

SPARK 131

(Matrix Code: **SPARK131.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: It is impossible to be offended.

NOTES: Perhaps you've had the experience (even during the past ten minutes) where someone used a tone of voice that caused you to react? They insinuated implications, behaved disrespectfully, or assumed something false and you suddenly felt a surge of emotions rush through your veins? Perhaps you considered your reaction real and justified? Perhaps you recognized it was emotional but could do nothing to avoid it, like trying to swim upstream while being sucked backwards over Niagara Falls? The emotions swallowed your center, obscured your presence, trapped your free perception, conquered your body with hormones and engulfed your mind with stories. Ever experience anything like this?

Now think about your Box. The purpose of your Box is to prove itself *right* so that it can assure your survival (even if your Box is *being right* about you *being wrong*, meaning you being not wanted, worthless, unlovable, etc.... which is a characteristic of the "I'm not okay" Box, where you must feel *not okay* in order to feel normal). In the instant you experience something that challenges the *rightness* of your Box (which for the "I'm not okay" Box could be a moment of sensing respect, appreciation, recognition, being loved or wanted) your Box goes into emergency mode and implements Channel 1 or Channel 2 of its standard defense patterns. Channel 1 is usually some version of getting hysterical and attacking the "aggressor," and if this fails, then Channel 2 is applied by collapsing, getting depressed and leaving. These Box reactions are as unconscious as a drone prison-guard system detecting a movement near the perimeter and automatically gunning it down without caring if it is an escaping prisoner, a curious dog, or a kid flying a kite. The point is, if your Box is running your life, emotional reactions will be normal for you.

How does your Box trigger emotional reactions? By repeating one of its standard offending stories to you and limiting your attention to focus on a circumstance that confirms the story. If you pay close attention you will see that the Box's story comes first, then your reaction.

For example, if a woman is speaking to her husband and the man's Box tells him the story: *She thinks I am stupid* and focuses his attention on the tone in her voice then he might say, "Why are you harping on me?" If the woman's Box tells her the story: *He is ignoring my intelligence again*, then she might respond, "I'm just being clear about where to put the frying pan, Honey. When you don't react I assume that you don't hear me so I speak louder. I would never put that pan there." Then if the man's Box then tells him the story: *She never apologizes*, then he might respond with, "The pan would be better kept here. You could apologize to me for that tone in your voice." And if the woman's Box tells her the story: *He is punishing me with depression again*, she might say, "Are you going into that shut down mood again?" It is *all* Box relating to Box.

This realization has a terrible implication: *If you are ever offended you are offending yourself by believing your Box's stories.* The way out would be to identify your Box's

stories as only your Box's stories and let them jet past you like a bullfighter sidesteps a charging bull. But you don't do that. Instead you let the stories hit you square in the heart and react emotionally. Why would you prefer to get offended? Because of the benefit: letting your Box take responsibility for your life.

Even if being offended feels uncomfortable, it is a familiar discomfort. And while your Box is generating your emotional reactions it wags its tail like a proud dog having dug up your freshly planted flower garden to bring you a dead squirrel. Being offended is the best a person can do when their Box is in charge.

But for most of humanity, the Box is running the show. War, politics, news, social media, finance, marketing, fashion, entertainment, sports, religion, technology... modern culture thrives within the context of Box reactions. In a modern two-person relationship, Box war is standard. Each Box votes itself right and proves it with convincing stories that trigger the experience of being offended.

When you grant a third person the authority to have a valid opinion, such as in a community of three or more adults, suddenly you no longer can count on your Box as the ultimate authority. It can no longer self-declare its own righteousness, and frequently gets out-voted with feedback from others. If your community is centered on ongoing adulthood initiatory process, group intelligence can provide tremendous relief for your *being*, and tremendous outrage for your Box's ego and Gremlin.

Certain people try to control others around them by threatening to become offended, thus forcing everyone to "walk on eggshells" and avoid core issues. Such threats lose power when you recognize that *anyone* can arrange to be offended about *anything*. Someone might be offended if you wear red or don't wear red. Someone might be offended if you give flowers or don't give flowers. Someone might be offended if you speak out or don't speak out, and so on. It is not possible to hurt someone else's feelings. The insult is completely manufactured by the experiencer of the insult. We hurt our own feelings to play out low dramas that unconsciously feed our Gremlins.

It is *all* Box Mechanics.

EXPERIMENTS:

SPARK131.01 Start by assuming that your Box is running your life. This is 99% guaranteed to be true, and if by some miracle it is *not* true, you can *still* benefit from this experiment.

SPARK131.02 STEP ONE Detect to what degree your Box is running your life. Remember, the Box promotes *survival*, whereas your *being* thrives on *living*. There is a big difference between surviving and living. To detect your current state of affairs, split off a piece of your attention and have it neutrally observe what stories your Box tells you. Do this 24/7 forever. A BIG clue for detecting Box activity is if you have voices in your head. In Eric Berne's *Ego State Thoughtmap* you confirm that you are in the *Parent Ego State* when in your head you hear either *Critical Voices* ("You are worthless") or *Nurturing Voices* ("You are the best"). These are other people's Boxes talking to you, corporate, societal, governmental and religious Boxes providing the stories that fire up your emotional reactions in their favor. Solution? Use your *Voice*

Blaster. Blow the voices away. They are not your voice. They are vampires. In fact, in the *Adult Ego State* there are essentially *no voices* in your head. There is simply presence, noticing, action. In the *Adult Ego State* you generally speak before you know what you will say. It also helps to ask your friends (and your enemies) for direct, honest and immediate feedback about your Box reactions. Believe them.

Each time this week that you feel even the slightest offense, write down the story that your Box has told you to trigger that reaction. Try to detect patterns.

SPARK131.03 STEP TWO A core adulthood initiation is to distinguish your Box from your *being*. Your Box is the automatic defensive interface between you and the world. Your *being* is what gets appreciated before you say, do, or have anything. You can detect your *being* through detecting its appreciable qualities that wordlessly exist and are directly experienced by each person you encounter no matter what stories their Box uses to react to you. The qualities of your *being* evolve as your *being* grows. Your *being* grows through engaging experiences that build matrix. To find your present qualities of *being* do the following *Declaring Appreciation Exercise*.

Declaring is the power of saying: *What is so.* (Notice the Is-Glue located between the *what* and the *so.*) You do *unconscious declaring* when you complain about how bad the weather is, or when you explain why you like a particular football team. In the following exercise you practice *conscious declaring* through appreciating the positive qualities of another person's *being*.

Begin by arranging to have a half-hour together with an adult partner. Sit in chairs in open-body position facing each other, feet on the floor, grounded, centered, each within their own bubble. Partner A looks into Partner B's eyes and begins saying out loud what you appreciate about their qualities of being. Speak before you know what you are going to say. Your partner only sits and listens. No comments; no jokes. Start each sentence with the words, "What I appreciate about you is that you are _____ because you _____," then fill in the blanks with what you read in their *being*. Be bold. Speak assertively, directly. Be poetically audacious. Say, "You are _____!" Use your *Possibility Paintbrush* to paint in words your evolving sensations of appreciation so the other person directly experiences what you appreciate in them. This is not about saying anything that you already know about the other person. You do not have to know someone before you can sit in front of them and read their qualities of *being* like an open book. You simply look into their eyes and keep saying what you appreciate about them right now. One person practices for five minutes. Then change roles. You can also do this exercise while standing in line at the Post Office.