

SPARK 059

(Matrix Code: **SPARK059.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: For a human being, the stimulus never causes the response.

NOTES: Street bums and millionaires, thieves and philanthropists, the happy and the depressed all inhabit the same world. Why are we people like we are? It is not the circumstances. In every case, the stimulus does not cause the response. Why? Because the stimulus is the same for everybody, but the variety of responses is huge. We respond according to the predisposition of our Box.

The following is a true story: Identical twin boys suffered a difficult childhood together. One grew up to become a drug addict and petty thief in prison. The other grew up to become a successful public defense lawyer with a family. A journalist heard of this remarkable story and decided to interview both of these men. He asked them each the same question: "How did you end up here?" The drug addict in prison said, "Look at my childhood. I was abused, abandoned, betrayed. I had to become a drug addict. I had no other choice." The lawyer in his office said, "Look at my childhood. I was abused, abandoned, betrayed. I had to become a defense lawyer. I had no other choice." Your life is designed by your Box.

Whatever the stimulus, your response is determined by free will choice. Even if you say, "I had no choice," you are using your free will to choose to act as if you have no choice.

Stimulus and response are not connected. The gap between stimulus and response is what differentiates a human being from any other animal. Human beings have the possibility of going nonlinear. An animal's response is hard-wired into their nervous system. They have no alternative but to battle or run. A human being always has the option to laugh, or tell a new story. When someone cuts in front of you in their car you do not automatically have to swear at them. Your response is a choice made from literally millions of possible options. If you do not take advantage of the immense variety of alternative responses then you are acting like a machine. What could make you keep responding in the same way? The answer is, your Box's reasons. You give responsibility for making choices to your reasons.

For example, the telephone rings. Why do you answer it? You think that you answer the telephone because it rings. "Because it rings" is a reason. Does the ring of the telephone force you to answer the telephone? No. If you answered the phone because the phone rang, then the ring would be determining your action; the ring would have total power over you and it does not. You may think that you answer the telephone because it rings, but that thought is generated and sponsored by your Box. When you assume that the phone has such power over you then the Box gets to play victim to the telephone. But if you investigate you will discover that *you* have the power, not the telephone, not the reason, and not your Box! The power you have can never go away. Irresponsibility is an illusion. Whether you use the power or not, that is a different question.

EXPERIMENTS:

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SPARK059.01 This experiment may be a bit disconcerting to friends and relations while you practice it. We caution you to be discreet and to care about the well being of others. On the other hand, this is an important experiment to do. Do not use the fear of other people's reactions to stop you from learning what you need to learn. The purpose of this experiment is to discover that there is in fact no connection between stimulus and response. None. The way to discover that there is no connection is to prove it to yourself.

The experiment is this: three times each day, respond in ways that are not implicated by the stimulus. This can be one of two things: A) Nonaction, meaning be in contact, pay attention, but do absolutely nothing, or B) Nonlinear action, meaning do something unpredictable. With every stimulus you already know what your typical or natural response is. The experiment is to alternate between doing absolutely nothing, and, doing something completely different than what you (or anyone else) would normally do.

Here are some examples of nonlinear action. After you get the sense of it create your own actions spontaneously.

- If the magazine salesman comes to the door, beg money from him.
- If it rains, put on your bathing suit.
- If you feel hungry, go dancing or run up and down the stairs.
- If you are late, buy a new watch.
- If someone bumps you, ask if you can interview them.
- If someone gets angry with you, agree with them and start yelling at yourself too.
- When waiting to cross the street at a red light, introduce yourself to other pedestrians.
- If someone says, "Hello, how are you?" give them a weather report.
- Eat dessert before dinner.
- Wear your underwear on the outside.
- If you receive a letter in the mail, put it in the refrigerator.
- If your mother comes to visit, do a fashion show for her.
- If you want a cup of coffee or a chocolate bar, do rage work.
- If you see a pretty woman or handsome man, let yourself grieve over the fact that they will one day die, and write a love poem.
- If you feel insecure, do twenty pushups.
- If your neighbors are arguing, bring them a fresh baked pie, or start a game of Monopoly with them.
- If you feel offended by unexpected comments or actions, sing a Broadway show tune.

Again, the intention of this experiment is not to appear crazy, not to offend people, not to be strange, but rather to gain direct immediate access to freedom of action. You gain freedom by taking responsibility for having many responses regardless of the circumstances.