Build a Memory Palace to Upgrade Your Productivity – Alon Braun with Dave Asprey, Part 1 – #841

Announcer:

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Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bullet Proof radio with Dave Asprey. Today we're going to talk about anti aging, neuro technology, scientific innovation, and deep tech. And Alon Braun is a friend who founded NeuroTech Analytics which is a neuro tech focused analytical hub for analytical reports in the neuro tech industry, and I am an advisor to his research firm that does that. But he's also an incredibly prolific and successful entrepreneur. He is an advanced student of what's going on inside your mind, inside your brain, different techniques for extending and enhancing memory. One of the techniques, he's going to show us today, and I found him to be really note-worthy when it comes to anti aging, and cognitive enhancement. All the things that are at the core of bio hacking, so our private conversations have been so cool that I said "Hey man, you've got to come on the show, and share some of what we've talked about with the world because it's new, and it's really interesting, and it's very forward-thinking".

He's also written a book called the Entrepreneur Journey, and what you'll find there is if you wanted to really understand what's going on as an entrepreneur this guy does the deep thinking because if you look at personality frameworks not a lot of people tie those back to entrepreneurship. But I think he's cracked the code here, so lots of wisdom in today's episode. I'm going to do my best to fit it into an hour for you, but we might go a couple minutes over because he's real smart. Alon, welcome to the show.

Alon Braun:

Thank you, Dave.

Dave:

How's that for an intro?

Alon:

Actually amazing.

Dave:

I forgot the most important thing. You're a former computer hacker with Israel's cyber special forces unit, so he and I are both former hackers. And as a matter of fact, I've already downloaded his credit card number while we're starting the show, and he also downloaded mine, so now we're even.

Alon:

Yeah, I can expand on that maybe to be more correct. I was part in the special unit in Israel, and I got the clearance for this show to talk about it. There's a unit called Mamram, and I know people don't hear about it much, but this is the name of the unit, and actually all the Israeli high-tech is almost come out of Mamram. People are being special force trained in the programing, and software development, and managing big systems. They serve long time in the army, and after the army they build basically the Israeli high-tech scene, and then it's also influence the Silicone Valley... There is a similar unit in India, it's called the IIT. I don't know if people are familiar with, but in Israel we have the same.

Dave:

You sound like a typical Israeli hacker. Yep. Just for you guys who aren't from the computer hacking world who know leetspeak, and all the old school stuff I will just tell you that the Israeli hacking military capabilities are well respected globally. This is a guy who is pretty damn smart, but that wasn't enough so, oh, and then you decide to become a marine biologist, right?

Alon:

It's more of I started after the... Yes, but in the middle I've been into genetic engineering. I felt like "Okay, take all my knowledge, I'm going to crack biology". So this is where we think that we start to be aligned... I took all this knowledge, and went to biology, and I bioinformatics, and genetics, and done cloning of genes. I had the start of [inaudible 00:04:01] years ago a glowing plant, and after that I done my master marine biology, and coral [consification 00:04:14]. I publish about that, and then...

Dave:

And then that wasn't enough, so you decided to become a Feldenkrais. A body movement, energy work practitioner, right?

Alon:

Yeah. I'm weird, I know. Then I decide I should put the focus on myself, and my inner self, and I was optimizing looking at how... This is something called the Feldenkrais method, and I'm practitioner at three years of studies, and we actually learn how to improve our movement, we learn how to work with people to improve their movement, and actually hacking into the... I could give an example, it would be much simpler because everything is body communication, so there's not a lot of verbal, but I can demonstrate. So this is something we work every day. We developed the language, and every muscle in my body I'm looking at the relation, I'm seeing how I improve it. This is work I do every day with my trainers, and the KPI is our posture. So we're looking at the posture, we're looking at how we feel, and we optimize for best. And this is one of the thing I believe the most for aging.

So if we talk about longevity and aging I believe our ability to move, and to think... So the level of the software mainly is the most important element for me like to keep on learning, especially in the body. But after the Feldenkrais I will continue. I decided again to shift perspective. I will get to it later about the... In the entrepreneur journey I get... I know you're familiar with it, Dave, with integral framework, and we can look at reality in different, let's say angle, or perspective, or glasses. So we have the world of the inner world, and we have the outer world, and we have the world of the collective, and we have the world of the system. Let's call it like that. So I've been looking at this different worlds, and places within me, and optimizing each one of them, and hacking, or improving every direction that I can. So I move from Feldenkrais, and this science. I move into-

Dave:

That's actually funny. You moved through Feldenkrais which is a movement practice. Anyway, sorry, that was a dad joke.

Alon:

I decided to do big data, and understand the world. And big data people, and marketing, clicks, traffic, buying traffic, selling traffic. And because I put... Okay, I will make some money. So this was my KPI.

Dave:

So you became a wealthy guy, and right now you're working on your body, your mind, your spirit, your longevity, and understanding how all that works. There're not a lot of people with your background. I think it's safe to say that. What intrigues me is that after the mindset of being a computer hacker your really understand systems thinking in a way that most people don't, and you understand how to move a system you don't quite necessarily understand everything about it. Everything is a black box, you push on it, something comes out. You talk about KPIs over and over. Did you get the thing to do what you wanted it to do? And when you look at our consciousness, or our aging, and all it's the same thing. We might not know everything, but we know enough to make it do what we want.

Alon:

Exactly.

Dave:

It seems like that mindset percolates through all the stuff you've done. Even if you're looking at the body it's a distributed system of tiny information processing nodules called cells, or subcellular components. And that's why you start very low down, and you start working on that system, and suddenly your posture changes, or longevity changes, or brains change. Now, there're two things that I think would be most interesting for the Bullet Proof radio audience, and for the Upgrade Collective live members who are here, who have lots of really cool comments. One of them is definitely going deeper on the entrepreneur side around Ken Wilber's integral theory, and what that is, and how you tie it in with the entrepreneur's journey in your book. So we're going to get there, but I think first the area that would be really impactful for people is talking about memory palaces. I mentioned these I think in Headstrong, and I've had a few interviews a while back with a Swedish memory expert. But you have a whole new take on these things. Can you walk me through what is a memory palace, and then what you did to hack that?

Alon:

Yeah. I will start a little bit before, and say we made, at NeuroTech, we made a big conference. I think it was one of the biggest right now, and we got 100 interpreters, and different people. Everything was around aging, and brain, and memory. I was looking who can help, who can do something in technology wise, scientist. I was looking in electrode implant, people that implant themselves with electrode looking to extend the stimulation in order to enhance waking memory. And I came back to my thinking that I don't see that something will work right now, immediately for me because I really want result. I want immediate result, and I want to see proof. This also why I like your work so much, is because you look... Exactly like you say, you look what works. This is the most important. What works? So the KPI, it needs to work. That's the important... What is the science?

We will find the science after when we find that it's working. I think me and you, it doesn't matter for us. It can be a spiritual direction, it can be a body direction, it can be anxiety, it can be nervous system, it can be psychology. It doesn't matter as long as it's working. I think in recent years there's so much information in the internet. People also like Team Fairies, and blogs like that that looking what is actually working for everything? How can we validate?

Dave:

Let me ask you this. If you found out that carrying a teddy bear around with you all the time made you smarter would you do it?

Alon:

Yeah, absolutely.

Dave:

See? You're my kind of guy. I just wanted to be clear.

Alon:

Absolutely. I will take the teddy bear, and I go to the psychologist. Maybe I have too much masculinity, and I need to take down my masculinity a little bit, but I will carry the teddy bear.

Dave:

I love that. Okay, keep going.

Alon:

After that I was watching a Netflix documentary about memory, and there was a very nice guy named Nelson Dellis, and he was a full time US champion, and he said "I've been learning all this memory for my grandmother, she had Alzheimer". Also in my family it was the same. My grandmother, and it was horrible, and there was event with my mother. With time I understood that memory need to be something, like there is a button in the working memory, and I want to improve it. I started to work with Nelson Dellis in how do I improve the software level, you know? We started testing my memory, and I see my memory is actually pretty bad. I can remember six numbers, and this barely. If you give me a test it's not good. Maybe I learn too much in my life that maybe it's over capacity, but it's not amazing. So I was in six numbers, and-

Dave:

When you say six members do you mean you can remember six numbers at a time, or six on a dual-end back?

Alon:

No, not at the time, it's straight.

Dave:

Six is below average for a vice president.

Alon:

Exactly.

Dave:

Seven is where a typical vice president can go. Actually, eight is where a vice president goes. Seven is average. So you're slightly below average.

Alon:

Below average.

Dave:

If you get to nine, and ten you tend to find people at higher levels in an organization because they can remember more. So you're a little below. That surprises me, actually.

Alon:

I'm the type of person where he left the keys... I don't know, my conscience has shift places, and I don't notice stuff. But I started to work with him, and we saw that I managed to improve myself to remember 100 numbers now. So after I reach 100, and I can recite 100 numbers forwards and backwards, that was already like "Okay, something is working. Whatever it is, it's working". Then I started to see mind palace, what it is, and what the biological implication of... What is the meaning? What is the relation between mind palace, and biology? And now I will mention what is mind palace because we get to the point. It's a trick, a technique which is 1000 years old, and it's actually developed in Greece, and people use it through the last 1000 years, or 2000 years. Actually you imagine a place, and in the place you imagine a [inaudible 00:13:56] place, and they can be a home that you grow up on, or a school, or whatever it is. And you place object in this palace, or in this house, or this location.

You also animate them, and you make them do something really nice, or emotional, this object, and I don't know how, but you remember. This is really easy to remember, so I played with my little children, and they remember amazing stuff. So if you transfer... So I understand that if you translate something into a memory palace you can actually remember it with these places. I worked with Nelson, and we build a big palace. I had a palace of, I don't know, 50 rooms, and every room had 10 places. So I had a stack of 500 places I can populate now.

Dave:

When you're building a palace like this, just to put a picture to it for people, you imagine a house, or a palace, and you walk in the front door, and there's a shelf there. And on the shelf you can put something, and if you're going to remember the number one you have a little object that's always number one, so you place the vase there. And on the shelf underneath that you place the basketball which is number two, or whatever your little internal thing is. In your mind you can explore this big thing like you explore a video game, those three dimensional Duke Nukem, Doom... Everything you play is descended from those games so I'll go back to old school. So it's kind of like that, and it's super powerful, but is that really working memory? Because working memory is like RAM versus this is something that's been translated by RAM. You're using a RAM doubler.

Alon:

I think that when you look at the object it's like working memory. So when you are with the object... The palace is actually the lair before the working memory actually, so it give you the network of connections. So basically you are building a stack, or network that when you have one item you can continue with other item, and actually drag them from your brain. The palace is just a neural connection, and the objects will be like the items... I think that you understand. When I take an item it's basically I'm populating my... But when I look at the room, if I look at the room, and see five item, or seven items this is my current working memory. And I look at them, and I have seven of them, let's say. This is what I'm able to hold. So the rooms in the house hold these items, but then it's okay, I can do that. I must say, I'm like a walking company. I have great coaches that I work with in different area of my life, and taking care of all the time. Emotional, philosophical, body, everything that I can.

I spoke to my coaches, and everybody know this mind palace. They know memory palace. What you do with that? It's nice when maybe you want to impress somebody with great memory, and you

want to show people as an expert, but I don't know about the actually you do because you can use your phone. So what is the point?

Dave:

I don't use the memory palace I built very often. It's probably rusty, and got some ivy growing on it, but you use yours regularly, right?

Alon:

Exactly. So what happened? I said I will find a good use for this. There have to be a good use for this tool. I started experiment, and what I done, I have a big project management system, and I have a few hundred items in the project management system which are different... Basically it's representing wants. So my project is wants, but it's parts of wants. So our project management usually is when we wake up in the morning, what we want from life. In a way this is my project management system because I have built it in different of life, and every area I know... Okay, my next task in food is I eat more broccoli. I'm going to make a habit of more broccoli. Nevermind. You put all the wants. I took all this project management system, and I uploaded it to the memory palace. How you do that, you take... This is something I was working on, how I actually do that. I needed to make an object for every project. Make an object that remind me of this want, and I took all this list of object which looked very random.

Some of them just a person because I like to put... And I show you later with my entrepreneur [inaudible 00:18:44] framework that every project is actually a team, and a person, and we worked with people. So these people start to populate my project management system. And since they populate my virtual palace, my mind palace. And what happened then was actually amazing. This is why I like to encourage people to try this because what happened then, suddenly I found myself... If I walk on the stairs now I can actually work. I can actually do really body things. I can actually swim, and work. I can actually sit in the bench, or in the field, and just run. Upload object by object, and I can actually sit with the object, and be creative. And I can say "Okay, what is the next step in this project?", and I can be very relaxed because everything is suddenly... I know what I want every moment of time. If somebody ask me "What do you want?", I have a whole palace. Where do we start?

This remind me of... So suddenly feels like the anxiety a little bit went down because I don't need to go nowhere, I don't need to check my phone, I don't need to check my computer because what is most important is what do I want, and what is the next step? How can I be creative in the products that I want to do?

Dave:

I got to pause you for a second there. This is fascinating, but what you just said reminds me of Getting Things Done methodology. Remember that one? David Allen.

Alon:

Yeah, yeah. David Allen.

Dave:

And if you guys don't remember this, this is a guy who said the way to inner piece is make sure every email, and every piece of paper is filed in a really precise system. Now, I did this for two years which I wish I got back because the bottom line is he's an anxious person. I should have him on the show because I'm not trying to attack him, but he's an anxious person so he deals with anxiety with control.

You can also just deal with the anxiety, and realize I threw all my shit in a big box, and if I need to find something I just flip through there until I find it which is more like a memory palace. As long as you remember where you put it in the box it's in there, or it's in a search engine so your stress could go down. What do you do to deal with your anxiety when you don't have everything tracked in a system?

Alon:

Okay, but this is another topic. For me, anxiety is the meaning of I need to connect more with my body. So anxiety is the more I put focus on my senses the more I feel better.

Dave:

That's a big hack for everyone listening right there is that anxiety is in the body, it's not in the mind.

Alon:

Yes. We all know Porges' sympathetic, parasympathetic work, and we can start to talk about all this subject of anxiety by itself.

Dave:

I don't want to take you off your previous track there, but I caught that, and I think that's worth noting for people it's okay if you don't know where some stuff is. You don't have to feel anxiety if that happens, but having a system that tracks it typically reduces anxiety, or at least reduces missed opportunity. There you go.

Alon:

But then when the system is inside of you, and you actually can connect to your body... This is what I did. Basically instead of sitting on David Allen Getting Things Done, and I respect David Allen, but in order to make it work I need to sit on the computer. I'm a computer person, I don't like to sit on the computer. If something you learn about being like in software engineer... And this is something every software engineer will tell you. They hate the computer. We don't like to sit in front of the computer, and then the phone, it's even worse. So I like to connect with my body. I like to develop my body, I like to connect on my emotion, I like to connect to people. So as if it's embodying information can really open up other things. You can be with the project, and be Tai Chi-ing, I don't know, swimming.

Then the realization is... And for that I understand maybe this is the ideal. What's happening? I'm just actually taking a construct, and now it's like my wants actually. So perhaps we can build palaces of who we are, and what is our values, and what we want. So we take all the... We live in a time that every person in the world is exposed now to Tony Robins. They have the coaches, and many people they repeat this information again, and again. And people hear it at home, and they know it. People already heard the advices. They heard the advices, but what we do with that? We hear we should be happy, and we hear we do that, and it's my responsibility not to be a victim. There are so many frameworks, and we have a ton of advices. What do we do with that? In the age of the internet, when everything I accessible, what we do with information?

Can we file it on the computer? There's five steps that Tony Robins give for something. Do we file it on the computer, and... What we do with that? So I started to understand that. Perhaps it's about embodying information, and the main works that need to be done is not getting more information, it's actually embodying the information, and actually uploading it to us. And when we upload this networks of information with a time you're creating habits in your thinking. So when you're visiting these

networks you're creating habits, and things happen in a different way. Things start to change when you're actually working directly, and constructing these networks. I can get into the topic of NeuroTech.

Dave:

Before we get into NeuroTech I just want to clarify. I know because you and I talked about it for 45 minutes on one of our calls. What you're doing is you're taking a project, you're putting it in a room in your memory palace. But then you're also creating people or processes to work on it which I want to make sure that that comes through for listeners. That ties right back to Think and Grow Rich. These round tables that the author of the book talks about, saying "Well if you want Thomas Edison working on something, close your eyes and visualize that you've got him sitting at a table with you. What do you say?" Imagine that your brain can do that. You're kind of putting Thomas Edison, or whoever in the rooms in your house, and saying "Go do some work while I swim". Did I have that right?

Alon:

Not exactly. It's funny that you mentioned Thomas Edison because my book is about Thomas Edison, and I break down all the Thomas Edison journey. But what I can tell about that is when we are in the mind palace, when we are there and we have this virtual beautiful place that we built with all our projects, and all our stuff, this is what I have, I notice that we can actually do stuff inside. And the meaning of that is what is an action we can do on an object? And this is a really fascinating subject, and I think this is what you mean. What can we do per object? What is the abilities? Can we move the object, and remember the movement? Not sure, but can we delete an object? Would be interesting. Might, yes. Can we sort objects in a room? Problem. I managed, for example, to give the object a number, and remember the number, but that was quite easy because we can say big is, I don't know, a watermelon, and we put the watermelon in the object that we want.

So you can add priority to all your 100 things, and you can mark them with some other objects. So you can do that. Then you can say "Okay, my priority for 100 objects"... Entering the room I will put a watermelon, I will put it on one of the items in this room. This is most important for me right now". Interacting with objects, and this is taking me to the subject of the book, I have built for the past two years because I'm so interested in memory... There was another big realization that happened for me. This is my start of the journey with a bulky memory is that we have a very difficult time to make decisions because in order to make the decision there's a type of calculation, and this type of calculation, you know what is the limit? Working memory. Very difficult for people, and they judge themselves, and they doubt. You finish school, nobody will never work with you about decisions, never work with you about making, I don't know, how do you decide things. And they ask you a huge question, like "What do you want to do? Now you finished school, what do you want to do for the rest of your life? Who you want to marry for rest of your life? Where do you want to study?"

So these questions, these big decisions that come to young people. What job you want? Who has the capability to answer that? The only way, we use heuristics, and we copy other people. And we look, "Okay, father said that. I will do that. He is a successful person, I will copy him". So we just using heuristic because we don't have a way to calculate. The calculation is so complex that how do you calculate that? The issue is the working memory. We just can not do the math. So I went and learned the math. This is the math that I found most important, is something called AHP. It's very aligned to the work that I done on my Feldenkrais, on the body. Using the AHP I built the entrepreneur journey book which look at... I felt I will minimize all the ends to entrepreneurs, or artists at least, have a goal to make a change in the world, and I actually cut the journey into steps.

And I look at the main decision points, and I put mathematic calculations on how you make the decision for every point, and because of the working memory issue... And I try to build from the math constructs that I can use in my own... How do you embody decisions like that? So this was my work, and this is a book about...

Dave:

It's worth noting that in the Entrepreneurs Journey you are starting every chapter with an example from Thomas Edison which is why I brought him up earlier. And one thing that's nuanced there that is very computer science, maybe even a little trans humanist there is that what you're talking about with working memory being a limiting factor for decisions, what's underlying working memory is energy production. And in computer science how much power can you run through a chip before it burns? That's why you have water-cooled gaming computers, and all this kind of stuff. So a lot of what I focus on is how do I get more mitochondrial efficiency which means less heat, less waste, less reactive oxygen species to make enough electricity? One of the reasons [inaudible 00:30:35] matters, and some of the supplements that catalyze energy because it makes working memory easier.

So now you have better working memory ideally, and you have more energy which we know more energy helps you with decision making. In fact, there was a study out of Israel with a parole board that probably proved that the most.. So the idea is you get a power upgrade because you exercise, and because you make your hardware work. And then what you're doing is like installing a virtual machine inside your head where you've now figured out inside your machine "Oh, here's how I do a raise, here's how I do sorting", other basic things any programmer knows how to do. And apologies if you're not a nerd, and you're listening to this going "What are these guys talking about?" But what's going on here is-

Alon:

Sorting.

Dave:

Yeah, sorting. Queuing. I hear all these concepts.

Alon:

Exactly, it's sorting. Dave, if you understand that it's sorting... It's all sorting, algorithm. How do you run sorting algorithm in your own brain? I think there's answer for that. I can get into the subject, but it's exactly that, and I agree totally about... I think you are the right person to solve the energy, and mitochondrial problem, and I will follow what you do, and in order to enhance my hardware. That's the reality of things. I'm working on the software level exactly like that. I will work on enhancing energy because I think that you have all the relation, and network, and you actually doing the work. That's all. This is the reality of things, and I do not need to do this work on hardware.

Dave:

So what we're doing here is a hardware upgrade, and then a software upgrade. And what you're doing is basically an operating system upgrade which is better than... A lot of the software is what do we think about? How do we think? What are the core assumptions we make that underlie conscious decisions? But what you're doing is somewhere underneath that. So if you guys are thinking about this, every now and then on your phone you do an iOS upgrade, and everything shifts, and every now and then you install a new app. So if you're listening to a podcast, you get a new idea, that's an app. But if you have a new way of thinking that's more affective, and more efficient, or turns on new capabilities that's what

Alon is talking about here, and that's what's in his book. It's pretty fundamental, groundbreaking stuff, but I've got to ask you, how long did it take you to turn this on? Because this sounds like a little bit of work to install a virtual machine inside your head.

Alon:

It is a bit of work. I will take your question, and move it to my little children. I have children, they are five... A son aged seven, and two twins, five years old. I'm looking at what they are training with, and I start to make games for them that can help them to understand to solve things. So I think that you can actually install it really good if you play the right games, and not computer games. This is the issue. It can be computer, but I... I will explain something like that. Our senses do not operate with numbers. So like musicians, musicians do amazing work of embedding maths in some ways. It's actually embodiment of math, so musician actually tapping into these energies, and sorting of sound. So if you have a random sound, and you need to sort it in your mind really fast... So let's say if you take eight bells with different sounds, and you need to sort them, give the child to do that. Make them do it really fast.

He will be amazing in his ability to think because ability to think, and make decisions is actually our ability to sort, but it's a multi criteria sorting. The [inaudible 00:34:28] is Montessori. It's a direction of Montessori education right now. I do not see somebody took a bigger leap than the Montessori framework for the little children, but there is a lot of work to do there, and how to install this basic stuff. Even to sort something, just to sort, it's so simple.

Dave:

It's a reformatting of our education system. So instead of passing some standardized test you do that. My kids learned to count with their toes. Moving nuts around with their toes so that the numbers would be embodied in them and I think there's value in the Rubik's cube. My son is really into that right now, but talk about working memory. He's got God knows how many thousands of algorithms in his head all the time. It's pretty astounding, but stuff like that is not video games. But can we make video games, and install this? Do you think that's possible?

Alon:

Absolutely. Especially VR, and I think especially in the world of VR, and what's happening. I was amazed to use the Oculus, and machines like that. I don't know if people are aware of what's happening, but it's becoming better, and better, and in a way that a virtual world is coming. And I hope people understand that it's coming. [inaudible 00:35:45]

Dave:

Is it safer to let Google, or Facebook install algorithms in your brain with VR?

Alon:

Good question. I think it's happening already.

Dave:

It is happening already.

Alon:

It's happening already. So now the question is how do we make good choices about which podcast we listen to? How we make good choices which movie we... So it's about the choice. Right now we have so much choices. You open Netflix, what do you choose? You open the internet, what do you choose? It's all the time a question of a lot of data, and best choice. So I think that this is a skill that we need for our children, and multi criteria decision, choice, fast according to his preference, not according to Netflix preference meaning we need to do the ground work and work with our children, and I work with my children. So what is our values? What do we value in a TV series?

What is important for us in a cartoon? And then be able to take... Perhaps the fact that is real, or the fact that it's enjoyable, and the fact that we take few criteria together, and how we choose the best show. This is something our kids need to do, and we need to do. And I must say, I will repeat the kids stuff, but it's more for our children because they will have so many choices, and choices are being taken for them most of the time.

Dave:

How do you deal with FOMO, the fear of missing out? This is why choices are hard for a lot of people, especially kids. If I choose this I don't get to choose this. So how do you deal with it yourself, and how do you think about teaching the body to be calm when you make a choice that maybe it was suboptimal, but it was good enough?

Alon:

I will say decisions... First of all I will say something about our body because it's related. We make choices all the time especially when we move. So when we move our hand in a certain way there is choices that have been made to move in a certain way. It's a pattern that [inaudible 00:37:56] learn, but we all the time adjusting the patterns. That's the fact of choosing, again, the movement. Trying with the shoulder a little bit different, trying with the hand a little bit different, and see what is more comfortable for us, and all the time optimizing. It's about little judgements. The way I think the operating system working is about comparing little judgements, and sorting them out. So it's not about "If I do that something horrible will happen". It's being first of all on the positive result. In the AHP network they look at benefit, and risk, and cost. So you look at it... But in our body, and in the day to day I think that it's better to leave first of all the risk parameter out, look at what you want, and then put them in.

Because if you put the risk parameter first, and this is [inaudible 00:38:55] this operating system, first of all thinking "What can bad happen?", you already put your body in a sense of anxiety. You're making your working memory smaller probably, and you do not make optimum decisions. You just make safe decisions.

Dave:

So I would say it's a fear-based thing.

Alon:

Yeah. It's fear-based thinking.

Dave:

It's funny because what you just described there is what you learn in the first year of computer science. The traveling salesman problem which is when... And this is something every one who's ever written their first code has to deal with. And it's you have a salesman who needs to travel to 10 cities, and

there're all these different paths he could take, and how do you know which flight to take first in what order? And it turns out it's really hard to do that in the perfect way. You can get it pretty good, pretty fast, but to solve it ideally takes enormous compute power, and distributed processing, and this is why travel systems like Sabre exist. If you guys have heard of that, that's what does all of your travel stuff. So this is 50 years of human engineering, and software, and hardware, and distributing networks to solve that problem.

So what you're doing there is you're doing the traveling salesman problem through life. How do I make optimal decisions I need to know in the network, and you're just doing it with more consciousness than most people.

Alon:

That's what we do in our life, this is what we do.

Dave:

It is, yeah.

Alon:

Free will. [inaudible 00:40:16] one gate country, but they put it in the constitution. I think the ability to choose, and the ability for us to have free will... I think you promote it a lot. This is in the heart of everything. Our freedom to choose, and to be who we are, and to follow what we want, and do it consciously. I think this is the health of everything.

Dave:

Fundamental.

Alon:

Fundamental.

Dave:

Here's a really tough question for you. This I actually from Susan in the Upgrade Collective in our live audience. She typed it for me. There are times... This is something I've struggled with for years, and I feel like I've got a pretty good grasp on it now, but I want to know how you do it. So there're times when your computer science brain says "All right, I've made this choices", but your non rational, non computer science body has an intuitive thing that says "Hold on, my calculations say to do this, my gut says don't do this". How do you know when that's happening, and what do you do?

Alon:

It's a good question. I will look at it like that, and I put it... Also, it's in my book. This is about... You have all the Chakra system, and the [inaudible 00:41:37] system, and all of them looking very carefully on the centers of energy in the body. And actually what they are is a mechanism to make this decision. We can choose from our heart, we can choose... And what is that, is our body is a mind palace, and our heart is a value of connecting. I can go over every chakra, and explain the value that is inside, but this is exactly what it is. The heart is connection. So how do we make a multi decision? That is not what Susan asked. Susan asked "What happen when it's in the heart?", but if I want the heart and the brain, and the sense

of who I am, and my expression of what I want in life. And what about my safety? And what about fun? What if I want all of them together? I'm not satisfied with one.

And I think the journey is "I'm not satisfied", and this is something that I learned from Ken Wilber. This is the integral framework, and we see how we upgrade the way we decide. Actually, our values. It's the values that we put attention to, and he describe it in colors, and it's really beautiful. I really suggest everybody to learn integral philosophy because I think this is one of the main, best philosophical movement right now that is current. I will say that what you see is that some people... People change with the way they make decision through life, and also cultural change. It's an individual, and cultural, and you see that actually the operating system changed. So it start with safety, and then it move like maybe... I will not describe all the colors now, it will be too long.

You have older, and the blue, and you have the orange, and it can be money, and success. And then you have green, connection. And it's like people are upgrading, they're moving through... And you have then the artist, and blue, and then you have people in yellow which is like my sense of being here, and helping the world, and being safe, and being... How do you do all of them together? Working with your heart, and working with your mind, and with your sense of safety. How do you combine that? And that is the multi criteria decisions that need to be operating. So Susan, try to simplify it when she says... She's trying to simplify it. Say "Okay, it's actually the heart". No, it's not anything actually. It's actually seven, eight, ten, twenty criteria that we need to operate with. We just simplify because we can not.

So people that move to the heart it's sometimes because they already understand that money... It doesn't have to be only about money. It's also about our connection to people. But you want to combine, you want them all, you want to learn to do it all. You can not neglect now your sense of safety. You can not neglect because then you feel anxiety. You can not neglect your sense of self worth because then you will feel empty, and worthless. What about connecting to... So we want all. And this is my answer, and I will dive very deeply into the math of that, and how do we do that? I think this is the center of my work.

Dave:

It really is the center of your work from what I can tell, and that decision making... It's easier to make a spread sheet, and say "What should my career be?" You do a spread sheet, "Oh, careers make you money, so I want to go work on Wall Street". And you realize "Oh, hold on, that also makes you miserable so maybe I'm not going to work 90 hours a week". So then you do a few weighted things, but then at the end of the day if your gut is screaming at you "No, this is terrible", whatever you decide, and you don't weight that at all you'll wake up 20 years later, and hate your life.

Alon:

Absolutely.

Dave:

And they don't teach you that in school, so you account for that in your framework.

Alon:

Exactly. This is the main thing to account. Its multi criteria decision, and that is a mistake the entrepreneur have, and this is what I picture in my book, and this is what I teach. It's how to use all these criteria for the entrepreneur not to make zero meaningful project which I see so many of them with great execution, no meaning. Or how do you make amazing meaning, but no execution? How do you combine all these parameters together to succeed actually? Something is always missing.

Dave:

Let's switch gears, and talk about entrepreneurship, and mission, and vision, and things like that. And I have a sneaking suspicion that this may end up being a two part podcast because we're just getting going on this part of it. So we've learned a lot about memory palace, and decision making, but let's talk about entrepreneurship. And you hit the most important thing first there which is you see the "I have lots of vision, and nothing ever happens". And we all know a bunch of entrepreneurs, crazy inventors, people like that where they might have the greatest thing since sliced bread, gluten free bread, but it never sees the light of the world because they couldn't execute. And we see the executors we execute stuff that doesn't matter even if they make money. It seems like you're allergic to both of those.

Alon:

I'm totally allergic... This is why I like your work. I will say it again because you touch the inner self, and you're exploring psychological places, you're exploring the system area, you're exploring the marketing, and you're exploring the team, and collaborative work. All of them are necessary. People all the time neglecting one of them, and say "Oh, but this is evil".