

SEMINAR #84: Construct a Hypothesis

{SEMINAR Main Theme}

Story begins 00:43

SEMINAR WRAPPER #1 by Kathryn Pryde

[Alien door chime rings, twice]

ALEX: (sighs) Thomas, I do not want to talk right now.

ALICE: (through door) It's not Thomas.

ALEX: (quickly) Zerash, let her in.

[Door opens]

[Footsteps walking into room]

ALEX: I was hoping to see you. That you would come to me. I'm sure you realize I'm only trying to make sure we're all hap-

ALICE: (cuts him off) I wanted to talk to you about our last conversation - about the last few days, really. I think there's something going on...um...with us...with, uh, you...and I feel like I am somehow a catalyst for it? And I really want to help before it reaches a tipping point, because I don't really know what that'll look like.

ALEX: You walked into my room to immediately tell me you think there's something wrong?

ALICE: I-I didn't say wrong-

ALEX: But that's what you meant. Don't be a pedant, it doesn't suit you. Especially when you spend all your time telling me and Thomas to think critically, to assess the world around us like a human. You think there's something wrong with me.

ALICE: This isn't an appropriate response! None of the responses you give when I enter a room are in proportion to *anything*. I think it might be a little unhealthy, but really, I-I just want to understand -

ALEX: You know what? No, I take that back. You are *absolutely* suited to being pedantic. You talk out of both sides of your mouth as easily as Zerash opens doors.

ALICE: I have no idea what I did to upset you, and every attempt I make to talk through it with you stops because you jump down my throat. This can't feel good for you, either. You don't like being this angry, do you?

ALEX: (shouting) I'm not *angry!*

ALICE: Right. Sure you're not.

ALEX: (frustrated) You don't understand...

ALICE: I want to. That's all I want. I want to understand what's going on. And even if it doesn't make perfect sense, I want to try. Forget about the anger itself, try to put it aside and just...just talk to me.

ALEX: I don't know how...My- my head gets so...clouded. I can't think.

ALICE: It doesn't have to make sense. It just is. (Sighs) Here, maybe this'll help. Zerash, please retrieve the file "False Vacuum."

{SEMINAR Segue Music 3:16}

False Vacuum by James Rossi begins 3:18

[Bass music, party sounds]

[Insects chirping]

[Breeze rustling tree leaves]

PROFESSOR: (talking on phone) Mom? Mom. Mom! Listen to me. It'll be fine. Mr. Pups will get raptured, okay? Y-you really think God would just leave all the puppies? It'll be fine, Mom, no, Mom, Mom-

[Grass rustling]

VISITOR: (talking on phone, separate conversation) Don't wait for me, not sure what my plan is.

PROFESSOR: No, Mom, No, you don't need to hold Mr. Pups really tight, he won-he won't get forgotten.

VISITOR: Did you know this hill is a lot steeper than it looks?

PROFESSOR: Yes Mom, I'm in church right now, just making double sure I'm forgiven, I'll be fine.

VISITOR: You never came up here? You've lived at the base of this for like 5 years! Come join me!

PROFESSOR: Alright, I love you too, Mom. I already talked to Sara, she'll be happy to hear from you.

VISITOR: You are a stick in the mud as always! (laughs)

PROFESSOR: Talk to you later.

[Professor's phone beeps]

PROFESSOR: (frustrated) Of course, I did that.

[Professor dials phone]

VISITOR: Tomorrow, I am dragging your butt up here. It's a hell of a view!

PROFESSOR: Hey, Bill.

VISITOR: Stop being so negative. Nothing's for certain. Well, 'til it is, I guess. But still.

PROFESSOR: Yeah, saved you for last. Figured you'd want to gloat. (Laughs) Was hoping it'd have happened by now, to be honest.

VISITOR: Alright, if we're still here, maybe we can go grab some food, the rest of the gang, and do a picnic up here.

PROFESSOR: Thanks, I respected your work too. Just wish the universe had respected mine a little more.

VISITOR: Sounds perfect. Make sure you talk to Marie by the way; she said some sweet things about you before I left.

False Vacuum by James Rossi

PROFESSOR: I know, go be with your family. Thanks for picking up-

[Beeping as both phones disconnect]

VISITOR: Well, that's it. Cell service is overloaded. They did a good job shoring up the grid for the end.

PROFESSOR: Yeah.

VISITOR: So you really believe in this being the Rapture?

PROFESSOR: What?

VISITOR: When you were talking, I heard you mention it.

PROFESSOR: Oh. No. I-I don't. My mom does, the idea is letting her calm down. Or at least worry about something other than the stars going out.

VISITOR: Ah. So, you get to say goodbye to everyone?

PROFESSOR: Yeah.

[Awkward pause]

VISITOR: Not too talkative?

PROFESSOR: Look, I came here to- doesn't matter. I just want to be scared alone, okay? This isn't easy for me.

VISITOR: For you? It's the end of the world! Not easy on anyone!

PROFESSOR: It's worse than that.

VISITOR: How could it be worse?

PROFESSOR: It's the end of everything. We live i-in a false vacuum and reality is popping.

VISITOR: Oh yeah, I heard that on TV. I didn't understand it very well, though.

PROFESSOR: That's because all the useful people were trying to find a way out of this. We gave up.

VISITOR: Ah.

[Visitor rummages through bag]

VISITOR: Want any popcorn?

PROFESSOR: Are you serious?

VISITOR: Come on, what better way to ring in the end! The biggest show of all!

PROFESSOR: Is that what this is to you?

VISITOR: What else can it be! Man, lighten up a little. I'm not dumb, I know death is barreling down at us at the speed of light from the depths of space, but I'm not going to go out frowning, or hungry.

PROFESSOR: It's 99.9 percent the speed of light. Well, it's an even smaller gap than that, but we literally don't have the time for me to count the nines.

VISITOR: Alright. Explain it.

PROFESSOR: What?

VISITOR: You can't just hint at understanding, then hide behind being mopey. Besides, you look like it'd do you good to talk a bit. So let's do this. I got my popcorn. I'm happy.

[Visitor rummages in popcorn bag]

[Visitor eats popcorn]

PROFESSOR: (sighs) Alright, thanks. I really appreciate it to be honest. I'm scared out of my mind right now. (Breathes deep) So, the universe is this mesh that vibrates. The energy level it vibrates at determines the particles in that space, but even a vacuum has a vibration. You follow?

VISITOR: So, empty space still has energy?

[Visitor rummages in popcorn bag]

PROFESSOR: Bingo. That base energy level is the problem. See, less energetic states are more stable. So, even though our

vacuum has almost no energy, there is less energetic possibility.

VISITOR: Ok, but how does that put out the stars?

PROFESSOR: Somewhere out there, this lower vacuum state popped up. It then converts the fabric of the universe next to it to the new, lower energy level, but our physics can't exist within the new vacuum. As the conversion expands, the stars inside it simply cease to exist. Due to some quirks and comparative speeds, it means we are observing the death of the universe in fast forward.

VISITOR: Ah. Well, that sucks.

PROFESSOR: Really, that's it?

VISITOR: Well, what else is there to say? When reality's undone that's sort of the end of the story. We could try and leave a message to someone else, but how? Write on a rock that'll be wiped out to a nonexistent future? That is if you're right at least.

PROFESSOR: If?

VISITOR: Always a chance I suppose. I'm not pinning my hopes on anything, but can't hurt to prepare just in case. I work at the power company, we have a few folks who volunteered to spend time shutting everything off, just before. Seemed irresponsible, to leave everything running just in case something exists after.

PROFESSOR: Waste of time.

VISITOR: Better to die working for a hope and a prayer than going out alone and scared on a hill.

PROFESSOR: I already said you don't have to be here.

VISITOR: I came up here for you, well, the experience of it. I looked out the window saw you climbing the hill and thought I'd join you. My friends are throwing that party down the hill.

PROFESSOR: Oh. (Pause) Shouldn't you go back?

VISITOR: Naw. It's really nice up here.

[Visitor rummages in popcorn bag]

False Vacuum by James Rossi

[Bass music and cheers from the party in the distance]

PROFESSOR: Just go back to your friends. I'm not sure what you are looking for but it's not up here.

[Visitor rummages in popcorn bag again]

VISITOR: When I was eight, my parents were killed in a car crash.

PROFESSOR: What does-?

VISITOR: It's my turn to talk, so keep quiet. I was in the car at the time. The only thing I remember from that crash was seeing a pair of headlights. Then it all went black. I woke up in a hospital and my aunt was in a chair next to me. I looked at her and asked if she'd died too. My whole life, I've never shaken that feeling. That I didn't make it out of that crash. So, I'm not saying I lived my life to its fullest, but I tried to at least make it interesting.

PROFESSOR: I'm...I'm really sorry.

[Breeze in the trees]

VISITOR: It's life, and that's the point. Every moment could be the one right before the end, and freaking out about it, regretting the unavoidable, fearing the unknown, is unhelpful because at any time, you might look up to a pair of headlights and then that's that.

PROFESSOR: (Pauses) Would...you mind holding my hand?

VISITOR: (Chuckles) Of course not. So, since we're a thing now, mind telling me just what drew you up here? No offense, but you don't seem overly sentimental.

PROFESSOR: A theory. My last one I guess. I wanted to spot a good view. This thing zooming at us, unzipping the universe, could have been pushing some particles ahead of it. So, right before the end, the atmosphere would get bombarded with all these high-energy particles, and an aurora would erupt, encompassing the entire sky.

VISITOR: When would that be happening?

PROFESSOR: Honestly? If it were, it would have by now. It's almost time.

VISITOR: It's still an amazing view.

PROFESSOR: It, really, really is.

[Party sounds fade]

[Animal sounds fade]

[Breeze sounds fade]

VISITOR: I'm glad I came up here.

PROFESSOR: I am t-

[All sounds disappear]

{SEMINAR segue music 12:09}

SEMINAR WRAPPER #2 by Kathryn Pryde

ALEX: Reality was crashing down on those people. Or maybe it wasn't, but even if there was something left, it doesn't matter if no one survived or finds it.

ALICE: The temple we're in standing is a testament to how societies have legacies. Because we all want to be remembered, we want to matter.

ALEX: Alice, it *didn't* matter what they did because everything was over anyway. How on earth could that help me?

ALICE: Because one of them was so wrapped up in how terrible it was that they couldn't see that the present was staring them in the face. And that's what you're doing. You're so mad at me, but I'm right here asking to help. Just *talk* to me. Start at the beginning. I promise to listen.

[Long pause]

ALEX: Look, I'm not like you... And-and you want to *leave us*... because I'm-(sighs) we're not enough...

ALICE: No, I just want to get back to the ship, find out what happened to everyone after we destroyed the MCP. It's natural for me to want to go home, but it doesn't mean I'd leave you. Either of you.

ALEX: You're all I have.

ALICE: You have Thomas-

ALEX: Thomas can't think like me, he doesn't understand and I- I'm *sick* of explaining every organic thing that happens to me. I need *you*, Alice, and you keep talking about how you need new people.

ALICE: But, i-it's not healthy to be so possessive of me or to be so terrified that I might leave. And I know it probably feels terrible but wonderful at the same time because you're just...you just *feel*. There's no rhyme or reason for it. But, I'm telling you that if you are my friend, then you have to be willing to let me have space.

ALEX: (angrily) *NO!* I will *make you stay!*

ALICE: That's *enough!* This is *exactly* what I'm worried about! And don't mistake what I'm about to say as a request, because it is not. You need to go to the medical bay and get checked out. Let Zerash run a full physical on you.

ALEX: No! You just think there's something wrong with me because I'm not acting the way you want me to!

ALICE: So, then prove me wrong! Go, find out what your body is doing and if it just turns out that this is just who *you* are, then you have to learn how to handle it instead of exploding at me! (Sighs) I am not gonna force you. But you are starting to scare me. Do you want me not to feel safe around you? I don't want that. But I won't tolerate being verbally abused. You think that what you're feeling is fine, but I'm not sure it is. How much of this is the personality you had and how much of this might be a biological misfire? (Sighs)

[Footsteps as Alice leaves]

ALEX: Zerash... retrieve "Odyssey One" for me.

{SEMINAR Segue Music 15:12}

Odyssey One by Jair Majid Kornegay begins at 15:15

[Ship hums quietly]

[Beeps and chirps of computers in background]

DR. REBECCA FLORES: When did the symptoms start, Rick?

RICK: (muffled, behind glass divider) When we left the star system.

DR. FLORES: Immediate onset?

RICK: No. First it was just the noises.

DR. FLORES: Can you describe the progression of the psychosis?

RICK: I'm not crazy.

DR. FLORES: I understand.

RICK: No, you don't. {Eerie music starts} They don't want us here.

DR. FLORES: They?

RICK: With all due respect, doc, you need to turn this ship around. (Suggestively) Or...

DR. FLORES: Is that a threat?

RICK: Not from me.

DR. FLORES: Do you think changing course would improve your condition?

RICK: I think the whole crew would see an improvement. We never should've taken this job.

DR. FLORES: Do you feel like your condition is worsening?

RICK: Is the Odyssey still leaving Beta Nine?

DR. FLORES: Yes.

RICK: Am I still in restraints? (Raises his hands)

[Clank of metal from restraints]

RICK: Alright, then.

[Mechanized door activates]

[Footsteps on metal deck]

CAPTAIN: Any updates on whatever's got the crew riled up?

DR. FLORES: The condition is connected to our colonization candidate, Beta Nine. They become fixated on it, convinced that these noises they're hearing are a warning to return what we took.

CAPTAIN: Well, there must be a cause, right? Some kind of alien pathogen or something?

DR. FLORES: Captain, trust me, I've checked. Nothing's been detected on board. Same for the testing on the artifacts we pulled.

CAPTAIN: But I've been on eight runs with these guys. I can't believe folks like this would just lose it. (Pauses) Is there a long-term risk here without treatment, Doc?

DR. FLORES: The aggressive outbursts will get worse if we don't treat it soon.

CAPTAIN: What does "worse" look like?

DR. FLORES: Too early to tell. This...whatever "this" is...is doing things I've never seen before. (Confidently) I'll have something soon, though. That's a promise.

[Mechanized door activation]

DALIA: Captain, we have a situation on the bridge.

CAPTAIN: (annoyed) Summers and Mag, again?

ODYSSEY ONE by Jair Kornegay

DALIA: Ugh, no, sir. Summers is...well he's freaking out. Ranting about spiders in the hull.

CAPTAIN: Well...are there?

DALIA: Um, no sir.

DR. FLORES: Other patients went on about spiders as well.

DALIA: Sir, what's going on?

CAPTAIN: Get whatever muscle you need and sedate Summers.

DALIA: Sir-

CAPTAIN: (emphatically) That's an order.

DALIA: Yes, sir.

[Mechanized door closes as Dalia leaves]

CAPTAIN: Doc, I need something. *Anything*. We can't lose any more crew.

DR. FLORES: I need more time.

CAPTAIN: We don't have it.

DR. FLORES: You need to figure that out then. I'm the only one onboard this ship that can get you answers. And trust we, we are dead without them.

CAPTAIN: C'mon, Flo! This is just like that time on-

DR. FLORES: No, it's not. It's not. That was cabin fever. This shared psychosis is different. I have done every possible test and scan we have. There is nothing on the Odyssey that could cause these symptoms. (Quietly) Scientifically speaking...

CAPTAIN: What are you insinuating with "scientifically?"

DR. FLORES: I--

[Two tones as Public Address system activates]

SUMMERS: (over PA) They're in the hall! The spiders, they're in-

[Scrambling]

SUMMERS: (over PA, more distant) Get off me!

[On speakers: Gunshot]

[Two tones as PA shuts off]

CAPTAIN: Shit! Our time table just moved up, Doc.

[Mechanized door activates]

[Footsteps on metal deck as Captain leaves]

RICK: (sinisterly) You gonna fix me, Doc?

DR. FLORES: I'm gonna try.

RICK: I must be lucky, then. I think another test just finished shaking or whatever that thing does.

DR. FLORES: Spins.

[Machine beeps]

RICK: 'Scuse me?

DR. FLORES: You mean it spins.

RICK: (mockingly) You got the answers. Don't you, Doc?

[Electronic beeps]

[Mechanical whirring]

[Whooshing noise]

DR. FLORES: Give me a quick moment to look at these samples and...what the hell? Nothing?

RICK: (mockingly) I wonder what you're missing.

[Two tones as PA turns back on]

ODYSSEY ONE by Jair Kornegay

SUMMERS: (over PA) If we do not turn this damn ship around, I swear to God I will use this. I'm not bluffing!

DALIA: (over PA) We believe you. Just calm down, Summers.
There's no need for any violence.

RICK: (jokingly) Uh oh...

DR. FLORES: Quiet.

DALIA: (over PA) Just drop the gun.

DR. FLORES: (anxiously) I need to hurry. I need to figure this out. I don't have the time.

SUMMERS: (over PA) I...I don't want- (pause) What is Mag doing here?

{Eerie piano music begins}

RICK: What leads do you not have, again?

[Glass smashing]

DR. FLORES: (angry) I have nothing! (Beat) Oh, God.

DALIA: (over PA) He's just here to help.

{Eerie music builds in tempo and intensity}

SUMMERS: (over PA) No...No he's not. He's not!

CAPTAIN: (over PA) Drop that weapon, Chief. That's an order.

SUMMERS: (over PA) (laughs bitterly) You don't even know what's going on, do you? What'll happen if we don't turn around?

CAPTAIN: (over PA) You could tell me. Then tell us. Just lower the firearm.

{Eerie piano music}

SUMMERS: (over PA) I told you, and you won't do the one easy damn thing I've asked you to. We shouldn't be near this star system, Captain. All we do is take take, take, take, take! From every star system. From the primitives. Now they're going to take from us.

CAPTAIN: (over PA) What are you talking about?

SUMMERS: (over PA) Don't you see? It's not for us. Those artifacts don't belong to-

CAPTAIN: (over PA) NOW!

[Scuffle over speakers]

[Struggling]

[Two gunshots]

[Sparking from damaged computer]

[Speakers go dead]

[Mechanized door activates]

[Footsteps on metal deck]

RICK: Are you gonna tell him, doc?

DR. FLORES: What the hell happened?

CAPTAIN: (sadly) Yeah, we had to...I had to, uh...

DR. FLORES: Had to what?

CAPTAIN: We lost control of our nav systems.

DR. FLORES: Meaning...?

CAPTAIN: We're dead in the water.

DR. FLORES: Can we pilot blind?

CAPTAIN: The malfunction locked me out of the controls.

RICK: Why don't you tell him, doc? What he already knows?

DR. FLORES: This is ridiculous.

RICK: Ask him.

ODYSSEY ONE by Jair Kornegay

DR. FLORES: (to Rick) Fine. (To captain) Should we have listened to Rick?

CAPTAIN: (annoyed) Who?

{Shocking music}

RICK: If we keep asking, he'll see reason.

DR. FLORES: It's just... the last test I ran came up empty. Which doesn't make sense. But I'm close. I know it.

CAPTAIN: Who the hell is Rick?

Beat.

DR. FLORES: He's right...here.

CAPTAIN: I don't remember a Rick on any manifests.

RICK: And here I thought we were starting to form a connection, Captain.

DR. FLORES: Shut up!

CAPTAIN: Who are you talking to? What's going on?

DR. FLORES: I was talking to Rick. Can't you hear him?

CAPTAIN: You're infected, too.

DR. FLORES: No. I was just doing a test on him. Right here. He's here dammit! Somewhere.

[Walkie talkie button click]

CAPTAIN: (to walkie) We have a problem in the med bay.

DR. FLORES: It's the artifacts. It's the artifacts!

CAPTAIN: Why don't you take a step back and calm down, Flo.

DR. FLORES: We need to get rid of them. Throw them out of the airlock.

RICK: Why don't we return them?

DR. FLORES: Right. Why don't we return them?

CAPTAIN: Flo, how could we return them? We're drifting.

[Walkie click]

CAPTAIN: (on walkie) I need help, here.

DR. FLORES: Listen to me. Just for a second, listen.

[Walkie click]

CAPTAIN: (on walkie) Why isn't anyone picking up?

{Eerie music building intensity}

RICK: You should have just listened to me instead. Now, you're in a pickle.

DR. FLORES: Captain, we could get Rick to fix this for us. You could fix it together. You would just have to listen. That's it.

CAPTAIN: "Us?"

DR. FLORES: Shush. You hear that?

[Faint rhythmic tapping]

CAPTAIN: (anxiously) Hear what, Flo?

DR. FLORES: The tapping.

RICK: Hmmm...

DR. FLORES: Like little feet...tap-tap-tapping in the hull. They're saying you won't listen in time. It's too late. They don't want to negotiate anymore.

RICK: They want us-

RICK and DR. FLORES: (in unison) To kill.

{SEMINAR Segue Music 23:26}

SEMINAR WRAPPER #3 by Kathryn Pryde

ALEX: (sniffs) Maybe she's right...There's too much going on in my head..

[Tap of fingers in the same rhythm as "spiders" in Odyssey One]

{**SEMINAR theme music 23:45**}

Featuring the voice talents of Kathryn Pryde as Alice and Dan Foster as Alex

In "False Vacuum"

Andre Vernot as Professor and Kaitlyn Kliman as Visitor

Written by James Rossi

In "Odyssey One"

Lauren Walton as Captain

Lisa Michau as Dalia

Elise Krauec as Dr. Rebecca Flores

Tom Fellis as Rick

And Adam Blanford as Summers

Written by Jair Kornegay

Directed by VC Morrison

Assistant-Directed by Samantha Reed

Shorts edited by Jeffrey Bridges

Wrapper script and story by Kathryn Pryde

Edited by Jeffrey Bridges

The music in this episode included:

"Day of Chaos" and "Lost Frontier" by Kevin McCloud

Additional music by VC Morrison

Seminar theme by VC Morrison

Produced by Pendant Productions

Seminar co-created by Kathryn Pryde and Jeffrey Bridges

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For more information, visit pendantaudio.com. Thanks for listening.

Trailer starts 25:20

NARRATOR: Next, on an all-new Seminar...

BOSS: (with French accent) Tim, how long have you worked at this development and research laboratory?

TIM: About four years, ma'am. With you serving as an excellent example.

BOSS: You were left a perfectly functional work environment while I took some time off. I'm not exactly pleased with what I'm seeing right now!

TIM: It being my first time in charge, I think it actually went pretty well. But I can satisfactorily explain, I swear.

NARRATOR: Decision-making skills are essential for both the professional world and the dating world...

WOMAN: Well, I have handed it to you, this is the perfect makeout spot. Starry sky, light-years away from the nearest person...

NARRATOR: When the time comes to prove your skills...

WOMAN: Well, I'm guessing those beeps are a distress call then, right?

WOMAN #2: Yeah, let me see if I can ignite the engines, get this thing closer.

WOMAN: And do what? Fire phasers at it? What do you think you're flying?

NARRATOR: Will you leave a good impression? Or fade like a dying star?

BOSS: You launched loads of loathsome litter into the disused dimensional door to solve the problem of having craploads of cloned Chloe Clooneys which was to solve that workers wrathfully walked from a ridiculous refreshment reorder of the tart tangerine tonics? DO I have this right?

TIM: I'll admit I could've reached out more for advice. I just wanted to impress you, I guess.

NARRATOR: Prepare to prove your skills with stories written by VC Morrison and James Rossi coming February 27, 2019 only at pendantaudio.com.

WOMAN: You know, when I met you at that party, and you said you were looking for a cunning linguist, I thought you had something else in mind...(fade out)

