

Energy Economics: Your Focus is Your Money Flow – Pedram Shojai with Dave Asprey – #758

Announcer:

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Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's guest is Dr. Pedram Shojai, doctor of oriental medicine and master herbalist, acupuncturist. You may know him as the Urban Monk. He's been on before. New York Times bestselling author, multiple times, I believe. And he's the Founder of well.org. Qi Gong master, Taoist Abbot. There was a few things to say that cross over from the east and the west, and he's focused his life now on writing and sharing knowledge versus being the man about town. And in fact, he's been on more than once when I think about it, he, most recently, episode 440, so this was quite a while back, talking about prosperity. And he was on, actually, three times before that, even episode 107, about where vitality comes from.

So, Pedram's a friend of the show, a personal friend, and has just come out with a new book, which is all about focus and how to bring time and energy and money into that state called flow. He's going to share how he's done it and he's going to show the knowledge from his book with us today. So, Pedram, welcome back, my friend.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Great to be back. Nice to see you.

Dave Asprey:

Did you know when you were writing your book that the world was going to come to an end and that 2020 would be an incredible shit show, or...?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

You know what's funny is I felt it. I felt it.

Dave Asprey:

You did?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Oh, man. A couple years ago, about, I'd say, two and a half years ago, my wife was just getting annoyed because I was like, man, we got to go. We got to go. We lived in Southern California. We'd moved down to Orange County from LA. And something just wasn't sitting right and I just couldn't put my finger on it, and I'm not a doom and gloom guy. I don't read all the weird conspiracy theory stuff, but I was like, man, something does not feel right. I feel like we do not need to be in a city right now. And I struck a deal, because I was making all these films and stuff, I was gone 80, 90 days a year. And she's like, "You know what? If you really want to move to the mountains, I'll oblige it, but you can't be gone all the time. That's not fair to me."

And so we struck a deal where we said, look, seven nights a year is my maximum out of town, and that's how much it's worth it for me to live on a ski mountain and not be here for whatever reason, and then boom, the world blows up and I look like a genius, but it was just that feeling, right? It was a

feeling. It was just like something doesn't sit well with me right now, and I don't know what it is, but I can't ignore it.

Dave Asprey:

Well, that's the benefit of being a monk and being a little bit more in tune with something doesn't feel right. Do you think that all of us have that intuition built in or are you unusually gifted?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Oh, man. I'm one of the least gifted people you'll meet. No, it's all just work. It's all just work. I mean, people will say, oh, I can't meditate, oh, I can't do pull-ups. Well, have you tried? What do you do to strengthen that muscle? And very specifically, if you start working on the things that develop your prefrontal cortex, you'll get better at these things called meditation and focus and attention, and all these things that happen in parts of the brain that we know how to trigger and activate and work to enhance. And so, look, I just did the work. I loved it. I fell in love with the Jedi stuff and went in both feet, right, I just jumped in to the work.

But having been an ADD kid and just kind of like a normal guy, and look, I was just a pre-med guy at UCLA and a scientist, I fell in love with this stuff because I could feel it. And the more I did it, the more I can feel the results. And it's not about belief, at that point, some experience, right? It's like, hey, wow, I have experienced this thing. I don't need to believe it. It's true to me. And so I just kept rolling with it. So to answer your question, anyone can cultivate this. It's just, it's work.

Dave Asprey:

I believe that anyone can cultivate it, but I also think that not everyone can be Michael Jordan.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Sure. sure. I mean, who knows?

Dave Asprey:

Some people are more gifted. When they start, they have greater potential, but that everyone can learn it. Is that what they would teach you at an abbot somewhere?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. I mean, look, there's a lot of things. I mean, I grew up with a dad who went to school in Germany, so I had German work ethic on top of the literal translation of kung fu is hard work, so those cards kind of lined up in my favor to be like, okay, well, you want anything in life, you got to work for it. A lot of people don't grew up with that kind of work ethic. And the other is, look, I grew up, immigrant family, not eating honey nut Cheerios. I grew up being fed lots of vegetables and good food from my parents. And my parents, they weren't med heads, we weren't put on a bunch of drugs, we weren't given a bunch of preservatives. I mean, does that stack in your favor when it comes to focus and attention? Sure. Right? Same way we're trying to raise our children now.

But, yeah, sure. I'm sure the genetics come in and, look, I was fortunate. We're just finishing a 10-part series on trauma right now. I was really fortunate to have a pretty mediocre upbringing without major traumatic events that can absolutely hijack your mind space, right?

Dave Asprey:

Trauma's a really big deal, and we've had so many episodes on it. And when you talk to high performance people, quite often, they're like, "I don't have any trauma." And then you ask them a few questions, the reason you're high performance is you're still trying to adapt and be safe from whatever the heck it is that you don't even know you're afraid of because it got built in to your tissues.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

That's it.

Dave Asprey:

But you didn't have to deal with as much of that, but you see it in the people that you've worked with so much.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Oh, oh yeah. And look, it's not rose garden for anyone, no matter what your circumstances are. But at least I wasn't raped by my dad and things like really intense things that I see every day in this work that we do, but, I mean, all the little micro traumas? Sure. They put a chip on your shoulder, they drive you to do the things you do. I mean, I live in Park City, Utah. Every direction I look at has a gold medal Olympian around. And, man, some of these guys are just really hard to hang out with because they just can't stop competing in every little thing, and you see these micro traumas right there in their face. You're like, man, okay, so what are you running from or towards or against? Because it's right there, buddy.

Dave Asprey:

It feels like there's a lot of that in MMA. Like, I never felt safe so I'll just learn how to kick everyone's ass, but it's kind of a hard way to live.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

I mean, listen. You want to build a fortress to defend the soft inner shell that you never want poked at again. I've met a lot of these people in the martial arts over the years. And some of the nicest people I've met are in the martial arts because they have a way to express their anger and their emotions and vent and feel normal, but a lot of them came from trauma, right? Whether they were bullied, or just bad experiences, which led to them trying to fight their way out, quite literally.

Dave Asprey:

It's interesting because a lot of listeners are not doing MMA, and if you are, doesn't mean that you have more trauma or not. There's just patterns that you start becoming aware of, and I'm in awe of someone who can handle themselves in a ring like that because it requires a certain state of awareness and calm even when there's someone literally trying to pound you into the ground. There is growth that comes from martial arts, no doubt about it. You talk about a crisis of consciousness in your book in society, what does a crisis of consciousness mean?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

The Buddha called us hungry ghosts, and we're all stumbling around, trying to feed off of each other at a horizontal feeding frenzy because we forgot how to drink vertically. We forgot how to align our consciousness with that which is pure and true and meaningful. And in my tradition, we call it

retroflexion, turning the light of awareness around to observe your inner state, and that's where awareness comes. That's where enhanced states of consciousness come from, right? But we live in a world where our attention is now the currency of the information age. Literally, we'd monetize people's attention through eyeballs and advertising dollars and all the stuff that we kind of been hearing about more and more through films that have come out.

And, look, I put it to your audience that, look, if you can't pull your attention back to your life, your health, your priorities, and introspect and turn around and actually command your attention, I guarantee you, someone is pulling it out the back door. You are being mined right now for your mind, and that's the challenge we face.

Dave Asprey:

You have to either own that or someone else will. It's one of the reasons I am a huge fan of every piece of feedback gear you can get. If you have your ring that tracks your sleep, in fact, are you wearing one? It looks like you're wearing an aura ring, or is that just some kind of [crosstalk 00:09:08]?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

No, I'm not. [crosstalk 00:09:08] back to my platinum wedding ring.

Dave Asprey:

Oh my goodness.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

I don't wear it when I lift weights at home, and so then I always have it off, and then she's like, "Hey, how come you don't wear your wedding ring anymore? Don't you love me?" And I'm like, "Okay, okay," put it back on. I have a different relationship with wearables. I wear this, my Suunto... not my Suunto, my Garmin watch for feedback and stuff when I'm exercising. Man, wearing it all the time makes me feel a little weird. I don't like the energy on these devices. I don't like to wear electronics [crosstalk 00:09:41]...

Dave Asprey:

The EMF kind of energy [crosstalk 00:09:43].

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah, it's the EMF energy. It kind of messes with my field after a while, so I stop wearing them. I own two of all of them. I don't know. It gives me a weird feeling.

Dave Asprey:

I just put mine in airplane mode so there isn't the constant transmissions and all that, and this is the only one that I wear now. But for people listening, if you're looking to turn that light of awareness on yourself, having a score at the end of the day that said how did I do today is one of the easiest and lowest hanging fruits for building awareness because for me, when I had fibromyalgia and all this brain fog and I'm growing my career in Silicon Valley, my practice was I would write in the margins of my engineering notebook, like, hey, I'm feeling like crap right now, why? Or I'm feeling really good, why? And I built the practice because it was out of necessity.

And then I would play this little video game on my PalmPilot, way back in the day, and it was freestyle or I'd play it on my computer, but I would be like, I have no working memory today. I can't play this game. It takes me five minutes to solve what should take one minute. And all of a sudden, I have this external bizarre ways of creating a mirror for awareness of my internal state. And now it's just way easier to do that. And then of course, that led me into the field of neurofeedback and the whole really deep meditative states from that, but it ultimately comes down to that consciousness. Anything that helps you grow consciousness is good, whether it's meditation or wearing the watch when you workout, or whatever. All of it stacks in at least in my world. And I like your view. [crosstalk 00:11:18].

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

I 100% agree with that.

Dave Asprey:

Okay. The other that attracted me to having you back on the show, Pedram, is that in Super Human, I wrote about how people have it wrong. They're looking at return on investment just based on money, but that the really currency for entrepreneurs, for any human being, is just energy. Because if you don't have energy, the other two things, which are time and money, are not meaningful. And in your book, you say it directly, time, energy and money are the three greatest sources of stress, lack and confusion. We're aligned on that but you teach about it differently than I do. Talk to me about those three things and why they're causing confusion.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

So, if you look at your average person, they're trading their energy and their time for money all day, every day. I could trade my money for someone else's time. I could buy time in different ways. And so it's just kind of an active exchange between those three areas. I mean, time is something, I don't know how much more of each of us have, that's a cosmic question. We try to enhance that number, but there's a certain amount of heartbeats and then you're not here, right? Energy, the currency of life, I mean, we eat food, breathe oxygen, obviously try to do things to enhance that, and that's the cellular currency that runs the whole show, whether it's your immunity, your postural muscles, your brain needs a lot of energy, and money is something we trade the other two for all the time.

And so looking at that, to me, I call that the water. And looking at life, if you look at life as a garden, what are the main plants in your garden that you say are important to you, right? So your health, your family, your friends, your career, your passions, all these things that we all say are important. And I learned this being a Qi Gong guy, coming down from the mountain, is a certain percentage of my students, Dave, here I am trying to teach them all this stuff to make their lives better, here's some more energy, here's some vitality, it's all good, some of their lives would blow up. And I realize that they were the energy equivalents of lottery winners who had really poor finance skills with money, right?

And so if your energy economics are messed up, I could teach you how to do all these wonderful things and you're just going to blow it because you just don't really allocate your energy to where you say is important to you. You say family is important, you say your health is important, and I look at what you're doing every day, you're watering weeds, or it's all going to career and the rest of it is lip service, and we were just talking about this before I went on. I mean, look, I'm a lifestyle guy, I'm a former monk, I've been doing this work for a long time, and I was gone 80 days a year and my kids were getting pissed off, and treating me differently when I'd come home, and it just got to a point where I said, listen, talk is cheap. Work-life balance is something you have to double down on.

And, look. I mean, you moved to the island, I moved to the mountain. I'm spending a lot of quality time with my kids, and I've restructured my career because talk is cheap. Are you going to be the husband and the dad that they deserve simultaneously or you're going to race to a gazillion dollars, or whatever it is, and have diabetes and heart disease and estranged spouse and kids that don't care to know you anymore, right? And these are decisions we have to make now.

Dave Asprey:

It's funny. I'm a member of this organization called YPO, or Young Presidents Organization, and there are chapters in most cities around the world, a lot of people haven't heard of it, but you have to be running a sizable company that you started to be a member. So this is a place where CEOs talk to other CEOs about weird CEO stuff that most of the world won't connect with because it's weird when you're a CEO. And I've been giving talks, I just gave a talk over Skype to Kuala Lumpur, and just all these places all over the place, and it's all entrepreneurs at various stages, and a lot of them are 50-plus and they've made their success, and all of them now are saying, oh my God, my health. I burned it out. How do I get it back? And I think the message you're putting in your book is that maybe if you don't burn it out in the first place, you don't have to fill it back in.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

That's it. I mean, I'm finishing a film right now I'm doing with Robert Kiyosaki, Rich Dad Poor Dad. He's an elaborate character, to say the least.

Dave Asprey:

A good guy.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah, but he's a good guy, and I've really enjoyed my time with him. And the framework, the thing that really jolted me that got me to really want to do the movie was this understanding. And, look, I grew up in LA and as a boy growing up in LA, what's success, you drive a Ferrari, you have a mansion, all this stupid stuff that's kind of beaten into your head. So when Robert and Kim achieved financial independence, their basic formula was this, what are our monthly expenses? At that point, it was \$3,000 a month. They're living pretty small and meagerly, right? And their passive income had to simply exceed their monthly expenses and then they were free. They bought their time back from this thing called money.

And for me, growing up with all these guys in LA, before I went off and did the monk thing, I mean, everyone's like, oh, what's your number? Is it a million? Is it \$5 million? Is it \$10 million? Is it a B, right? And so everyone's got this dumb number, but they don't really account for what it is that their actual monthly burn is that would keep them happy and keep them out of the rat race. And then once you're out of the rat race, yeah, sure, you want more stuff, then you create some assets and do it, you could play the money game, but free yourself from that crap so you could be the dad, the husband, the citizen, and all these other things that the world needs you to be at the same time.

And so it's this weird spell that money holds over a lot of us where we're constantly running after it, dumping our time and energy into it, and not watering the plants that we say are important. And as we get further and further downstream there, it's harder to reconcile. We become liars. We say we want something but our actions say otherwise, right? And then that's where life starts to fall apart. Life's big problems show up. Health crises show up. And all the things that... you've had 400 or something people on this show, that's what you talk about, right, is people's lives fall apart when their

health falls apart. Their marriages fall apart when finances fall apart. And all just kind of circles around this exchange of time, money, and energy.

And I can tell you right now that my premise here is that the glue for all of it is focus. If you can't focus on what you say you want and your focus gets pulled out into Instagram and into the internet and it gets pulled out into the election crises and the next crisis that comes, you're never going to be able to map out your life in a way that's going to be meaningful and going to nourish you because your priorities are being supplanted by the priorities put in front of you by social media or the news.

Dave Asprey:

It really appeals when you talk about having "your number". One of the things I've learned to be grateful for, in 26 years old, I made \$6 million, right? And that should've been a big enough number. And I looked at another friend at the same company where everyone suddenly had a BMW, and I said I'll be happy when I have \$10 million, which is a super douchebag thing to say, to be perfectly honest. But the time, I absolutely believed it, and the reality that I understand now, having had a chance to reflect on that and maybe grow up a little bit, is that, in fact, I lost that \$6 million a couple years later with, A, lack of focus, which is a big theme in your book, but also, to learn that having that money didn't make me happy. In fact, I was really miserable.

And even before that, I was in Entrepreneur magazine, there's this weird fat kid selling things over this thing called the inner something, the internet the very early days of e-commerce, so I'm like, yeah, I was in a magazine. I'm like, wait, I'm still not happy. So I tried fame, right, and you tried money, and if I hadn't had those two experiences, I probably wouldn't be running my life to where I am now where I care a lot about impact and money is a side effect of it because honestly, that makes me happier than those other things having achieved them early in life and just still felt empty.

But I also, at the time, I had a real problem with energy, biological energy. My mitochondria were broken. I had fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue and all that, and I ended up pouring all of my remaining assets into fixing my physical energy problem, which gave me enough lift to work on the stuff that your book is focused on. One of the things that you say in the book, you say how you're living right now is a reflection of the mental, emotional and spiritual operating system that, we say, that drives your emanation. But those aspects are the ones that are the hardest ones to deal with, but if you don't have enough energy or you don't have enough time or you don't have enough money, how are people supposed to have time to focus on spiritual operating system?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. Well, see, that's the funny part, right? If you look at someone's calendar, it's filled with work stuff and it's never booking time for any of the other stuff. Date night with wife, play with kids, whatever it is. You say your priorities are somewhere, but then you allocate your time somewhere else, well, follow the money, frankly, right? And time is flowing in a direction that your focus is telling it to flow, right?

And so if you look at the way reality has assembled, you're a little baby, you learn to wiggle your toes, you start to do tummy time, you start to creep and crawl and do all these things, and then there's a thing on the table and you're able to move this blob of mass and stand yourself up against this table and move this material object from one place and time space to another, I mean, it's an absolute miracle, right? But how much of your nervous system has to focus in on moving your muscles, moving your body, moving matter, lifting things to move something around, let alone build a shack or write a book or the things that we do as humans here on planet Earth, right?

And so I look at this lack of focus as the central problem because, look, in Chinese medicine, these guys have a lot of metaphor that's kind of proven to come true over the years.

Dave Asprey:

Yeah. They knew a few things from thousands of years of watching, right?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Well, yeah, what actually what, observing the internal state, right? These people were the original biofeedback biohackers. They understood the internal state. And so what do we say in Chinese medicine? We say the Qi follows the Shen, the spirit. Spirit is the attention housed in the heart. So where your focus goes, your energy goes, and if you can sustain your focus, the energy that you're generating through the cells of your body, through the mitochondria, through this miraculous thing called life, continues to go to where your focus goes, and then the material universe starts to assemble around that.

It's like the formula for manifestation, and you could say it's hippy-dippy and weird, but I literally do this every day of my life. I have a streaming service, I have a million things going on that I workshop all my monk stuff into in the real world. If it doesn't work, I stop doing it, right? So, how do you take your focus and assemble matter around that? If you have a lot of energy, later on, when you got better at this thing called life, it didn't take you as long to make \$6 million because now you had the power that you were able to focus to assemble more millions of dollars and things on this plane.

But if you don't have your vitality, you don't have your energy, the battery's dead, there's no juice, there's no current behind your focus. But if you could bring up your vitality, which is your hulkish [inaudible 00:23:26] in so many ways, is bring up the cellular health, bring up the mitochondrial function, bring up the capacity of the system to extract starlight from our sun and move it through your body to make things move in some miraculous way, you bring up the ability to generate more energy, and then you focus that energy, you get the life that you choose then just be careful what you're asking for, right? And that's where a lot of my lottery winners were failing is I could bring it up, but then, well, what are you asking for? What do you want? How do you stay focused and direct it so your life actually happens in a way that is intentional instead of tumbling around in the white water, wondering why circumstances ruined everything for you again.

Dave Asprey:

You mentioned that you were an ADD kid, and now you're talking about focus. You just wrote a book on it. And it's easy to say tell me your whole book in a sentence, but how do people go about achieving focus when there are so many distractions, but honestly, if you don't make your house payment and it's your cellphone payment, it's probably hard to do much else, right? How do you actually build focus in the chaos?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Great question. And this is why... I kind of depart from the media in this, right? I don't play that game, and the reason why I don't play that game is because I think the media has really focused around selling sugared cereal to children. Don't give me the get rich quick scheme for life. Tell me what to actually do, right? And I come from a discipline called kung fu, in the literal translation, is hard work. You want something in life, you got to go get it.

So if I tell someone, hey, listen, here's three practices to do that's going to hone your focus, increase your energy, make your life work better, all you got to do is do them, there's two types of people in this world, one that says giddy up, let's go. That sounds great. I got it from here. And the other one that says, oh, man. That sounds too hard. Can you put that in a pill? Is there some device that can zap that in to my ear? And that right there is the crisis of consciousness. That's the central premise of

the book is we have been trained to look outside of ourselves for a solution that comes in and hacks instead of getting back in the driver's seat and finding the nexus of control that gives us the mastery we started with, lost and need to regain in life.

Now, is that easy? I didn't say it was easy. But is it the right move? Absolutely. Ask any of these masters up in the monasteries.

Dave Asprey:

It's really interesting though, it depends if people are thinking a hack is a way to not do the work, that is not what the hacks are for. But doing the work...

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Right. It's a misread.

Dave Asprey:

Doing the work in the most effective way is the hack. And hard work, I can tell you, you go to monastery, if your foot's on the wrong position, they're going to stop you and say, well, I would say, and you and I translate it, I'd say the hack for the problem you're having is to turn your foot in a little bit, dumbass. Right? And then, you do it right. And over time, they've figured out the fastest path to achieve a goal, and the hack is finding the fastest path using all means available.

And I actually believe that because of changes in the world of technology, there are ways to achieve things the old way may not be the fastest path anymore, and it's our job to figure out ways that drive lasting and meaningful results with the least possible energy because the driving motivation for all humans is laziness.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yes. [crosstalk 00:27:15]...

Dave Asprey:

Now, we don't want to burn energy unnecessarily because it's unnatural to do that. If you can hunt the lion or whatever you're going to eat, the elk, if you can do that with less energy, you want to do that because then, the energy can go into something better. And so it's an interesting conversation now where I've heard a few people say, oh, hacks are bad, you can't hack that. And I'm like, yeah, hard work without precision is, in fact, it's even worse.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

It's inefficient.

Dave Asprey:

Yeah, it's wasteful. Right.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Well, think about how you and I met. When you and I met, you were biohacking guy and I was monk guy, but I had owned a brain lab for several years before we met. And so I commissioned our guys to

study gamma wave coherence of the brain of meditators and try to figure what the hell is happening so we could get better at this, right?

Dave Asprey:

Funny enough, that's 40 Years of Zen. That's one of the many brain states that isn't supposed to be trainable. Gamma, still, most neuroscientists said you can't train gamma. But let me ask you, could you guys figure out how to train gamma?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

You know what's interesting is gamma was the elusive quantum cloud, and we learned, at this point, and this is back in early 2000, how to train a round gamma to allow for gamma to happen more frequently and regularly. So training gamma itself was trying to, at that point, grasp me out of cloud, but training for bringing down high beta and training alpha and training deep theta and all these things, and then getting into a state where you had popped in the clutch allowed for gamma to happen more regularly more frequently, and that was one of the many different phenomena we're studying at the time.

Dave Asprey:

That's so cool. Well, we have definitely evolved that world, although a lot of people still say you can't do it, the last... I'm always testing the latest stuff. The last test that I did, I was able to raise my gamma by 20% in a half hour. Was that...

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

That's miraculous.

Dave Asprey:

It's doable now.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

So, this is in 40 years?

Dave Asprey:

Yeah. This is why I think hacks are valuable because raising gamma is really freaking hard. And yes, I can do it by allowing it to emerge and all that stuff, but if I can show my body and my mind this is what it feels like, then I'm more likely to be able to get there without a technology. And as a training modality, that sort of stuff is important. And I almost feel like if you look at what you would've experienced at a monastery, they're going to sit there and say, okay, it's a quiet room. We've set everything up as best we can. And they're going to watch you and they're going to know when you... like, that, you did it right. And you're like, aha, now I have a north from my compass. And I certainly had none of that crap when I was in Silicon Valley as a young man.

And I wish that someone had just been able to set me down and be like, there's a state that you've never felt and that's what you're supposed to be doing, because it was out of my universe.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Right. Well, that's the problem is everything is out of everyone. There's no context for any of this work, and there's all this neo spiritual gibberish out there that's getting people to do a bunch of crap that is actually ineffective, right? And I've done a ton of crap in my life where I've left it behind because when I went from acetic to an Urban Monk, if something didn't work in my busy life in Los Angeles, it wasn't relevant, at least for that time in my life. And so if this stress management technic didn't work, I didn't have time for it, man. Right? That's called inefficiency, 100%.

And then that's where the tech came in, that's where a lot... and it's a double-edged sword, right? Not all tech, there's all these brain wave apps out there, 80% of them are garbage, right?

Dave Asprey:

True fact.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Right? And so here's my point though that I want to make sure, and you and I are welcome to disagree on all kinds of things, that's why we're friends, I feel like the tools take over and become a problem is when the device or the tool or the app or whatever it is starts to cross over into idolatry. When you get to the place where you have learned that this God-given state of gamma or whatever it is, is an internal state that you can return to with your own consciousness, thank you so much, tool, I'm happy to use you again, but now I have to understand that this is intrinsically a skill or a state that I can access with my consciousness. Thank you for showing it to me.

But if I think I need the technology next time to get there, now I'm addicted and now I'm in a different world. And that's a very fundamental distinction that I think a lot of people get trapped in is people are like, oh, I can't. You live without my head space. I'm like, yo, that's dark. Right?

Dave Asprey:

Not picking on head space in that...

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Well, any of them. Any of them, right?

Dave Asprey:

No, yeah, exactly. The idea there though is that you could do the same thing with a guru, right? It's one of the reasons I wrote Game Changers. What if we just study 500 gurus and figure out what they agree on and just do that without following anyone, including you or me. Because addiction to a guru, where you have to be in their presence to feel the state, you're doing it wrong. If you have to do 150 ayahuasca ceremonies, you're doing it wrong, right, where you can experience it and then learn the skill. And it feels like that's kind of behind the curtains in your book, Focus, where you're saying, well, if you focus on these things, you experience them, but if you require all of this crap, I mean, God knows, I talk pretty openly, I spend \$1 million hacking my biology.

Really, I probably, if I'd have known what I know now, it would've been sub-\$100,000 because I wasted a lot of it. Or the flip side is I spend a lot of time doing heart rate variability work, transformative, but I don't have to walk around with a clip on my ear 24 hours a day in order to have learned how to turn off my sympathetic nerve system. So there's bursts of value, and then you evolve. How do you recommend that people know when they've achieved what they're going to get from their plant medicine, from their latest gadget, and then return to the state of focus that's in your book?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah, great question. And so I think we could stay Facebook friends now because we're back on the same page.

Dave Asprey:

Yeah.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Oh, man. I got to stop hunting all these trolls, right? The world of Facebook is also one of those, right? Social dilemma and all these kind of new bodies of work that are coming out, is the algorithm is gamed at taking your attention out of your head, right, which is the opposite energy we need. So let's talk about the good technologies that are there to help you find that state. How do you know, right? So if you're doing heart rate variability and some of the new tech, it's like, okay, well, here's my number. Look at that. I'm better at this. If you're doing meditation in Qi Gong, it's also very easy to know. Am I in a better mood all day? Do I have more sustained attention and energy all day? Is my fuse longer when my kids barge in to my office and start screaming when I'm working? Don't they know how important I am? Right? And all the things that interpersonally are supposed to be affected by this will be affected by this.

Now you want to geek out and talk about Nrf2 pathways, you want to talk about NF-kappa B pathways and all these things that we now know. So we know that we can suppress cytokine expression at the highest level through mind-body practice, through these genetic pathways, if your joint pain is getting better, if your migraines are starting to improve, if you find yourself better capable of saying no to the cheesecake, saying no when the guys come in to town for a drink and you're like, well, I was going to the gym and get us salad and see my kids, but you guys are here. Let's go eat nachos and buffalo wings and have Advil in the morning. Right? [crosstalk 00:35:17]...

Dave Asprey:

When's the last time you ate nachos and buffalo wings?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Probably about eight, nine years ago. I had a...

Dave Asprey:

Okay. Just checking that you're really walking the talk.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

No, once in a while, you got to have nachos and buffalo wings to remember what they do to you, right? I had a couple buddies in town and one of them suggested Irish Car Bombs, and it sounded like a great idea at the time. [crosstalk 00:35:36]...

Dave Asprey:

What is an Irish Car Bomb?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Ah, I think it's Jameson with Baileys, Irish cream, and Guinness?

Dave Asprey:

That sounds freaking horrible.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

But it's delicious. It's horrible the next day. Yeah, it's horrible the next day, right? And that's the thing. It's amazing at the time, but it's a terrible decision for tomorrow, right? And so where's your prefrontal cortex at that time to say, yo, you know what? I don't think we need this tomorrow and I don't think we can have the kind of week this is going to lead to. What part of your brain steps in and stops that? If that part of your brain is working better, then your practice is working for you, right?

Dave Asprey:

Let's talk about alcohol a little bit more. So, I mean, you're a daily meditator, are you a teetotaler?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

A teetotaler?

Dave Asprey:

Teetotaler means someone who never drinks.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Oh, no. No. I seldom ever drink. I'm not like, oh, I need to have a beer at the end of the day kind of thing. I don't regularly. No. But I can tell you one thing for sure is that coming down from the mountain and being around a bunch of judgy spiritual people and being around a bunch of new age people that are hiding all their bad aberrant habits and all these things that they say they don't do but they do, and being around gurus that were boinking all the girls in the Ashram, I've seen a lot, is when I came down from the mountain, I stepped into the experience of being a human in a lot of ways.

And I could tell you, alcohol, once every few months, drink some alcohol, dancing on the tables with your wife and having a big night and then having a headache and being like, okay, well, I don't want to do that again, once in a while, no problem. No problem.

Dave Asprey:

I love it that you say that. And that even with your spiritual training, it's okay to choose to not be in that optimal state because it's fun, as long as you don't do it all the time.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Well, that's it. And, look, like I said, I don't want a freaking beer. It's just going to give me gas and make me thirsty. But if I have friends I haven't seen in a long time or it's a buddy's wedding, let's drink that vodka and let's celebrate your wedding and let's make it a big, fun, exhilarating night and I'll pay the price tomorrow. That's fine. Right? And I will drink that poison knowingly, right? And that's okay. That's life.

Dave Asprey:

That is a part of focus, is choosing to do something because it was worth it, even if it had a cost.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

That's it. That's it. I will allocate the water to this knowing that it's going to take some water away from other things, but it really nourished my family and friends plant, right? And we had one big night that we'll all remember and celebrate. Do I do that, that often anymore in my 40s? No, it hurts. Right?

Dave Asprey:

It also hurt in your 20s, you just didn't know it as much.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Oh, my fuse was much longer, right?

Dave Asprey:

Well put. You said something else though I've got to challenge you on, okay?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah.

Dave Asprey:

You studied Taoism, and now you're saying these gurus, I'm going to quote you, boinking the women in their ashrams, isn't sexual practice a core part of Taoism?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

So, yes. And so I learned tantra and I learned wonderful practices around sexuality in my Daoist tradition, none of which was weird, but then I was in a number of Hindu ashrams and Buddhist ashrams where there was judgment around sexual practice, and it reared its ugly face, just like it does in the Catholic church, just like it does in all these traditions that don't allow you to be the human you were born as. And I have been very outspoken about this because I'm a tantric practitioner. I think sexuality and spirituality are cultivated in the same... I could speak of them in the same way.

Dave Asprey:

They go together.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

They go together. But I've been in, look, I'm a Hospitaller Knight in the Catholic tradition, I have seen weird, judgmental people in my path that repress their sexuality and get creepy, man. They get creepy.

Dave Asprey:

I just had an episode where I interviewed the guy who's done the largest survey of fantasy, sexual fantasy, ever done. And he's like, this is really interesting, but you can predict people's fantasies based on their political leanings. If people are all about freedom, the more liberal people are, in their fantasies, it's all about control. And then people who are all about control in their conservative leanings, for them, it's all about freedom and group sex and all sorts of stuff. So people are pushing in whatever direction they don't have in the bedroom, and then feeling guilty about it, and his whole point is this is so abundantly common since it looks like everyone has these, maybe we could just talk about it. It was very

interesting to see that those happen, and you're saying you see the same thing in spiritual traditions. [crosstalk 00:40:31].

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. But, I mean, this is America, we can't talk about anything, right? And that's the problem. That's the problem is just like, come on. Seriously, the tie I have, there's only two paths to immortality, one is to get someone pregnant and raise some children and hope that my gene pool carries on through generations to come and hopefully, make them gadgillions of dollars to ensure their survival and all things that come through...

Dave Asprey:

The Genghis Khan path.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

The Genghis Khan path, right, which works until [crosstalk 00:41:01].

Dave Asprey:

[crosstalk 00:41:01]?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah, yeah. It works until it doesn't, until we're all not here [crosstalk 00:41:04]...

Dave Asprey:

So, well, something like 10% of people in many parts of Asia have at least some genes from Genghis Khan, according to some study.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

He was prolific. [crosstalk 00:41:14]...

Dave Asprey:

So that's one path, what's the other path?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

And the other path is to find the immortality of your consciousness vertically and to understand the transient nature of this temporal thing called life and to understand, maybe, that there's another element to consciousness that ties us into a stream of life that is never ending, a stream of life that's flowing through all of us that we can share in common, the Yoda stuff. And so the tantric path ties those two together by helping you understand your sexuality and the base energies and bringing them up and appreciating and cultivating, and Chinese alchemy would call taking the Jing and refining it to Qi and Shen of spirit, right? And that spirit, that Shen lives in the heart, and it's called attention and it's tied to your focus, right? You like that? [crosstalk 00:42:06].

Dave Asprey:

Yeah.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

But that's, literally, it's the same alchemical path of cultivating your essence and directing your energy in a way that's meaningful to you. I mean, look, I don't tell anyone what to do with their lives, I just tell them how to think about life so that they're less frivolous and more capable of directing their energy in the areas that they say they want and reconciling their word with their actions, right, because that's where integrity comes in. You start lying to yourself, that's where everything starts to break apart. Hey, I'm going to lose 40 pounds. Okay, you've been saying that for eight years, what are you doing? Right?

Dave Asprey:

Right.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah, how do you assign an action with that? And what are you going to do every single day to get there?

Dave Asprey:

Talking about doing things every single day, how many hours a day do you meditate?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Oh, man. I'd be lucky if I got an hour right now. We're homeschooling, we got kids at home, I have millions things going on. I get up and do... before I pee in the morning, and I could explain why, I get up and do about 40 minutes of Qi Gong in the morning, every morning, before I urinate, and then I'll meditate for about 10 minutes, and then I'll meditate for maybe about 15 to 30 minutes in the evening before going to bed.

Now, I have other practices that I do that could be called meditation, so I hack my life, I take phone calls in my infrared sauna, I take a wet steam, I mean, it's going to sound boujee, but I got all these toys in my house, right, where I get to do all this stuff that I've worked my ass, I traded my time and energy for, right? And...

Dave Asprey:

Yup, plus you live in the middle of nowhere, so you can afford some real estate to do that.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah.

Dave Asprey:

No, it's hard to do that in LA. It really is.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

It really is. It really is. I mean, I curated my life in a way where I could have all the things that I choose, right?

Dave Asprey:

Okay. So, an hour a day, and you're saying you'd be lucky if you get that, I'm guessing most listeners don't spend an hour a day meditating.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

I recommend 10 minutes a day for people whose [crosstalk 00:44:06].

Dave Asprey:

10 minutes, that's the minimum effective amount?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. Minimum effective dose is if you start 10 minutes a day, it's not like you're going to be some sort of enlightened guru, but you're going to start establishing a relationship with a part of your brain, your prefrontal cortex that allows for you to start getting better at this thing called focus, at this thing called mindfulness. Now, do you put other things in the day to allow for you to become more aware of where you're at? Sure. But just sitting down and turning your attention inward and watching your breath for 10 minutes a day is a great start.

And here's the trick. Once you start, you want more because you realize that life gets easier and easier when you're doing the work. Right? But I just tell people, look, you got 10 minutes a day, you spend 10 minutes a day doing Candy Crush on the toilet. Come on. Everyone's got 10 minutes a day, I don't care who you are.

Dave Asprey:

Well, you've talked about peeing in toilets, so I'm not going to ask you about any of your weird fantasies, but... totally kidding. Why do you do your Qi Gong before you pee in the morning? I have not heard of this before.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Couple of reasons. One is in the Daoist tradition, the kidneys absorb the Qi that is supposed to get expelled in the morning, so you have a lot of energy that will go out in your first stream of urine, and so in the alchemical practice of Qi Gong, you get up and you reabsorb that Qi and you put it back into the meridians before letting that pee leave your body, and the kidneys are kind of the repository of a lot of the energy in the system. It's an alchemical thing.

Dave Asprey:

But don't most people wake up just having to pee a lot? Do you just not wake up that way or you're like, I have to pee but shut up, kidneys, and...

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah, I trained myself to just get up before I absolutely wet myself and do the work and then pee after, right?

Dave Asprey:

You're a weird dude, man.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

It's weird. It's weird. But here's the other thing, what is the first thing most people do? Used to be, first thing you do upon waking is you stumble over the bathroom and pee. Now, most people, half of them will lean over and start checking their social media feeds or check their emails and stuff. So [crosstalk 00:46:12]...

Dave Asprey:

You can do that while you pee.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

You can do that while you pee, right? And that's what the [crosstalk 00:46:16]-

Dave Asprey:

I totally get it.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

... people do, right? But think about it, it's a mindless activity-

Dave Asprey:

It is.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

... you start your day with mindlessness, looking at the world's demands of your attention, before you even start your day. So for me, to establish my operating system in a self-referential, and I mean that in the positive way, not a narcissistic way, in a self-referential way that allows my attention to come back towards me is I need to gather my attention and start my day with my consciousness focused on my life, my breath, my priorities before Facebook comes knocking, before the emails come knocking. And so the most mindless thing we do in the morning is we stumble in and start doing this thing that we automatically have built as a habit, which is obviously a biological need, right? But I want to hack habits, I use your word, hack, I want to hack habits at the very start of my day, and then I want to start supplanting positive behavior over every little thing that has become automatic and mindless throughout my day as I build and assemble my day to bring my focus back home.

Dave Asprey:

That's a beautiful use of the word hack, where it's a practice that was more effective than doing it another way. And so, definitely, I'm the same way. I do not turn my social... well, not the same way in that I meditate before I pee, but I do keep my phone in airplane mode for at least an hour after I wake up, that used to be until I drop my kids off at school. My kids are in school now, so I still do that, but for all of this time when they weren't in school, same thing, you just don't turn it on because it's not worth it. And my team all knows, you're just not going to be able to reach me. If I even know the house phone number, you might be able to do that, but you're probably going to have to drive to my house to get my attention, and that's fine.

So, most people though, even after hearing this so many times on the show, are still not necessarily plugged in on that really important thing, so I'm glad you brought it up.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

It's one of the most important things in the world is who gets to drive your brain before you do? Because if it ain't you, you're tumbling on the white water the rest of the day. And yeah, I want my attention focused here, and then I could feed my lifeguard and I could take care of my kids. I could do what I need to do from here, but let me choose. I don't want the world to choose for me.

Dave Asprey:

It's a powerful place to be, and part of that is something else that's in your book, Focus. And you talk about saying no and setting boundaries. And I had, especially earlier on in my career, but even when I was starting Bulletproof, saying no was a lot harder for me than it is now because I see a lot of cool stuff and I want to say yes to it, right? Whether it's building a new company, or building a new product, or going and doing some kind of cool thing I haven't done before. So I've become a little bit better at saying no, or at least saying yes to the right things. What's your advice for learning how to say no? Because you've say no a lot in your life now. I only travel seven nights a year, that's a big amount of saying no for you that only came on in the last three years, what was your trick? How did you do and how do you suggest people learn how to say no more often?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

I think the first and most important step on that is to really reconcile with yourself what you've already said yes to, because if I say yes to my kids, my wife, my health, my time in nature, my dogs, and all these types of things, I need to then back out how many hours a day are left after all of those yeses, right? It's like doing a budget. If you have a credit card that you cut up the cards, right? If you are in time debt, if you're saying yes to a bunch of things and all the things in your life that you already say you value are not getting watered, your kids are pissed, your dogs look at you, like, dude, come on, you need to walk me more often, then those yeses are being neglected.

And so your new yeses are turning your old yeses into no's, right? And that's just a hard reconciliation of what you say you want versus what you're doing. And I think mindfulness has been taught very erroneously in the West. I mean, you have all the weird guru trippers that are like, oh, it's all about this enlighten state and what you really need to do is take ayahuasca because it approximates it and then you don't have to do the work. There's all these weird misreads of what mindfulness is.

And I said this back in the Urban Monk days is if you think of it as an app on your desktop and you have all these windows open and then you're starting to get stressed out because there's too much stuff going on, you double click meditation and you do some stuff, and then you go back to 27 open windows, that's bullshit. That's not how it's supposed to work. It should be this virus-scanning operating system that's constantly going, "Hey, Dave. You said yes to that new company over there, do you realize that, that's 16 hours a month that you're committing to? And your kid is playing the guitar now and you said you'd go to the concerts and your wife says we should go spend some time in Italy and not work so hard," and using that as a filter for future yeses.

And I used to be like everyone else, Dave, not everyone else, but a lot of people who kind of got into this world is I became a meditation apologist, where I'm like, oh, yeah, yeah. I'm going to say you should meditate but I know you're not going to do it so let's talk about the other stuff that you might be willing to do, and we start playing let's make a deal, I'm done with that. If I told you that there's a practice out there that literally helps enhance the part of your brain that's responsible for the negation of impulses, higher more reasoning and rational thinking, it will help you to better say no to the cheesecake or the new event in light of all the things that you've already said yes to, it's called meditation, right, and you do that to enhance the part of your brain that allows you to get better at saying no.

So now, I have to stop, and if it's something I'm super excited about, I'm allowed to say yes, but then I have to figure out where I'm going to get the time, money and energy away from my other yeses. I look at my lifeguard in, and I go, okay, well, what do I have to pull water away from to say yes to this thing? And it could be, yeah, yeah, maybe later. Yes, in quarter three of 2022, that's an absolute yes. Let me finish a couple of these things, let me hatch a couple of these eggs I'm sitting on, and that is absolutely something I'm interested in. I'll be back. Or I'm so sorry, I can't do that. But in the given timeline right now, hell yes is often an instinct, right, that you have to weigh against all your previous yeses on.

Dave Asprey:

That was a big hack for me, the not no, but not now. [crosstalk 00:53:17]...

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Just the later. Yeah, sure.

Dave Asprey:

This is on my list of things that I'd like to do at some point. I'm not saying I'm not going to do it, I'm just saying I'm not going to do it right now. And that creates a bigger sense of freedom, from what I can tell.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. Yeah. Look, and that's the part in time that is also, I think, amygdala driven, the part in time that's time compressed where it's like, I'm going to lose this opportunity. Your basic survival instinct is like, I got to grab this right now because I don't know when I'm going to eat something cool like this again, and that's in terms of life candy, not even food. And we tend to reach for these things in this time compressed way, panicking that they're not going to be there tomorrow. And anything worth waiting for is there. And, yeah, sure, there's opportunities and spec and stocks and all that crap, but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about something that Dave has to put his precious heartbeat's time, energy and effort into.

And right now, if you got a lot of stuff going on, it's, yeah, maybe later. Right? That's fine. And maybe it'll pass. My kids are more valuable to me right now. I can't disappear on them. It's not fair.

Dave Asprey:

Love that. Now we're coming up on the end of the interview, and you've done something interesting and something that I'm doing for my new book on fasting that includes the spiritual fasting, where you've created a 21-day course where you're saying, all right, you can read a book but maybe you could just teach them the stuff, and you're giving it away when people buy the book, and I actually think this is the future of writing these books where it's not enough to spend thousands of hours writing a book, you also have to finish the work as a teacher and say I'm going to make it so that you can digest what's in the book fully, and I appreciate that you did that.

And what you're doing is the same thing I am, which is, hey, buy the book, send me a receipt so I know you bought it and I'm going to give you what would be a \$100 course, or something like that, which is cool. I'm guessing that the link for that is theurbanmonk.com? Actually, I didn't even write it down.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Just go to theurbanmonk.com, it'll be on the homepage. I did this in 2016 with The Urban Monk book, where I did the seven-day free course called The Reboot, and it really taught me something in 2016 when I was just starting to write, this is my second book at the time, and I was just like, wow, you lazy bum, go read the book. And I realized that I'm the same guy I was judging, right, where it's just like, man, someone like Dave's like, oh, hey, I read this book. It's great. I just go on Amazon and buy it and it shows up, and then you get these stacks of books that just start showing up at your house, and then you start looking at them, going, damn, that's seven months of my life right there. I'm stressed out looking at that, and I don't even know where to start or which book to start with.

And I realize that we live in a world in the information age, which is so overwhelming, that the author does need to show up. The author needs to show up and be like, hey, look, folks. I get it. It's hard. I'm here. We could do a read-along. I will help you through this. And it's important to understand in the age of overwhelm that I'm not here to try to overwhelm you, I'm here to help you. Right? And so that's why for me, just taking 21 days of my life and sitting with my students and my readers to really make sure that I'm leading them to water and encouraging them to drink. I can't drink for them, but getting them as far as I can, I found, has been very effective in getting people to do the work and reap the benefits of the work.

Dave Asprey:

Very, very well said. One more question for me, Pedram, and you're going to love this, top three recommendations if people want to improve their focus. You only get three, either matter most or that people are most likely to do, you get to pick.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Okay. Well, the first one is an absolute number one, which is meditate. Again, I'm not a meditation apologist. Meditate your entire life gets better. When you get better at making decisions in life, you start to make better and better decisions, it turns out, life works out. It turns out, life works out. Number two, stop poisoning yourself. If you're like, ah, dairy bothers me a little, I just get gassy but it's okay, it's death by a thousand cuts. Find out what your body doesn't like, it's telling you it doesn't like, and just stop doing it. You want to add to the life force bank account, you don't want to take away. And if you're doing things every day that are diminishing your vitality, [crosstalk 00:57:48]...

Dave Asprey:

Like kale, is that what you're talking about?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Like kale, yeah, all the oxalic acid. Well, what's funny, I was talking to Chris Kresser. Chris Kresser moved up here too so we ski all the time.

Dave Asprey:

Oh, did he?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. And [crosstalk 00:57:58]...

Dave Asprey:

Got to get away from all that mold in his house, yeah.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. Well, right. He's now here in Deer Valley, we ski all the time, and one of the things he's been doing is he stopped recommending kale because what happens is all of...

Dave Asprey:

Finally.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah, but it's not the reasons you don't... I mean, I don't know. You've recommended not doing it because of the oxalic acids and all this...

Dave Asprey:

And the thallium, yeah.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

The thallium, yeah. So he's like, holy crap, I've been telling people to drink thallium, and these kale plants, they just suck up all the thallium. [crosstalk 00:58:28]...

Dave Asprey:

And they're bad in many different ways. But yeah, I started with oxalates and thallium three years ago, became really obvious. I actually measured an increased in thallium probably from broccoli and not even kale, but I had them like, this is ridiculous. So...

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Yeah. Well, yeah, for the same reason that [inaudible 00:58:42] are good is, right, they're now sucking up all these poisons from planet Earth, thank you very much, but if we eat them, then shame on us, right? So don't poison yourself.

Dave Asprey:

Okay. That's number two. Number three?

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Number three is still water breathes poison. If you are not moving your body, if you are not building lean muscle mass and increasing the density and the volume of mitochondria in your body and you're complaining about not having enough energy to see your life through, the equation is very clear. You need to have throughput, you need to have your food be pulled into these mitochondria that are robust and pulling energy, creating energy for your life. Don't be afraid of more energy, just have good energy economics and move your body in a way that allows for you to have more throughput. I don't worry about food if people are moving and people are active and people's mitochondria are cranking, you know what? They're asking you for more food and it's burning it.

I've worked with all these ultra-marathon guys that are eating, and this is not the best kind of food, but double, extra-large pizzas while running, and they could probably eat the cardboard box while

they're at it because their body has such metabolic needs that it's just pulling it through and they're muscular and they're healthy and they're happy. So, I think that

Dave Asprey:

Very, very well put, Pedram. Thank you for being a guest again on the show, and for doing the work of both writing the book and making it teachable. I've realized, just in my own books, that I have not done a good enough job of being the teacher, which is funny, I spend five years teaching at the University of California, but I may be had taken my foot off the gas on that front in favor of writing, where now, I'm like, okay, if you write the textbook [inaudible 01:00:50] teach the class. So, this is the future of being someone who's creating content that's worth reading, so I think you're ahead of the curve on that, and I appreciate that you're taking the time to do it. Have a beautiful day, Pedram.

Dr. Pedram Shojai:

Thank you, my friend. Great to see you, as always.

Dave Asprey:

If you like today's episode, there's something that you have to do to avoid being a bad person, and that is when you decide you're going to read a book, you have to leave a review. So, read Pedram's book. In fact, you want to do both of us a favor, buy Focus, his new book, and at the same time, order Fast This Way. You can pre-order it now. And then they'll show up together, and these are books that are entirely compatible where it's around building awareness, building practice, and doing what works so that you have focus. You probably wouldn't know this, but I found this study that's in the book, up to 30% of the thoughts you have are probably about what's for lunch or dinner. You can do better. Have an awesome day.