational sense of trust, then for particularly women who are older, when their heart is being held by themselves and by their beloved, then the passion is much more available and much more exciting because you take care of me and that's a turn on.

Lion: I teach men in my classes for men that foreplay is usually about 24 hours. So, if you want a woman to be sexual, start about 24 hours before and start caring for her needs and treating her with honor and respect and doing little things for her and you may give little suggestions and 24 hours later, you've got a hot mama on your hands. So, let that be a lesson to all of you men out there and for women, you might want to pass that on to your guys.

Carista: It's actually for the sustained secure connection and passion to really be readily available, that's for all of us how we care for each other to be 65 as well. It doesn't have to be perfect as we end here and looking to time is very important even ourselves who teach this to others and have such deep understanding of it, we give each other bandwidth just like that day I just mentioned. I remember you said to me we're human, like we trigger each other, we both had different needs at the same time and you know I love you. It's like let's just reset and get on with the day. It's like yeah, be forgiving because we're human and we get reactive but the studies show --

Lion: It's wonderful to know that we don't have to be perfect because I'm far from perfect, and I don't need to tell you but you're not perfect either. I know you're close.

Carista: Yeah. I don't want to be. I want to be vulnerable. I heard that. I just might say because I was in midsentence and I know I want to add to what you're saying --

Lion: I interrupted you? Are you telling me that I interrupted you?

Carista: You did but it just felt that it was so loving that I'm flowing with it. I didn't leave the listener hearing me say, "And the studies show..." and not finish it. Now we're both so excited to want to pass this forward. We keep kind of overflowing. That's how I feel we're interrupting each other, just this excitement of sharing.

The studies show that with parents and children, with lovers, with any healthy relationship, the reason why they come to 80% of the time, another way of looking at that is four out of five interactions are positive and as long as that's the dominant feeling, I feel your intention is to empower me, nurture me, care for me, give me the sense that you are a safe resource of love, I can give you space to be human and have your wounding and your moods and your PMS and your bad day. I can give you space to have reactions because that's life, human.

Lion: I do get PMS and the difference between men and women is women get it about once a month and men get it three or four times a day, but I find it's a lot less these days because I'm feeling secure.

Before we end, I just want to share with people that we have a program called [The Keys to Creating a Secure and Passionate Relationship](#). It's a five-part,

seven-hour teleclass that you can listen to at your convenience. We hope that you share it with your partners so that you can actually work together to reprogram your relationship dynamics and create a secure attachment, a healing attachment with each other.

You'll learn about your own and your partner's relationship attachment style and how to rewire for security and passion. If you're single, it's still useful because it will prepare you to create your next relationship so that it is solid and satisfying. You'll discern better what other people's patterns are and you'll avoid relationships that will take you into insecurity and find the person that will make you feel secure.

You can learn more about it on [ConfusedAboutLove.com](http://ConfusedAboutLove.com). That gives all the details and you can order it there if you're interested.

Carista: If anyone has any questions they want to ask, email Carista at [carista@confusedaboutlove.com](mailto:carista@confusedaboutlove.com). Feel free to do so.

Lion: So, we want to wrap. For those people who have given us their hour, we so appreciate your hanging in here. We got a message from [Participant] over the webcast. "My comment is that I'm grateful for this bonus call. It resonates with me, so thank you." And so you are welcome. -Do you want to add anything else, Carista?

Carista: Just kind of the excitement of sharing it always is that I want to encourage people to realize that none of us are victims of our core wiring, having come from a background with tremendous amount of trauma and insecurity and knowing this was a missing piece for me and to really encourage people to take the time to learn how to rewire however you do it with the use of our course and our support or whatever is out there. It's really possible.

Lion: Great. We have a question. Hi, [Participant].

Participant: Hi. A few minutes ago, when you were going to say, "the studies show..." when you started answering that, I heard a blank. I wondered if you could repeat that.

Carista: Yes. I did share it but there may have been a computer glitch. The studies show that the secure attachment positive love between a parent and child or between partners or even business associates or good friends, four out of five interactions of connection are positive. That's what is often referred to as secure attachment or healthy love and that the dominant interactions and connections leave each person feeling positive self-worth and empowered and cared for. That's what the studies show.

Lion: Right. And there are other people in the relationship business who have said that the interaction should be five to one, positive to negative, whether they're a

sweet peck on the cheek, a compliment, an appreciation or whatever is felt as positive versus one negative and as soon as that climbs to two or three or four out of five being negative, you can pretty much predict the end of the relationship, unless they take our course and learn how to rewire. So, absolutely.

Carista: The Gottman Institute is the one that says that, and they've got 30 years of research behind what are the elements that usually create predictable divorce versus successful marriages that are in crisis or the ones that are five to one positive, therefore the tendency to be constantly in critical, judgmental, admonishing cycles are really the death of a good intimate secure relationship. Again, one can rewire if both sides choose to do that work and learn how to be loving and positive.

Lion: Great. Thanks for your question. And we have another question.

Participant: Hi. I had two questions. Toward the beginning, you talked about a book resource. I think it was with a study but I wasn't sure. I'm wondering if you could give that again. I went by really fast.

Carista: The book for adoptees? The Primal Wound. The Primal Wound by Nancy Verrier, for adoptees.

Participant: And then my other question is if you're more the trauma type and you find it hard to trust, is there anything you could start doing to help yourself before you get in a relationship?

Carista: Yes. Go work with a trauma specialist – and there are many of them. Many of them are called Somatic Energy workers, Peter Levine, a group of therapists or some of us like myself who are syntheses of different kinds of styles. But someone who specializes in trauma healing, you want to be able to work with them so that you can reveal what happened and be able to experience letting that go. Also you want to make sure the healer really understands what healthy loving connection is supposed to be, and they're helping you actually re-pattern that directly in the healing session. So yeah, definitely do that.

Lion: I have a male friend who is deeply traumatized, beaten mercilessly I would say by his father and by working with a somatic experiencing therapist has really softened and opened up in a beautiful way. It's been wonderful to see him. He's a very good friend and seeing how that trauma can be rewired by just very carefully and slowly moving into the trauma pattern. And anyone who specializes in PTSD also is going to have techniques for very gently opening those doors.

Carista: Yes. And the second reflection on that is when you do feel safe, it's very important that anyone you explore with knows you've been traumatized and cares about it. In reporting it, they don't show empathy or sensitivity. It's like, "I'm doing my work. You're not my therapist." But I need you to know that if it's

a rage or I don't know what kind of trauma there was, you want to be able to report it and know they're going to care particularly if they trigger it, even if they don't mean to that you're safe to report that.

If you feel safe to report that, then you won't go into those trend cycles or they will be able to care for you. So the kind of partner you choose, you don't want to put yourself back in a relationship that mimics the danger of what you're trying to heal. Just the opposite.

Participant: Right, right.

Carista: So you want to be able to report it and say, "I want to rewire with someone towards secure bonding, and there's this body of work I want to explore with you. I don't want it to just be about my healing. I want to be a safe source for you as well, but I need to know you're going to -- at least you can hear my story and know that I may sometimes get triggered, and I want to be able to report that to you." Your ability to report when a person triggers and then caring is 90% of the rewiring.

Often, when we were in trauma, there was no one there to advocate for us. We were too young to advocate for ourselves and we lost our voice to say, "Stop it. You're hurting me. You're scaring me."

Participant: The voice thing especially. Yeah.

Carista: The voice is always the problem with the trauma. You need to find your voice in a safe therapeutic container with a therapist. You can talk about it and learn how to find your voice. And then when you start to experiment with other relationships, you want someone who wants to hear what you have to say.

Participant: Okay. Thank you.

Lion: Yeah. Thank you so much for that question. And we have on the webcast one who writes, "Thank you very much. You have given me greater understanding and hope for a future that includes healthy love," that's really what we're doing here so thank you for that comment, "and suggestions for avoidant types to prepare for or start a healthy relationship. Can you do the same thing for the avoidants?"

Carista: The first avoidants need to realize to really heal quickly is their need for connection is there, that the tendency to avoid is not saying they don't need to connect. They, again, need to find someone who is interested in valuing their feelings and their need to connect in a way that's safe for them.

It needs to be someone who will slow down enough to give them space when they need it, as long as they take space in a respectful way that's not going to

trigger the other, and then they begin to take risks being vulnerable what they need and that they find someone who helps them find their voice, that my need for connection and my need to be cared for is important to you, and they need to learn because they didn't learn needs were important in a relationship, to be able to hold and care for the other's needs with equal respect and kind of sharing that mutuality.

Lion, you want to add to that?

Lion: Yes. I would say that that was really important for me and my development is first recognizing that when I wanted to go away, when I wanted space, that actually there was a need underneath that. By sinking down and feeling what is that feeling that wants me to go away, what is the need underneath that, what's the belief underneath that, I began dismantling and deconstructing the tendency I had for just going away, taking space and including the space I took by going into my head.

So, my favorite way of avoiding what's going into my head into thinking, into understanding or making distinctions or arguing or talking, that was just a way for me to actually avoid my feelings as well, and then to honor my own needs because my mother didn't honor my needs. She didn't really care what my needs were. She just did what she did.

For me to be able to first honor my own needs and then to admit them was a very big step for me as an avoidant in my recovery process. And then for those of you who are not in a relationship, we talked about this on our program, you can find a friend, a trusted friend, and learn the material together and practice together even not being in a romantic relationship, just being in a friend relationship, and make the same kinds of commitment you would in a romantic relationship that we're going to help rewire each other. We're going to depend on each other. We're going to practice this together when we're -- if I need you at 4:00 in the morning, I'm going to call you, and you agree that you'll make me a top priority.

So, it is possible to practice these things even before you get into a relationship so that by the time you do get into a relationship you've got some practice under your belt.

Carista: Yes. And for those who even that feels scary, a therapist who really is there as a positive safe source to find your voice and share your feelings and reveal your vulnerabilities is also an option, and it's the slowest because you're going once or twice a week and paying money to get the connection. But the research shows that someone who's been very traumatized in insecure attachment, within a few years to five years, you can really rewire with someone in that context.

There are many options with your child or whatever. I would just balance it out because I know there are a lot of anxious types who want to know "Well, what would I do?" because we've covered the trauma and the avoidant, just to add quickly. What the anxious really needs is they need to value that their need for connection is important. It is a good need, it is a healthy need, and their need for intimacy and that the reason why they're anxious is often because they're not being honest that their need for connection is actually what's running the anxiety, their need for some support outside themselves.

Once that is accepted and honored, then one is responsible to learn how to ask for attention and support particularly if they're in a committed relationship where the person makes it appealing for the person to want to hold them, care for them and listen to them. So the tone of voice, the quality of the energy, particularly if it's an avoidant type, becomes very, very important.

Also, realizing sometimes if it's an anxious that's being triggered by an avoidant ignoring them, as I learned with Lion, was I -- because at first he didn't even realize he really had these needs for connection, I would take responsibility to ask him. This is what I need to connect and take responsibility and what I need for you. And remembering he didn't even know he had needs to be valued, I would make sure, as the anxious, to say, "And what do you need?" and really care for it with equal value and make sure he learned to feel he could be vulnerable to connect with what he needed and say it and have someone really care that my need, that I'm needing for connection is as important as yours. And so sometimes the anxious, if they're with an avoidant, has to help the avoidant learn how to self-reflect on their needs.

Lion: Well, that's all we have time for. Thank you all so much for being with us on this program with Carista Luminare, PhD, my partner, and me, Lion Goodman. We're very happy that you joined us today.

Carista, thank you so much for doing this with me. And thanks for being my partner.

Carista: Thank you.

Lion: Goodnight to everyone, and we hope you use this information well. Again, [www.confusedaboutlove.com](http://www.confusedaboutlove.com) if you want more information. Take care, everyone. Goodnight.

Carista: Take care, everyone. Bye.

Lion: Bye now