

Scot McKay (00:02.68)

How's it going, gentlemen? Hey, do I have a topic for you today. I think just about all of us, certainly any of us who have been in a relationship with a woman before have experienced that moment where she gets really upset. And if we tell her, hey, why don't you calm down? It's just like shaking a warm Diet Coke and uncorking it. It's going to explode everywhere. How can we find ourselves in disagreements with a woman or a situation where maybe she's well,

we don't want to use the word hysterical because that'll make her hysterical if we call her that. But what if we find ourselves in a similar situation to that and really don't know how to get out of it? And it's almost as if we have five seconds to figure out the right thing to say or do right now, or maybe, the relationship's over. Well, my returning guest, Doug Noll is a master of de-escalation. And he has a book called De-escalate: How to Calm

An Angry Person In 90 Seconds Or Less. And, uh, 90 seconds might be a little too long, but it's how long we're going to give ourselves today to unravel a bird's nest like that. Certainly something every man should have in his toolkit. And I'm excited to have Doug Noll on. Before we introduce him to you, I want to remind you that the website is mountaintoppodcast.com. The Facebook group for all you guys is the Facebook, I'm sorry, The Mountain Top Summit on Facebook, which is where all you guys should be hanging out. A lot of fun.

Doug Noll (01:07.489)

You

Scot McKay (01:27.916)

And of course on social media, just about everywhere it's @scotmckay. I also want to remind you guys, if you're not watching this podcast, if you're still listening, you're missing out on some really fun nuances when I have guests on. So you want to go to YouTube and check out the video version. Without anything further, Doug Noll from central California. Welcome back, Doug. It's great to have you on.

Doug Noll (01:49.439)

Hey, Scot it's great to be here. And before we get started, hey, for everybody that listening, do me a favor. Whatever platform you're on, give Scot a five star review right now. His podcast is fantastic. It requires support and you're the people who support it. Five star review. Don't screw around. Do it right now while you're listening.

Scot McKay (02:07.15)

I know why I've had you on three times and that's a big part of it. Actually, that was completely unexpected and I do definitely appreciate that. And I echo that, you know I don't go around begging for, five stars and you know, "smash that like button". I'm not that kind of guy. And you know, I don't have 3000 reviews cause I'm not going around harping on it, but...

Doug Noll (02:09.759)

HAHAHAHA

Doug Noll (02:28.289)

You shouldn't have to. People should just know. Give you give you five star reviews. You have an amazing podcast. You've been doing this for a long time. Come on. Come on, people. Get real.

Scot McKay (02:33.368)

I agree. I agree. It's funny. I have that many listeners. I just don't have that many reviews. It's amazing. You are a long time expert in this. And I think the first thing I want to ask you is how does this play out in your own relationships? I mean, perfectly, perfectly.

Doug Noll (02:51.553)

Perfectly, perfectly. My wife and I never fight or argue. Oh, we might have disagreements, but we don't fight about it. And if either one of us gets upset, the other one knows exactly what to do and just settle back, listen to the emotions and reflect back what the other person's feeling so that we feel deeply heard and validated.

Scot McKay (03:10.87)

Okay, What if there's more than 90 seconds worth of emotions that need to be heard and validated?

Doug Noll (03:15.713)

You hang with it until the other person calms down. Rarely more than a couple of minutes.

Scot McKay (03:21.698)

So the 90 second clock kind of starts ticking when it's time to deescalate, not when the problem starts. Is that accurate-ish?

Doug Noll (03:29.683)

Yeah, the 90-second clock starts when you start actually listening to and reflecting the feelings of the woman, not anything else.

Scot McKay (03:42.924)

I think we've heard that before, maybe from you, maybe from others. It seems like a very common strategy for de-escalation, especially, or even I should say above and beyond relationships in say, law enforcement, right? It's a general psychological principle.

Doug Noll (03:44.715)

Mm-hmm.

Doug Noll (03:57.377)

Right. is in The technical term is called affect A-F-F-E-C-T labeling. It's grounded in a seminal neuroscience study that came out in 2007 out of UCLA. And what that study showed was when you label the emotional experience of somebody who's upset, it downshifts the emotional centers of the brain related to negative emotion.

Downshifts them down, and at the same time activates executive function in the prefrontal cortex so people can start to think again. So you're literally calming the brain down by simply telling somebody what they're feeling with the very specific emotions. And it's not that it's not as common as you might think. There very few people who teach this. I know I am. I don't really know of anybody else that teaches this specifically the way I do. I know that Chris Voss talks a little bit about it in his book.

But he's into negotiation, not into de-escalation.

Scot McKay (04:58.338)

Yeah, Chris Voss, it seems like he's a guy who has a hammer in his toolkit and everything looks like a nail. Everything starts looking like hostage negotiation. I've heard someone else say basically everything is hostage negotiation, but I think they were more of a comedian than a serious, you know, psychosocial commentator. Yeah.

Doug Noll (05:04.203)

Pretty much.

Doug Noll (05:07.745)

Yeah, exactly.

Doug Noll (05:11.328)
Yeah.

Right. So the beauty about this is it's not a difficult skill. It's a weird skill in the beginning. It's weird to learn because we're not used to talking about emotions. But once you overcome that weirdness, it is the most powerful relationship tool you can have. Because here's the thing. When we get into an argument, what are arguments all about? They're never about the substance. They're always about not being heard. And the paradox of a couple's argument is that

I want you to hear me, so I'm going to yell at you until you listen to me. And the other person's brain is saying, I want you to hear me, so I'm going to yell at you until you hear me. And so you're yelling at each other, each wanting to be heard. And nobody's taking the time to say, stop, let me listen to you and validate what you're feeling.

Scot McKay (06:03.842)
That is so rare that I'm going to go out on a limb here. And this may be anecdotal, but I hear story after story of people having gone to therapy, you know, couples going into therapy and they don't feel heard by the therapist. They're saying, okay, here's the deal. Here's what's going on. And the therapist goes, yeah, it seems, it seems like I still want to fit your square peg into this round hole because that's what I know how to talk about.

Doug Noll (06:19.861)
That's right.

Doug Noll (06:23.713)
That's right.

Doug Noll (06:27.787)
That's right.

Scot McKay (06:31.276)
I don't know anything about how to figure out what you're talking about. So let's, let's reframe everything you're saying as if it's something else. I've also heard this. That I don't know for the sake of billable hours or not losing a customer or something like that. The counselor will say, how are you doing? How, how has it been going since last time? And the person will respond with, man, everything's coming up roses. I'm going great. I feel like I'm almost completely healed. My past, I don't even think about it anymore. And the person will go, well.

What's really hard? What's still broken? I think we need to get past this brokenness. I think there's still a lot in there that's unresolved and the person will be like, no, I think a lot of it has been resolved. I feel great. I feel like in many ways we've accomplished what we've done here. All right. So come back next week and we'll talk about what's still broken and what's still a problem. I mean, even professionals in the mental health profession.

Don't get what you're talking about.

Doug Noll (07:27.073)
No, they're not trained in neuroscience.

Scot McKay (07:30.966)
Isn't that something?

Doug Noll (07:31.957)

Yeah, there actually is a massive schism going on. I'm not a neuroscientist. I'm a lay, I guess you could call me a lay student of neuroscience. But as I've studied this stuff, I've realized there's a massive schism between psychiatry, psychology and neuroscience. And the neuroscience people are saying, you people are all screwed up. You don't know what you're talking about. Look at how the brain actually functions.

Scot McKay (07:50.934)

I'm laughing because I think a lot of the guys in the audience are like, well, I'm a scientific student of getting laid. So I guess we have something in common, you know, so.

Doug Noll (07:56.507)

Well, there you go. So, so understand how the brain actually functions and it doesn't function the way we think it does. It functions completely differently.

Scot McKay (08:05.026)

That's so ironic a statement. Our brain doesn't function the way we think it does when our brain's the one doing the thinking. Go ahead.

Doug Noll (08:11.659)

Correct. Correct. And the reason for that is that what we experience as reality is subjective. And the brain is processing millions of bits of data every single day. The way I like to analogize is imagine Hoover Dam, this gigantic dam in this massive reservoir, Lake Mead behind the dam, and then imagine a tiny little hole in the dam that's thinner than a needle squirting out of stream water.

That stream of water is what we subjectively experience as reality. And behind the dam is everything else.

Scot McKay (08:46.392)

Based on our socialization, based on our frame of reference, our purview, where we're located, what we've experienced, how we were raised. It's a big world out there and we wouldn't want to mow it, but we haven't seen most of it either. Right? Yeah.

Doug Noll (08:48.769)

It's based on everything. It's based exactly, exactly, everything, everything.

Doug Noll (08:58.891)

That's right. It's all behind us. so anyways, all my work is grounded in neuroscience. If I don't have an empirical brain scanning study to support what I'm teaching, then I don't teach it. I mean, that's all I want to say about that. So, but what...

Scot McKay (09:12.002)

Well, you just let everybody else do the studies and then you comment on it. Smart.

Doug Noll (09:14.593)

That's exactly right. I let the brain scientists do the brain work and then I read their study and say, hmm, how can I apply this to what I'm doing? We do the fun part. So, affect labeling is one of those foundational skills that was, you know, it was studied with the brain scanning studies in 2007. And since then, there have been a number of studies since then. And so now we have this neuroscientifically based way that if you're a guy and you've got an angry girlfriend or an angry wife,

Scot McKay (09:18.446)

you

Scot McKay (09:21.932)

We do the fun part around here, right? Yeah, exactly.

Doug Noll (09:42.945)

or an angry woman anytime or it's reversed a woman dealing with an angry man, you can literally calm them down in a minute and a half to two minutes if you just use the simple skill. Also. OK, well, I also want to say just to lead in, if you want to build instant loyalty, trust and safety.

Scot McKay (09:58.828)

Let's dive in, let's talk about the practical parts.

Doug Noll (10:11.029)

You listen to the emotions, not the words. And I've done a lot of thinking about this. And I've come to the conclusion that women want emotional safety more than anything else, more than sex, more than money, more than dealing with a handsome guy. They want to feel emotionally safe. if you...

Scot McKay (10:29.63)

I would not only agree with that, I would build upon that by saying I think that's the cornerstone work of masculinity in igniting femininity is to make women feel emotionally safe and protected.

Doug Noll (10:36.501)

That's right.

Doug Noll (10:40.969)

And the way you do that, the way you do that is what I'm about to show you how to do. This is the foundational skill. All right. So first of all, mindset, there's no such thing as rationality, not not men, neither men nor women are rational beings. That's a big myth. It's a big lie. Forget rationality. When you see somebody who's upset, whether it's a man or woman, don't say they're being irrational. They're just being emotional. They're being normal. Emotions are normal. They're not abnormal. We've been taught that they're abnormal, but evil, they make us weak. They're sinful.

Scot McKay (10:45.686)

I'm all in, man.

Doug Noll (11:11.187)

All bullshit. Emotions are what make us human. And it's not just feminine, it's also masculine. So we just got to get over that mindset that rationality is how we judge behavior and decision making. There's no such thing as rationality. I could go into a long lecture on that, but I won't. okay, really quickly, rational, rational.

Scot McKay (11:29.858)

Well, I would prefer a short lecture on that before you move on. Okay.

Doug Noll (11:36.491)

Plato started the whole thing back 2,500 years ago. And it kind of came down over the years, because all that of these philosophers and theologians could observe is that bad things happened when people were emotional. So they immediately came to the conclusion that emotion is bad, rationality is good. And so it's all about you should be rational, even though there is no such thing as rational. Well, in the 1940s, two guys, John von Neumann and Oscar Morgenstern, developed rational choice theory. And they sort of took in economics, they took the concept that human beings

make rational choices to maximize utility. In other words, they're making choices to make their lives

better. Within three months of them publishing rational choice theory, it was proven to be absolutely not working. Yeah, call the ally paradox and then that for me to go down.

Scot McKay (12:21.326)

Doug, hold on, hold on. Doug, Doug, I need to stop you.

Doug Noll (12:26.901)

We have barking dogs.

Scot McKay (12:31.618)

be right back. Hold that thought. I'll be able to. Do remember what you were talking about? Talk about, talk about it didn't work. Start from when they found out it didn't work. All right. Hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Okay. Yeah.

Doug Noll (12:35.467)

I think you're okay. yeah.

It didn't, it didn't, it doesn't work. okay, we're gonna get.

Scot McKay (13:14.062)

All right, the joys of post-production anticipation. Hold on.

Doug Noll (13:16.213)

Hey, you know, one of the beauties about being able to work from home is we get barking dogs and crying babies and all that stuff. It's all normal. It's not a big deal. So I was talking about rational choice theory and

Scot McKay (13:21.838)

That's the first time in several years something like that's happened. right. All right.

Scot McKay (13:30.636)

Okay, but you gotta put a firm stop before you say, and they found it didn't work.

Doug Noll (13:36.522)

Okay.

and they found that it didn't work. And rational choice theory was a great economic model, but a totally wrong description of actual human behavior. And what has been discovered in all the years since the 1940s is that all decision-making is emotional and all behavior is emotional. There is no such thing as rationality. So when you're a guy and you've been schooled in this idea that we're rational beings,

It's going to lead you down the wrong track in terms of relationship because you can expect a relationship to be rational. It's not. It never has been. It never will be. Drop the idea of rationality.

Scot McKay (14:20.216)

So this got this, So these guys have been confronted as it were with the idea of Stoicism out there in the Manosphere. Yeah.

Doug Noll (14:27.797)

Yeah, let's talk about that. So Stoicism has never said, don't be emotional. It's a complete misconception of what Stoicism is as a philosophy. Stoicism says, be aware of your emotions, regulate your emotions, and be emotionally intelligent. That's what Stoicism is really all about.

Instead it got perverted into this idea that don't it you can't I can't ever let him see my sweat I can never be upset I can never cry I can never... I can only be angry. That's the only true male emotion that is legitimate because it shows me to be tough and virile and mean and you know all that stuff. Total bullshit.

Scot McKay (15:12.396)

Now you also talked about

Scot McKay (15:22.69)

Now you also talked about nobody and nothing is rational. What about if you're in a situation where someone is either schizophrenic or having a bipolar episode and they really are being irrational off the charts? I can't coach to that. I can't tell guys how to handle that because those people aren't in our reality with us. So I'm sure that you're...

You've got kind of a sidecar to go along with this for handling people like that.

Doug Noll (15:50.593)

So, right, so when we're dealing with personality disorders, such as schizophrenia or manic depressive disorder, any of the other DSM problems, DSM being the diagnostic and statistics manual, which describes all these brain disorders.

Scot McKay (16:10.04)

Which always seems to be a work in progress by the way. It always changes. Yeah.

Doug Noll (16:11.841)

Yeah, that's another story all into itself, driven by the insurance world, by the way. From my perspective, working in places like violent maximum security prisons, where I've trained inmates how to de-escalate prison violence, as long as people have functioning emotions, affect labeling works.

And it turns out emotions are the last thing to go. So it works with people who have dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, all of all these debilitating diseases. People still respond to emotional validation. Every human brain is hardwired for this, including a woman's brain. So let's get to it. How do you do this? The first thing you do, let's say a woman is really upset, either upset at a situation that you're not involved in or worse, maybe upset at you.

The first thing you have to do is you have to learn how to not listen to the words. Ignore what she's saying. Because if you listen to what she says, you're going to get triggered and then you're in it and it's really hard to get out. So train yourself to not listen to the words. It's not that hard. You just got to learn. Ignore the words. I don't care what she's saying. I'll tell you a story about that in a minute.

The second thing we're going to do is we're going to listen for the emotions. And our brains are hardwired for doing this. It goes back millions of years of evolution, long before we were able to speak. You know, vocabulary. Humans have only been able to talk for less than 50,000 years. There was no vocabulary. There was no speaking, no reading.

Scot McKay (17:49.4)

I know a few women who can talk for at least 50,000 years, if given the choice.

Doug Noll (17:51.873)

But from an evolutionary perspective, language is very, very new. And before that, how do we communicate? It was all nonverbal. And we and we picked up on emotional cues and we've been able to do this for millions of years. We still have that ability. We just don't use it. But now all you have to do is quiet your head, quiet down, don't get reactive and just sit there in silence. Empty your head and the

emotions will start floating in.

And then the third step is simply tell the woman what she is feeling at that moment. You are really pissed off, you're frustrated, you don't feel like you're being listened to, you feel ignored, you don't feel supported and appreciated, and you're really anxious and worried and concerned. You feel really sad and disconnected and unhappy. And stop.

Scot McKay (18:44.172)

You know, what's funny is a lot of times you'll hear from people, you know, advice for going on job interviews or how to have conversation on first dates. And it's almost a running joke at this point that the best way for someone to feel heard is you repeat to them back. You mirror to them what they just said. Like, so

where were you born? Where were you raised? Well, I was born at a very young age and I came from Poughkeepsie, New York. so you came from Poughkeepsie, New York. And the person, it was like a "yes, and..." you know, it's just like, you know, I'm big on the "yes, and..." the first rule of improv. Cause I think that helps build conversations. What I find particularly evolutionary about what you're talking about is you're using that same principle, but you're applying it to the emotions they're feeling.

Doug Noll (19:19.328)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (19:37.794)

And you're eating your own dog food here, as I used to say at Cisco Systems when they use their own components and their own network. And hearing the emotions and echoing the emotions, maybe not mirroring them, reflecting the emotions, right? Exactly. Not the words. So you are truly ignoring the words. And to me, the idea of ignoring the words completely is a hot take.

Doug Noll (19:50.177)

I call it reflecting.

Doug Noll (19:57.633)

Correct. Correct.

Scot McKay (20:04.174)

Because how am I supposed to understand what it is she's feeling the emotions about if there's no verbal context there, but I'm sure you have an answer. You don't need it.

Doug Noll (20:08.981)

You don't need it. You don't need it. Your brain knows what she's feeling. And all you got to do is pay attention. Now it helps when I coach people and teaching people how to do this, I teach them how to structure them. Emotions are data like numbers on a spreadsheet. And the problem is we've never been trained how to structure emotions in a way that makes sense to us. So the metaphor I like to use is imagine you got

receipts and checks and invoices and bank statements and it's all a big pile on your desk and you and now you've got to tell me what the condition of the company is because it's not in the form and they're not in formal financial statements. That's the difference. We take this big pile of messy stuff and we structure it so that we can have access to it. That's the big trick and that's what I teach people.

Scot McKay (20:53.742)

Well, anybody, anybody who's ever been to a country, anybody who's done even a modicum of world travel to any country where they don't speak-a the language, you still can connect with people. You still

know where people are coming from. You still will know when someone's happy you came into their store, you know, when someone's sick of you, know, when the police are angry. Exactly.

Doug Noll (21:06.017)
That's right, absolutely.

That's right. That's That's right. Human beings are human beings. We all have the same share. We all have a shared base of emotions, but we also have emotions that are unique to our culture. There are emotions that exist in Finland that do not exist in North America. And there are. There is a I can't remember the word for it, but that when when when people are it's wintertime in Finland and people are all gathered close together

Scot McKay (21:27.458)
Give me an example. I think that's fascinating.

Doug Noll (21:38.269)
in a room, they have an emotion for the feeling that that generates. And there's no such word in English for that. So it's their own emotion. have an emotional. Emotions are constructed, but we're not born with emotions. Emotions are socially constructed. And we really don't start forming emotions until about 18 months of age. Up until that time, we have something else called affect, AFF. And we are born with affect. And there nine of them. All human beings are born with these nine affect. The affect are like

Scot McKay (21:45.238)
Huh, interesting. Kind of like a coziness.

Scot McKay (21:53.656)
Wow.

Doug Noll (22:07.073)
colors on an artist's palette. And our brain takes these different colors, affect, and mix and match them in different intensities. And we have an experience. And we put a name on it based on our culture and our language. And that is called an effect.

Scot McKay (22:20.536)
So you think a lot of guys are just kind of painting by numbers and they're still in the affect world when the evolution version that makes us smarter with women would be learning how to be more of an artiste? do tell. Let's do this. Yeah.

Doug Noll (22:24.063)
Yeah, yeah.

Doug Noll (22:29.973)
That's exactly right. Developing emotion, develop emotional granularity. The more precise you can be about the emotions you're experiencing, the more precise you can be about the emotions that she's experiencing. And unfortunately, we live in a world where men are told that emotions are bad and evil. So they don't really spend the time to develop emotional granularity. They get into a condition called alexithymia, which is the inability to name your own emotions, which then lead

Scot McKay (22:59.244)
which we've talked about on this show before.

Doug Noll (23:00.927)
which leads to lots of relationship problems. And so the cure for alexithymia is to learn how to label

somebody else's emotions because if I can label somebody else's emotions, it's building my emotional vocabulary and my emotional sensitivity so that I can be emotionally self-aware and emotionally self-regulate myself. So there's a huge benefit to you from affect labeling or validating the emotions of your girlfriend. Huge benefit. And going back to that date.

The advice that I give is don't talk about yourself, listen to what she's feeling and simply reflect back the experiences that she's telling you, reflect back her emotional experiences and watch what happens. And she'll go on all night long. Thrilled, thrilled that somebody's validating. And let me, I want to give one other story too. Oh yeah.

Scot McKay (23:47.576)
She really will. Yeah.

Scot McKay (23:52.44)
Well, before you do, just understand if you do that, you are a rare man in her world. It's like it's like a second date guarantee if you want it.

Doug Noll (23:56.875)
That's right. That's right.

Probably more than that. All right. So I wanted to go back and tell you about ignoring the words. So my wife, who is the most amazing woman in the world, blew out her ACL skiing. I guess it's been four years now and we got her. She skied down the hill on the ski. That's how tough she is. And but but ultimately she had to have ACL surgery, ACL replacement, which is, you it's it's a surgery.

She came home first night after the surgery, she was fine. But the second day, the pain really hit her. And we had her on some pretty powerful painkillers. And she called me in, in a complete drug induced haze and started screaming at me, telling me what an asshole I was and how I never did anything. And I mean, just really lit into me. It was hard. But I also knew that she was, this was all drug induced. And so I just sat there.

On the bed, she's in pain, screaming at me, blaming me for everything, accusing me of everything. And I sat there and I ignored the words, even though they were really hurtful. And I just simply affect labelled her. You're angry, you're frustrated, you're in pain, you're upset. just for That went on for a good 15 minutes until she finally calmed down. And I got up and went out and it took me two months to recover from that. But but.

That's how you do it. And that was amazing to me, was as hurtful as those words were. And I know she didn't really mean them, but still it was really hurtful to hear. I was able to stay there completely calm and composed and not get reactive and not get upset and be present for her in her moment and validate what she was going through. And that was more important to me

Doug Noll (25:57.813)
than the fact that she was hurting me and I was taking a lot of psychic injury because of that. And that's the power of this stuff.

Scot McKay (26:04.002)
Yet You hear a lot about that kind of scenario when women are giving birth, you know, because of the pain. I think the question that has to be asked here is how do you know when someone doesn't mean the insults they're leveling upon you?

Doug Noll (26:11.049)
Right. Very painful.

Doug Noll (26:23.038)
Most of the time.

They don't mean it. And now I'm speaking in my role as a professional high conflict mediator, where I've walked into some really deep, hard conflict, whether I've been teaching in prisons, teaching murderers how to be peacemakers, or I'm working on the outside, I'm working in a high conflict corporate dispute or family business dispute, and people are screaming and yelling at each other. My experience has been that most of the time they don't mean it. They just hurt

and they're lashing out and they want to be heard. And if you take the time to just listen and validate, the hurt goes away, the screaming dies down, and people relax and calm down. And the problems can be solved.

Scot McKay (27:16.28)
Well, the problem is sometimes people really have a hard time believing that contrary to what you just said, that wasn't what was bottled up over all these years. And finally, it was like, here it is. I'm sick of your face.

Doug Noll (27:28.351)
What's really coming up, in my opinion, what's really coming up is a huge reservoir of resentment that's developed over many, years of relationship. And then finally it blows up. I've been, I have been guilty of it myself in my first marriage. And so I've been there, done that. This, all this resentment builds up and now you just, it explodes out and it's really not...

It's really an expression of frustration, sadness, loss, grief, abandonment, rejection, and feeling unloved and unlovable over all these years that's being expressed in a very typically aggressive, insulting way. But it's really, go ahead.

Scot McKay (28:14.19)
Do you think it's more?

Do you think it's more difficult

not only to handle these situations, but in fact, be prepared for them if they come few and far between? If like you said, you know, you and your spouse and Emily and I are similar in this respect, don't have a whole lot of knockdown drag outs around here. This is atypical for us. So when one happens, I would think because of the rarity of such a situation, we'd A, be more shocked by its occurrence

than this is just every day, yeah, yeah, you know. And we would also perhaps not have the field sense to be able to handle it as adeptly as we would if we'd done this several times before. So that's kind of an irony about this, isn't it? The less it happens, the more you have to be on point just to be ready and prepared for it.

Doug Noll (29:02.09)
Well...

Here, here, that's right. But here's the thing. The more you affect label, the better you get at it. And the better you get, even in the good times, the better you get at it until it becomes an unconscious automatic response. And you don't even have to think about it. And people can come into you and just get right in your face and shout vile insults at you. And you're going to drop right in to your place. And you're to start affect labeling and stay calm. And it just happens automatically.

Scot McKay (29:13.204)
Even in the good times when nobody's arguing

Doug Noll (29:34.559)
You don't even think about it.

Scot McKay (29:35.714)
Well, you bring up a good point here. I mean, we're focusing on our relationships with women because that's how we roll around here. That's how we get down. But really the practice of what you're talking about translates to every other relationship, even micro relationships with people at the grocery store across, across, across all aspects of our life. Yeah.

Doug Noll (29:46.698)
That's right.

Doug Noll (29:50.465)
That's right. And that's a great place to practice, by the way.

That's right. You learn that this becomes one of the foundational skills of life that allows you to transform any relationship instantly because people, all have a deep seated need to be heard and nobody knows how to listen. So that need never gets fulfilled until somebody walks along and it's learned how to affect label and now can do that deep validation. And it's like, wow, thank you for listening to me. The gratitude is effusive.

It's phenomenal how it works.

Scot McKay (30:28.396)
Well, even sometimes, you know, you'll listen to podcasts like this one, and I'm sure I'm guilty of it myself. We're so interested in being heard ourselves that we forget that other people have the same need we do. And I think that could be why this is a very rare skill. Because when someone comes at us with whatever negative or strong emotion they're bringing to the table, I think the first, perhaps

Doug Noll (30:41.569)
That's right.

Scot McKay (30:57.13)
admittedly untrained human response would be defense. Like, hey, wait a minute, buddy, who do you think you're yelling at? You do this too, you know, I know you are, but what am I kind of thing, right? Right.

Doug Noll (31:00.683)
That's right. immediately, we go into a threat. That's right. We go into immediate threat response because our brains cannot distinguish between a social threat and a physical threat. So we immediately go into defense unless we've been trained what I teach people in, which is how to affect label. And then we go into that response, which changes the dynamic completely. So let me just, so people can get a sense of this.

Let me give you some statements that you guys, everybody who's listening, you can use this right away. So let's imagine you've got a girlfriend or a spouse who is really pissed off, at you or just pissed off at something. First thing you're gonna say, you're really pissed off and you feel like I really don't get it and I don't understand you. Get those words memorized. Another thing you can say is you feel really hurt.

and you don't feel like I'm really on your side right now.

That's the second thing you can say. If she goes quiet or withdraws, you're shut down, you're disappointed, and you're wondering if I actually care for you.

And if you screw up, you really screwed up, then you say you're feeling betrayed and you're really scared that this might happen again.

Scot McKay (32:24.918)

It takes a lot of wisdom and restraint and maturity to pull this off. I mean, it's so much easier to talk about it when the emotions aren't there than when it's happening.

Doug Noll (32:29.949)

It takes courage. More than anything, takes courage.

Scot McKay (32:37.258)

It does. The weak guy is the one who reacts and tries to, I guess, overpower, especially his woman and keep her under his thumb. That's where it turns abusive.

Doug Noll (32:37.95)

It takes courage.

Doug Noll (32:45.387)

The strong, that's exactly right, the strong, emotionally intelligent man will use these kinds of statements, recognizing that it's not about me.

And if it is about me and I screw it up, then all the more reason I've got to listen her into existence and then figure out how to make things as right as possible.

Scot McKay (33:01.142)

What?

Scot McKay (33:11.65)

Well, at what point, if any, do the words matter? And here's why I'm asking this question.

Doug Noll (33:16.001)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (33:18.882)

You just mentioned memorizing these phrases. So, okay, we're going to ignore the words she's saying and read her emotions like a cheap paperback. Okay, great. That's a cool skill. We're obviously going to keep our emotions in check and at an appropriate level. And I think you've, you've implied that successfully, but in the example you just gave of I've done someone wrong and they feel betrayed at some point, we're going to need to apologize and own it, aren't we?

Doug Noll (33:46.145)

Correct, well, that's an interesting question. What we're doing here is we're flipping the script. So what happens to a lot of guys is they've got an upset girlfriend or an upset woman and they immediately get anxious about her upset and to soothe their own anxiety, they jump in and try to problem solve. Look, if you would just do it this way, then, you know, and that blows it up. Why? Because the woman doesn't feel heard or listened to. She's feeling invalidated.

All you're trying to do is soothe your own anxiety over her upset. And you're telling her if you would do this differently, you wouldn't be in this emotional condition and I wouldn't feel upset. It's a very selfish

kind of thing. All right, so what we're doing is we're flipping the script. If I say, wow, you're really pissed off, you're frustrated and angry, and you feel like you've been completely disrespected and you feel like you've been betrayed and abandoned.

Scot McKay (34:24.814)

Well, that's not a "yes, and..." either. Yeah.

Doug Noll (34:43.201)

She says, yes, and typically the tourist will start. You wait until she's calm and then you say, all right, what do we need to do to make things right?

And that's all you do, you just ask a question. What do we need to do to fix this? What do we need to make things right? How do we solve this problem? Don't offer an, never ever, ever offer an unsolicited apology. And even then, apologies are very tricky and most people do not understand how to do apologies. So they screw it up. That's a whole lesson unto itself is how to apologize. And...

Scot McKay (35:18.158)

Well, let's hear it. got time because you are the first person in the history of this show to say never, ever offer an unsolicited apology.

Doug Noll (35:24.809)

Oh yeah, it's horrible. So a true a true apology is 100 percent vulnerability. It's like. I'll give you the metaphor, the metaphor, and then you'll I think you'll get it. So two alpha wolves are fighting for dominance. The one wolf loses, it immediately rolls onto its back and bears its neck. And the alpha wolf that wins goes in and just plucks at the neck, doesn't even break the skin.

Scot McKay (35:27.363)

Well...

Doug Noll (35:55.401)

What the loser did was show complete vulnerability and say, I am completely vulnerable. You can take my life if you want. My life is in your hands. And the wolf, the alpha wolf, of course, will not do that. It shows respect and says, yes, I accept your submission and I'm the boss. That's an apology. You have to roll over and bare your neck and say, my life is in your hands. Whatever you need to do or want to do, you can do it. I have no defense.

Scot McKay (36:23.342)

Well, it's kind of like what you're saying is, again, it's not about the words, it's about the actions. So this is kind of continuing that philosophy forward.

Doug Noll (36:27.211)

Right.

Doug Noll (36:31.669)

because You can say, I'm sorry and not mean it.

Scot McKay (36:36.908)

Yeah, okay. I think that's pretty profound actually. you know?

Doug Noll (36:40.039)

And what you have to do is if you say, am sorry, you have to say it and demonstrate it and behave in a way that makes you completely vulnerable and open and defenseless.

Scot McKay (36:49.878)

Okay, so let me land the plane here for the guys who are used to hearing how we talk about this around here.

I think it's, it's enlightening to hear you say, okay, I'm a man who believes the emotions matter more than the words. And I have a through line throughout all my teaching that shows I'm consistent in that. And I really appreciate that. think that's pretty badass. Yes. A lot of people go look, I'm sorry. Okay. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. In other words, it's just shut up, shut up, go away is what they're really saying. I'm done. And that's, that's a weaponization.

Doug Noll (37:17.867)

That's right.

Doug Noll (37:22.977)

That's right. That is another problem.

Scot McKay (37:24.29)

You know, and, and I would say some, a similar situation And I would say a similar situation is, you know what? You're right. I'm wrong. We're done. Boy, is that an easy way to make someone shut up, but it doesn't do anything about the emotions. doesn't quell the resentment at all. So my thought, you know, that, I was thinking the direction you were going to go in is it's about that part about making it right.

Doug Noll (37:32.897)

Exactly.

Doug Noll (37:39.403)

That's correct. It only makes it worse.

Scot McKay (37:52.746)

As much as just saying, you know, Hey, here's my feeling, believe it or not. In other words, you're going to put action behind those words. I mean, what can we do to make this right? A woman will, a woman may say to the man in her life, well, you're the man figure it out, which would frustrate the heck out of us, but at least, you know, we put that ball in her court if she...

Doug Noll (38:12.481)

You affect labeled that.

Scot McKay (38:14.252)

Right. If you, if you, if you get it, volleyed back into your court, well then I suppose you have to do something.

Doug Noll (38:17.345)

So you're confused. So no, I'll say so. So So you're really confused and unsure about how we can make things right. And you want me to think about it and offer suggestions to you that you can either accept or reject.

Scot McKay (38:30.456)

Okay, yeah, that's what you'd have to do at that point.

Doug Noll (38:30.901)

That's how you respond to that.

And then you say, I don't know what if we did this?

What if I apologize?

Scot McKay (38:42.136)

What if I resolve not to do this anymore and I'm gonna change this habit?

Doug Noll (38:44.097)

What if I really work hard on changing myself so that this never happens again? And if it does, it won't be as bad.

Scot McKay (38:54.764)

Alright, so what if she asks a question just to play devil's advocate here? What if she's really upset because she wants to buy five pairs of Bruno Magli shoes and you don't have the money for it? You can affect label the hell out of that, but how do you make it right?

Doug Noll (39:06.591)

I'll say, you're you're You're really frustrated that we don't have the money for you to go out and buy the shoes that you really, really, really want to buy. And you're frustrated because I'm saying, no, we can't do that. We can't afford that. And it's really upsetting to you because you feel rejected. And you feel unloved and you feel a little abandoned. She'll say, yes. So then I might say, so how important is it for you

to in five years have a house that we own, that we can raise a family in?

Scot McKay (39:41.442)

That sounds a little passive aggressive.

Doug Noll (39:43.475)

No, it's not. I'm changing the frame. Do you want to buy the Bruno Magli shoes now and spend \$10,000 on the credit card that will pay two years, paying it off? Or do you want to be a little more frugal and buy a house together and raise a family?

Scot McKay (40:00.396)

And she says, I want the shoes.

Doug Noll (40:02.1)

Then you say then that means no house.

Scot McKay (40:05.314)

Well, that's practical.

Doug Noll (40:06.529)

If that's your choice, I'm not going to get in the way of your choice, but just recognize the practical ramification is that that means we won't have a house.

Scot McKay (40:15.854)

Well, what if that's demonstrably foolish in the long term? Where does masculine leadership come in?

Doug Noll (40:19.189)

Then, well, can, I mean, Well, then the question then becomes, are you in the right relationship?

Scot McKay (40:25.627)

Wow, really?

Doug Noll (40:27.143)

Absolutely. If your values are so different from the girl's values, the woman's values, that you can't agree on basic stuff like priority over finances, then you're probably in the wrong relationship.

Scot McKay (40:38.627)

Yeah.

Scot McKay (40:42.348)

I'm not disagreeing. I'm just saying, man, that's going to be tough love for a lot of these guys.

Doug Noll (40:45.947)

Well, it is. mean, and the problem is that that she has she doesn't have financial discipline. Expects somebody to be a sugar daddy. And you're a young guy in your 20s trying to make your way professionally or in your business or working or whatever you're doing. And you know that it's going to take fiscal discipline to get ahead in the world. And spending money frivolously just is not the way to get there.

Scot McKay (41:10.69)

I would think these are conversations you have to have when you're dating. Yeah.

Doug Noll (41:13.345)

That's right. Down the road, as you get more more serious, you have these conversations. This should not be a surprise conversation. This should not happen and be a surprise. If it is, then you haven't done your due diligence. You're dating due diligence.

Scot McKay (41:21.058)

That's exactly right.

Scot McKay (41:30.41)

Exactly. Well, think this has been a fantastic conversation and an essential one for these guys. And so many original concepts have been brought up and some shocking ones. And I really appreciate your candor in talking about them because, man, this really is a shock to a lot of guys' system and something we really need to think about differently. You know, one thing I do want to address is, you you were talking about Alexithymia and a lot of guys are

Doug Noll (41:54.217)

Lexothenum.

Scot McKay (41:57.551)

have been led to believe, you know, including by guests on the show that that's kind of Asperger's adjacent. You know, you got a problem if you're that guy and you're bringing this idea that it could have been just socialized and that it's curable. Yeah. We've been taught it's been okay. In fact, it might even be good for us.

Doug Noll (42:09.153)

It's totally socialized. There's nothing organic about this. We've been taught You're three years old, you're a little guy, you're out running around in the yard and you fall down, you skin your knee and you start to cry. What are you told?

Scot McKay (42:23.662)

Stop crying.

Doug Noll (42:24.353)

Stop crying, rub dirt in it, it doesn't hurt. Be a man, be a big boy, pull up your pants.

Scot McKay (42:28.3)

Right. And then before you know it, you don't understand your own emotions anymore or why they're there. You just push them down. Wow. Isn't that something? Yeah. The name of your book, De-Escalate: How To Calm An Angry Person In 90 Seconds Or Less is really good stuff. And I'm going to put it back at the top of the Amazon influencer queue at [mountaintoppodcast.com /amazon](https://mountaintoppodcast.com/amazon) for these guys.

Doug Noll (42:30.965)

That's right. And now all of a sudden you're Alexa Thima.

Scot McKay (42:51.256)

But I want you to also tell us before we go about your group on Skool. And if you guys aren't familiar with Skool S-K-O-O-L dot com.

Doug Noll (42:58.913)

So you've got a Facebook group and there are other community groups. There are two or three or four platforms that allow for communities to come together. I don't like Facebook. just don't like Meta. I don't like Facebook. I don't like Zuckerberg. I don't like anything to do with it. I mean, I'm on it like everybody else you have to be. But if I have a choice, I go somewhere else. So Skool just happens to be a pretty good platform for a community. And I decided about four months ago to build a Skool community for people who want to learn about everything I've talked about today

Scot McKay (43:01.283)

Yeah.

Scot McKay (43:13.326)

Okay.

Doug Noll (43:28.929)

plus more and be in a group that's very supportive. There are people I've trained in there and people bring their problems in. We have a coffee hour every Saturday morning, eight o'clock. I get on Zoom and people can come in and ask me questions and we talk. And it's free to join, costs nothing to join. And you get out of it what you put into it. So you come in and you post and you reply and you get active and you get access to a lot of resources. And I just do this service, my life right now.

Frankly, I'm in a place where I'm pretty financially secure. I'm 75 years old. I still work. I still do stuff, but I get to do it because I get to serve people. And this whole Skool community is one way that I can serve a whole bunch of people where people don't have a lot of money. They can't pay me the big bucks I charge for coaching, but they can come in and I can still work with them. They can still learn and they can improve their lives and their relationships. So.

Scot McKay (44:23.182)

Well, I think that sounds great. I, I've been impressed by everything I've seen from skool.com. I think it's... Yeah. It's a good platform that's that fills a necessary gap. I think, you know, you can compare it to a Facebook group, but just by virtue of its nomenclature, Skool implies, you know, this is where you come to learn something. Yeah.

Doug Noll (44:28.737)

It's a good platform. I like it.

Doug Noll (44:37.313)

Let's go one more.

Doug Noll (44:42.015)

learning, it's a learning community. And it's got a lot of really cool, if you're a Skool owner, like I am, I own my group, it's got a lot of features that are really useful. So anyways, for people who are interested, it's skool.com S-K-O-O-L.com /de-escalate D-E hyphen escalate. That's it, put it in, put in your email address, free to join and you're good to go.

Scot McKay (44:50.882)

Fantastic.

Scot McKay (45:01.878)

Just for good measure because it's how we've always done things around here and I'm stubborn, mountaintoppodcast.com /dougroll, your full name D O U G N O L L is also going to point to that very same Skool link because that's what we always do and a lot of these guys they they know that the URL is mountaintoppodcast.com they just add your name to it and boom they're there or skool.com/de-escalate, either way. Good stuff, man.

Doug Noll (45:25.249)

Good to go. All right.

Scot McKay (45:31.276)

I really appreciate you and I appreciate this conversation. Every time you come on, it's not only rock solid information coming from a very smart perspective, but it also is life-changing. So thanks once again for coming on Doug. Hope to have you back again when your next big thing comes along.

Doug Noll (45:43.137)

You're welcome.

Okay, Scot, you know, it's always a pleasure talking to you. And, know, you're one of the few podcast hosts where I get to be really blunt because I'm dealing with our audience needs to hear blunt stuff. And so it's really fun. So thank you.

Scot McKay (45:58.125)

Nah, the whole piss on your leg and tell you it's raining thing is terrible. I appreciate you're from California and you're not like that. That I can appreciate. Yeah. And it's a beautiful place just south of Yosemite, which is God's country, for sure. Well, thanks once again. And gentlemen, if you haven't been to mountaintoppodcast.com lately,

Doug Noll (46:01.025)

I know.

No, I live in the real California, not in the fake California over on the coast.

Yeah, I live in a beautiful place.

Scot McKay (46:22.414)

As you've noticed, we're talking about better men getting better women. Someone kind of snarkily said to me, yeah, and better ingredients make better pizza. Exactly. I mean, I have no problem with that. If it works for Papa John, it works for us too. You know, they do pizza. We do getting better with women. So if the shoe fits, if the Bruno Magli shoe fits, we'll pay that \$5,000 for it. Little comedic recall there. No, we're...

Doug Noll (46:44.449)
Absolutely.

Scot McKay (46:49.496)

We're grateful for you guys. And listen, we want to be crystal clear about what this is all about. Today's episode was all about getting better with women by being the better man, clearly. And there are so many nuances to that. There's so many ways to affect that. And going forward, we're going to have guests on who are laser targeted towards that in new and exciting ways. The dimensions we can get better with women in are practically infinite.

So I appreciate you guys and definitely go over to mountaintoppodcast.com. When you're there, check out Jocko Willink's company, Origin in Maine, also the guys at The Keyport and the guys at Hero Soap. And when you partake of anything from any of our illustrious long time sponsors, use the coupon code "mountain10" to get an extra 10 % off and it'll appear right before your very eyes at checkout. And also fun and exciting stuff coming

Uh, all the time. One of the latest features we have for you is called VAMANOS, which is AI that is walled off from the rest of the internet only contains X & Y Communications research and mindsets and answers. And when you ask it a question, it'll answer it the way I would. And, um, guys are loving that 0 % refund rate and almost every guy renews it. You know, it's 14.95 a month. You can catch that at mounttoppodcast.com as well.

And until I talk to you again next time on better men get better women, The Mountain Top Podcast, this is Scot McKay from X & Y Communications in San Antonio, Texas. Be good out there.