



**Transcript of “Dave Kalstein: Mastering the Mind
with Neurofeedback and Sayoc Kali - #171”**

Bulletproof Radio podcast #171



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Dave Asprey: Hey, it's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Radio. Today's cool fact of the day is that if you're worried that you might have killed too many brain cells while you're in college drinking, maybe you don't have to worry about that. It's because brain cells in the learning part of your brain and in the memory part of your brain can regrow themselves. They actually can regenerate. Scientists recently figured out that they can grow stem cells that turn into those parts of your brain.

Today's guest is writer, producer of one of TV's biggest shows, NCIS Los Angeles. He's also a friend and his name is Dave Kalstein. Dave, welcome to Bulletproof Radio.

Dave Kalstein: Awesome to be here.

Dave Asprey: You're an enigma of a guy. You look like a cross between a samurai and a Tibetan. You got great ink. You're a martial artist. You're a super successful guy here in town and you also do neurofeedback.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: You're interesting.

Dave Kalstein: I think one of the reasons why you say interesting and one of the reasons why maybe people respond to my energy is because I had gone as far as I could go in my career left to my own devices. Everybody has a personal success formula they work and eventually they hit a wall.

Then it's time to self-examine and it's, "I might need to go to other places to figure out how to make myself better." By better I don't mean value, I mean how do I enjoy life more.

Martial arts is one of those things for me and it was through martial arts actually I found you. I trained in an art called Sayoc kali which is a Filipino martial arts, a family system from the Sayoc family. After a training session one day one of the master level instructors said to me, “There’s this coffee with butter in it. You should check it out.” My first reaction was, “What?” But then a lot of what we do in martial arts is, “What?”

I jumped in with both feet and I went home and my first cup of [Bulletproof coffee](#) was actually made up with salted Kerrygold, I didn’t know. I still drank and I felt awesome. Ever since then that was my gateway drug in your culture.

I got really interested in [heart rate variability](#), I got the [vibration plate](#). Started eating [bulletproof](#) and then neurofeedback was one of the last places I went with it because, first of all, it was a little expensive. I am not one of those guys that came in to the [bulletproof](#) culture and expert in neurofeedback. I never really meditated that much either.

Really, the first time I did it was when I hook myself up to [NeuroOptimal](#). By that point I’m, “I’m just going to take this plunge here.” I loved what it was and I started listening to more of the podcast you did on neurofeedback and which led me to the [40 Years of Zen program](#). That, just judging from the awesome response of all the people at the conference, is something that people are very interested in because it’s mysterious, it’s expensive and it’s very effective. As you say, you said a change of life.

That was the most powerful experience I’ve had and the most unusual experience I’ve had in terms of becoming morally performer.

Dave Asprey: If you’re listening and you’ve never heard of neurofeedback, it’s the idea that you can get electrical signals off your brain. We’ve known this for close to 50 years. You can play them through a computer, turn them into sounds and then play the sounds back to you. Your brain waves can become violins or pianos or various other sounds.

When you do it your brain becomes able to know that it's getting a signal from itself and then you can learn to take charge of it. The first one you mentioned, the [NeuroOptimal](#) there is one of the technologies that I write about on this site. There's lots of info on the side there. This is one that you did at home.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah, I bought a [NeuroOptimal](#) unit. My girlfriend and I both use it, we still use it. It's really ... There is paste that you put on your head to get the electrodes on, but the effects are great. It's really easy to bring it to your house. I think you've talked in the past about sharing it with other people, sharing the cost which makes a lot of sense.

If I was just going to use it for me then it wouldn't really made much sense, but the fact that my girlfriend and I can both share it is awesome.

Dave Asprey: It comes down to 18 bucks a session which is why I like that one because you can put the electrodes on yourself, you just stick on here, one here, some clips on your ears and then you use it. How often do you use it now that you've done some really advanced training?

Dave Kalstein: When I went to [40 Years of Zen](#) I'd had about a hundred sessions under my belt. Like most people that are in your community, I started that doing three sessions a week and want to do more, but you're not really supposed to.

That's the thing about neurofeedback is you don't really have to, you're not supposed to work hard at it. It supposed to just happen, which for a goal driven person like myself at that time was difficult 'cause I'm, "I want to do a hundred sessions a day." That led me to realize the scientific part of what we do, only takes you so far. Eventually you have to confront the unknown.

The first time you tried [Bulletproof coffee](#), it's the unknown and you feel awesome. The first time you put electrodes on your head, it's also unknown. If you voluntarily choose to confront that, great rewards maybe waiting for you.

With martial arts, it's the same thing. Nobody wants to go train martial arts the first day. In my job in Hollywood, I remember the first day I had to walk on to a set and

produce an episode. It was 6 years ago, the first time I'd ever done it. I was young. I was scared and it was a unnerving experience.

We need to sometimes go away from the scientific thing and open our minds up to the unknown in the same way that I stepped to the door into that soundstage and ended up doing pretty good on that on that day. You have to make the leap. If you don't make the leap you will live a life like everybody else which I don't want to do.

Dave Asprey: You weren't doing that before you discovered neurofeedback by a longshot. You were already doing Sayoc.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Tell me more about Sayoc, because my take on you and having gotten to know you reasonably well is you don't stop. You're really intense, you pay a lot of attention to stuff and you jump in with both feet and you try it and you get what's there's for you. What made you do that with Sayoc? What is Sayoc?

Let's talk about that and how you got as involved as you are there. Then let's see how you've done other things in life.

Dave Kalstein: The biggest distinction I got to make with Sayoc is I did martial arts before. A lot of guys haven't done martial arts before they trained Sayoc, but I done Thai boxing for many, many years. We don't use weapons in that, it's a sport. Most martial arts the weapons practice is the most advanced elite level, 'cause it's a weapon and you can hurt someone badly from the get go.

In Sayoc, in your first class you learn how to use a knife which is counter intuitive, why would you start with a knife when you can't even punch?

The way we think in Sayoc is you deescalate from the perfect form. Once you go from there you are equipped to deal with everything else. Why would you want to practice something that's inferior? If you can work that knife, you can work everything else.

The blade, this is also very individual to Sayoc. The blade is a learning tool. There are consequences to getting cut. Now, we don't use live blades in the first class but we do teach you how to handle them. The trainers that you felt, there's enough feedback there to let you know, "Oh! That little chill down my spine." Now I've got your attention, now you're ready to learn 'cause your mind is occupied by this very scary looking blade.

You're hitting about vital targets and all these things. Really, all you're learning is how to learn.

Dave Asprey: I really enjoy the training. You're kind enough to bring in Nick, a Sayoc master.

Dave Kalstein: He's a full instructor.

Dave Asprey: Full instructor. Okay. Then why is he in the wrong title there?

Dave Kalstein: I'm glad you brought this up because our master level instructors are called Tuhons, and there's not many of them in the world. These are guys that have 20, 30 years or training. Nick is very good. He is not at that level yet, but he's a solid guy. I just want to make that ...

Dave Asprey: A senior instructor. Okay, cool. Got it. I don't understand the hierarchies yet.

Dave Kalstein: Like any group, it's important to have hierarchies 'cause if you don't and there's no rules, you have no protocols and it's chaos. Next thing you know you got guys putting on t-shirts and selling their own stuff. Tell me that sounds familiar Dave. No protocols, you got people coming to your conference and selling things that may or may not benefit you when it's your thing.

Dave Asprey: Yeah. If they're selling your chocolate frosted sugar bombs at the conference, I'm, "You're welcome to sell them but this isn't the place for that."

Dave Kalstein: One of the things we do as a group, it's all about group dynamics because if all I can do is teach you to become a more deadly individual I have failed. Because chances are when you are in life you will be with other people. It's a tribal art, therefore we train you to make those around you better. Our definition of mastery is Mr. Miyagi on his own, it's how you transfer these formulas to other people.

Dave Asprey: If people think you might be spouting BS here, you participated in training of some of the world's most elite militaries.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah, the Sayoc tattoo group, they train elite law enforcement and military. Obviously we can't get too specific with that. The formulas have worked on that level and now we're actually making headway in Hollywood as well. Sayoc mastery brand is offering the same, I guess, training to more civilian minded clients, and I myself have worked with some of the Sayoc guys and we've sold a couple of TV shows as well.

The formulas that work for the physical combative world also work in the mental work. We only know that because we do it. I know it's a little ... That's what people need to get over, it's how can this blade formula actually work in a room as well.

We are never not armed. You walk into a meeting and the same temple that works in the blade can work in that meeting because now the people are the fight, even though it's not a physical fight.

Dave Asprey: It's interesting, when I went night training in your garage, you're there yet another person who's an observer and you had the instructor there. It's awesome because you're using shiny steel knives, unsharpened knives, but rather than a piece of wood which is a common training thing. I've been in classes like that before which doesn't neurologically trigger you.

I actually had a knife pulled on me a couple of times when I was a kid. At that time you're, "This is a life or death situation." It leaves a mental impression. You're likely

to recoil from a blade like that. In fact, we naturally do that even no one has ever threatened you with a knife 'cause you know that can kill you, it's deadly.

I found in my nervous system, doesn't differentiate between a shiny unsharpened knife that will not cut me even if I drag it really hard over myself versus a real knife. To stand there, it's unnerving. Someone standing there holding a knife against you and you know he's just going to block, but it looks like a knife. It's weighted like a knife. It has the energy of a knife in it versus a piece of wood which is, "Oh, I just know it's not a knife." The difference there was very palpable neurologically.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah, there's not much left to chance with the way that Sayoc teaches. Something you talked about before and I'm glad you brought it up; the three person teaching method. That's something we do, it's called the feeder; receiver; observer relationship. In that situation the instructor was the feeder, he was feeding you information, controlling the room. You are the receiver, you are receiving information and I was the observer. I was watching from an objective point of view how the lesson was going. I was looking at you to see what responses you're having to maybe communicate to the instructor, "Maybe we should take him this way 'cause he's having this reaction."

With the shiny blade you were talking about, we like to use shiny blades because when you're having a knife pulled on you on the street it most likely be a shiny blade that looks just like that. How you train is how you will be in reality.

We don't make the delusion that we think that will be 100% in training ... I'm sorry, in real life. You think the level you're training.

We believe that maybe 30% of what you can be. It's a lot of subconscious responses as well. Every time you see your knife is a time that you become more familiar with it. If it ever happens to you in real life, you'll have those reps to burn.

Everyone talks about 10,000 reps to gain mastery I guess. I actually don't agree with that, 'cause I want to know what kind of reps is that person burning. What is your definition of a rep, because it's not about quantity, it's quality. Something I actually just said in my talk at the conference was, "I don't burn 10,000 reps. My life is 1 rep

and it never ends until I'm dead." That means I have to be extremely mindful of every piece of my day.

Does your day start when you get out of bed? Does it start when you make coffee? Does it start when you put your clothes on and go to work? Does it start before you open your eyes with your first conscious thought? That's probably going to set you up the whole day. If that's the case then maybe your first step of the day is before you go to bed the night before, because the unconscious is also a very alive place.

The way we train is if we're going to set you up for your day to train, that rep, it starts the night before. What is the last thing you think of before you go to sleep? Everybody has their own way. Gratitude is a big deal for me because I do not want to waste any time because it's only one rep.

Dave Asprey: That's such an elegant way of thinking about it is just one rep. The other thing that impress me about Sayoc is that the idea of a pattern, and I've done some training in judo, I'm not a mixed martial artist by a longshot. I'm a computer guy.

It's really interesting. None of the other forms that I've seen taught, focus is intently on almost like a template, whereas there's usually a movement. It's always training a movement, but the whole training that we did was really about, it's here, then here, then here, then here. Rather than wipe on, wipe off, karate kid stuff and then you magically put a body there. It was targeted.

The idea of training by pattern and template is way more intuitive for people, they learn better that way but they also, I think, embody neurologically faster that way. Is that conscious?

Dave Kalstein: Yeah, it is. By the way, I am not a professional martial artist. I'm like you, I'm just a writer. I was not some super warrior when I showed up, so I was in your position as well. I was overwhelmed by the information.

You're talking about a template. What are you learning? Most martial arts is, "Cut him in the neck." What we do is we tell you exactly where you're thrusting. In that

template you can learn many things. It's not just where the places to strike on the body are, you also learn in that process where you have to protect yourself from being struck.

You learn what you do to somebody, what's the trauma. You also learn how to save someone if they had that trauma done to them.

What you saw that template, it's called three of nine. It's actually a formula, it teaches you many things. Because then we don't have to waste time saying, "Here's a medical management piece." 'cause you already learned that in three of nine.

We don't have to teach you how to draw a blade because you've already burned so many reps at three of nine that you know how to do it. One rep or that one template, you're going through so many things in your head. That's, look, you can call it hacking or you can call it an ideal rep. Because the more things you can accomplish in that one motion, the faster you will learn and the quicker you will become a master.

Something that I love about Sayoc is, in other martial arts that I've done, it's the master level people were always, "If you work really hard you'll eventually get to where we are." In Sayoc kali, the Tuhons, they all say, "If you train Sayoc you will be a master faster than I was. Because in our culture, it's not about how good you are." You judge a master not by how good he is but how many masters has he made.

That's why everybody ends up pursuing a path apprentice, apprentice instructor, associate instructor. Because if you don't want to teach then we don't really have a lot of use for you, because that means you're keeping it all inside for yourself. It's all about the self. Where are other people?

We also don't want to create clones. There's a lot of different things going on out there at the conference and are awesome. Ultimately, everybody has to bring their own spin to it. Everybody came and they had your way of thinking. You'll be, "Oh, this is boring."

Dave Asprey: It'd be super boring. Yeah.

Dave Kalstein: This is like anything that you tryout. You want to be really good and you want to move like your masters move. Whether it's a corporate job or martial arts or my job, but what I realize is that in the Sayoc culture, my masters do not want me to move like them. They want me to move like me.

My reps can then add to the formula, it can make the tribe better. Today when I gave my speech, that may have been a template.

Dave Asprey: A template that would then be teachable and communicable so you could talk to someone else about a speech, or you are using a template you already learned in your speech?

Dave Kalstein: The speech today was the exact same template that you learned your first day of class.

Dave Asprey: The three of nine.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah. Our formulas ... It's, "What is a formula?" One of the qualities of a formula is that they're universal which means they can apply anywhere. That lesson you learned with the blade, I did that today in the speech. Obviously that's a whole different discussion. We don't teach formulas that are not universal. If they're not universal they cannot be a formula.

What I'm talking about is pretty heady stuff right now. We always say, you have to earn the reps. There is stuff in Sayoc that I can't do. I may intellectually know it but I have not physically earned those reps yet. There are guys, they've been doing it much longer than me and they know how to do it. As smart as I am, we unite the physical, the mental, the emotional, the sensory. It all comes together.

A lot of people will go to something like a Tony Robbins type thing and will have an awesome weekend. Afterward, they'll be, "It all went away after a couple of weeks. I was on this high in this net." or any of those self-help type things. For us, that doesn't work because the rep never ends.

What's the one thing that's missing from all those other Tony Robbins self-help type things is the fact that you're not doing anything with your body. There's nothing that you can bring away with it. There's no emotional subconscious connection. You never had the stimuli of the blade. That's why we use the blade as a learning tool. That's why the blade has been used as a learning tool since primal times.

You're never learning just one thing, like something that you always hear students say is, "Man! I got shocked in with information and then three days later I realize what you're actually saying." That's how we know they're learning because there's no way you can process it the first time. Any deep formula, it has to ... We target the subconscious basically. Life is short, we want you to make you good fast, and we want it to be about mastery. We are in a mission to mastery. It's not even really about the knife thing in the end, it's about how do you live your life.

Dave Asprey: When you're putting in your reps the way you're communicating this, is there a way to use TDCS or some electrical current in the brain or somewhere else in order to make the rep sync in faster? Would that be a form of cheating or somehow impure?

Dave Kalstein: If it works, it's not cheating. You know what I mean?

Dave Asprey: I love that.

Dave Kalstein: A lot of the people ... We have a neuro-ophthalmologist that's a full instructor in Sayoc Kali. I was talking to him about the [40 Years of Zen](#) experience. I was a little nervous because he's a real doctor and I'm not. I don't know that much about neurology, but I told him about it. I was waiting for him to be, "Nah! That's a joke." He said, "No. That's legitimate. It sounds extremely legitimate."

We take everything. You can't be a master if you're not willing to consider everything. When we researched the TDCS, when you came to my house with some other guys. I saw my friend is there who are very knowledgeable, 'cause we want it to be a dialogue. It's not about who's better.

Dave Asprey: It's fun.

Dave Kalstein: It's about sharing that information and making the rest of your tribe better. Absolutely, all that stuff is going on and that's why ... That's why I take a lot of pride in being here right now because an instructor told me about coffee and a couple of years later I'm here talking to you, and a lot of Sayoc guys are aware that there is this world out there and they're able to use it or not use it according to their own personal formula. Everybody's formula is different.

You have a personal success formula. I have a personal success formula, but have you succeeded because your formula is so tight? Have you succeeded because in spite of all the bad reps you ever burned?

Dave Asprey: Probably the latter for me.

Dave Kalstein: And me too by the way. When I first started out in Hollywood I was very fear based person. My methodology behind writing a script was I don't want to write the best script ever and touch people's lives. It was, I want to write a script it's so good it makes my colleagues at the show question why this chose this path in life.

That's some fire right there, but that's also a lot of weight to carry around with you. That is how you carry a weight if you're by yourself and you're making yourself in isolation. It's just like Michael Jordan hated losing, more than liked winning.

Think about how good Michael Jordan could have been if he wanted to make masters and he had a way to do it. Because there's a lot of master level people who are, "I just do what I do." Don't tell me that. How do you transfer it? How good are your guys?

Dave Asprey: Knowing how to do something and knowing how to teach something are very different skills. Early in my career, I spent 5 years teaching about 3 nights a week to other professionals to learn how to communicate knowledge really effectively. I believe and I think rightly so is more of a hypothesis

than that was a course skill that would teach me more. I learn my field, I became one of the top guys in my field because I taught it so many times.

This is similar to do with Sayoc. At the same time, that ability to take a complex topic and then boil it down. I took that template and I moved it over to nutrition and human performance. The hard thing was how do you take masters of data points and bring it down? It is a template and it's a thing that we learn. The question is; can we teach kids or young adults how to think about templates instead of how to just do stuff?

Dave Kalstein: That's always when something that we talk about is, like head hunter tribes, older cultures. They had a lot of things figured out. We have created a lot of complications in life. There are certain principles or universals.

Talk about kids. I don't have kids. I would like to one day, most of the guys in Sayoc do have kids. We're talking before about when it goes down, you're going to be around your family.

We are a family based art. Kids are always running around our seminars. One of the first things they learn, what did the kids in the tribes in the Philippines? They learn how to pass blades to their father. They learned how to hold them the right way. The women learned similar skills. There was no one that was not helping. Because in a tribal culture in the jungle, if everyone does not contribute you're not going to survive very long. I don't think it's very different right now on a Hollywood TV show, on corporate America. If the formulas don't work for kids then they're not universal.

Dave Asprey: I took what I learned in Sayoc about passing a knife safely. Never thought of it before, and I taught both my kids.

Dave Kalstein: Oh great!

Dave Asprey: We've passed knives back and forth in the table.

Dave Kalstein: Did they have fun?

Dave Asprey: Yeah, they think it's really cool.

Dave Kalstein: That's very cool.

Dave Asprey: Interestingly, some weird thing, Allen who's younger, which is a boy really into it. Ana, who's a girl, she learned but just that the fire wasn't there. I have no idea if that's just random 'cause of who they are or if that's a gender specific thing. It surprised 'cause I would have thought Ana who loves to climb trees and do stuff that she would have been to it. It was, "Okay. I got the skill, I'm done." Allen was, "More. More. More. More."

Dave Kalstein: Because the blade is an emotional tool. Boys, they like to swing swords. They like to get rough with it. Women, they don't have the same type of emotional response to that. There are good and bad things to both.

It's funny, I'm glad you said that you taught your kids because there's something in Sayoc, it's a talk that I heard once from one of the master Tuhons. I've been Sayoc for only 6 months and we were at this event called Sama-Sama. Sama-Sama is like our bio-hacking conference and that everyone from the world comes to one place.

Every year we do something called the Sayaw. The Sayaw is this big bonfire and we all have our blades and we hear tribal drums and we move around the fire. Why do we do this? Because in the tribes back in the Philippines, they would do this before they would go in the battle. The fire is life but it's also death. You move close to the heat with your blade and you feel the balance, the fine line between that. You feel what is to be alive and your family is around you. They are also moving. Your brother warriors are there and you're also moving.

Now what have you created, it's not about going out and killing someone the next day. It's about the process. You're in the alpha state. You are in the flow state. That's how they created it back then.

It was always a communal thing, and part ... Something that came out from that on my trip, before my first Sayaw, one of the Tuhans said, "10,000 hands." Let's talk about that. I always heard it in Sayoc, I didn't know what it meant. He said in the

tribes, we take our knowledge seriously. Whenever I get your knowledge I take it seriously 'cause I know that I didn't earn on my own solely. There's some things I figured out, but everything that was learned, someone out there paid the price in blood.

For us to use a training blade and not a real blade, why do you think that happened? Because something went wrong back in the day. For us to target that one thing first and not the second thing first, that came from somewhere too. Someone paid the price in blood back there, before I was even around.

The instructor said, "When you draw your blade you should not be afraid because even though you may be going out into a situation that is dangerous and that may cause you your life. When you draw your blade in your Sayoc guy, you don't do it with one hand, 10,000 hands draw that blade with you."

When you were passing your children that blade, 10,000 hands pass that blade with you and that moves me and that's powerful and that's awesome.

Dave Asprey: It's amazing 'cause I never would have conceived of there's a safe way of doing it where you're not going to drop the knife and all that. I grew up, I remember I got my first knife when I was, I don't know, 8 or something. My dad gave me his buck knife he had when he was a kid. It's an important thing.

I remember that, but there was never, "Okay, what do you with it other than don't cut your fingers?" There's some basic cutaway from yourself stuff. It wasn't formalized. My kids are still a little bit too young to have their own pocket knife. I said, "It's okay if they cut themselves." Unless they cut off a finger, knives are a great form of biofeedback.

Dave Kalstein: They probably won't because you taught them how to pass blades.

Dave Asprey: Exactly. So I bought him just a little pocketknife, a little Victorinox. I said, "Guys, when you're ready to have a fire ceremony." Make it a very important thing for them. "We'll do that when we built a fire pit in the backyard."

Dave Kalstein: You can have a Sayaw.

Dave Asprey: We could. Then I said, “You guys want to do it?” They’re, “Nah.” I said, “Okay. You’re not ready yet.” They’re, “What? What? No, we’re ready.” “No. We’ll try again next month.” They still haven’t earned their knives yet because the passion isn’t there. I think there was a huge emotional value in making it ceremonial for kids as well.

Dave Kalstein: There is. There is. It’s like a life house consequences and ultimately you have to make things change for yourself.

Dave Asprey: It’s totally true. Now, I get you as a martial artist more than I did before this.

Dave Kalstein: Good.

Dave Asprey: Then you started doing a hundred episodes or hundred sessions or [NeurOptimal](#). What happened in your life? [NeurOptimal](#) is the home neurofeedback. You took it up to your head. What changed emotionally? What changed your martial arts practice? What changed in your career from that level of neurofeedback, which is relatively light?

Dave Kalstein: Something I had to get over in the beginning was looking for immediate results. If sometimes you can pop a pill and you feel the results immediately. With neurofeedback, it’s a different. I had to be patient with myself. That part is part of the training too, don’t look for crazy results. You can do it a hundred times a day.

It goes back to process and I ended up. People will just tell me, I wouldn’t feel myself. They would say, “Dave, you seem a little bit more calm. You don’t stutter as much in conversation anymore.”

Dave Asprey: You noticed that effect too?

Dave Kalstein: Yeah. It's funny because when you get a [NeurOptimal](#) system it tells you to list some things, some goals, 'cause you need some method of quantification. I actually didn't look at it since I bought it and so the other day I looked at the goals and it was, "Be more zen." Be kinder to people. Show them love. That kind of thing.

Those are all things that happened. A lot of it ... It's funny 'cause as neurofeedback, as you're looking for the immediate value, you're almost getting in your own way and that's what we were talking about at the speech day a little bit which is hacking, it's pursuing something that's valuable and finding a better way to get there.

Dave Asprey: Yes.

Dave Kalstein: It gets to a point when you are really doing elevated stuff with your brain, you can't hack ... There's only so much you can hack. Eventually someone has to say, "I'm going to hook myself up to this computer." or "I'm going to take this trip somewhere it cost a lot of money and go through this crazy experience that no one can really describe to me."

At that point it evolves past that value thing and starts being about the process. It starts being about your life. In my mind, all the steps between the coffee and the [sleep induction mat](#), they lead you to the door of process and that's what mastery is. That's what the neurofeedback technology of [NeurOptimal](#). That opened a door for me but I had to walk through it.

Dave Asprey: There's a whole process 'cause I would like all these to be free, that the value to all of us when people's consciousness works better, it's very important. Okay, breathing exercise is free. Heart Rate Variability training, \$99. Then you go to something like the upgraded [focus brain trainer](#), moving blood to the front of your brain. You can pay attention better including during meditation, that's under a thousand dollars.

[NeurOptimal](#), hundreds of sessions of neurofeedback which is \$18 a session but you got to buy a lot of them. Apologies, these are partners I work with.

Then the big one, one that's on the most for me is [40 Years of Zen](#), but you can see, it's a template, it's a process. Start small, do things. Do they make a difference? Do you want to go to the next level? For me I've done 6-1/2, soon 7-1/2 full weeks with electrodes glued to my head, not counting my [NeuroOptimal](#) sessions.

That's a significant amount of my life. I've done it because it's gotten me out of my own way. I don't know anything that's more effective where I would do that. Now, you explained that you stutter less, you felt more zen. You are more emotionally ...

Dave Kalstein: Open with giving love, expressing love to people.

Dave Asprey: From [NeuroOptimal](#).

Dave Kalstein: That got me ...

Dave Asprey: Go in the door, and you said I see that my brain will change and then you went to [40 Years of Zen](#).

Dave Kalstein: Yeah, I would not have done [40 Years of Zen](#) without [NeuroOptimal](#). It's a great doorway into that next level.

Dave Asprey: It seem but your brain does when it can see itself.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: What happened post 40 Years of Zen? What were the changes you experienced?

Dave Kalstein: I've been twice, I'm going back a 3rd time in December. The 1st time it was really about clearing out my own mind, working on myself. The 2nd time I realized that I've done a pretty good job of that and my alpha brain waves were plateauing and the next step of it was sharing this awesome world I have inside my heart with people. Which can sound a little new age-y right?

Dave Asprey: A little.

Dave Kalstein: A little, but for things to become alive. I've been talking about tribe the whole time, kids, this and that, dancing around the fire. Dancing around the fire by yourself is not the same thing as doing it with your brothers. It's not the same thing as doing it with your family.

Every time you go, new things happen. You are able to control new parts of your brain. That's part of the process. You don't just do the same thing over and over and over again. Just going once, by the way, is life changing. I didn't think I was going to go back. Again, but decisions led me to that point.

It's a progressive practice. It is like martial arts for your brain.

Dave Asprey: Very much, yeah.

Dave Kalstein: At a subconscious level. The funny thing is after doing it I came back and who am I going to talk to about it? I could talk to you, and of course I talk to some Tuhons about it. They were all nodding, like they'd never done neurofeedback before, but they were at a level in their lives where they had earned the reps where they knew exactly what I was talking about. They were ... They know what alpha is.

Dave Asprey: There are spiritual masters from many different disciplines who get here. What I found is that I was a cloud computing guy, not a spiritual master. I didn't know anything about this stuff when I was young. I was able to find the faster path.

The idea of meditating is attractive to me except that I could play with my kids or I could meditate. I would like to play with my kids, I would like to meditate but there will be a tradeoff.

What if ... When I do meditate I have rubber bumpers and buzzers when I do it wrong, so I won't waste even one second in an effective meditation. To me, that's a

beautiful thing. That's an ideal, like the pursuit of perfection, the idea of getting more in less time.

That what was attracted to me it, to be honest, that's what attracted me to the second time that I've done it and the other times. The first time what attracted me was, I actually said, "The average person gets 12 IQ points, divide it ..." It was like a thousand dollars an IQ point that I'll put that on my Discover card 'cause I didn't have cash in the bank for that. I was between jobs, but it was still worth it. That wasn't actually the full [40 Years of Zen](#) program that was a full form of neurofeedback but without the nutritional and the coaching staff that I've since put around it. I don't know, it made a difference for me.

Dave Kalstein: Something we talked about the first time, like I said, there's not many people we can talk about it with. I got a chance to do my ... I do the complimentary coaching call when you enroll in the program. I got a chance to deal with you after I was done.

It's great 'cause I could finally talk to someone about it. Something I remember you said was, it's great that you can express it this way. I was trying to express myself in a way that was my experience and I was not a spiritual guy. I still wouldn't qualify myself as some new age-y guy.

I understand there's things that's not been quantified in life, but when you say meditation people think that you're going to be in a lotus position, still, with no mind for hours and hours. For some people that works.

What [40 Years of Zen](#) did for me was because it shows you the feeling, it quantifies scientifically the feeling you get when you're in a high alpha state. By the way, what they do there is not that type of meditation. You were thinking about things all the time.

Dave Asprey: You're working your ass off.

Dave Kalstein: Your brain is working. A lot of people think, "I can't think about nothing for a week." Afterwards, and this is the big thing, if you cannot take the

training with you then it's not a value. You have to be able to do it when you leave too.

That leads me to, "Okay. I don't have the chamber, I don't have the electrodes. What is my own meditation?" Because if I hold myself to someone else's definition of meditation, I'm never going to get it. My meditation is I'm writing a script and I'm coming to a point where something in my mind says, "Time to quit Dave." or "That line sucks." or "You just start over." It's my ego. I recognize that now 'cause I'm more aware. My observer persona has been cultivated.

I can see that without emotion. What's my meditation? I do not like candles and incense. I have not painted my walls of my room any particular color. What I do is I get up and there's a blade. I have a blade in my drawer this long and I take it out to my backyard and I move with the blade. I don't want people to think that I'm moving like Bruce Lee because I'm not. It's moving meditation, it moves like this. You'd barely see it moving. Because it's not about the motional value of taking that cut there, it's just me moving and I am mindful now 'cause there's a weight in my hand and there are consequences to it.

Really, after 5 minutes of that I am up and ready to go back into it. I am in full alpha state. Now, I'm not suggesting that anyone in your audience without training pick up a blade and go out and do that. That is how I trigger it. What I would encourage people to do is think about whether they'd go to [40 Years of Zen](#) or do [NeuroOptimal](#) or whatever. What is their mode of meditation? Because it's not a one size fits all thing.

Dave Asprey: Not at all.

Dave Kalstein: Some people ... Everyone has experienced that alpha flow state in some point in their lives. [40 Years of Zen](#) lets you know exactly what it is. Then you need to do work afterwards of how do I recreate this in my life every day? It doesn't take ... You don't have to buy all these toys when you get to that point. It's having that state of mind where you know what it takes to get yourself there.

Dave Asprey: Very well put. Dave, there's a question every guest on the show has answered. Maybe you prepped out of time. I have no idea. Top three recommendations for people who want to kick more ass. You've kicked ass in your career, you're a kickass martial artist. You're just a cool guy.

Dave Kalstein: I gave this one a lot of thought because I listen to your podcast all the time.

Dave Asprey: You did prove that. All right.

Dave Kalstein: I realized that ... What is kicking ass? It's the result of a lot of things. It's a result of training, of preparing yourself for life. My three things, they're questions. How do you respond to life? Because there's three different ways. The first way is a reflexive response.

That is, when something happens that you're not expecting and you cover up physically or emotional, and you have no control over that. It's a reflex. Anyone goes through that. That is what happens when you haven't been mindful about your life.

The second type of response is the condition response, which is you've actually been mindful of the consequences, had some training for yourself and now you know how to do it. The problem is, it takes thought. In that moment of thought you could lose that situation.

You've got the reflexive, the condition. The third one is the correct response. That is when you have trained so much that the conditioned responses are now reflexive. You're doing without thought in your state of flow.

Everyone on your audience can ask themselves those questions. When I go into a situation, I am responding reflexibly, conditioned or am I correct? There's a lot of people that do things correct. If you are not in that correct response phase, I would encourage them to think about being more mindful about life and thinking of the formula to get themselves to that point, whatever it may be. It maybe Sayoc, it may be meeting in a sowing circle. Whatever it is, I guarantee people can analyze it that way. If life is one rep, do not waste it.



Dave Asprey: Dave, people know where they can watch your TV show. Anywhere else you want to send them?

Dave Kalstein: CBS, Mondays at 10. If you like what I've been talking about with Sayoc, you can go to sayoc.com. That's S-A-Y-O-C.com, a lot of information there. We got training groups everywhere, women, children, guys do it like me. It's a lot of fun, it's a whole world and we'd love to have you. Thank you for having me.

Dave Asprey: It's been a pleasure. Thank you my friend.

Dave Kalstein: Yeah, awesome.

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