

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that there's a new artwork created by artificial intelligence that does really weird things to primate brains. Turns out that when strange images made by computers get shown to a species of monkeys, they cause nerve cells in the monkeys brains to fire more than pictures of real world objects. And the AI could design patterns that activated specific neurons while suppressing others according to researchers. That's nuts. The AI responsible for those mind bending images is an artificial neural network, which is a computer model that's made of neurons that have a feedback loop similar to the way your prefrontal cortex and most of your neurons work, and it's modeled after something called the ventral stream, which is part of the neural pathway involved in vision.

Dave: They programmed this AI to see by studying a library of about 1.3 million images that were labeled. And it turns out that these new neural networks are neuroscientists' best computer models of the ventral stream. This is unprecedented because this is the first time that we've had control over neural activity using just images in a predictable way, and it may lead to treatments for mental disorders, and it offers some really cool insight into how we may make computers act more like brains. Imagine though, if you are using virtual reality, and the people who put together say a video game or virtual reality were using ventral stream manipulation to make your brain do stuff that wouldn't normally do. That might be good for your brain. It might be bad for your brain, but what if we gave it to people doing marketing or even worse, politics? Who knows? Whatever it is, that's why we need hackers.

Dave: I'm here in Scottsdale Arizona in a live episode of Bulletproof Radio with an expert psychologist who's known for innovative thinking, training and speaking and helping people overcome the weird feelings that block them. And you know on Bulletproof Radio, I talk a lot about biology and the biological underpinnings, even sub cellular stuff that affects feelings. But also end of the day, you can have every cell in your body working really, really well, and you still have bad software belief systems, or you just react to your emotions with stories that aren't real and all that. So today's guest is Joan Rosenberg, who's a master clinician, trainer consultant. And she's looked for most of your life at emotional mastery, how to change your emotions and just to achieve personal growth, whether it's around your career or your life. She's done huge numbers of psychotherapy sessions and taught at the graduate level in psychology.

Dave: And one of the reasons I have her on the show today is that her new book called "90 Seconds to a Life You Love: How to Master Your Difficult Feelings to Cultivate Lasting Confidence, Resilience, and Authenticity." All right, that's a mouthful, but I have her on because of one word in the title, and the word is lasting. And the problem with a lot of things like diets is that you can lose 20 pounds and gain 30. And you can say, "You know, I went to a seminar, I went to a therapy session, and I felt really good for a week." And then it all came rushing back in, and what Joan is focused on is how do you create that lasting resilience, which is one of the most precious things you can have. Joan, welcome to the show.

Joan: Thank you so much, Dave. Thrilled to be here.

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Dave: Let's jump right in with what I would consider to be the main meat of your work and it's something you call emotional mastery. What is emotional mastery the way you've discovered it?

Joan: I think of emotional mastery as ... actually, it's ran up by a couple different things. One is great emotional self-regulation, as such that you are being responsive as opposed to reactive in the world.

Dave: So emotional self-regulation, is that teaching someone to turn off an emotion or to not feel the emotion or to react differently to the emotion because if I master my emotions, can I turn off the useless ones and just be done with it?

Joan: It depends on what you're calling useless first of all.

Dave: Okay.

Joan: No, it's not. It's not turning them off at all. It's actually being present to them in a way that doesn't disrupt your function. So that rather than feeling like you're falling apart, or you're unraveling, or you have to shut down, what you're able to do is actually to stay present to what you're experiencing in the moment, and then not do anything to try to get away from it. No avoidance, no distraction, no disconnection. And you move through it.

Dave: So what's an example of a way and emotion might get in your way in a normal day? Or the way you're talking about all these things getting in your way, how do you know it's an emotion versus someone acting like a jerk?

Joan: Well, someone might be acting like a jerk and then evoking that emotion anyway.

Dave: Exactly.

Joan: Exactly. So if you're reacting in a way that's angry, or ... let me give you an everyday kind of example, one that I mention in the book, and it's having been ... I was driving and somebody hit me from behind. And in those moments, I could have gotten out of the car and then really furious and angry and spilled that anger in mean ways all over the person that bumped into me. And in the moments that I had before I got out of the car, I was able to go, "Look she didn't want me, I didn't want to be hit." But I have a high value and want to hold integrity of ... in terms of myself a different way, in terms of being kind and well intentioned.

Joan: So when I got out of the car I was able to kind of use that to know that I was frustrated and angry and disappointed that I had to deal with all the stuff relating to the accident, but that I could go back and say, "Let's just exchange information, you didn't want to hit me, I didn't want to be hit. Let's kind of just deal with it and move on." And then I could when I left then I could deal with my own feelings of frustration and disappointment but not splash them all over her.

Dave: Now, that seems inauthentic Joan. Like okay, inside I'm really all pissed off and look at the camera and smile and-

Joan: I wasn't smiling.

Dave: Okay. All right.

Joan: No, there wasn't a smile to it. But it was way more matter of fact, but I also didn't see the purpose. Didn't want to be mean. So it wasn't inauthentic in that way, it was like, I don't want to be mean, but I'm also not happy. So let's just deal with this and I'll move on and deal with the rest of my reaction without being-

Dave: Why didn't you want to be mean?

Joan: Because I don't believe that's the way to treat people.

Dave: Okay. I would agree with you there.

Joan: Yeah.

Dave: But there's a lot of people where, it feels good to be mean sometimes.

Joan: And I think that that's what a lot of people discharge emotion. And to me, that's not emotional mastery. Right?

Dave: [crosstalk 00:07:30].

Joan: It's just regulated emotion, right? So then spilling it all over somebody else when it's really theirs to deal with, then that would involve something else.

Dave: Because you've done a lot of sessions with clients, okay, you understand the impact of someone splashing their stuff all over someone else's [crosstalk 00:07:51].

Joan: Right.

Dave: But you also have to develop a certain level of Teflon because pretty much all day long in sessions, people are splashing their crap ... Well, they're trying to splash all over you, but it doesn't stick. What are the skills that you've mastered as a clinician so that when people expel their garbage in your general direction, that it just goes somewhere else?

Joan: I think the single most important one is my ability to listen to what someone is experiencing, and to reflect their emotional state back to them. What I found is that, especially with new clinicians, if they don't do that, they take the other person's emotional stuff home, the baggage home. So the single most important thing I can do is to recognize someone's pain, and just in essence, hold a mirror up to it, even if it sounds like I'm ... somebody say it sounds like you're saying the things that are so obvious, and it's true, but it has a huge impact of calming someone else's nervous system down. So if

you came in and you were angry about an exchange that happened between you and a colleague, my simply saying to you, it's like, wow, I get a get how angry you are. You just being recognized and having that validated, does something I believe to kind of calm you down, and then I'm not taking it home. You're taking it home in a more organized way.

Dave: So just listening. I am just having a hard time with that. I believe and it's affected my life very positively what other people think of me is none of my business. They can be mad at me or not. I had to, maybe I didn't have to, I chose to gain that level of awareness just because dealing with haters and trolls and people with a financial motive or just people who were bullied a lot who can come after you and say whatever weird stuff going in their head, I feel like it really doesn't bother me anymore. Not that I've had the feelings and then I behave professionally, whatever. It's usually like, I didn't have the feelings. I'm just like, "Okay, could you say my name again because people probably will do more stuff that's good for them if they find out about my work and they can decide if I'm whatever you said I am."

Dave: But I'm not sure that you have that same picture as a clinician because what I'm doing is a public thing, right? And what you're doing is one-on-one. So someone comes in, they talk about all this crap, you listen really intently. Whereas what I'm doing frankly, if it's a troll, I read the first three lines. I'm like, ban delete, I never have to see them again, they can't see my stuff anymore. I feel super good about that. They spent an hour yelling at me, I spent one second deleting their stuff. Net, net, I win.

Dave: But you don't get that luxury because you're going to sit there and listen for an hour. Right? And I know my wife is a drug and alcohol addiction emergency medicine specialist. So you have to become a licensed therapist to do that kind of work. And she'll tell me about long ago in her career the types of things people do. And they'll blame their therapist, they'll yell at you and they'll do all sorts of stuff. That's a very different and more visceral and personal thing. You are feeling those feelings and then listening deeply and reflecting it or?

Joan: It's interesting because I don't have people that come in and yell at me.

Dave: You don't? Okay.

Joan: No, I don't.

Dave: Maybe you just see more artists.

Joan: That's them?

Dave: The people who come in are kind then-

Joan: They're not, by large, they're not directing their emotional baggage on me.

Dave: Okay, so they're angry, but they're not angry at you.

Joan: Correct.

Dave: Even when you maybe highlight something they didn't want to know about themselves [crosstalk 00:11:43] activity?

Joan: That's a great question, Dave. What I have found is that when one has the ability to say from your observation of the truth back to somebody, so if I'm confronting them in session, what I believe is that confrontation may be the deepest form of empathy.

Dave: Interesting.

Joan: Because what ends up happening is the person goes, "Oh, wait a minute, game's up. You got me."

Dave: Because you caught them on their BS because you've pushed their button.

Joan: Exactly and so they feel even more well understood. So for me confrontation is one of the deepest forms of empathy.

Dave: That is something I've never thought about and it makes good sense. I suppose if it's a useful confrontation, right? The confrontation in that someone hit your car and you yelled at them, they yelled at you, no one's learning anything for that. But in a therapy session, sure, okay, you find the guy whether they felt something, they saw something they reacted so they would have a mirror right?

Joan: I would say the same thing is true in terms of somebody at work, and you're wanting to discipline or you're wanting to have somebody raised their standards or perform more effectively at work, it'd be the same thing. More often than not when you step in as the manager, the CEO or the supervisor, and you say something to them about their work quality, at some level, they already know it's true. And that truth that I believe resonates. And again, it's a connection, it's actually empathy.

Dave: Okay, but that doesn't necessarily work, just thinking about it. If you're at work, and especially ... Okay, I'm a CEO, right? If I create that kind of confrontation, there's just a power dynamic, even if my senior leadership team, they're all smart, wonderful people. And that said, I still have the upper hand because I'm the ultimate boss. Well, other than the board of directors who are my boss, no one ever sees that. And I can get confrontational, but because of that power dynamic, I always have the bigger fist, right?

Joan: Right.

Dave: But it's the same true if you're a manager, you're always above your team. So I can see cross-team conflict being useful. But if it's coming from the top down, it seems like it's never going to work. How do you-

Joan: You know what? I disagree with that. Again, I think that think of coming from a place that's, again, if you will, positive kind and well-intended, or if you want to take the

positive kind out and just use well intended, right? But that when you come at it from that standpoint, and you're not yelling at the individual by way of confrontation, but you're speaking to the issue that's problematic even if you have the upper hand and they feel recognized and understood. It's like you're not performing at a particular level, and I need you to step it up. And they also know that they're not performing. Even if it's uncomfortable, I do think that they move forward in a good way.

Dave: So that's your definition of conflict and it is really just calling people when things aren't the way you want it to be. Okay, I see that more realistically but you have the Microsoft culture and to some extent Amazon in the way it's talked about now, Steve Ballmer, the old Microsoft used to yell and conflict and I did a lot of work with them back in the day and it was common for you to be really stressed and unhappy because of that. How do you achieve that when you're working with a lot of millennials in the workplace? I try to match that Microsoft culture with the current people who are coming into the workforce who just didn't experience that in school, didn't experience that at home. It seems like if you'd be walking into a Buzzsaw.

Joan: It would be walking into a buzz saw. So there's probably two parts to that. One is in the ideal, perhaps working with the person who is leading to see if the leader is open to making some changes and actually doing the same thing but without the heat and the intensity. And then the second part of it would be also teaching the millennial to either put on a thicker skin, or if it doesn't feel like the environment is suitable and it's too hostile, then it may be to have them move out of that.

Dave: I might have told a millennial who's a good friend at one of my portfolio companies to put on his big boy pants. And it seemed like good advice at the time. But I don't know, was that a good technique do you think?

Joan: I don't. I would say depends on the situation, unfair. So again, it's what's the value that the company and that culture is holding for the millennial working there. What's important about staying there and staying in that kind of environment? Because I don't think that organizations have to be that way. We end up recreating family dynamics in organizations.

Dave: You talk about mastering difficult feelings. We talked about that a little bit. It's kind of how you respond to them, but lasting confidence. There are a lot of people who do not have confidence that's even fleeting. What are the tools from your 90 Seconds to a Life You Love that specifically are around getting that lasting confidence into someone's life?

Joan: Great question. My approach is centered on helping people experience and move through eight unpleasant feelings.

Dave: All right. Tell me these eight.

Joan: Sadness, shame, helplessness, anger, vulnerability, embarrassment, disappointment and frustration. So emotions feelings or emotional states if you will, because helplessness and vulnerability are kind of states.

Dave: I was going to ask you about that. They seem almost the same.

Joan: It's different. Vulnerability, think of a vulnerability as I'm exposed and I could be hurt.

Dave: Okay, but you can still do something about it.

Joan: You can still do something about it. And helplessness is where you feel like you can't do anything about it. So why these are the most common for feeling outcomes to things not turning out the way that we need, or the way that we want. So I'm not talking about trauma, and I'm not talking about tragedy here, though those feelings may show up in those circumstances. But it's the everyday spontaneous reactions to things not turning out the way we want, or want to need.

Dave: Now in Game Changers, my book that's a summary of 500 episodes or so, I think it's around 43, I could have the number wrong. It's about weasel words, words that make us weak and one of them is the word need, but you just used it a couple of times. So when you're sitting on ... you're not sitting on the couch, you're sitting on a chair, looking at a couch as a therapist, whatever it goes on in a modern therapist room these days. What is need versus want and how do you use those strategically?

Joan: I'm using from the standpoint of basic needs such as water, air, those kinds of things. I'm also using it from the standpoint in particular social connection. Beyond that, I'm not saying I need 50 more dollars or I need a Porsche or I need ... it's not from that kind of standing point.

Dave: So these are survival, the true needs because they're survival.

Joan: Yeah. True needs. Yeah.

Dave: Okay.

Joan: And so, I need somebody, when I'm a young child I need a caretaker, right? Or someone who can help me navigate the world and will protect me. It's that level of need. So to the lasting part of it, when I define confidence in the book, I think of it is the deep sense that you can handle the emotional outcome of whatever you face or whatever you pursue. So what I found again, is that if someone weren't able to experience and move through those unpleasant feelings very well, they didn't feel very capable in life. They just didn't feel capable of handling life. And that so much of developing confidence has to do with the belief that we can basically handle something.

Joan: And most people have it confused. The notion is that I'll be confident and then I'll go take a risk to do something. And then they never have the confidence to your point, or I'll have the confidence and then I'll go give that presentation or I'll go speak up. Or I'll say the thing to my partner that I'm afraid to say. It doesn't work that way. It actually works in the reverse. As you speak or through speaking, you develop confidence.

Dave: Through speaking.

Joan: Through speaking or as you take action or take some kind of a risk, or continue to take those risks. You develop the confidence. So it's the willingness to kind of put yourself in situations where you could experience one or more of those eight unpleasant feelings, and find out that you can experience them, move through them, and then keep going.

Dave: Do you recommend that people make a grid of these feelings and sort of figure out the situation that's most likely to trigger that and then go experience it so that they can grow?

Joan: No, not at all. Let me tell you a scenario from early childhood and then I can tie it in in terms of you don't have to go figure out all the situations that bother you. It's really figuring out which feeling feels hardest to bear.

Dave: Okay, so you stack rank the feelings from worst to best.

Joan: You can if you want. You don't have to do that. Here's the key because I wrestled with two questions throughout much of my life, one from childhood and then the second was once I started to get into my professional life. The first was, what is it that helps people develop confidence? I was an exquisitely shy child and I was bullied throughout my childhood. So to be able to deal with that, and look off to the side and see all my friends or peers that were gathered together, but I didn't feel like I fit in or belong door. It's like how come they look like they're belonging, they're laughing and they're so confident. And that wasn't my experience as a kid.

Joan: So how does somebody develop confidence? And the second was once I got into my professional life it was, what makes it so difficult for someone to deal with unpleasant feelings? And as a kid, I struggled with it. So-

Dave: I think all kids do. It's probably even [crosstalk 00:22:38].

Joan: Right. But what dawned on me as the years went on, is that both questions were related to each other, and answering the second one helps answer the first. So what I realized ... and this was after the neuroscience came out, that the most of us experience unpleasant feelings to bodily sensation. So think the heat and the rushing of blood to the face for embarrassment or some kind of a sinking feeling at your chest level for sadness or disappointment. People describe butterflies for anxiety, though I have a different view of anxiety, or like a tightening up or jaw clenching kind of thing with anger, whatever it might be. So what I've realized is that it's not that most of us don't want to feel or all of us don't want to feel a full range of what we feel. I think we do. What we don't want to experience is the bodily sensation that helps us know what we feel.

Dave: Interesting. All right, tell me more about that. Because feelings are in the body first. Right?

Joan: Right. In fact, think of the language we use for it. We don't talk about feelings coming down. We talked about feelings coming up, right?

Dave: Interesting.

Joan: So the notion here is that if I can help someone stay present to the bodily sensation and anchor to whatever that feeling is, and they go, "Oh, okay, that's what it is. I'm feeling angry." And they start to notice where in their body. And there's an exercise in the book that I call the how, what, where of feeling. So that you notice how you're experiencing it, where it is, what the sensation is about. And from Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor's observation of the 90 Seconds, that when that feeling fires off the bat chemicals rush into the bloodstream, that's what's activating those bodily sensations.

Dave: Now, most of the history of psychology has been around this idea that you have a thought which causes a feeling, right? And I look at what happens on an EEG and I know that's bullshit.

Joan: It's both directions actually.

Dave: Because I suppose you can spin emotions up with thoughts, but it feels like that just feels with the data set that I work with says that something visceral happens, then you have a story and something else visceral may happen after the story. But the initiating incident is always a feeling none of that.

Joan: I would say more commonly, but-

Dave: More commonly.

Joan: But no. Well, actually anybody that starts to think negative thoughts is actually doing what they call a top down process. So you're thinking and then you're activating the experience in your body.

Dave: The experience in your body was already there though. I guess the feeling didn't happen first in that. Well, it might happen first 25 years ago or something.

Joan: Right.

Dave: I got it. It was activated sometime.

Joan: Right. Or if I'm looking at somebody that's attractive, or I'm imagining somebody that's attractive, and I have the sensations in my body, then it's a top down process, as opposed to what you were describing as a bottom up process. And they talk about that in terms of bottom up and top down thinking.

Dave: In terms of the people you've worked with, and you have a long career looking at all sorts of different types of performers and non-performers and just humans, what percentage of the time is it bottoms up where feelings lead to thoughts versus thoughts lead to feelings?

Joan: No, I think I would agree with you. I think it's the greatest percent. I mean, I can't put a number on it, but if it's a percentage-

Dave: Is it like a 51 49 or it an 83 ... I'm curious, because in my world, it's always physical then thought because I didn't have the thoughts in my head anymore that would cause me to get spun up like that, like I edited that stuff.

Joan: Well, you've done a lot of work on this. Yeah.

Dave: Yeah. I've done huge amounts of work. So I'm saying what's the normal mix in humans?

Joan: Probably when somebody is coming in, they're driving a lot of their distress by poor thinking.

Dave: Okay, poor thinking will cause pain and waste energy. Do you see more top down with less functional or less emotionally functional people?

Joan: Correct.

Dave: Interesting. And as people do their work, they correct what they're thinking or just learn what thinking doesn't serve them, then they stop having that, but then a feeling will just come up because they walked into a room that reminded them of whatever and they felt uncomfortable. They make up a story and blame someone else. [crosstalk 00:27:15]

Joan: No. Now they're more aware, and they're actually being much more responsible about how they manage their emotional state. So probably I would say, I don't know. I'd have to really think about it. But if you want me to put a-

Dave: [crosstalk 00:27:27].

Joan: What? 65 35 but it's 65 from bottom up and 35 top down.

Dave: Okay. Very interesting perspective. All right, that's a higher number than I would have thought coming top down. But that's also because if I think to the way I used to think, it probably would have been more like that. I just, it's been a while since I was in that state, right? So you start thinking that moving right now as you always were. How long does it normally take someone to get on top of making that change? Just to correct the negative thinking.

Joan: Well, once people have an awareness that it's the bodily sensation that they're trying to avoid that, if they want to be active and motivated to actually in quotes 'kind of heal more quickly', they'll work right away to start using that awareness. So the shift can actually happen very, very quickly. Somebody had my book material for two days, and used it to work with themselves about going into a social networking function that they hated and that they always felt like an imposter in. And what she did is she ran through the eight feelings, tried to identify where it was in her body, noticed that it was vulnerability that was the hardest for her, imagine the scenario going into it, and then

handled herself differently when she actually got in the room two days later. And her husband said to her, he'd never seen her so social before. So as quickly as-

Dave: From two days.

Joan: As quickly as you put it into play, is as quickly as the changes start.

Dave: Okay, what are the words in your list of eight things and that map's very nicely to my understanding of these things. The work that I do with neurofeedback was vulnerability. And for me, years ago, that was a core thing where I also had lots of bullying, right? And so you learn like, don't be vulnerable, right? It's not safe to be vulnerable and you learn pretty much if someone tells you they're vulnerable, the easiest thing to do is just to smack them around a little bit. Which is why a lot of bullies are bullied to become bullies because you get hyper reactive. So that vulnerability thing is basically a lot of what Lewis Howes who's been on the show and is a friend, a guy I really respect and he talks about, I'm a pro football player, but the problem is being vulnerable. And I'm like, I'm a computer hacker, CEO, Silicon Valley, whatever, the problem is being vulnerable.

Dave: So it's clearly a problem for men from some aspect, but women have different vulnerabilities that they're excited about. What's the difference in the types of vulnerability that affects men versus women?

Joan: Interesting question because I also talked about two different kinds of vulnerability in the book, one that I call non conscious vulnerability in the second I called conscious vulnerability.

Dave: Okay, let's talk about those first and then tell me the breakdown.

Joan: Okay, the non-conscious is, in essence, all of us feeling vulnerable all of the time.

Dave: Because we're going to die.

Joan: We're going to die and anything could happen to any one of us at any given point. We could get a phone call about someone being ill or that they've passed. We could be subject to an earthquake, a tornado, a fire, a flood, it doesn't matter or human man-made disasters, man-made violence against each other. So at any point, any of that could happen to any one of us. The idea is to keep an awareness of that at a low level, just so that we're ... because that's the survival instinct, right? The second is what I call conscious vulnerability, and that's when we choose to be vulnerable. So we're choosing into taking risks, or choosing into learning a new skill or choosing into asking somebody out for a date, whatever it is. We're choosing to put ourselves in a state where we could be hurt or learn something. And that's conscious vulnerability.

Joan: Now, the beauty of it for me, Dave, is that one can ... And to me being vulnerable in those ways as you're describing is our greatest strength. We are at our greatest strength when we choose to be vulnerable. And the way we manage it, is to be able to tolerate and move through those other seven feelings.

Dave: Interesting, so vulnerability is the last one or?

Joan: To me, it's the most unique.

Dave: The most unique, okay.

Joan: Because one could experience vulnerability as weakness, which I don't consider it, or the greatest strength. And then there's the two kinds and that it actually maps to the other seven in a unique way.

Dave: I have learned to look at vulnerability as the most, the highest resilience from a strength. Because if you can walk into a room or frankly, onto a battlefield, and know that you're vulnerable, and just be comfortable with it and say, "I'm going to do what I'm going to do, given that this is the state of being alive." It doesn't come at any cost. So I'm completely fine.

Dave: And I've become more successful over the last eight or 10 years, at least by the external measures of success, also, probably by the internal ones. But I've also gotten to know a great number of just exceptionally wealthy people. And at least half of them I would say are feeling exceptionally vulnerable all the time and not in a good way because they're afraid to lose what they have. Which is kind of fascinating. It's not what you would expect you think, well, you're actually in such a safe position because you can buy insurance because you get on your jet or you do whatever. But there's like this background buzzing, like I'm not safe because I could lose it because I'm vulnerable. How do people deal with that?

Joan: What I do with that is that in my mind, they may also not be walking that thought all the way through.

Dave: Yeah.

Joan: So what they're doing is they're allowing themselves to loop over and over with a thought, but they don't carry it to what I would call its logical conclusion. So what if that happened? Then what? And then and then that take that next step. And what if that happened, then what? What resources would I need to experience and move through each of those different scenarios that I imagined, but most people will get lost in the loop of just thinking about it, but never coming up with the resources they need to address it.

Dave: And it's ironic because in that category, those who actually will have all the resources they need, they can hire therapists and they can hire security guards or whatever the heck they need in order to structure their life. So, it's just a non-issue and to feel safe that even if I did lose you my Swiss bank accounts or wherever they have, that things would probably be okay.

Joan: Correct.

Dave: But they don't take those steps. Why don't they take those steps?

Joan: That one I don't know that I can answer. I don't know. It's-

Dave: It's got to be one of eight those things. I'm kind of resistance, right?

Joan: Well, they're wanting to avoid something. Yes. And maybe it's the avoiding the disappointment, or the embarrassment or the shame that something would happen.

Dave: Can they just be avoiding the acknowledgement of the vulnerability?

Joan: Sure.

Dave: I feel like that's the root cause. In this one instance, we're thinking of we're just the thought of, "Oh my god, what if I lost all this? How would I live without my Gucci Ferrari," wherever the heck is their thing and that thought is just so important or terrifying that it's just not worth thinking about. So you don't do the stuff you're supposed to do. I probably had some of that. When I was 26, I made \$6 million and lost seven when I was 28. But really, if I'd have had the vulnerability or been comfortable enough with my own vulnerability, and just acknowledging, look, I am an expert in a lot of things, but not financial management, I could have hired and I really did try to hire but I didn't do very well, people who could have helped me make way better decisions than I would have made. And I could have knowing what I know now quite easily, made sure that I didn't lose at least more than half of it.

Dave: But the psychology behind it was I don't want to admit that I might lose it, I don't want to admit that I can make a bad call, I don't want to admit A, B and C. And it all it really does come down to a list of eight things, which is fascinating. It's an easy read in your book to talk about those. But even then I feel like if you would have handed me your book when I was 25, I would have looked at that and said, "I don't feel any of these things." Like, how do you teach someone that they're actually feeling things that they don't acknowledge they're feeling?

Joan: Again, my experience is that once you address or once I have addressed these kinds of things with them, it's an immediate recognition that they go, yes, I'm trying to avoid sadness, I'm trying to avoid disappointment, or I don't want to be vulnerable or I don't want to have to face whatever it is that I need to or not need to, but I don't want to face X, whatever the X might be. So it's my experience generally, Dave is that when I speak to it, people understand it and acknowledge it. And then what ends up happening is that not only do they feel validated by me or recognized, they recognize themselves in a different way. And to your question at the very beginning, how does it become lasting? It's because people become more well connected to themselves. And when they're when they're more aware of what happens within them on a moment to moment basis, and they can manage that experience better, it's lasting.

Dave: Okay. If I wanted to put that into practice in my life, like I've gone through your book and you talk about six steps to reclaim your personal power and these are powerful

psychology steps you distilled from what you would do in therapy. If I want to really put this into practice though, am I going to spend an hour a night going through the book, going through the ... or the six steps on page 149. It goes [crosstalk 00:38:04]-

Joan: Probably the chapter one will spend the most time with is chapter eight where I'm asking people to take a look at their life stories. So where the biggest healing needs to occur when we've been hurt by others in ways that we didn't deserve. That is what in fact I talk about is moving through grief, and it's grieving through what we got and didn't deserve, which is the bad stuff, or grieving over what we deserved and didn't get, think the praise and recognition or the good stuff, grieving over what never was the kind of life circumstances we grew up in, grieving over what isn't now and grieving over what may never be. And then I ask people to go through a set of questions. It's probably nine or at least nine or 12 questions in that chapter, where I'm asking people to take a look at the impact and the meaning that those life experiences had on them at the time they occurred as they grew up as they aged, and now. And then I think that helps people finally move to a place of forgiveness, but it's what I call making sense of your life story.

Dave: The underlying message that you can take away from that is that all those things mattered way more than most people as adults think they mattered. And just by going through and processing that, in whatever way works, that it unlocks how you behave today. And there's a word that for someone who used it at this event, Consumer Health Summit where we are, they talk about struggling, and people ask this question. What are you struggling with today? What is struggle from your perspective as a therapist?

Joan: Probably where we feel challenged. Where we feel like we don't have the resources yet to meet whatever the issue or the challenge is. And that we either need to develop the intellectual learning the knowledge base, or we need to develop a stronger emotional resources or we need to reach out and be asking for help and find the resources outside of us. But we're challenged in a way that we don't have the resources yet to achieve.

Dave: It's possible though to be challenged and say, "Oh I'm challenged," but to not struggle.

Joan: Correct. Absolutely.

Dave: And so, people ask me that question sometimes. And I have gone to great lengths in my life to not struggle. I will fail, right? I'll work really hard and I'll fail. But along the way, I didn't struggle I just pushed which is-

Joan: It's an attitude.

Dave: It's an attitude thing. So when you're working with a client or what do you call them, patients, clients? I would say supporting another human being in your work and you find someone is struggling greatly. What do you do to help them struggle less and do more?

Joan: I would say there's three main areas. I pay attention to what they think. Your weasel words are an example of that, right? I pay attention to how they think it, meaning are they in patterns of thinking negatively, are they in patterns of just thinking in an either

or way, are they in a pattern of always personalizing what's going on for them, things like that. So from a cognitive behavioral standpoint, they would talk about those as cognitive distortions or faulty thinking patterns. And I also pay attention to how someone experiences and expresses feeling. So I would be paying attention to at least those three things to help them move out of the struggle.

Dave: Awesome. I just realized we never closed the loop on vulnerability.

Joan: Okay.

Dave: We talked about the two types of vulnerability just being vulnerable because you're going to die and being willing to fail. But how do men and women experience vulnerability differently on average?

Joan: The first thing that comes to mind for me around that, Dave is that a woman feels vulnerable on a physical level.

Dave: Yeah, I would have guessed that.

Joan: That is different from ... and that's a day to day experience.

Dave: Just physical sighs.

Joan: Yeah. An awareness that a woman could be hurt. And more often by men than women. And so on a day to day basis, it's a physical survival issue in addition to how someone gets treated emotionally.

Dave: There's a stereotype and it's one that feels like it's based on reality that women are oftentimes more comfortable with being emotionally vulnerable than men are, at least in Western cultures. Where does that come from?

Joan: I think it's socialized a lot. Probably there are some differences on a biological level as well. I've not had the experience of testosterone to know what it feels like to have it.

Dave: You want some injections? I've got ... you don't.

Joan: But I'm sure that there are some literal biological differences and the socialization that we go through is very different. It's like, you're told to man up, you're told boys don't cry. We can go on and on about the all that comes [crosstalk 00:43:45].

Dave: Okay. That comes out right into gender stereotypes and stuff like that.

Joan: Totally.

Dave: All right, and that can ultimately lead to men being less willing to face emotional vulnerability, and women maybe knowing they have more physical vulnerability than

men. So I guess you just know it's there, it's all the time like the survival vulnerability that everyone has, but it's amped up for women just by virtue of physiology.

Joan: Correct. Yes.

Dave: Okay. That makes really good sense. But maybe because that's present, maybe there's more comfort on the emotional side. I'm just making that up. But I'm trying to get to the bottom of this. Why is it such an issue for men? And it may just come down to the primate brains and testosterone and-

Joan: Men are taught to be [inaudible]- I mean, they're ashamed for having an experience of emotion. And so, if they show the vulnerable side of emotion, think sadness, disappointment, embarrassment-

Dave: Anything on your list of eight.

Joan: Yeah, then they shut down on that. One of the things I talked about in chapter four, kind of the distractions chapter is whether you use a default feeling. And bear with me on the stereotype for a moment, but men will default to anger, and channel all the other unpleasant feelings through anger, and that's where it comes out. And women will often default to the other side. They'll default to sadness or disappointment, and you'll see the tearfulness, but you won't see them expressing anger or frustration. So that part of it is allowing both men and women to scan for the full range of what they're experiencing, and actually express it more truthfully, rather than just channeling it through the default feeling.

Dave: Okay, that's a powerful answer. I'd like to ask you another question. One of the roles of an author is to share wisdom and put down some words that are worth people's time to read so when they walk away, they feel like they have more than that. And it takes a certain amount of time to have enough wisdom to write something that people want to experience. And this comes down to the question I've asked every guest for the last few dozen episodes. It comes down to aging and death. How long do you want to live?

Joan: Past 100. I have-

Dave: Past 100.

Joan: Past 100. I don't know where past. My mother is just about to turn 97 and I have a grandmother that died at 104.

Dave: Wow. So you got good genes.

Joan: Yes, I do. And my grandmother lived by herself till five days before she died.

Dave: Wow.

Joan: So she was very capable. And so I have the genetics for it. So I'm-

Dave: So at least 100.

Joan: At least 100.

Dave: Okay. How do you foresee wisdom changing as you age?

Joan: My wisdom or someone else's wisdom?

Dave: Your wisdom. How is it going to change what you do with it?

Joan: For me, I look at life as a learning. It doesn't matter what I do, everything is a portal for learning or an opportunity for learning. So in terms of an attitude that I hold, it's trying to make use of even the difficult experiences I might go through as a learning experience. So for me, my intent or my hope would be that I would continue to just become wiser as I aged.

Dave: Just become wiser as you age. Okay, beautiful. I've talked about this living to at least 180, a number pretty openly. And some people say, "Oh, that's just a fear of death." But when I look really deeply at it, it's not based on fear. It's just based on passion, stuff that I think it's fun. But if it wasn't fun anymore, I'd probably change my number. Right? Okay.

Dave: Well, Joan, thank you for being on Bulletproof Radio, your book, 90 Seconds to a Life You Love has those eight feelings that you talked about. And there's great value to going through that list and just making sure hey, which of those is in the driver's seat when you don't know about it? And it's interesting, even Ron Howard, the famous director, it has a quote on the back of the book. So people at all walks have gone through this process and like I said, 90 Seconds, I think it takes a little bit more than that to read the book. But it's fast stuff. And if your software's not working right, it helps to fix your hardware so you can do the work faster. But a big part of performing better at what you do is this kind of work. So thanks for writing your book, Joan.

Joan: Thank you. And thanks for having me, Dave.

Dave: If you liked today's episode, you know what to do. Head on over to the favorite place you go to buy books and pick up a copy of Joan's book. If you don't have Game Changers yet, and you listen to the show regularly, shame on you, you're wasting your time. You should pick up a copy of that too, see how you chain one of those eight words on you in a marketing context. That was sneaky, right?

Dave: Anyway, what you really want to do is you want to leave a review for the books that you read. So if you buy Joan's book, leave review on Amazon. If you've read Game Changers and you haven't left a review, just leave a review. Game Changers is now the highest rated book of any book I've written. It's 95% five star reviews which is awesome and amazing. Most of my books are like four and a half star reviews which is still pretty good. So thank you if you've reviewed it and if you haven't, I'd love it if you did, and I

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