Transcript of "Dan Burden: Boosting Happiness, Safety & Longevity with Blue Zones - #252"

Bulletproof Radio podcast #252

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Dave: Hey, it's Dave Asprey with Bullet Proof Radio. Today's cool fact of the day is that sleep walking is called somnambulism, which is from Latin. It's somnus plus ambulare which means to sleep and to walk surprisingly. What you probably didn't know is that about 18% of the world suffers from sleep walking. That's way higher than you probably thought it was. One of the other things you probably didn't know and this is something that I've personally experienced. If you're in a highly toxic environment, like say a bedroom with toxic mold growing above your headboard, like I was, your chances of having night terrors that includes sleepwalking go up substantially.

If you are one of those 18% who suffers from sleepwalking that's kind of interesting but if it just started and you're having all sorts of weird, funky dreams see what the air smells like. Maybe it matters. Before we get into the show, check out the Bullet Proof Conference. Go to bulletproofconference.com and October 23rd through 25th in Pasadena we have dozens of companies coming with the latest bio-hacking technology and some of the worlds top experts in hacking your brain and hacking your body as well we're expecting about a thousand people to show up.

If you want to come hang out with a bunch of people like you who enjoy Bullet Proof Radio, enjoy Bullet Proof Coffee and are really interested in doing things the easy way rather then the old fashioned hard way, just getting more in less time, come check out the Bullet Proof Conference, bulletproofconference.com. Today's show is what I'm really excited about and it's something I think that you're going to enjoy. It's about blue zones. The blue zones concept is that there's a life radius way of talking about a walk-able community and how building the environment around you, like your neighborhood, your towns, and your cities directly effects your health, your happiness, and your well being.

If you know the definition of bio hacking from the info graphic that I wrote several years ago when bio hacking was a really new idea, it's the art and science of changing the environment around you so that you

have more control of your own biology. That's why this is going to be such a fantastic discussion, because we're going to talk about how do you design the city around you so that you kick more ass. That's pretty cool. Today's guests are Dan Burton and Samantha Thomas. Welcome to the show Dan and Samantha.

Samantha: Thank you.

Dan: Thank you. It's great to be here.

Dave: Dan, you're the director of innovation and inspiration and a national walk-ability expert at Blue Zones. Samantha, you're the built in environment and community catalyst director.

Samantha: Correct.

Dave: Okay. These are some pretty fancy shmancy titles. On top of that the White House recognized you, Dan, as one of the top ten champions of change and transportation. Time Magazine says you're one of the six most important civic innovators. You guys are doing some big stuff, even though you have these fancy shmancy titles. What is this big stuff you're actually doing?

Dan: I'll start. We are basically helping create oasis for great livability in every town we work in. That communities throughout all of North America have become so focused on the car that everything got out of scale and that includes our parks, our schools, our streets ... The fact that we zoned everything and separated every land use means that people can no longer walk naturally. Our goal is to go in and start to create these oases in a community, typically starting with the downtown or certainly the downtown and it's central town area. Then once things get seeded and people realize that this is a big change that they love, then we can help inspire the community to go and start to correct even places in the suburbs.

Samantha: Yeah, I would just add it's about what we are looking at, how do we get people back on their feet and how do we make walking really the most pleasant, unavoidable choice of how we choose to get around our cities.

From there as we need to go further and further out into adjacent communities and so forth, we have different transportation choices. Whether it's our own personal car, car sharing, transit, biking, you name any of the other innovations that are coming forward with technology now. I think we as humans, we're born and made to walk. How do we make something that's so natural, natural again?

Dave: It sounds like in order to build environments where people are basically encouraged to walk, where it just makes sense to walk instead of drive, it sounds like there's a lot of you're going to have to move, you're going to have to live in high density housing with someone above you and next to you and around you and all that, which a lot of people don't really want. Have you told people, "All right, you're going to have to move in order to get this benefit?" Is the cost and inconvenience of coming out of the suburbs, coming out of the countryside and living in a big high density city ... Are you replicating the model in China? How does that work?

Dan: No.

Samantha: No.

Dan: No, we really don't encourage people to move. If they're footloose and fancy free and they're looking for a new community or even a new part of the community, great. No, to start fixing every neighborhood ... A good starting point would be taking age friendly. The average male is going to outlive their ability to drive a car by five or six years and for a female ten or twelve years, obviously through many advances in medication and medicine and all kinds of thing. Also people made some choices to where they wanted to raise their family. They're not going to move. They're not going to sell their house. That's where their worship centers are and friends. We need to start with each neighborhood. Some neighborhoods are ready to start right now. Others are probably not going to be ready to start for another five or ten years. Every neighborhood needs a champion. I'm just going to start to say, "Okay. It's okay to have a park near us or make some changes to our schools so that kids can walk to the schools." Every neighborhood in time does need to be fixed.

Dave: When you say fixing a neighborhood you mean putting in sidewalks and crosswalks and speed bumps. What do you do to make something more walk-able?

Samantha: That's a great question. Yeah, there's a range of tools and principals kind of in our greater toolbox as communities and so certainly sidewalks or bike lanes or other aspects that you just mentioned are key. One of the biggest things that we're most interested in and really looking at is how do we get safe speeds on streets so that streets really can become complete by them adding in where appropriate and when needed the additional buffers for people biking or walking and driving or what we call complete streets. There's movement happening here in the US. It's picking up a lot of speed called Vision Zero, where modeled after Copenhagen in the eighties. Correct, Dan?

Dan: It is, yeah.

Samantha: Where we as communities and as people are tired of losing lives due to traffic related crashes and accidents. What that really means is how do we change the speed that people driving are going. Because speed is the number one factor that kills people in place. We work with communities on identifying what we call the target speed. If you're near a school how do you actually help people driving go the fifteen miles per hour and then from there with the goal of getting more people walking and biking. Add in the features and tools that are needed.

Dave: When I hear things like speed kills, I'm always interested in the data. When they raise the speed limit the number of deaths per mile driven went down. Are you sure that speed kills?

Dan: It does.

Dave: I'm unconvinced. Speeding by a school kills. I'm not sure that speed kills in general makes any sense at all.

Dan: Yeah, I think the important point about speed is you increase the speed let's say from twenty miles per hour to thirty. You go from where if you

hit a pedestrian or a cyclist. You go from, oh, maybe fifteen percent not surviving at twenty. At thirty only fifty percent survive.

Dave: Yeah, survivability of accidents goes down but the incidents of them doesn't necessarily go up. I'd buy that.

Dan: Yeah. I think that's the important point is that as speeds go up not only do more pedestrians and bicyclists get killed but so do motorists. Everything we're doing now to make walking, cycling safer is actually a benefit to the motorist as well.

Dave: If your commute is twice as long. We now waste about forty million extra hours per year sitting in traffic because we're going really slow how many human lifetimes have wasted potential is that?

Samantha: Yes, great point.

Dave: Unless they're listening to Bullet Proof Radio, in which case it's better for everyone, right? There is some sort of a ... I would say there's a tension between go slow and actually like get home so you can play with your kids. How do you address that? Some jobs aren't going to be work at home jobs. Some jobs you drive somewhere because you have a specialized expertise and you have a forty minute commute. In fact, I would argue that the vast majority of people listening to our conversation right now are probably commuting, not because they don't want to walk to work but because there isn't a job near them.

Samantha: Exactly.

Dave: If you tell these people, "Hey, we're going to make the communities more walk-able, we're going to cut the speed limits in half which also lowers the carrying capacity of the roads by fifty percent, which increases the commute time, oftentimes doubling it, how do you handle that kind of tension. "Okay. We want walk-able cities but we also want people to be able to get home and see their families." What do you tell community people and I'm imagining these community meetings where you're proposing these changes, like in Copenhagen where everyone walks, but how do you address that problem?

Dan: Yeah, everything that relates to the built environment is very complex. There is no simple silver bullet. It's truly ... We have to look at every aspect. One of the most important things is that as we make it easier for motorists to drive faster and go further out and they settle further out it's adding to the traffic congestion. They're actually not getting home as soon. That's just the way traffic works. The more people feel that they can or because of banking rules and so-on it's just easier to buy a home further out, then the more you get locked into a lifestyle that's full of stress ... What we're saying is if ... Some folks would love to have their own neighborhood rescued and they are fortunate to live more toward the center of town. They should have their quality of life improved so that they can walk, they can bike and they can drive. That's the shift that we're seeing in city after city is they become more walk-able. A lot of traffic tension is eased. It's not the opposite. It's fascinating that as we create a walk-ability the motorists actually have slightly better time.

Dave: Is all of this kind of a mute point? I've said ... My kids are six and eight right now. I think it's unlikely that they'll actually learn how to drive unless it's for fun because the self driving cars are so close right now. The whole idea of owning cars is going to radically change anyways. When we do that the amount of parking spaces goes down by like an order of magnitude and suddenly you just walk where you want to walk. When you want to stop walking you pull out your phone, push a button and a robot picks you up. That's actually happening a lot more quickly then most people are thinking about right now. There's billions of dollars being poured into this. Is that going to change what a blue zone is or what a life radius is radically for your vision?

Dan: I think it's going to improve the life radius. I'm also eager for the future and I hope it happens in my lifetime. I think it will. I'm very supportive of the fact that as we go more and more to driver-less cars that we can get rid of 95 percent of all the parking. We can put in buildings. We can achieve the place making and the identities that are needed to create a thriving, bustling center and add to each neighborhood. What are your thoughts Samantha?

Samantha: Yeah, I think as you point the technology of driver-less cars as an example is not far behind. We're already moving as a trend into more of

like a sharing economy with the zip car and car to go and kind of all these different ways that you can be either car free, car light or have the option for your kids when they're old enough to drive to tap into a car when maybe there isn't one available with the household. I think too that .. The other trends that not only support this evolution in technology are changing demographics. In North America we have one of the highest and largest populations of our history turning sixty-five in a matter of the next ten years. We have this huge population shift happening and the next kind of largest population generation, the millennials, are already reflecting maybe what you're seeing with your kids where I'm a millennial.

I don't want to have to own a car if I don't need one. I want to be able to have access to a car. I want choice. I think a lot of the blue zones philosophy, not only in the built environment but the other areas of work that we do around work sites and food and schools and the like, is really about how do we create choices and how do we bring to the forefront what are the healthier choices and that becomes easier for people to make those options available.

Dan: Yeah, but going to your mention of is it a mute point? No, I think as we become much more walk-able and more focused on people, the social lives of our neighborhoods and things like that, we're preparing ourselves for the car-light or the car-less future.

Dave: You have a concept of this life radius. As I mentioned earlier but I never asked you guys to define it accurately. This is a really key point because for listeners if they're looking at relocating or just changing the environment around them to make their neighborhood or environment more compatible with human biology, thinking about things in terms of live radius is actually really helpful. Can you define that so people can sort of get that in their heads.

Dan: Yeah, I think a key point about a life radius, which is one of the Blue Zones principles, is that we spend ninety-percent of our lives inside the radius. For some people, that might be twenty miles if they drive a car and they don't have stores near where they are or to go to a park need to get in a car to go. The ideal life radius would be down around five

miles. The human being can walk in twenty minutes one mile. An hour long walk you own three miles. If it's beautiful, it's attractive and safe and comfortable. Many people will walk two miles to a train station for example.

Now with a bicycle the radius becomes much greater. It's easy to do a five and even a ten mile walk. The point is you want most of the things you're going to do for ninety percent of your time to be inside that radius. You don't have to do something exotic. Your friends, your worship centers, food, entertainment, everything ideally is an area that you own. You know that area. That's the life radius and it adds to a persons health and happiness to have a good life radius.

Dave: Yeah, I would just add for the visual listeners out there if you have a hand-free or just mentally if you put a dot on a piece of paper and that symbolizes you in your house, then put other dots that represent the coffee shop, your workplace, your school, the children's school, the park, the worship center, all these things that Dan just mentioned. From there that helps define your life radius. Where are your friends homes, your other gathering places and then I guess the question would be is of those key things how many can you access by foot, by car, transit? Is it actually safe and comfortable to do all of the above. Then you can start to define through those routes of travel ... Maybe those are priority areas that could be further enhanced within your community and with your neighborhood to provide that choice.

Dave: It makes sense if you're looking to relocate, map out those things. The problem is if you're looking at a new neighborhood, you don't know if you like that coffee shop. They probably don't even put butter in their coffee. Not just that but there's also this idea ... A lot of people don't know this but the number one variable as to whether someone's going to be your friend is how close they are to you. At least that's historically speaking. We have this weird thing called social media now and there are a lot of people who have friends that are not at all near them anymore. We have these online interactions.

This lets you kind of filter like, "Oh, my friends are the ones who like to dress up in medieval outfits or Tron." There's probably only like forty

people like that on the planet but they're all friends, right. There's probably a group of them. We have this almost hyper specialization of friendships that isn't geographically friendly at all. I get on airplanes and fly to conferences quite often to hang out with a group of very close friends. I don't even know where half of them live like I probably couldn't remember if I had to. I haven't been to their houses. I'm never going to so we all fly somewhere to spend three or four days allegedly to do some business thing. It's mostly because we're all friends. There's something happening where the proximity of your friends is maybe less important and people don't know their neighbors as much because of social media. Do you think that'll just naturally reverse itself or is there something about ... Maybe most people don't really like their neighbors anyway because they have nothing in common, especially in big cities.

Dan: I think both friendships circles are very important. Now that we have social media we need to feel connected to people who have a like sharing of ideas and concepts and things like that. We need to bump into people on a daily basis. Study after study is confirming how important that is, that it adds to your sense of well being, that true happiness comes from how many friends you have. An interesting study about that and it gets back to the life radius with the impact of the car. Do you want to tell the story about Donald Appleyard, his studies Samantha?

Samantha: It was in the eighties, right Dan?

Dan: It was.

Samantha: Donald Appleyard was studying around livability, the guru of kind of livable streets in San Francisco. He wanted to see if there was a correlation between how many neighbors or associates or friends you had on your street compared to how fast vehicles and traffic was moving on your street. Lots of traffic compared to streets with little to no traffic. What he found is on streets that had low traffic, slower speeds, quieter, people on average had three strong acquaintances on their block. As streets got overbuilt and widened and encouraged more through traffic, people who lived on those streets only knew maybe one acquaintance on their block. The social connection of the street

dramatically changed due to the relationship with the building forms and the volume of one mode of traffic on it.

What he saw was as those streets got built out, the homes no longer had people gathering on the front porches and no longer had little stopping points where people were bumping into one another as they were either coming out of their parked car, walking down the road and so forth. We are seeing a direct correlation between how many hours per day is recommended to add to peoples happiness of social interaction and engagement from not only like really tight family and friends but also just the need for us to be able to bump into each other. Really it's about six hours of face-to-face bump into one another time and that actually excludes Facebook. Although that's an important circle to stay connected it's not fully contributing to our full well being and happiness.

Dave: Six hours a week of bumping into people is more than most people get, especially if they work from home. I work from home. I don't bump into that many people at all. I actually see this quite a bit. Unless you're in a cubicle farm and then you spent a half hour commuting and then you sit in your office building or unless you're in sales and you're calling on accounts or something like that, seems like no one's getting that.

Samantha: You're right and we're looking at how do we even reshape the way we are working these days. How do we make more walking meetings or breaks? We're actually seeing that as people are moving more and that means that you're maybe randomly bumping into people or you're engaging with people in different ways that we're starting to improve work productivity too. There's a direct correlation between how healthy, mobile one person is both physically and mentally that then relates to productivity. I think we're thinking about from the life radius standpoint how do we create environments that allow for more of that permeability and the choice so it really isn't ... I joke with my sister, "Get in your car box leaving your home box to your work box to your gym box back to your home box." How is it more fluid in allowing for those spontaneous moments of collaboration innovation or just interaction.

Dave: It's kind of funny that you mentioned a gym box. The cross fit box is a pretty famous thing. One of the reasons CrossFit has taken off is that

they have a really strong sense of community build in around these things. Would just putting more smaller gyms in neighborhoods solve a lot of these problems?

Dan: Not directly. Here's the key point. People who join a gym say the first of the year, the percentages drop off astronomically, that the best way for people to stay fit, of all ages to stay fit, is truly to walk out your front door. For walking to be a natural activity so that then you start to bump into people and you get in your daily routine just walking to a store that's nearby, whatever. That you're getting both the social connectedness that you need and you're getting that physical connection that is essential for longevity and just good health.

Dave: I travel extensively. I've traveled to China and looked at the spaceship cities where the air isn't breathable outside so every building has air locks and there's like 50,000 people living in each building. There isn't a lot of social interaction on the street. You go to Japan, lots of people walking, not a lot of people talking. Go to New York, same thing. People walking doesn't seem to have a high correlation of people actually communicating and doing neighborly things. Especially New York. I love New York but New York is not known for being so friendly, right?

Samantha: Yeah, I think there's definitely the different like cultural aspects to the social life of a street. As you point out, New Yorkers are heads down on the go as a kind of full context. Where New York has strong models is they have a lot of range in options on where you're living and still be able to access kind of all of your daily things with different transportation choices.

Dave: Is that like an ideal blue zone sort of life radius city? Is this a model?

Samantha: For us from the built environment from the walk-ability standpoint, you get true walk-ability when you have a diversity of destinations within a five to twenty minute walk. One mile radius gets you the heart of walk-ability. New York has a lot of that scale. That's also really urban. It happens and can fit all sizes. Dan and I live in Port Townsend, Washington, which is a town of nine-thousand people. It is very walk-

able, bike-able, has a lot of great active transportation and living choices for people of all ages because of its kind of core form.

Where I live I can walk to my coffee shop, to the yoga studio, to a park, multiple parks, to the co-working space that I work at, to Dan's house where we're sitting today. For those people who chose to live a little bit further outside of town than once they get into town they can walk and bike to all of their destinations and/or even bike in. There's different scales. What we're looking at is how do we bring back the human scale to environments that then will foster the healthy choices and improve overall quality of life, livability and equity, access to things.

Dan: There's a really great spot in Pennsylvania that doctors were trying to study forever where people are outliving their genes. They basically refuse to die and they refuse to get sick. Medical team after medical team went in to try to figure out what it was they were ... Basically all immigrants from, I think it was a spot in Italy, all from the same village there. They became rock quarriers, the men. They finally figured out what it was. Every night they would come home from the quarry, typically walk back from the quarry, and the woman would come out of the houses. They would socialize in the streets for twenty, thirty, forty minutes. That was the magic. People need that social connectedness. The more diverse it is the better. You're not just with your special social group or economic strata. You're mixing with America. There's where I think the social life of our streets really has to take on greater importance.

Dave: It's interesting. One of the quantified self founders, a group of guys who really have been looking at just getting data off the human body ... Guys name was Seth Roberts and he recently passed away. We've been doing some collaboration on the effect of small amounts of sugar on sleep quality. One of the correlations that he wrote about in his book and talked about on his website was the number of faces you see per day being an important variable for how well you sleep at night. He was like, "If I see faces on TV, it doesn't really matter but if I actually see them without any conscious awareness that it makes a difference, I sleep better. I thought that was ... It sounded a little crazy but honestly that's what the data says and I think it's true. It's true to a very visceral level

that's far below our rational conscious reasoning part of the brain. Like the bodies calmer when it sees lots of other primates around. It may even work for dog faces. My dog's pretty cute.

Samantha: We are obsessed with dogs.

Dan: We're talking about all these different things that people might want to consider in picking a neighborhood to make them live longer or feel better, just be happier. Quality of life is one of those things that everyone wants but few people want desperately, because it's not that well defined. Dan, you've led a pretty interesting life. You've done a bunch of these bio flux positions. You spent 6 months in Mexico. You led a bike expedition through China in 1980, when it was just coming out of Feudalism. Then you went straight Australia, and you looked at these radically different environments. What did you learn? What made you come up with this life radius perspective from all those weird experiences? I kind of find it hard to put all those together into a coherent way of thinking, but you have.

Dan: Yeah. I think that an especially an epiphany I had when I was in Australia, in 1980 working with them on bicycling to improve bicycling in Australia, I came to fall in love with all of their towns. All of their towns. As I tried to figure out, well what's different? They drive cars. They have many of the same assets that we have in the states, and then I finally figured it out. They didn't design their towns for the cars. The scale of the towns, the block patterns, where they placed the buildings, how well the buildings held the street, numbers of people walking, it was all a confirmation that they were building their towns for people. Which is what humankind has been doing for as long as we've had cities, and I believe that goes back as far as 12,000 years. To the 1st recognizable cities, we've always designed cities for people. It's only since around 1918 or 1920 that we stopped designing the cities for people.

The scale of our cities is wrong. Where we put the buildings, far back on the lot. The lack of green. Everything is out of scale and proportioned. That's what creates these desserts of social engagement and the desire even to walk. I think that epiphany is what changed my career, so I

switched from being in love with bicycling, to being in love with walking. That then gave me the right scale and introduced me to all the great thinkers of the world, of both those who wrote their early work in the 1940s, 50s, 60s, and the people who are like today are bringing the change. To me, the future is based around the human foot. It's the right scale.

Dave: It's interesting, most European cities were architect-ed or just evolved before the car. Most American cities would be after the car of these outside of the various downtowns. Something weird happened in Silicon Valley. All of the core Silicon Valley, Santa Clara, San Jose, Palo Alto, all of that was designed for cars. It all grew up as suburbs, and it's very interesting that when I was down there that's where a lot of the tech innovation happened. We invented computer networking their, and cloud computing, and things like that. Now the new wave of entrepreneurs, they're all living in San Francisco, which is a very walk-able city. I really like San Francisco. They're like "oh I guess I'll hop on a bus and go down to Silicon Valley if I have to, but couldn't we just have an office nearby?"

We're seeing this very, almost doesn't make any sense, so we'll stay stupidly expensive in San Francisco, but companies keep going there because the talent is there. The town basically wants to walk. I think that's part of it. They want also other people like them in their neighborhood, which is the clustering of fact... it's really interesting because it may mean that if you live in a walk-able area, or you buy a house in a walk-able area, that your property values are going to go up. Is there evidence for that?

Dan: Strong evidence. In fact, I believe the figure is about 80 percent of all large corporations are wanting to move back into the center city. The reason is that's where the talent is. If they want to hire the millennials, then they need to be where they want to live. 80 percent of the larger corporations are wanting to move back to the center cities.

Samantha: I was just going to add, the home value side, there's an organization called Walk Score that measures all the destinations, a kind of similar concept to the life radius, that are within your neighborhood or city. You

can extrapolate out as you want to, but they develop a score. San Francisco or the heart of Seattle, capital hill neighborhood as an example, has a Walk Score of 94, which out of 100 you can't really get much better than that. What we are seeing is with a 1 point increase in walk score, anywhere from a 300 to a 3000 dollar increase to your home value. Obviously the higher the walk score, the higher the value.

Dan: The real estate market has shifted, it now wants walk-ability.

Dave: It's definitely true, I am paying attention to this. The second bulletproof coffee shop is going into a downtown area that's being revitalized by exactly this trend. It's in Los Angeles, we're putting a 2nd one down there. I'm not going to say exactly where yet. We have to sign the lease. There's a lot of people in LA whose ears just pricked up.

Samantha: Yeah.

Dave: There's definitely people who want these. I'm looking at other cities, and yeah I look at walk-able areas. That's ideal. I'm working to create a sense of community around these ideas of, you can make small changes in the world around you. That actually make you perform better. Showing people that in a coffee shop is awesome. Doing it in an area where people are likely to walk in and come in and have a cup of coffee and meet someone else who cares about the same kind of thing. That's important to me. It's one of the reasons I do what I do. That's part of our real estate equation, for figuring out where a coffee shop should be. We look at parking, but we also look at do people just not need parking because they're already on foot. That's really nice.

Samantha, we just talked about Dan and his unusual experiences. You also worked in Africa for a little while, that kind of gave you a perspective, as I understand it from looking at your work. That's one of the things that inspired you as a millennial to step up and start looking at walk-ability, and looking at blue zones. What did Africa teach you about this kind of stuff?

Samantha: Yeah. I was specifically in South Africa, which is a huge country in the continent of Africa. I went to really study sociology, urban geography of

the cities and towns and villages. In short, South Africa has a very interesting history as a relatively new democracy. What I found most intriguing and also frightening, quite honestly, was how so many of the cities, due to its political past and part tide, had the built environment created such segregation. Even today, it's not as apparent per say as the Berlin Wall... coming down in that symbolism. Really people still, I think, are I guess in ways living in fear where I had never been exposed to gated communities the way that I had in South Africa. The disparity in transportation equity, where folks living the townships needed to walk, needed to try to get a bike, or take a little town cab to come into the center city.

Also, I was there in 2007, a lot of the downtowns are... was certainly coming back, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, the small suburban community that I was living in, had all the life had fled out of the downtowns and they were scary places. As a woman, you were advised not to walk at night or certain times of the day. It was really eye opening in the contrast of freedom access and equity. How our built environment really shapes a lot of our social ramifications and the socio-economic strata that defines us.

What I found most intriguing was in my time volunteering in some of the townships, I was an outsider, I had maybe a naïve perception. I didn't grow up experiencing the same things that people experienced, but I felt the most warmth and welcome from a lot of the township communities, that's primarily black and colored people. There was such a strong social network within those communities, within the families, that that made me really think about how vital that social life is to us. When I came back to the US, I knew that I wanted to work with civic engagement community minded, and how do we really help strengthen our nucleolus, which often stem from our street and build out into our neighborhood, and then city and town.

Dave: Let's say that someone is listening to bulletproof radio right now, and they're like "you know what? This is really cool. I want a better life radius. I'm not going to move because I own my house and because it's expensive to sell your house and buy a new one and all that sort of stuff." What are the top 3 things you might do if you wanted to

transform or upgrade the life radius around you. What do you do? You come home today after work and?

Dan: I think, just for anything, Pogo Park in Richmond California, one of the top neighborhoods in all of Richmond. Richmond has had some very tough times. In this neighborhood, a woman named Trudy Mayer came along and worked with the kids and found out that what the kids wanted was a safe place. Somewhere they could go to, away from the gangs and drugs and all the things that threaten their lives. In fact, a child had recently been killed. What she did is work with the youth and they acquired some land in the middle of the neighborhood, and they built Pogo Park. It is now one of the most amazing parks in America. The kids go there. They bought a house and made it into a really nice center. It's got... this is only 2/3 of an acre I believe. I think it's only 1/3 of an acre. They have got over 10 different activity zones built in.

All of the children love to come down everyday to spend time. They've given the children work. They actually get paid and they come just to have a safe place to do their homework. You just start wherever in your own neighborhood. In this case it turned out to be a park.

Dave: That sounds a lot like a Boys and Girls club. There's thousands and thousands of Boys and Girls club around the country. I supported the one in east Palo Alto. My friend and mentor runs it. I've gone there, I've volunteered. There's hundreds and hundreds of kids who often times don't have a safe place to go to do that, that builds definitely some community. I wouldn't say east Palo Alto is necessarily a thriving community. It gets over crowded. It's poor. It just doesn't have infrastructure. It's amazing, there is unpaved streets literally a half a million from 10,000,000 dollar mansions. Doesn't sound like that's going to solve my walk-able radius problem. It's nice to give kids a safe place to go.

Is that neighborhood in Richmond still a pretty rough part of town, or did it transform and property value went way up? Now it's terrified and houses are worth 3 times what they were. Did that really change the life radius? Or did it help a lot of kids, which is valuable in and out of itself?

Dan: I think it actually improved the life radius. People now can walk. They have a place to go to. They're bumping into their neighbors. They're asking for the streets throughout the entire neighborhood to be traffic calm. The children are actually doing surveys with the drivers and things like that.

Samantha: What I would add is as this park was evolving and this woman, who was the mother and leader of the park and the community, began to engage the kids more and say "hey if this is a safe place in our neighborhood, how are you getting here? Do you feel safe getting here, whether it's from school or home?" The kids all said, "no, we don't feel safe getting here. That's what we want to do." Together they came up with the concept called the Yellow Brick Road, which was kind of one of the key streets that really was able to pickup and gather the kids. From there, they started putting together traffic calming demonstration projects, to say "how do we make sure it really feels safe and comfortable for us to walk and bike and for our parents to let us do that?"

Where the partnership came in was with the city of Richmond, to say "hey, how can we partner with you, city, that oversees this public space? Being roads and infrastructure, so that overtime we can actually get permanent change from many circles, to bike lanes, to adding more trees in the landscape or yards that we're creating. So we are building a shade and sense of comfort that way." I think as you pick or pinpoint an area that helps bring a gathering place and bring your neighbors together, that you can say "how do we better create our community pride or community identity?" From there, what other strategies and partners do you need to do it? Right. It often city, and it's a crucial partner among many other community stake holders. Actually creating more long term change.

From the short term, it's from what we were just talking about. Working to add some paint or add new street furniture or benches to a park. Long term it is even more in routed in our civic process in a lot of ways.

Dave: What I am hearing is, create destinations where people want to walk. Which means essentially parks and coffee shops. There's this other kind of building, I am forgetting what they used to call them... libraries. I

guess they're royalty now. I'm not sure what's going on. I'm kidding, libraries still work.

Dan: Now they're filled with computers.

Dave: They are filled with computers. It's kind of interesting though, if you look at the number of places the average person is going to walk. I have a hard time imagining walking to the grocery store, because I don't know about you guys, but I like to cook. For me, to carry enough groceries home to be useful, walking isn't a very good idea unless you live above a grocery store. I still think that there are some reason that people are driving for a long time.

Now, you come home from work. "All right", I'm going to make this really practical. "I've got a family, I'm working and I'm probably not going to go out and start a boys and girls club, buy a house with money that I'd have to raise on Kick Starter to create this neighborhood thing." Although, more power to you if you decide to do that. The average person listening to this, that probably isn't there life mission. Let's say "All right, I'm going to support that. I'm going to support someone who is doing that work." Which is an amazing thing to do, rather than supporting their work directly. Find someone who is really struggling to do that and do something really helpful for them, even if it's a couple hundred bucks that helps them make ends meat. While they're bringing a vision to flourish, and can change the world.

You just want to... now you've created more walk-able things. You decided that you're going to go maybe to your local coffee shop instead of the drive-through Starbucks or McDonald or wherever you go to on the way to work. Those are to, kind of small, actionable things but are we really going to see any results? If even if half the people listening to this went off and did that today? Is there anything more actionable that you can do if you want to really, really make the neighborhood around you better? Is there an association you should join? Some sort of magic fairy dust your sprinkle in your neighborhood that makes life radius' get upgraded? How do we make this kind of easy? Right now it sounds like, "10 years and lots of political processes, meetings, and stuff like that." A lot of people just aren't going to do that. How do we make it happen?

Dan: Yeah. There is, as we said earlier, no silver bullet like a buck shot. We need many actions. I think every person taking some action is going to help. Now, I use Vancouver, British Columbia as a great example. I believe it was around 1982 or 84, they had the world's transportation fair.

Dave: It was 1986.

Dan: 86?

Dave: I actually went there, believe it or not, that's kind of strange. But yeah, expo '86.

Dan: Okay. They not only acquired all the land, which became a course perimeter of the water front, but they set a plan in motion that they were going to be increasing the density of Vancouver. They were going to boost the ability to have easy walking, easy biking, easy transit, give people an opportunity. It just performed magic. They were very good about their planning and put most of the density on the water front in a way that kept the view open and all the right things. Built a trail around the entire peninsula that I believe belongs to the public. Good spaces between the buildings. Then were able to keep all of the single family residential stock totally intact.

            Today I believe the figures are that Vancouver has become the densest part of North America and one of the safest. All of these things were attributed to their thinking to the future.

Dave: It's also more expensive that San Francisco, and has some of the worst traffic in North America as a result.

Dan: No, that's true. Unless you choose to live there, and then maybe you see your car once or twice a week when you want to...

Dave: If you're downtown. It's totally true. It's interesting when you drive dense and you're making more walk-able traffic, it doesn't always get better. London has the same problem. They made it prohibitively expensive for cars to come in and it's whatever $25 a day just to enter the city perimeter, which really makes it hard for people who live out in

the country. It's definitely a double edged sword, but I agree, if you're going to live in a neighborhood, you want it to be walk-able. For people listening, this is one of those things where it's not a pressing, I have to have this right now like clean air. Like I can't breathe today, that's a real problem. If you're looking at designing the environment that makes you and your family completely thrive, the kinds of thinking that you're demonstrating with blue zones and the idea of a life radius, it's really valuable.

We have this radical degree of control of our environment. We can bring in tractors, we can re-architect cities at a rate that was unimaginable 20 or 100 years ago. The amount of time it takes to build a 100 story building is less than ever, it's cheaper than it ever was in terms of a lot of things there is a lot of extra regulation and things like that. We can turn more quickly than we've ever been able to. The nimbleness of our infrastructure has changed. This means that if we build this thinking into our civic processes, that we actually just automatically build an environment that makes for strong humans, which is something I am really interested in. That's why you guys are on the show. I appreciate you coming on.

There's a question that I've asked every guest on this show, except for episode 70 something where I forgot, but hey we will forgive that one. That is, given what you know, I guess we will get both of you to answer it. Given all that you've learned in this process, just in life, if someone came to you today and said "I want to kick ass at life, I want to better at everything." What are the 3 most important pieces of advice you have for me? What would you say? Dan why don't you go 1st.

Dan: Okay, as an individual to improve your own life, right?

Dave: Yep. Your own performance, not just your life. I want to better at everything I do. I want to be a better dad, a better mom, a better entrepreneur, a better soccer player, whatever it is.

Dan: To me, number 1 is to experience life and to get a robust series of experiences in life so that you now have a better platform. You're standing taller, you can see out more, you can experience more in life. It

takes you good places. Get those experiences and get them early on if you can. Then keep growing. They'll never stop. After that one, I would say befriend everybody. That I throughout my entire life and career I have always been amazed at how things circle back, that because I wrote an article for example, I met Dan Beutener and changed his life. I now work for Dan Beutener. I think that would be very important to do that. Let's go to Samantha while I'm thinking of number 3. I don't want to blow my number 3.

Samantha: Oh good. Maybe mine might be a little bit more smaller scale and individual on how I feel like I keep propelling my passion, which is around built environment, walk-able communities, is to make sure you create time to, what we call, blue zones downshift. Whether that means making more little breaks or rest bits in your day or something that I have recently been doing is on weekends I really try, and this is really hard, but to completely disconnect from technology. My phone, the internet. Usually I have to do that by escaping up into the mountains and hiking or something like that. You know, to me what that downshift moment allows, and whatever right way is for you as a listener, is to get that perspective. How are you reminding yourself where your at and how powerful are environments in the world that's around us? That inspires me to keep working towards change, which is the 2nd piece is don't fear change.

I think we all want to accept change, and that can be a hard thing when there's change in our life. Whether it's really dramatic or really small. I try to challenge myself and seek change. How are we always pushing that needle for change and hopefully for the better? Then the 3rd piece, I think is just yeah again, surround yourself by your loved ones. That is able to connect and that's back to your point.

Dan: I am glad I waited because this one to me is the one actually fuels my engines. I'm passionate about things. It's that passion. I think the passion is focused around bringing change. That if we focus our life on, you know you've only got so many years on this planet, if you just accept everything is the way it is and is going to stay the way it is you've given up. You've given up for almost the 1st moments of life. My whole life has been focused on bringing change. I think as people realize they

have that power to grow and to be effective, that becoming a powerful change agent is one of the most important of the 3. Yeah.

Dave: Awesome. Well thank you so much for sharing that, and thanks for being on bullet proof radio. Where can people find out more about blue zones, and what you're doing with it?

Samantha: Bluezones.com is a great spot where you can learn more about the in depth and robust work that we're doing and in Beutener founder and CEO has several books, his newest one is The Blue Zone Solution. Which focuses more on food, and from the blue zones communities, the 5 people who are living the longest. And the original Blue Zones book, is a good one that sets the principle on what is blue zones?

Dave: For people listening, we have 2 Dan's. I just interviewed Dan Berden, is the director of innovation, and Dan Beutener is the author of the book. I think the other Dan will be on bulletproof radio at some point.

Samantha: Wonderful.

Dan: Fantastic.

Samantha: Thank you for the opportunity, this is great.

Dave: Thanks for being on, have an awesome day.

Dan: Appreciate it, thank you.

Dave: If you enjoyed today's episode of bulletproof radio, you should know that the entire time, and you would've seen this if you are on YouTube, I was shifting around because I was standing on the bulletproof sleep induction mat, which has all these acupressure spikes. I was actually making my feet tougher and stronger and activating acupressure points while I interviewed people, which is definitely, definitely bio hacker cool. You can check out the sleep induction mat, the new technology, you can also get on the bulletproof website that blocks blue light coming out of your phone so you can sleep better if you do look at your phone before going to bed. Which you know you are not supposed to do, but you do anyway. Check that kind of stuff out. If not, download this

episode. Leave it a good review. I really, really appreciate those. Check out the new Blue Zones book, it's neat to think about how the environment around you is going to be effecting you and even the next generation. We can do it right now. Have an awesome day.

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