

The Journey Beyond “Paper Love”

A new framework for understanding ourselves in relationships.

Part I:
The Blueprint
We're Given

Paper love
This should so work.
From what can be seen,
this was meant to be.
Profound compatibility,
says the god of algorithms.
If only life was lived on paper.
This should have been love ever after.

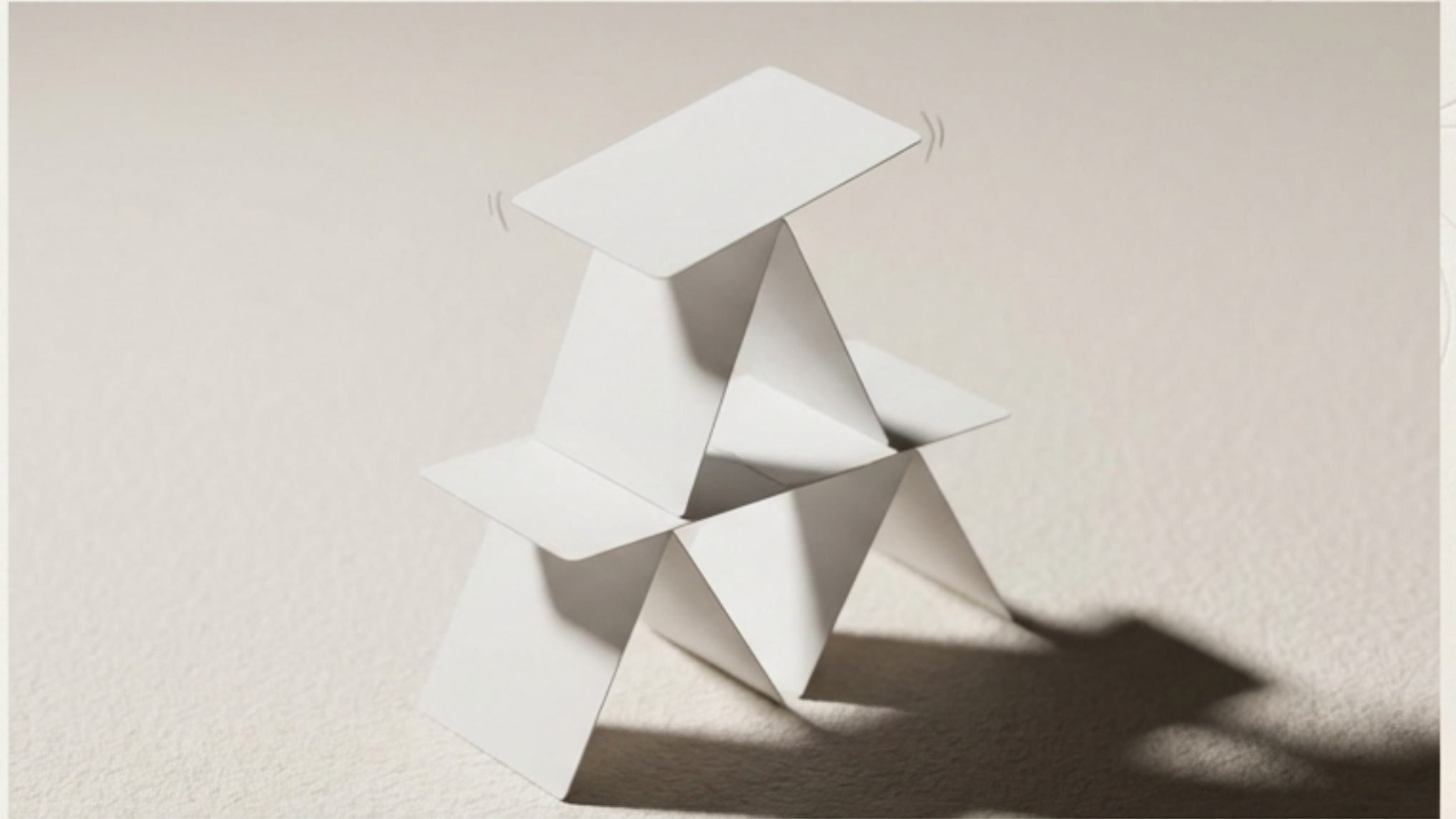
Key Insight: We are taught to approach love as a logical puzzle, a theory to be solved on paper. But this blueprint is missing a critical component: the human element.

The Flaw in the Fairy Tale

The Algorithm Illusion: Believing Believing compatibility can be calculated and guaranteed.

The Soulmate Trap: The idea that there is only “the one” can lead to closing ourselves off to possibility. As one participant noted, it makes you feel “deficient if you don’t get that.”

The Checklist Mentality: Approaching relationships with a list of criteria to be met, rather than an experience to be lived.



Love is not a theory. It's not the same as love experienced. Love is to be lived.

Chasing the Unrepeatable High

Case Story

A participant shared an early, powerful experience of love—a “utopia” where his “heart literally stopped.” He later learned a crucial lesson about the danger of idealizing that feeling.



The Takeaway

When we fixate on recreating a past high, we stop experiencing the relationship as it is now. We set an expectation that reality can rarely meet.

The Insightful Parallel

“I understand what happens when someone takes drugs for the first time... they spend their entire life trying to get back to that place.”

Part II: The Reality on the Ground

Perfect Partner

I am marrying a perfect partner
who matches my list with every single tick.
I'm so lucky like this
that such a being will exist
after they've seen my exorcist.
Out with the now, in with the new,
now for a life of wedded bliss.

Financial Stability



Shared Values



Physical Attraction



Intelligence



Ambition



Kindness



Sense of Humor



Adventurous Spirit



“Normal Marital Hatred” and Other Unspoken Truths

Relationships are not defined by the absence of conflict, but by how we navigate it. Our culture often creates a dynamic where “the new shame is staying with someone that you’re not in love with,” encouraging us to flee at the first sign of trouble.



We often present a curated version of ourselves in the beginning—a **“mask.”** The real relationship begins when we see each other’s “exorcist” side, the parts that emerge under the stress of sleep deprivation, hormones, and daily life.

Case Story: Loving Beyond the Blind Spot

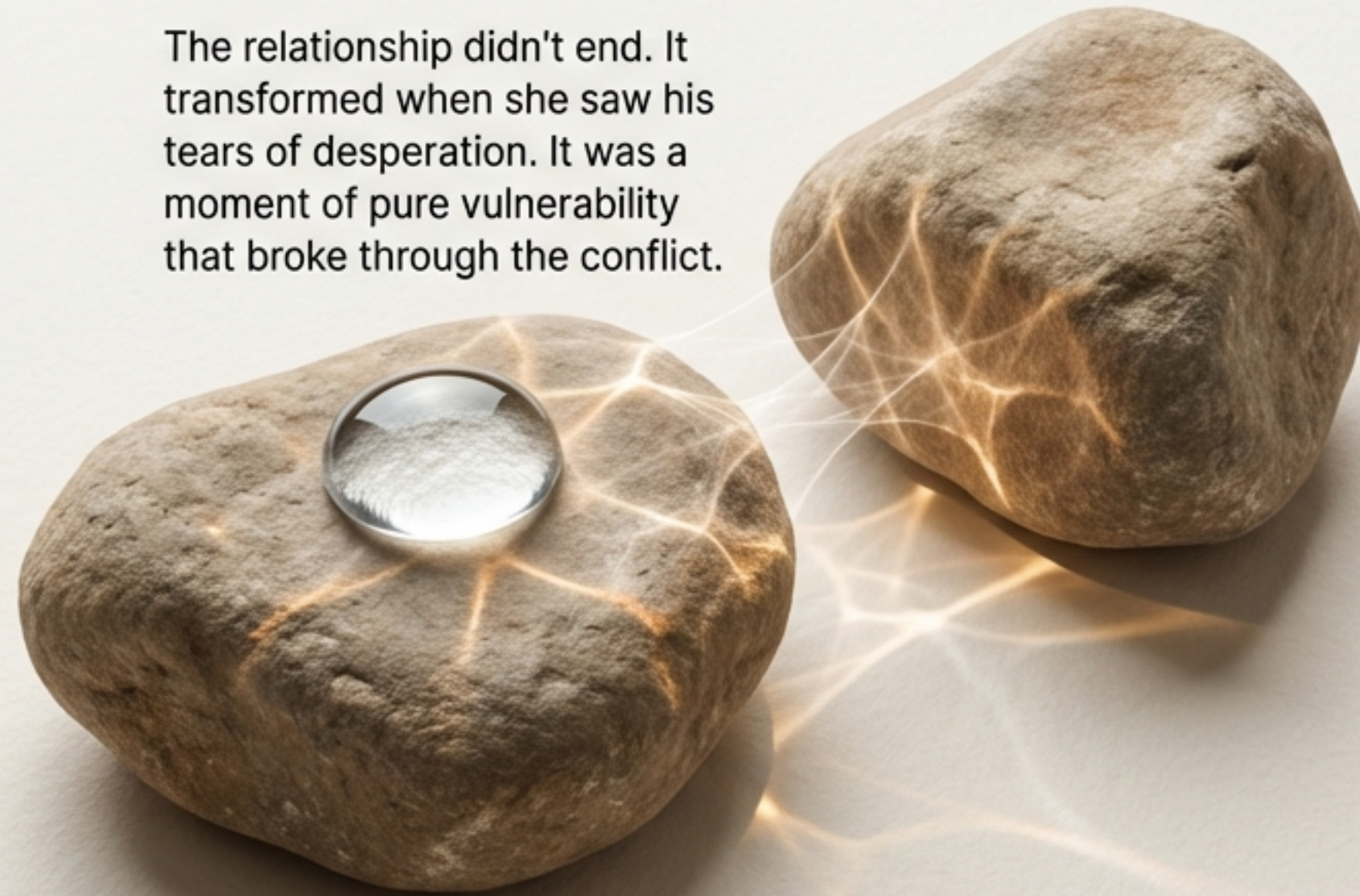
The Story

A woman shared her early marriage experience. Her husband husband fell for the ideal: "I always smile, I always care."

The reality was fraught with conflict, even escalating to physical confrontation ("biting somebody's finger").

The Turning Point

The relationship didn't end. It transformed when she saw his tears of desperation. It was a moment of pure vulnerability that broke through the conflict.



The Lesson

"He didn't see the wrong side of me at all. So love is blind... but everything came together, you know, we change."

True connection was forged not from the initial ideal, but from working through the difficult reality.

Part III: The Turn Inward



Mirror me.
Me, a name I call myself.
Here's the place I start the work
to know the who I am.
The same path I take to know you.
Like in a mirror.
Knowing me is knowing you.
Feeling me is feeling you.

The Gift Hidden in the Conflict is Self-Awareness

The Core Metaphor

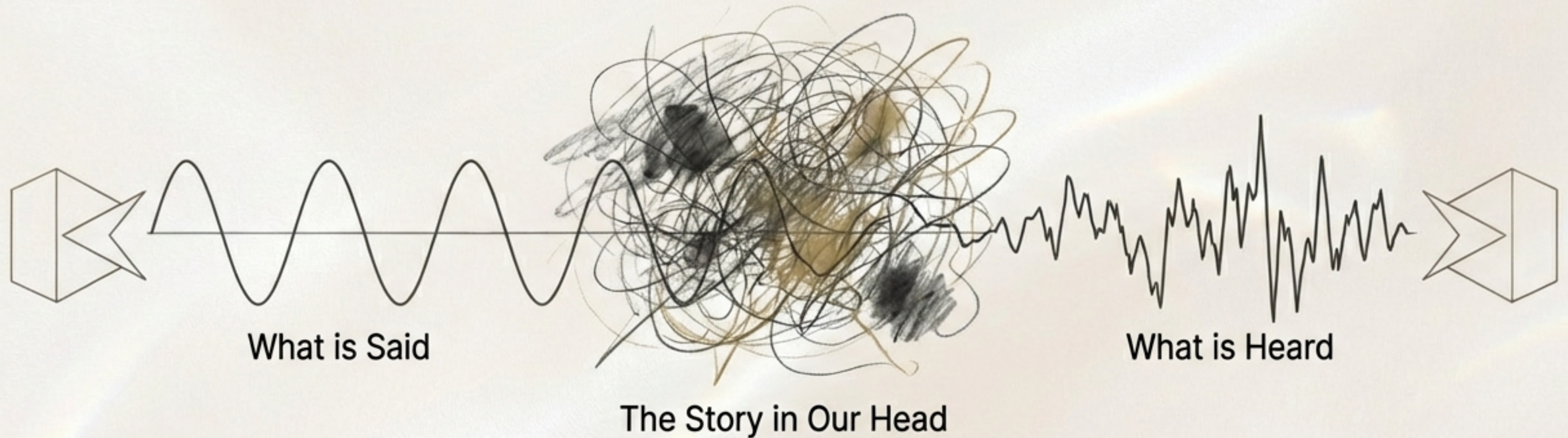
“Nobody can press a button that doesn’t exist. The person is pressing your button because you *have* that button. The gift of that person is to show you, **‘Hey, here’s the button.’**”

Real-World Example

A participant reflected on her marriage: “What started as me liking someone that was kind of dependable and detail oriented became stifling and critical... He didn’t really change that much. The way I *saw* it changed.”



The Massive Distinction Between What is Said and What is Heard



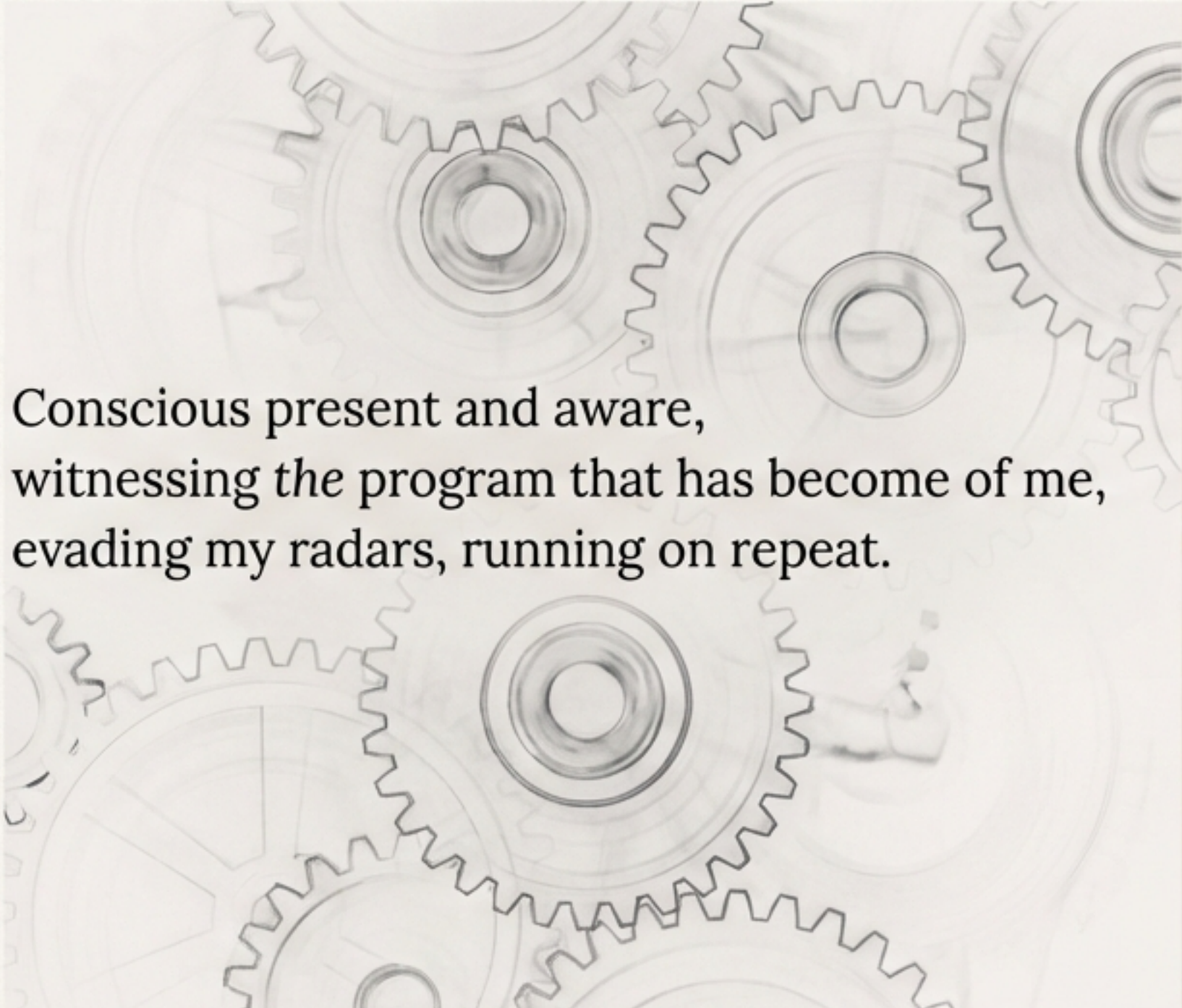
Key Insight

Communication breaks down not because of the words used, but because we use our own framework to interpret them. We are often reacting to **the story in our head**, not the reality in front of us.

Case Story

A woman recalled punishing herself for weeks over something a friend did, rehearsing angry confrontations in her mind. When she finally spoke to her friend, the response was simple: "Huh? I didn't realize it. Oh, I'm sorry." Her entire painful experience was generated by her own mind.

Part IV: The Practice of Awareness



Conscious present and aware,
witnessing *the* program that has become of me,
evading my radars, running on repeat.



Conditioning:

Living historically, thanks to my conditioning.
Showing up hysterically,
till I see through mystically what serves me.
Intentionally disrupting long-held programming.
Life experienced currently.

The Battle Between the Conscious and the Unconscious Mind

The Core Idea

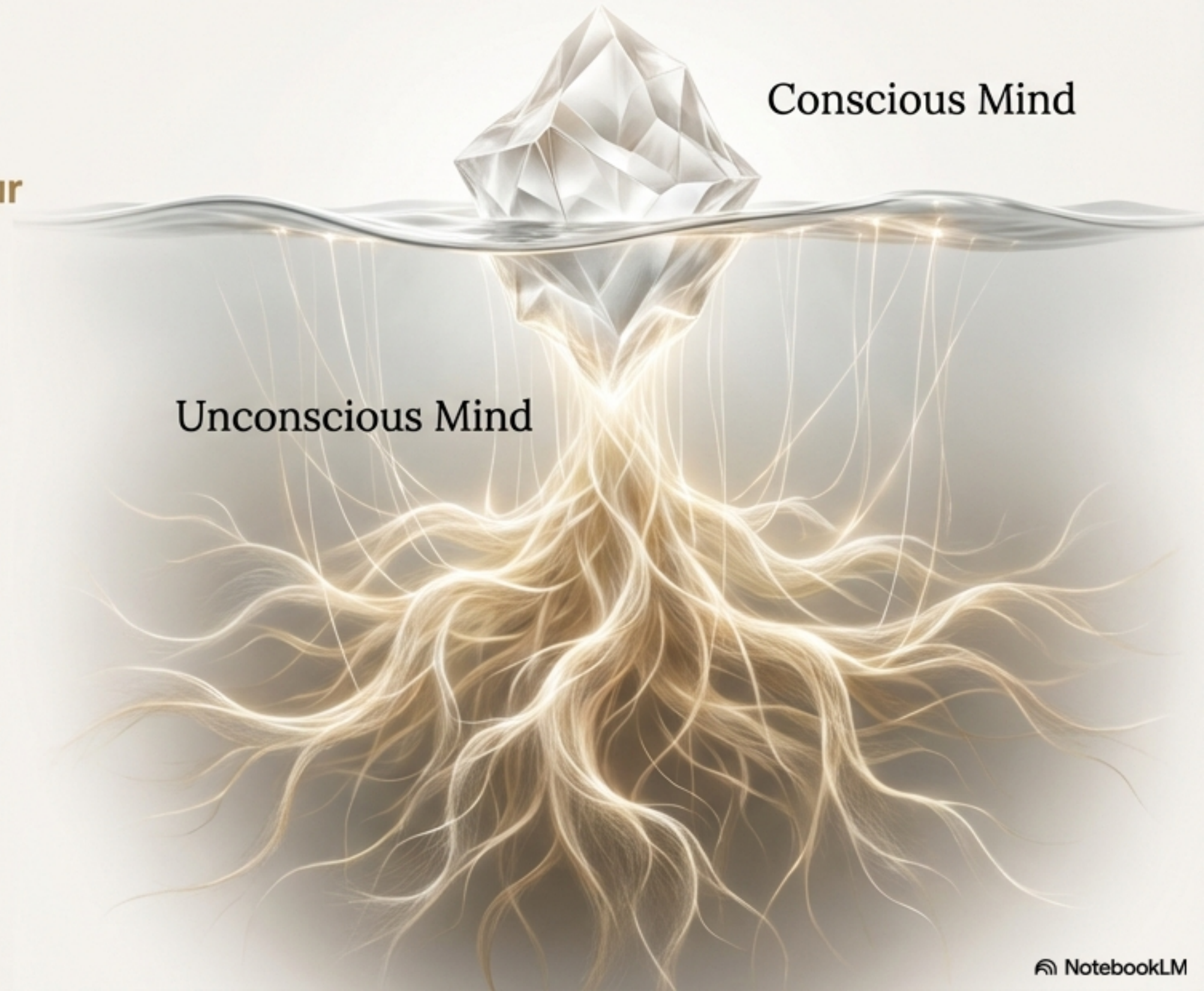
We often operate on a surface level, unaware that **'it's the unconscious things going on in our unconscious mind that's pulling the strings.'**

Where The Program Comes From

This conditioning is built from our environment, our upbringing, and generational "norms that grandma and grandpa spoke about" which may no longer serve us.

The Crucial Question

We're taught about math, English, and science. But who really and truly has ever sat down with us and taught us about relationships?



The Choice: Living Historically vs. Living Currently

Case Story 1: The Past Dictating the Future



A man ended a wonderful relationship out of fear. His friend had been hurt in a similar situation, and this story became his program. **"I just wasn't going to get my heart broken."** He acted on a potential future based on someone else's past.

Case Story 2: Choosing the Present



A woman found herself stuck, **"living in the past"** after a relationship ended, closing the door to new possibilities. She consciously chose to learn mindfulness, retraining herself **"how to be present"** in every small moment, which allowed her to move forward.

Love is Not a Conclusion, But a Current Experience

The Final Synthesis

The challenge is to hold love as multi-dimensional, just as we are. To move beyond the fixed stories of the mind and embrace the many possibilities that exist in each moment.

Key Takeaways from the Group

Let the past be the past and embrace that which is new.

Love can be expressed in a multitude of ways.

Don't bottle anything in your heart... happiness is the thing.