Announcer: Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio. It's Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that regular meditation leads to neuroplasticity in your brain. Neuroscientists at the University of Wisconsin found that people who meditate on a regular basis have high levels of gamma wave activity, and that activity allows those frequent meditators to better control their thoughts and their reactivity. Other studies have found that those high levels of gamma waves actually lead to neuroplasticity. If you want the official definition, it's the brain's ability to change structurally and functionally on the basis of environmental input.

Dave: Now, traditional neuroscience believes that you can't train up gamma with neurofeedback. However, that is something that we built proprietary hardware and software to do at 40 Years of Zen, my neuroscience facility. I can show you pictures of my gamma waves that do go up when I do them. Even if I didn't have neurofeedback, it turns out meditation itself, when you are good at it, when you practice it regularly, the way an advanced Zen meditator would, for instance, can raise these high-frequency brain waves.

Dave: You could also, if you're a biohacker like me, run an electrical current over your brain in the gamma frequency range, which I may or may not have been doing for quite a few years, and which we also do at 40 Years of Zen. Gamma's the new alpha, I like to say.

Dave: Today's guest, Emily Fletcher, has been on a couple of times before. She's a friend, and she's the founder of Ziva Meditation and created something called the Ziva Technique, and she's the leading expert in meditation for high performance. She started Ziva in 2011 in New York, and she's been on the New York Times, The Today Show, Vogue, and ABC, and she's one of the top 100 women in wellness, and she's spoken on meditation for performance at Google, Harvard, Viacom, and Wanderlust, where I also spoke and saw her most recently.

Dave: She's also a game changer because she doesn't just sort of pick regular people to teach meditation to, although she does a bunch of that. She finds people who are kind of high performers. Let's see, Oscar winners, Grammy winners, Emmy winners, Tony Award winners, NBA players, CEOs, and then parents and entrepreneurs like me and everyone else, which is kind of cool, because before she started doing all that sort of weird stuff, she was a Broadway performer. She had roles in Chicago, and A Chorus Line and really, I'd say, beat herself up physically and emotionally and used meditation first on herself and then to help a lot of other people.

Dave: Emily, welcome back to Bulletproof Radio.

Emily: I am so excited to be back here with you, Dave. Thank you for having me.

Dave: We were just talking before I turned on the record button. I'm sitting here looking at you, and you look fantastic and well put together, the way you always do. But you have a new baby named Jasper, and I was just saying you do not have a new baby, because

you don't look like the way you do after a new baby, because you don't look drawn out and tired and sort of like you've been through a pretty heavy emotional and physical thing involving lots of sleep loss and whatnot.

Dave: Before we get into these new things that you've learned about the Ziva Technique that you're going to share, just tell me. You don't look like a new mom. What did you do?

Emily: Well, I have to say that my postpartum was actually very brutal, and I went into it very arrogant. I got pregnant on my first try at 39. I had an amazing dreamlike pregnancy, and I actually wrote a whole course called The Blissful Birth, and I was ready to hit send from the hospital bed. Then my labor was a four-day back labor, and then it went into he had jaundice, then he had a tongue tie, so breastfeeding was excruciating, and my stitches came out.

Emily: I mean, it was just gut punch after gut punch, and sleep deprivation, and he was losing weight, and I wasn't making enough milk. I'd say about the first seven weeks after having him was one of the most challenging times of my life. I actually stopped meditating. Me, a meditation teacher. I've taught 15,000 people, and I didn't meditate for a long time, for me a long time.

Emily: I actually think I needed my body to be in fight or flight. It was like I needed to be in battle mode for a while. Then it was getting back into my routines of meditation, and exercise, and eating really clean that has pulled me out of that. Now I'm starting to feel like a human again, and I'm starting to feel like myself.

Emily: I want to shout-out my mom and my husband, because my husband has been taking nights for the past few weeks leading up to my book launch, and my mom has been helping us during the days. It takes a village, y'all. But really, truly, if I didn't have meditation, I don't know how I would have gotten through running a company, and having a book launch, and having kids. You know. This is your life. You've been doing this for years. I feel like in these high-demand times it's even more important that you double down on your health hacks.

Dave: I have this theory that the most ass-kicking women I know are oftentimes the ones who say, "Oh, I'm going to totally rock this pregnancy and this birth," and it seems like Mother Nature's like, "You know what? Just a little reminder here. It might be harder than you think." Pregnancies can be ridiculously easy. Births can be really easy. They can be really hard. It seems like it's entirely unpredictable.

Dave: But my pattern-matching system is sort of like the easier you think it's going to be, the harder it is, and if you're super stressed the whole time, it will probably be easier if I was going to be ... Although being stressed all the time is miserable and probably not good for you and the baby, but it's like finding that comfortable ground, you're like, "I'm just going to let it happen," seems like the hardest challenge for it.

Emily: Yeah. I think it was a level of arrogance, and I think I needed to be humbled. I needed some humility. I also broke my attachment to ... I was very attached to exclusively

breastfeeding, and I just simply wasn't making enough milk, so we had to supplement with formula. Yes, we found really good organic formula that we imported from Europe, but still, it was heartbreaking to me. But it was a good lesson right off the bat, to surrender my rigid attachment to outcome, to [inaudible 00:06:34] and ultimately do what's best for the baby, and to flow.

Dave: There you go. We always do our best, but if perfection is your goal, you're probably not going to like your life.

Emily: Yeah.

Dave: In fact, that's one of the laws in Game Changers. I just thought of that, that perfection isn't the goal, but average is the enemy. You want to be above average, if at all possible, but you don't have to be perfect.

Emily: Yeah, perfection is a prison.

Dave: It really is. I mean, I guess you've dealt with perfection a lot because of your career on Broadway, where you have to perform at about as near perfect as possible, and you have to look perfect, and remember everything you're going to do, and just kind of have perfection. What did that do to your brain?

Emily: Well, I think swinging, which is what I did, which means you understudy many leads all at once, it allowed me to develop this dexterity, this mental dexterity, and it allowed me to hold many roles in one awareness at the same time. My job was to show up to the theater with no idea which character I was going to play. At a moment's notice, at a drop of a hat, you have to play this character, or you might switch to another one. That actually, I think, took my brain to the gym in a very healthy way.

Emily: But that anxiety of not knowing was the thing that kept me in that low-grade chronic fight or flight, and that was the thing that led to anxiety and insomnia and going gray at 26, and ultimately leading me to meditation. Then it was when I found this practice, it was like, "Oh." Cured my insomnia. I stopped going gray. I didn't get sick for eight and a half years. Then I think it played a huge role in me getting pregnant at 39 on my first try and having such a great pregnancy, and then pulling me out of a brutal postpartum.

Dave: You talk about yourself as a recovering control freak, but you also say that you go to Burning Man and India as often as possible. How does that line up?

Emily: Well, I'm an adult child of an alcoholic, and I think that this is a very common attribute that children of addicts or alcoholics have. Because you don't know what's going to happen in your home, everything is unpredictable, you try to control anything you can. Sometimes that will be your diet. Sometimes it'll be your exercise. Sometimes it comes out in OCD. For me, it was, I think, always aspiring towards greatness. It was I wanted to be a better singer, a better dancer, a better actress.

Emily: Well, I think that that control, that perfectionism, helped me. I think it's one of the reasons it allowed me to accomplish what I did, but it's that whole rule of the tools that got you here won't get you where you're going. At a certain point, they started to be detrimental. It wasn't really until I found meditation that I started to understand the art and the beauty and the power of surrender, that you could actually let go and let something else take the wheel, and that doesn't mean being lazy. It means trusting that nature has more information than you.

Emily: I think experiences like going to Burning Man, and experiencing that beautiful right brain serendipity, that present moment playfulness, and then going to places like India, where even ... This is going to sound so hippy dippy, but even the trees vibrate, because people have been meditating there for thousands and thousands of years. There's just a different frequency when you go up into northern India. Having those life experiences really opened me up to what is possible and to this whole other way of living your life, which is one of fun and flow and trust, instead of trying to control everything.

Emily: I think because most humans only have access to their, quote unquote, left brain, or that prefrontal cortex critical mind, all of us are ... Not all of us, but many of us are trying to control our way through our lives. We're like those little kids at the grocery store driving the plastic car on the front of the shopping cart, and the mom is pushing the shopping cart, looking at the kid, thinking, "Oh, look how adorable. That child thinks he's driving this shopping cart." I think that's how God looks at humans. We all think we're driving our lives. We think we're controlling things, but meanwhile, God is like, "Look how adorable. Those humans think they're in control."

Dave: That's a great image. Anyone who's ever pushed a little kid, watching the total joy when they turn the steering wheel, and you're like, "He-he." Right? As a parent of a child who hasn't quite gotten to this age, one of my kids ... I won't embarrass that one by saying which one it was ... went through a period of, well, we'll just call it constipation. I'm going to use "they" to preserve anonymity, because, well, kids get embarrassed by these things. Looked at me and said, "I'm never going to poop again."

Emily: On purpose, like it was their intention?

Dave: Yeah. They're just like, "Pooping hurts. I am never going to poop again."

Emily: I'm going to control that.

Dave: I just looked at them and said, "Good luck with that."

Emily: Yep, good luck with that.

Dave: Maybe we don't have as much control as we might like.

Emily: Oh, it would be so convenient if we did. But the thing is if we're going around our lives just with our left brain or with our individuality, and we're not utilizing that intuition, or that right brain, it's like a really beautiful, well-crafted laptop without being on WiFi. It's

like having a great machine but not connected to the internet. When you practice these techniques, these biohacks, these sleeping, exercise, eating well, then you're basically taking your whole brain to the gym.

Emily: With meditation, you're taking that right brain to the gym, which to me is like the WiFi router that's allowing you to tap into that collective consciousness, to that creative intelligence that is bigger than any one individual.

Dave: One of the laws in Game Changers is all about getting outside your head, and the book now has 120-something five-star reviews. It has two one-star reviews. Both one-star reviews are basically, "Dave Asprey said to use drugs." I'm like, "I did not." In there I said, "Look, here's the deal. You must find a way to get outside your own head, to see what's going on in there," because if you're only looking at it from the inside, you don't know. Yes, ayahuasca or medically assisted psychedelic assisted therapies work, and I said, "Go to Burning Man. Do Vipassana. Meditate in a cave." There's all these ways that don't involve drugs. Deep meditative states. You've got to do something.

Dave: Many of the game changers I interviewed in the book had some practice to do this. I want to ask you, what is the best way to get outside your head? It's okay to say Burning Man. That was one of my recommendations.

Emily: Well, we've been there together.

Dave: Exactly.

Emily: I know how you do it. Fun is one way. Play is one way to get out of that incessant reviewing the past and rehearsing the future. It's not getting out of your head in general. I think it's getting out of that critical mind, that closed individual thinking. Two funny stories.

Emily: One, the first time you and I ever met was actually at Harvard Business School, and I was vaguely aware of who you were at the time. It was a long time ago. But you turned around and you handed me a vial of something. You said, "Here. Take this." I was like, "I don't even know who you are. I'm about to speak at Harvard Business School for the first time. I'm not going to take a vial of unidentified substance."

Dave: It was Unfair Advantage. That's stuff totally makes you have a better speech. I remember that.

Emily: Yeah. Since then, I would totally have taken it. Then a fun side note is that the one and only time I've ever done acid, my friend had this farm upstate. He was a meditation student of mine and he was very invested in me experiencing what it felt like to do that. I said, "Do you know what? You only live once. I want to experience this. I make a living off of talking about different states of consciousness." I did it, and it was super fun. I had a great time. I really enjoyed it. But the one thing that was coming through all night long was Vipassana, Vipassana, Vipassana, Vipassana. I had never done that before.

Emily: But there was something in me that knew that there was a way to access these states of consciousness even without drugs, and so a few months later I went to India and I did my first 10-day silent meditation retreat. While it was not the same thing as acid, it was fascinating to watch how you could actually go into a very, very different state of consciousness sober. Now, I'm glad that I did Vipassana, and I learned a lot from it. I think it was very valuable. But I consider that psychic surgery. It's great to do if you are looking for big insight, or you've been through a divorce, or you're writing a book, or you just need to get out.

Dave: 10 days of silent meditation is a big amount of time and energy invested, and yeah, it messes with your head.

Emily: Yeah. For a lot of people, if they go in very stressed or very toxic, if they haven't done much purification of their physiology, they can have a bit of a break. It's so intense that if you go in with your body not very purified, it just can be too much, and lots of people leave. Lots of people can have mild psychotic breaks. Lots of people have great experiences. I had a great experience. But like you said, 10 days is tough to get away, whereas what I teach at Ziva is more like physical therapy.

Emily: It's like I teach people how [inaudible 00:15:38] on their own how to be self-sufficient and then [inaudible 00:15:42] every day. This is obviously my preferred way, that you wake up in the morning. You meditate. It's like brushing your teeth for your brain, filling yourself up with bliss and fulfillment and the ability to adapt, and then you enjoy delivering that throughout your day.

Emily: Then somewhere mid-afternoon, early evening, you do 15 minutes and you steal away. You do it again and it's like you've taken a vacation for your brain. Then you have all of this energy and kindness and creativity to deliver to the rest of your workday and to your family and to your friends, instead of just coming home exhausted, drinking wine, and passing asleep on the couch.

Dave: It's an interesting idea to say, "All right, there's a daily practice of this." If you look at the Buddhist meditation paths, there's this fast path towards enlightenment that they talk about. I learned this at a monastery, a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Nepal when I went there, actually when I, quote, discovered yak butter tea, as in I tried it for the first time, which was the genesis for Bulletproof Coffee.

Dave: During that 10-day mostly silent meditation, they taught us about this, and the fast path is maybe you can get enlightened in one lifetime, but it's a dangerous, steep trail, and if you fall off, you go nuts. They're like, "This is a known risk." But that's the fast way to do it. I'm like, "That sounds fun. Is there a helicopter," because that's my personality.

Dave: There's also sort of the middle path, where yeah, it might take a few lifetimes, but you just have this kind of daily practice, daily practice in all of that. Then there was a much, I think, slower, less conscious path. When I look at what you're talking about, you're talking about something that's much more accessible with the Ziva Technique, where you're saying, "Look, I'm just going to do some of this every day."

Dave: The question that I have for you, then, is is it worth, for people who are so inclined, like me, to do Vipassana, or, like you did, LSD in an appropriate setting, in a spiritual setting, not at Disneyland or somewhere stupid? I don't mean at a party. I mean somewhere with consciousness and with support and all that, because, by the way, it has about the same risk of creating a psychotic break as a 10-day meditation. It's not without risk. But it's not high-risk either. Or holotropic breathing with Stan Grof, who's been on the show. I've done a bunch of holotropic breathing with him, and I've seen more stuff there than I have on ayahuasca.

Dave: These are all these different ways to at least once experience these very out there, outside your head states. Is it better to have done that and then have a daily practice because you know what you're capable of? Or is the daily practice alone enough?

Emily: Well, I think that everyone's going to come into it in their own way, just like some people come on the health train through food first and then they find meditation. Some people get on the health train through exercise and then they find food. Same thing with spirituality and different states of consciousness. Sometimes you might try drugs and then feel inclined to start a meditation practice.

Emily: I think where people get into trouble is when they think that the drugs alone will be sustainable, that the drugs alone are going to usher them into higher states of consciousness, because while it might give you a window into what that looks like, if you're not actually doing the work, then it's not going to be sustainable, and you have to pay the piper. For every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction. I think that can be valuable as a window into what it looks like and what it feels like, but at some point you're going to have to go to the gym. Steroids might make you big. It's not going to make you strong.

Emily: Same thing, the meditation practice is you going to the gym. It's actually working out this beautiful muscle that is in charge of printing every cell in our body and making every decision in our lives. When people say to me, "I don't have time to meditate," it's like what else are you doing with your time? We're talking about your brain right now.

Dave: I have a friend who has tried more than 100 ayahuasca ceremonies. He's not in training to be a shaman. He has just tried a bunch of these. At a certain point, I just want to look at him and be like, "Dude, it's not working." To your point, where if you have to do that, there's a word for it. It's called dependence. If you are dependent on substances like that to reach your deepest states, then that's a bit of an issue.

Dave: On the other hand, you're dependent on water so you don't ... You're dependent on exercise to get oxygen into your brains. You're probably, if you're like most sane humans, dependent on coffee in the morning. When is a dependence a good thing or a bad thing? I don't know where to draw the line there.

Emily: Well, I would say that the difference between a dependence and an addiction is most addictions are actually destructive to the brain, to the body, or to the psyche in some way, versus a dependence. I am 100% dependent on meditation, but I don't call it an

addiction because it's not destructive. It's actually constructive. To your point and the fun fact of the day, it's actually increasing neuroplasticity. It's increasing neurogenesis instead of destroying me slowly over time.

Dave: That's what kind of drives me ... Most people say, "Well, I don't do coffee because it's addictive." You're like, "Wait a minute. Coffee doubles ketone production in the morning and provides a whole bunch of polyphenols." It is constructive and it feels good. Is that an addiction? When you stop doing something that makes you feel good, you feel worse, like I said, just like exercise and just like sleep. Those are-

Emily: And meditation.

Dave: Yeah. All the good stuff. This isn't me pushing coffee, trust me. If you're listening to the show, you won't change my life if you don't drink coffee. It'll change your life. But I work on that a lot when I talk with people, just like you do, one on one. You see people worried about that line between addiction and dependence, and I think your definition there around is it constructive, is it additive to your life, then it's not an addiction, I like that.

Dave: So far, I don't think fentanyl is adding anything to anyone's life, unless they're in extreme chronic pain. But we have a lot of addicts. That's the flip side of all this stuff.

Dave: It's also worth pointing out that it's probably not possible to get addicted to meditation, although maybe to breathwork it is possible. I've seen people get in bad states from doing way too much breathwork every day where they're sort of floaty and ungrounded and just not able to function at work. It is also possible to get addicted to hallucinogenics, although it's exceptionally hard, and the addiction rate for things like LSD is actually much lower than for alcohol.

Dave: What's your take on addiction to breathwork? Have you ever seen it? What's the downside of breathwork? Then you want you to teach me some breathwork [inaudible 00:22:23]

Emily: You want me to push some breathwork. I appreciate your specificity, because I think that we're using the term meditation as this sort of catch-all, like the word food, and [inaudible 00:22:40] things to your body than butter, which does very different things than coffee, and yet we call it all food. Same thing with meditation. There is breathwork. There's Kundalini. There's Vipassana. There's Ziva. All different types, and some of them lift you up, and some of them are about letting go. I think it just depends on what you're doing.

Emily: I think anything you're looking to escape your life, then this can be addictive. But if you're looking at it as a tool to heal, then I find that it can only be additive. The thing about Ziva is that it's not just about an escape. It's actually not about feeling good when you're doing it. Occasionally, it feels nice when you're doing it, but actually, I say to my students all the time, "I don't care if you enjoy the meditation. I care if you get better at life." You having 15 minutes of nice feeling in a chair, if you want to do that, go get high.

If you want to [inaudible 00:23:29] backlog of trauma from your entire life, then meditate.

Emily: This is an interesting distinction, is that mindfulness, which is more akin to breathwork or focusing, most of the apps out there, most of the YouTube videos are teaching what I would call mindfulness, which is where you're directing your focus, and it's very good at dealing with your stress in the present moment, like, "Oh, I'm stressed. My boss yelled at me. Let me go listen to my 10 minutes of my app," versus the meditation that I teach is all about getting rid of your stress from the past.

Emily: To do that, we're actually de-exciting the nervous system and inducing very deep healing rest. Then the third part of what we teach is this manifesting, which is all about your dreams for the future. I know now, because you've had some shamans on, and you've gotten way weirder since we [crosstalk 00:24:12]

Dave: I've always been weird. I just didn't want people to know it in the first 100 episodes, because then they would not notice all the science behind even the weird stuff that I do.

Emily: Fair point, fair point. You've always been weird, but now you're more open. You're letting your freak flag fly more freely.

Dave: I just do what works. If there's evidence for it, I'll try it. If it doesn't work, the worst I do is I danced around on one foot and chanted or something. It's not going to kill me, right?

Emily: Exactly. The manifesting, I get some eye rolls from some high performers, but really, it's just consciously creating a life you love.

Dave: [crosstalk 00:24:39]

Emily: It's you getting intentional [crosstalk 00:24:40]

Dave: I've got to pause you for a second there. Those skeptical high performers, they come to 40 Years of Zen, and I get to look at their brain waves. I got news for you, people. I know what the brain waves of people who manifest without knowing how they do it look like. I can pick you out of a lineup if I have an EEG. If you want to tell me that manifestation isn't real, that's okay. You just keep on believing that and keep manifesting or whatever the heck you're doing, because it works. That's actually a mental state, and it's one you can reach with meditation.

Dave: I don't know. At a certain point, I don't care if you believe me or not. You either try it or don't. It's totally up to you.

Emily: Yeah. To your point, we're manifesting all the time. It's just are you aware that you're holding a magic wand in your hand or not. Are you just thinking that your life circumstances are showing up, or are you starting to take responsibility for the co-creator role that we're playing with nature all the time?

Dave: I fundamentally believe, Emily, and I think you do, too, if you harbor ill will towards others, even if you smile at them and look at them and all that stuff, it costs you greatly. If you have some of this manifesting, and everyone does, some people are better at making stuff happen than others, and you're walking around angry and pissed off at people all the time while behaving appropriately as an adult, you're going to create chaos in the world around you in ways that you are not aware that you're doing.

Dave: That is why I focus on things like gratitude and forgiveness and compassion in meditation, because if you don't do that, you don't even know all the shit you're creating in the people around you. That's also why if you have people like that in your world, you get them out of your world, or make them do their work.

Emily: Yep. I agree. P.S., thank you so much for talking about these things like gratitude, forgiveness. They're so simple, but they are so incredibly powerful. I have everyone do ... Before they do any manifesting, you start with gratitude, because it's like if you had a friend that was always asking you for things but never saying thank you, you would eventually stop giving them things. I think it's the same. If we anthropomorphize nature, if you're never saying thank you to nature before you're asking for things or manifesting things, eventually it becomes a little less effective.

Emily: Also, if you are taking time being disciplined about giving thanks each day, you're actually retraining your brain to look for everything that's going right. There was some interesting science that came out suggesting that even on the days where you can't think of anything to give thanks for, just asking the question, "What am I grateful for," is enough to change the chemistry of your brain.

Dave: I once did a sweat lodge with ... This was after a week of shamanic training with Alberto Villoldo, and this was led by one of the sun dancers. This is the hardest core, indigenous Americans. He had scars on his arms from putting hooks through, a real guy who spent his entire life doing sweat lodges and just saw the world through eyes that are not mine.

Dave: We're sitting in there, and traditionally you wouldn't mix men and women, but this was a mixed sweat lodge, and one of the women there said, "Oh, I've hit rock bottom. Things couldn't possibly get any worse." He looked at her and he said, "What we have here is a case of self-pity." I don't know what came over me. I was about to pass out, to be honest. I was really close to passing out. I just looked at her, and she said, "If I could just ask for one thing, it would be just enough to get through the day." I just looked at her, and, "What do you mean you've hit rock bottom? You still have both your legs, don't you?" Right?

Emily: Yes.

Dave: And, "You're nowhere near rock bottom, and if you could ask for anything on earth, why wouldn't you ask for enough energy to dance throughout the day instead of just to get through the day? Just get off it." Of course, after that, I looked at the guy next to me. I'm like, "If I pass out, would you drag me outside?" Then I was laying on the floor so I didn't throw up.

Dave: But anyway, that's still stuck in my mind right now when you said that, because there is no excuse for anyone listening to this, right, "I have nothing to be grateful for." Seriously? Do you have both your legs? Okay. Good. That's a win for the day. Are you breathing? It's not that hard, but it's so easy to get stuck in all the other crap. It's not okay to lose even that level of connection. I'm living in a part of the world where I have enough food. That's a pretty good one. I'll get off my soapbox there, but I had to share that anecdote because-

Emily: It was a good soapbox. Any story where Dave starts, "I was in a sweat lodge once," I'm interested in hearing.

Dave: It was kind of a jerk move, really, because it wasn't really my job to do that. But I will leave it to the extreme high temperatures and whatever else. But I couldn't believe it. I've been in times when I'm ... Self-pity and self-hatred and mean voices in my head and all that stuff, and meditation definitely helps with that stuff. But like you said, gratitude. If you can't find anything, you're just not looking.

Emily: I think the tricky thing is that when you're in those states, you oftentimes don't want help. You might think that you want help, but actually what people want is what I call the suffering trophy, where they just want this trophy, like, "I don't know how you make it through the day. That sounds very hard." I think that you can do that. You can genuinely give someone the suffering trophy without being mean about it, because it's honest.

Emily: I don't know how I made it through the day before I had meditation, mindfulness, and manifesting. Life was much, much harder. I would not have made it through my postpartum had I not had these tools. I can do that honestly and with compassion, and say, "You want the suffering trophy. When you want help, when you want a change, call me."

Dave: What do you do when an Oscar or a Tony Award winner is sitting across from you stuck in that place? Hey, do people at that level get stuck there?

Emily: Yeah. I actually had an NBA player come to me, and his agent had hired me, because he was thinking about leaving the NBA, and so his agent is the one who brought me on, because the agent obviously wants him to stay in the NBA. We're talking like tens and tens of millions of dollars of contracts. My job was to come in and be the ... I don't know what I was, like the 13th hour person, or the 11th hour. He was going through a bit of a mental ... It wasn't bringing him joy anymore, and it wasn't what he wanted to do.

Emily: I just had to be very honest with the whole team and say, "Look, I'm going to teach this practice. I cannot guarantee what he's going to do, but I guarantee you he'll be a lot happier on the other side, whichever way he goes." But people think that money and fame is going to solve their problems. It's not. It just heightens your problem. It intensifies. It magnifies who you are. If you have anxiety or depression and then you become an Oscar award winner, it doesn't make the anxiety and depression go away. It

just means that you have millions and millions of people watching you have anxiety and depression. That can intensify things and exacerbate it.

Emily: For me, it's always about just going to the humanness and looking at what is the best set of tools for this person at this moment in time. What's going to allow them to remind them of their own greatness? What's going to bring them joy? What's going to allow them to be a vessel for creativity and nature to use them so that they can deliver their gifts to the world?

Dave: You do see this from these super high performers, and you tell them the same thing, compassion and gratitude, and it works.

Emily: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave: Did he stay?

Emily: He actually left.

Dave: But he's happy.

Emily: But he is happier, and he's going back soon.

Dave: Okay.

Emily: He just called me two days ago and was like, "I'm coming back. I can't wait to use these tools when I'm playing." Yeah, it's exciting.

Dave: Okay. That is super cool. Now, there's a lot in Game Changers, the one where I quote you in the book, and it's Law 39, called Hijack Your Body's Intention. The law goes like this. Your breath controls your brain and your heart because a lack of oxygen will get your body's attention faster than anything. Train your body to stay calm during stressful situations by using your breath to your benefit. Train your body to use oxygen better. There's untapped energy available when your body stops stressing and gets more oxygen. Unconscious breathing lessens your impact in the world, and you're here to make an impact.

Dave: I asked you on the last show which breathing technique you thought had the most benefits, and you talked about a balancing breath between the left and right. If you're listening to this and you want that, you can search for Emily Fletcher Bulletproof Radio, and you've been on earlier episodes there, and I'll put those in the show notes for you.

Dave: But what I want to know now is you've got your new book, *Stress Less, Accomplish More*, where you've had a chance to put together all of this work you've been doing with people, and writing a book is a very big forcing function. It makes you become a badass at learning and knowing what you know. You have to either teach something for a long time or write a book ... In your case, you've done both ... in order to crystallize and structure the knowledge so that it can be absorbed.

Dave: Your book is really, really good at that, and you talk about the Ziva Technique, which didn't exist. You hadn't manifested that when we last interviewed. Tell me about the Ziva Technique and how it's different from that balancing breath you had before.

Emily: The balancing breath you could totally use at the beginning of the Ziva Technique, but the Ziva Technique is this beautiful trifecta of mindfulness, meditation, and manifesting. Where this gets a little confusing is that a lot of people are using the terms mindfulness and meditation as synonyms, but they're not actually the same thing.

Emily: Mindfulness, as I would define it, is the art of bringing your awareness into the present moment. It's very good, like I was saying earlier, at dealing with your stress in the now, like taking an aspirin. I have a headache. Let me take an aspirin. I feel better right now. It's an immediate state change, similar to breathwork.

Emily: Now, the meditation that I teach is all about getting rid of your stress from your past. In order to do that, we have to give the body very deep heeling rest. What we do is we de-excite the metabolic rate, the rate with which the body consumes oxygen. In the main course of the Ziva Technique, it's not about manipulating the breath.

Emily: We're actually utilizing tools that go in and slow the breathing, where you almost feel like you're barely breathing at all. But body temperature cools, heart rate slows, all of which allows your body to basically take a supercharged power nap, but without the sleep hangover. It's appropriate to do at your office. You don't have to sleep under your desk or anything.

Emily: Then the third component, the dessert, if you will, is the manifesting. That, like we were saying, it's you getting intentional about what you want your life to look like. I'm always fascinated how infrequently people do this. People think they're manifesting. They think they're praying. But they're secretly complaining. They're asking questions like, "Well, why did she get a raise and I didn't?" "Why can't I lose this weight?" "Why won't my husband go to therapy?" If you ask shitty questions, you're going to get shitty answers.

Emily: Instead, this manifesting time is like being disciplined about using this beautiful, sacred space right after meditation, right after accessing that right brain connectivity, and then asking very good questions, questions like, "What would my dream job look like?" "What does my dream relationship look like?" "What does my relationship with my body look like?" "How much money do I want to make this year?" This is the Ziva Technique, and I started teaching this because I realized that the world was filled with ex-meditators.

Emily: So many people had tried meditation and quit because they, quote unquote, don't have time, or they weren't equipped to handle the mental and physical detoxification that can happen when you start an intense meditation practice. Because the meditation is getting rid of all that stuff from your past, there can be some days and even some weeks of crankiness, of tiredness, of sadness, and it's basically a lifetime of trauma coming up and out. Because I wasn't really previously focusing on giving people tools to move

through that, I wanted to change it, because I realized a lot of people quit because there are billions of dollars of industry built on top of ensuring that you never feel a feeling.

Emily: When meditation kind of wrings you out and forces you to feel, you need to be equipped, and you need to have a community and a teacher and tools to help you move through that feeling with grace, and to know that there is light at the end of that tunnel. Yeah, so that's how I cognized the Ziva Technique, is that I just wanted, A, high performers, high achievers, to have a tool like mindfulness to use as a runway to go into that deep, restful surrender that is meditation, and then at the end to use the manifesting to feel like they've done all this work and now they can hitch that wagon up to their dreams.

Emily: It's like yes, I just, quote unquote, wasted my time meditating, but now I can really think about what I want to do with all this increase of energy. How do I want to show up in the world?

Dave: It's still interesting to me how many people get stuck on that third manifesting element you talked about from the Ziva Technique. It's almost like it's repellent because people think of like the magician with the white rabbit, waving a wand over a hat kind of thing. If you go back to the original personal development book, assuming we're not talking about old school religious texts out of China or India or the West, it's really Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill. This was a book that huge numbers of people, including me, have read, going back to the early 1900s.

Dave: It has straight up manifestation techniques in it, like write your goals down and look at them every day. We kind of know that manifestation has been out there for decades and decades and decades. But some time in the last 20, 30 years, we sort of fell into this scientific conundrum we don't know how manifesting would work, therefore it can't work, therefore it doesn't work, therefore I shouldn't do it, which is completely anti-science, but it's this weird thing that people do.

Dave: It's the same thing with nutritional supplements. I don't know why that would work, therefore it doesn't. You're like, "But, but there's clinical results that said it did work." This weird, I think, entirely left-brain phenomena happens. For someone who's listening who is an engineer, who is a high performer, and thinks manifesting is complete and utter and total bullshit, what would you say to them?

Emily: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I would say that it's basically you placing the order with the cosmic waitress at the cosmic restaurant. It's you taking the time to even ask yourself what it is that you want, because to your point earlier, a lot of us think that we want money, and that the money will make us happy. We never take the time to get specific about what it is that we actually want, and we don't all want the same thing.

Emily: To me, the power in manifesting is getting really quiet, utilizing that time right after you've meditated, and asking the question, "What do I want? What would I like to manifest?" That's half of the magic. It's just you taking the time to listen to those desires that nature actually put inside of you. Nature put those desires there, so it's not even

you coming up with them. It's just acknowledging the fact that we have 50 percent left brain and 50 percent right, 50 percent individuality and 50 percent totality.

Emily: This is taking the time to have that conversation, to place your order, to make your intention known. Then it's about surrender and trust and, to your point, knowing that your happiness does not lie on the other side of the manifestation of the desires. Okay, you got the $6 million and it didn't make you happy. I got on Broadway. Three weeks later it was the saddest I had ever been. A lot of people get married. They have the kid. They buy the company. They buy the car. Lo and behold, if you don't have the ability to access your bliss and fulfillment right here, right now, it is not coming on the other side of any person, place, or thing.

Emily: I think that as some of these more modern manifesting tools have been incorporated into the popular vernacular, that's when people get a little dismissive of it, because they think, "Oh, well, you want me to just secret a Ferrari, and then if I get a Ferrari, then I will be happy?" It's like, "No. You have to do the work of accessing your happiness here and now, and you have to do the work of taking responsibility for your desires," because your desires are not there to tell you where you need to go to fill yourself up. Your desires are there because that's nature using you to go and deliver your gifts to the world.

Dave: Very, very beautifully said. Question for you. Do you use a sleep tracker?

Emily: I have. I don't right now, but I have. I actually had an Oura Ring. Harpreet, who I know has been on the show, he's a Ziva graduate.

Dave: Oh, nice.

Emily: Oura Ring. I think after the Bulletproof Conference, I used the one when you put your phone on airplane, and you put it on your bed. What's that, Sleep Tracker?

Dave: Sleep Cycle.

Emily: Sleep Cycle. I used that for a little while, yeah.

Dave: How much deep sleep do you get?

Emily: Well, it's funny, because my sleep, when I'm meditating regularly, it just looks like this beautiful, deep, like a swimming pool. It just goes down and kind of stays there.

Dave: You don't go through the normal cycles?

Emily: I don't.

Dave: Do you dream a lot?

Emily: When my husband and I first moved in together, he looked at me and was like, "Good night, honey. Sweet dreams." I said, "I don't dream," and I turned over and rolled and went to bed. Romantic. But I don't dream too much these days. But my sleep is crazy because I have a seven-month-old.

Dave: Fair point. You're not going to get quality sleep for another year. Sorry.

Emily: My husband has been taking nights, so I'm sort of like earplugs, white noise.

Dave: Nice.

Emily: But I just think I'm in an in-between sleep right now. But normally, my sleep, when I track it, looks like a swimming pool. I go through periods where I don't think I dream all that much. Do you?

Dave: Well, I've seen anecdotal stuff. I've talked with meditation gurus from different countries, and just being able to say that is the coolest thing ever. Just to get a chance to interact with people like that's neat. A lot of them have said that when you do more meditation that you tend to dream less, just because your brain doesn't need to do it. But then you also have the shamanic side, the Alberto Villoldos of the world, and they're like, "You dream the world into being," and they spend their entire night dreaming.

Dave: There's a book. I haven't met the author yet. It's called Tibetan Sleep Yoga, and the guy's like, "Look, I'm a busy lama and I just don't have time during the day to meditate, so I just do all my meditation when I'm asleep, and I just go to sleep, and in my dreams my legs are crossed," and he's serious, and he writes all the stuff he does. I want to learn to do that.

Emily: Wow. Cool.

Dave: I generally haven't remembered my dreams or haven't had very many of them. But with some of the sleep hacks I'm using lately, last night I had three hours of REM sleep and an hour and a half of deep sleep. That's sleeping like a 20-year-old, and I'm 46. I've actually been able to, just with the right culmination of things, really, really increase those. I feel like my brain's getting a little bit younger.

Dave: But it's curious, because you do meditate a lot, and yeah, it's a tough time in life, because no one has normal sleep with a new baby. But I just wanted to see what you've seen maybe in your clients when they start meditating. Do they have more dreams, less dreams, better dreams, more nightmares? What's the relationship between meditation and dreaming?

Emily: Well, what happens in the beginning is a lot of people get very, very vivid dreams, and lots of times nightmares, and that's basically that catharsis I was talking about. It's that lifetime of sadness and stress and trauma that comes up and out, and it comes up in the meditation in the form of thoughts. It comes up in your waking state in the form of tears and irritability. Then it comes up in the sleep in the form of nightmares.

Emily: If anyone wants to sign up, it's just ZivaMeditation.com/online. Just a great sales pitch, Emily.

Dave: Well, no, but the thing is if you've got stuff stuck in there, it will affect the way you behave towards every other human and towards yourself all the time until you get it out.

Emily: That's right.

Dave: I mean, that's not a bad thing to have a nightmare, because you wake up. You're like, "Oh, I had a nightmare. Big deal. Now something that was buried is unburied, and it won't affect me anymore."

Emily: Yes. The theme song very much wants to be better out than in. In the first few days and weeks, it can be pretty intense. Sleep can get interrupted. People who've never had insomnia sometimes have it for a few days. There's oftentimes very violent nightmares, because we don't have a place to put our rage in this day and age. Unless you're a football player, there's no archetype for expressing rage these days.

Emily: But then after a few weeks, things even out, and then their sleep becomes much deeper. A lot of people who have tracked their sleep pre- and post-Ziva before meditating, their sleep cycles, they look like hills and valleys, like mountains. Then after taking the course, it looks like that pool basin. You just go light, medium, deep for six hours, medium, light, wake up. They wake up and they feel so much more refreshed.

Emily: For the people that say, "I don't have time to meditate," it's like, "Okay. Well, if your sleep could be one hour more efficient, then for a 30-minute time investment, you now have 30 extra minutes in your day."

Dave: That is a really powerful argument. Sleep efficiency is so much more important than getting eight hours of sleep, which is like 1970s advice at this point. In fact, one of the very early Bulletproof blog posts was ... The first sleep monitor you could buy was called a Zeo, and they're out of business now. I was like, "Here's how to change their algorithm," so that you're like how well did I sleep for the time I wanted to sleep, because it was all about if you slept eight hours, you're a good person.

Dave: With the Oura Ring, they actually incorporated that idea of sleep efficiency. I'm always like 87%, 89%, 90%, which is I don't waste time in bed.

Emily: Nice.

Dave: I feel good about that, but I think getting that percentage up is critical for people. The reason I'm asking about sleep is that's Chapter 4 in your book, is all about sleep, because sleep will improve your meditation practice. Your meditation practice will improve your sleep. It's one of those things that I think isn't talked about enough, so thank you for bringing it up in your book.

Emily: My pleasure. We actually have some studies now. We show graphs of people pre- and post-meditation, and just showing the efficiency. But I've seen it time and time again, and both are going to make your life better. It's very hard to have a great life when you're tired.

Dave: Well, I agree with you there. I'm actually a little bit remiss here, because you have graciously offered to anyone listening to Bulletproof Radio 15% off of your meditation course. Guys, this isn't some sort of an affiliate thing. This is just a gift from Emily to you. I don't have any financial stake in that.

Dave: ZivaMeditation.com, and just use the code Bulletproof, and you can save 15% if you'd like to experience this nightmare-inducing course. No, just kidding.

Emily: Then your whole life gets so much better, because you have less stress in your body.

Dave: Those are a small, sometimes side effect, but they're one that's worth having. I said that on purpose, because seriously, if all those thoughts and all those emotions are bottled up in there, you're just going to act like a jerk all the time, the way I used to.

Emily: Got to get it up and out.

Dave: Yeah. It's got to get out of there, and there's many ways. There's neurofeedback. There's the breathing part of meditation which is part of what you teach in Ziva Meditation. Then there's the compassion and gratitude and the chanting, all that stuff. I don't think either one of us can tell you exactly how it works. However, if you're sitting there going, "This meditation stuff is for people who wear tin foil hats and burlap sacks," you're still stuck in the '80s, because there's thousands of years of research behind this, and it actually works.

Dave: If you think it doesn't work, and you try it and it doesn't work, you basically spent two weeks looking dumb. If you try it and it does work, the benefits are kind of big there, so your risk is low. Your benefit is high. I would say learn meditation in whatever way you want, but Ziva Meditation is good, and it's got a good balance of these things. Just from this interview, you can tell Emily knows what she's talking about.

Dave: Use code Bulletproof on ZivaMeditation.com and save a little bit of money, and go out there and just use this stuff to make the world a better place. It kind of could use it right now. This whole melting of the glaciers in the Himalayas is kind of pissing me off. That news just came out. I guess if you breathe more, you'll sequester more carbon dioxide. Yeah. Okay. That's not how it works, but I wish it was.

Emily: But I do think that a planet full of less-stressed people will make more conscious purchasing decisions. We will be more conscious about how we consume, which will impact climate change. We will elect more conscious leaders. We will understand that the planet is part of us, and we are part of it.

Emily: That's a very real side effect of meditation, and it's actually part three of the book, is we look. We pull the lens way out and we look at, "Well, how does you selfishly improving yourself impact your relationship, your family, your co-workers, and then ultimately humanity and the planet itself?"

Dave: Yeah, I believe just based on biology that we are fundamentally wired to be nice to each other. It's just that we won't do it until we're sure that there's nothing about to kill us. That's your stress and anxiety. That's fear of something, some nebulous fear. As long as we're not starving. That's why maybe you should eat in a way that doesn't make you hungry. That's a big body of my work. Then there's this whole if you feel like the species is never going to get to reproduce, you'll also feel anxious all the time, so basically, get some, for lack of a better-

Emily: There's a whole chapter in the book called From Om to OMG, all about how it can improve your sex life.

Dave: There you go. Actually, meditation and breathing, I tell you, if you're a guy and you want to not have problems with that premature problem, learn how to breathe and you'd be amazed at the changes that could happen in the bedroom. I'm not going to go any deeper than that.

Dave: But then there's that final thing. After we get those out of the way, just like bacteria wired to form kombucha, little weird jellyfish-looking things called the mother, or the SCOBY, which is actually disgusting if you ever poked a SCOBY, but anyway, they will inter-operate. They will form a community for the benefit of the whole, and humans are wired to do the same thing.

Dave: If you meditate, you get rid of the first F, the fear. You eat right. You get rid of that second F, feed. You've got to figure out your own dating situation. That's the other F. You can figure out that one. Then let's make friends. I've got to say, do meditation, because that's the first F word that you need to handle.

Emily: Gets you out of that chronic fight or flight. It's hard to make friends when you're afraid.

Dave: Well, Emily, your new book, *Stress Less, Accomplish More*, for people that don't want to go straight to the meditation course, it is a profound read. It's an easy read. It's got all of the things that you would want to know in order to just think about, "All right, how can I get more of the things that I want in my life, including getting stuff done, with less stress along the way?" It's that reducing stress reduces struggle, which makes everything easier, which makes life more fun, so there's some secrets of the universe in that book.

Dave: I like the way you interpret the universe in it, so thank you for writing *Stress Less, Accomplish More* and for sharing it.

Emily: Thank you so much for sharing it with your tribe. Also, our mutual friend, Mark Hyman, he wrote the foreword, so that's kind of fun, to have one of the world's leading doctors,

who's also hella busy, talking about how this thing gives him more time. I'm down with that.

Dave: Mark Hyman's last interview on Bulletproof Radio got so many positive feedbacks. He kind of opens up the kimono about who he really is and why he does what he does. Talk about a profound human being who's just out for the good of everyone. I really appreciate Mark.

Emily: Yeah. Every time I see him, it's just a tsunami of love. He's doing big, big work in the world, as are you. I'm very grateful to know you. One thing about the gratitude and the forgiveness and the generosity is I just wanted to share that it's not just talk for you. Every time I've interacted with you, when you invited me to lead a meditation at your book launch, I just feel your heart in everything that you do. I know how much you care about making the world better, and about paying it forward, and lifting people up around you, and I see you walk your talk. Thank you.

Dave: Thank you, Emily. That's really kind. I do my best, and it's just who I am, so there's no way you can act any of that stuff. It is what it is. Here's the secret. If anyone acts that way, it actually kind of feels good, and it makes people want to help you. There's really no downside to being that way towards others. It's just a question of whether you can get out of your own way enough to do that, most of the time anyway. I'm still working on it. I'll tell you when I'm perfect.

Emily: Perfection is a prison anyway.

Dave: It is. I've got one more question for you. It's my new question, now that I did the *Game Changers* question for about 580-something interviews, the question about performing better. I've been running an anti-aging nonprofit group for 20 years now, or almost 20 years. I've learned from people three times my age, at least, when I was a little bit younger, who were highly performing, happy, healthy, in their late '80s, dating people decades younger than them, just people who are breaking all the rules.

Dave: Here's my question for you. How long do you want to live?

Emily: A sensible 120 feels good.

Dave: Okay. Why stop at 120?

Emily: I mean, I feel like I've lived a lot, and I'm going to be 40 in March, and I've had an amazing life, and I feel like if I quadruple that, that'll feel good. I mean, yeah. It just feels good and probably is showing perhaps what I consider to be normal and what I am considering to be above normal. It's not quite average, and it's not trying to be perfect. To our beginning point, right? I'm not trying to be perfect, but I am trying to be above average.

Dave: That's definitely above average. 120 is about at the upper edge of what we've seen people achieve using the technology of yesterday. My number is 180 or more.

Emily: I know.

Dave: I just think that there's so much good stuff coming, and part of that is that given all the stuff you've done in only 40 years, I kind of like to picture what wisdom you might have when you're 160. If your brain and your body are still working, which are prerequisites for wanting to live to any age, what good could you do with that wisdom? What would you do to change the world?

Dave: I think we have a shortage of wisdom on the planet, because a lot of our village elders have Alzheimer's disease, and their health is so crappy. They're not able to do the things that they would have performed 100 years ago.

Emily: I've never thought about that. That's fascinating, and a really good inspiration to want to take good care of your brain.

Dave: Yeah. You want to be the old person who's like, "You don't want to do that because I did that when I was 20, and 30, and 40, and it hurts every time. Try this instead."

Emily: "I tried it, Sonny."

Dave: I mean, it just seems like there's that. Also, if you're going to live that long, or you just think you might, maybe you wouldn't make such a mess of the oceans, because you know you're going to have to clean it up.

Emily: There's actually a story in the book where I talk about these monks in India where they call their death date. They say, "Next Wednesday I'm going to meditate on the Ganges, and I'll just drop my body." But they're not doing it because the body has become decrepit. They're doing it because they're in a state of consciousness where the body becomes irrelevant.

Emily: The concept that I really enjoyed, which I think will resonate with you, is that you want to take care of your body like you would a beautiful piece of clothing. If you had a beautiful, brand new suit, you wouldn't wear it once and then crumple it on the floor and stomp on it when you take it off.

Dave: I would pour coffee all over it, because that's what I do to my body, and that just ... No, I'm kidding.

Emily: No, you want to take care of your body, and then take it off with care, and hang it up like a beautiful suit. Yeah.

Dave: That's a good point.

Emily: I like that idea with the body.

Dave: Well, thanks for sharing your thoughts about old age with everyone listening. I want all of us on the planet to think about the fact that we have a really good chance of being

120 years old and fully in charge of our faculties and able to show up in the world. You better start making the world look like you want it to look when you're that age right now. Yes.

Emily: Amen. Amen.

Dave: Awesome, Emily. Thanks again. Again, ZivaMeditation.com. Use code Bulletproof to get a discount. Your new book, Stress Less, Accomplish More. I appreciate you.

Emily: I appreciate you. Bye, friends.