

Announcer:

Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's guest on the show is a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University and Director of the Stanford Neuroscience Lab. He's looked at what empathy and kindness do to humans on all sorts of different levels and wrote a fascinating and engaging book called, *The War for Kindness*, which is something that you want to pay attention to because right now it's too easy when you're feeling like you're under threat, even if you're not actually under threat that you snap out of kindness.

Dave:

I have fervently believed since the beginning of Bulletproof that when we have enough energy, that we're fundamentally wired to be kind to each other. That's actually one... it's the fourth F word, if you're familiar with my three big F words. So I wanted to have Professor Jamil Zaki on the show. This is the time when you can hack your response to the environment so that you are naturally kind and it doesn't take effort, that it's just built in and there is experiments, there's all kinds of cool stuff we're going to talk about. So Jamil, welcome to the show.

Jamil Zaki:

It's a pleasure to be here.

Dave:

You could have studied sociopath, psychopaths and abnormal nail-biting behaviors and you chose kindness. So what's wrong with you?

Jamil:

If I was studying psychopaths, I'd still be studying kindness because I'd be studying its absence.

Dave:

Okay, there you go.

Jamil:

My parents come from really different countries, my mom from Peru and my dad from Pakistan and they had a... they got together in Pullman, Washington of all places and fell in love, I think mostly because they were both so confused in the US that they found comfort in each other.

Dave:

Oh, wow.

Jamil:

They quickly I think realized as they became acclimated in the US how little they actually had in common and had this acrimonious long divorce that took up a bunch of my childhood and I'm their only kid. I think a lot of kids of divorced parents feel as though they inhabit multiple worlds at the same time, the

reality of each of their parents. For me, a lot of my childhood it was really a survival skill to learn to tune myself to their different frequencies and learn to connect with them even though they were having such trouble connecting with each other. I kind of feel that's the biggest skill I ever picked up in my life.

Dave:

So pretty much everyone who goes into psychology has childhood trauma. Is that what I heard you say?

Jamil:

You know, we might be overrepresented, who knows? They do say in my field that research is messy so if you find someone studying something, they either have a lot of it or maybe they don't have much of it at all.

Dave:

No, it's kind of funny. It is a true statement though. It's even true, anesthesiologists, like, why did you want to knock people out? I mean, you could have been a proctologist, wait, why did you want to do that? Any profession that's medical and intervening with other people, you're like, why did you go there? The answer is always interesting and it's not necessarily that indicative of something. But, you basically were dealing with two different cultures, divorced parents, you're like, all right, I want to get into this and you got into kindness though not family systems and all that. So what is it about kindness that's special or different or what made it worthy of your career pursuit?

Jamil:

I think it's among human beings, I don't know top three capacities that have allowed us to thrive as a species. I mean, our secret is it comes in so many forms, we can plan really well, we can remember well, but really if you look at us a hundred thousand years ago, we were pretty unimpressive animal, right? Just the medium size mammal, not particularly fast or strong, we couldn't fly or swim very well. But in part, our ability to work together is what allowed us to succeed because even if as individuals we were unimpressive, as a collective, we are like a super organism that can do things no other animal ever could. So, I really think that even now there's all sorts of evidence that kindness is our kind of superpower. It's a super power hidden in plain sight in a way.

Dave:

I very much appreciate that. Can I walk you through the framework that I've been using to talk with listeners? I'll do it quickly because some people have heard it, some people haven't. But I want you to poke holes in it and that's why I'm doing this. So this is an interest of learning and you'll recognize some of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and some other stuff in there, but it's from a biological behavior base thing. All life forms have to follow this algorithm. The first thing is, runaway from killer or hide from something that's scary because okay, you die right now so bacteria do it, plants secrete toxins, we run away or we hide, we do our defensive thing so, that's most important.

Dave:

Second thing you do is, you eat everything because a famine could be coming around the corner, right? I mean, all animals will do this. They'll stuff themselves if you give them good stuff, all right and then... including humans, you know, that's pizza. Then the third thing is... so the first one is fear, the second one is food. The third one is also an F word and all life has to do it. What do you think that might be?

Jamil:

Romance.

Dave:

No, it's an F word.

Jamil:

Yeah. I'm kidding. The F word that sounds... that is related to romance.

Dave:

Fertility, right? What were you thinking about?

Jamil:

Yeah. Right. Yes, yes.

Dave:

So, I apologize if I've used that on another guest and you're hearing this for like the fifth time because that's the only joke I know. Anyway, so those are the big three things that all humans want to do. But okay, if you're doing those to some degree of satisfaction, the fourth F word that all life does, not just humans and I'm saying this is why I believe that kindness is hardwired is the F word, that's friend. Because it doesn't matter if you're kombucha like, oh, how do I form a system with the life around me, including other yeast or bacteria? How do I form a biofilm? How do I form a stand of trees? How do I form cheese? How do I form a tribe? How do I form a herd?

Dave:

Every life form does this to some degree or another with different styles, but it feels like it's hardwired and that there is no form of life. It's like, I'm the only one of me, I will be all alone, I will not reproduce and I will not make friends with anyone I've reproduced. It doesn't matter I want to eat my babies, that's a different strategy, snakes and stuff like that. But still they have a sociological structure. So are we wired as humans to be kind to each other or are we wired just to pummel each other with rocks and take each other's lucky charms?

Jamil:

I think both in a way. I absolutely hear what you're saying and I think the Fs that you bring up are Fs that we talk a lot about in biology and in psychology. You're also right that friendship or just being part of something greater than ourselves is not a luxury, it's not a nice to have, it is fundamental to survival. I mean, if you want to run away from a predator and you're alone, good luck because a lot of predators are a lot faster and a lot stronger than you and it's by engaging as a collective that we're able to succeed and that's not just in humans. So, think about fish, right? So if a school of fish starts being attacked by large predators, what do they do? They form a bait ball and sort of form a giant clump where they're all sort of protecting themselves via each other, but they're also protecting each other, right? So it's only through mutual aid, that's what the evolutionary theorist, Peter Kropotkin called it, mutual aid and social behavior that many animals including us are able to survive and be fertile as you put it.

Dave:

Right, right. So, I guess that means all life forms have one slow friend, which is like the bait friend so that a predator will eat them.

Jamil:

Right. You don't have to be faster than the tiger, you just have to be faster than your friend.

Dave:

Yeah. I'm always looking for slow friends, it's an important part of my strategy. Now, so if it is wired then that we do that and we do survive better as a species and clearly, oh, like that guy, he's the one who makes fire and that guy over there is the one who does skins or whatever, we specialize and every life form specializes. So, is that the same thing as kindness or is that different? If it's just survival based, it feels like it's utilitarian. So help everyone listening understand what kindness actually is. I mean, you're measuring this in a lab, what are the units of measure? How do you know that it's there versus just self-interest?

Jamil:

Yeah. So kindness is also known as prosocial behavior or prosociality in psychology and economics and it's any behavior that benefits someone else. Now, let's cut kindness into two parts. One, cooperation. That's where I benefit you and me at the same time, right? That's when we work together to accomplish something that neither of us could do alone. Now, the other part, the other type of kindness would be altruism. That's where I do something for you and I don't benefit and maybe I'm even worse off for doing it. So the classic example of that would be someone in the military throwing themselves on a grenade to protect the rest of their platoon, right? Obviously they are sacrificing everything in order to act kindly towards others.

Jamil:

Now for, I don't know, centuries, millennia, people have been trying to divide altruism from cooperation by saying, is there an act that we can find that is truly altruistic? The answer is, it's really difficult and it depends on how you define it because sometimes I might act kindly towards you and obviously for a self-interested reason or cooperative reason, you benefit but I get a tax break. You benefit but I impress somebody who I'm hoping to date or you benefit but then you pay me back, you feel like you owe me something later on. Now, maybe I can say, well, what if I donate to charity anonymously? Maybe that's an act of true altruism because where's the benefit? But it turns out, and this is some research that I and lots of other people have done, that when you give to others you actually experience pleasure. We've found using functional magnetic resonance imaging that when you donate money to someone else, you activate similar parts of your brain as when you eat chocolate.

Jamil:

So if we enjoy kindness, does that make it selfish? These are the types of questions that people have been asking for a long time and I think we should stop asking because to me even... yeah, because to me, even if the way that we're built biologically means that we enjoy kindness, to me that doesn't take away from how powerful it is that we are kind. I think it makes it more powerful and more beautiful that we've evolved to enjoy it.

Dave:

So kindness is a selfish act?

Jamil:

Depending on how you want to define selfishness. But if you're thinking-

Dave:

But if you do it because it feels good, that's kind of selfish, right?

Jamil:

I think it is in a way. But let's think about what's the self in selfish means. Empathy is the idea that even though we're physically apart, psychologically we overlap. That my internal definition of me also includes my kids, my wife, my parents, my friends-

Dave:

Okay, your tribe, yeah.

Jamil:

... and even other people writ large, my tribe. So, if myself extends to all of them, then helping them is like helping me. Now you can call that selfish if you want, but I actually think it's quite a poetic feature of human nature.

Dave:

It is poetic. It is beautiful. The studies show your heart rate variability goes up, your cortisol goes down and when you do things to help another person suffer less or experience happiness, it pays off biologically. We are wired so that we will want to do that at some level. If we're wired that way, and by the way, do you believe we're wired that way? Just to be real blunt.

Jamil:

Yeah. I do.

Dave:

Okay. Good. I don't want to put words in your mouth. So if we're wired that way, why do people act like such assholes sometimes?

Jamil:

The novelist, George Saunders writes about... he writes about what he calls Built-in Confusions. So I think that, I think... so let's go back to your four Fs framework, right? We need friends, but you put that forth and I think a lot of people put that forth and they believe that first and foremost, we need to do for ourselves, we need to protect ourselves, we need to have enough resources for ourselves, we need to not get eaten and we need to eat and those things are true. Of course, we need those things. But I think that too often those two desires that we've evolved to have feel like they should be pitted against each other. We think that in order to do for myself, that means I need to consider myself an individual apart from other people. I need to be selfish.

Dave:

You mean socially isolated?

Jamil:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, exactly. We think, oh gosh, I need to protect myself, I need to be apart from others, I need to be individualistic. That fear that by giving to others we will lose what we need for ourselves, I think it misleads a lot of people into a very isolating, asshole life when they could be gaining a lot more, even for themselves if they were kinder and interacted more with others.

Dave:

I appreciate that, that perspective a lot. So some people are that way, but there's an inner conflict about it.

Jamil:

It is an inner conflict. It's so interesting though how clearly people are wrong. So you might know about these studies-

Dave:

True, yeah.

Jamil:

... but Liz Dunn and Laura Aikman and others have done these studies where they give people money and ask them, how happy do you think you would be if we gave you five bucks or if we gave you 20 bucks? And if you spent it on either yourself or someone else and people robustly say, oh, I'd be way happier if you gave me money to spend on myself and I'd prefer 20 over five, thank you very much.

Dave:

Right.

Jamil:

But then if they actually give those people money and have them spend it on either themselves or someone else, and then ask them at the end of that experience, how happy are you? People are much happier when they spend money on someone else than when they spend it on themselves and it doesn't matter whether it's \$5 or \$20,

Dave:

There's a famous clip from some YouTube prankster guy. He and a friend gave a hundred bucks to a homeless guy and said, oh, let's record if he is just going to go buy alcohol, watch. He goes and he actually buys food for everyone else who's homeless and basically spends it all on other people and they're just... literally, the guys are in tears and they're like, "Here, have everything in my wallet, you're a better human than I am," and walked away. It seems like that guy had figured that trick out that it felt better. I'm touched by that video and by other examples of people choosing kindness like that. How is this changing now that we don't really see other people for a while or we see them over Skype or Zoom or whatever. Is there a shift in our kindness wiring because we're oftentimes just with our family or by ourselves?

Jamil:

You mean in general like as our society has changed or right now? Yeah.

Dave:

Yeah. What's it doing to us? We're doing this weird social experiment around, oh, actually, maybe you are individual and maybe you are all alone and certainly from a pheromone and hugs and human contact and things that are documented to make you kind of feel better, all of those are suddenly swept away and we're living in these weird little bubbles. What is it doing for our kindness to each other? Is it going up, going down, going sideways?

Jamil:

It's really complicated. I've been so worried about it because on the one hand, with this pandemic and us all being apart, I'm very worried about a second epidemic of loneliness, of people basically feeling like this isolation is just getting to them. Loneliness, as you know, is one of the most psychologically and physically poisonous things around. It tracks cardiovascular ill health, depression, lost sleep and disrupted sleep, poor immune function. There's a study from about almost 20 years ago where they actually gave people the common cold virus and they measured how many symptoms they developed and the way that they measured this, I'll never forget, they had them blow their nose into a tissue and weighed how much snot they were producing and it turned out that lonely people, people who had fewer social ties, less diverse social ties, less regular social contact and felt less integrated with others, became sicker when you expose them to the cold virus, they were more likely to get it and their symptoms were worse.

Dave:

Wow.

Jamil:

So I think again, the idea that we are sort of biological free agents and that our biology is separate from our social life is a fallacy. We are even deep into our bodies, social creatures and so being removed from that is a terrifying thought in a way. On the other hand, this pandemic has brought out a third sort of epidemic, which is of kindness. There has been massive amounts of people engaging in charitable donations and trying to help their neighbors, there are all these mutual aid, Google spreadsheet, I mean, Google spreadsheets is not the most inspiring genre usually, but there've been all these mutual aid spreadsheets where people are, especially younger able body people offering to help their more vulnerable neighbors in whatever ways they can. So, I think that even while we're physically separate, we can feel together, including by helping each other.

Dave:

Okay. So we can do some of it but it seems like it's more of a cognitive and it's not like you're giving a lonely person a hug. Is there a difference in this kindness thing when you're not getting eye contact, when you're not touching it? How important is the physical part of kindness versus the cerebral kindness for lack of a better word?

Jamil:

I think it's a great point and I think it is important. So there are all these studies where they give one person painful electrical shocks or whatever, they give them pain and they're either holding the hand of someone they love or not and when you're not holding someone's hand, pain hurts worse and areas of your brain associated with feeling pain are more active than when you're holding someone's hand. So again, physical contact, touch is so important. On the other hand, you sort of separated earlier, physical

contact versus cerebral connection but one of the amazing things about our brains is that we really can simulate all sorts of physical experiences, right? If I ask you to imagine a bright light, your pupils will constrict as though you've just like walked out of a movie theater into the afternoon light. So, I don't know whether the types of connections we're forming can replace physical contact, what can really but I think that we can make really meaningful connections even from a distance.

Dave:

Yeah. I buy that. You talk about a few different words that all of which I believe in, but I don't know that I can really tell where one starts and stops. You talk about kindness, you talk about compassion and you talk about empathy and it feels like in some circumstances you could almost interchange them, but they are all different at least in the meditation traditions where I'm trained in transpersonal psychology and things like that. How do you as a researcher, define kindness versus empathy versus compassion? Then I want you to tell me how to raise all three of them.

Jamil:

Thank you. I think this is a really important... it's really important to get clarity because these can feel like such soft and fuzzy terms, but they're not, I mean at least from a research perspective, we can measure them. So as I said earlier, kindness is a behavior that benefits another person, it's anything that I do that leaves you better off than you were before. Then empathy is an experience. It's the experience of connecting with someone emotionally. Now the way that researchers think about empathy is as an umbrella term that actually contains multiple ways we relate to each other. So I'll give you an example. Let's say that you're talking... having lunch with a friend back when we could do that and he gets a phone call and you don't know who's on the other side or what they're saying, but he starts to cry and it's not happy tears.

Jamil:

So a bunch of things might happen in you. First, you might feel really crappy yourself. You might start to feel sad. You might even feel yourself start to tear up. That would be emotional empathy or emotion contagion, when you catch vicariously what someone else is feeling. Then you might try to think about what he's feeling and why, was he expecting some news or something? That's what we'd call cognitive empathy, trying to piece together what's going on in someone else's experience. Then third, you might want to help him. You might feel an urge or a desire for his wellbeing to improve. That's what we would call empathic concern. But, and here's a key point, it's interchangeable with compassion. So the way that scientists often see it is that empathy is like a big umbrella term and then compassion would be one of the components of our sort of emotional connectedness to others. Does that make sense?

Dave:

It does make sense. All right. Actually, before you even tell us how we're going to raise those in ourselves, stack rank them, most important to least important.

Jamil:

Oof. The NBA draft and social behavior and experience. Number one to the Cleveland Cavaliers is, you know, I think that it depends. So kindness is obviously, I think the most important for us as a collective. I think that we need to cooperate, we need to work together and that's whether you're in a family or a company or a culture.

Dave:

You can be kind even if you don't feel any empathy and you think everyone's a jerk?

Jamil:

You can.

Dave:

Okay.

Jamil:

But when it comes to your personal health, probably a combination of kindness and compassion matter a lot.

Dave:

It's very expensive to be full of hate and act kind. You get tired doing that I would imagine anyway. So, okay.

Jamil:

We ran a study with Stanford students where we asked them to... we asked them how many kind acts they had engaged in that day and we asked them how much empathy they had felt that day and compassion. What we found was that when people acted kindly, they generally felt better and they felt less stressed, they felt less lonely and so forth but that was especially true if they had felt compassion for the person to whom they had acted kindly. Kindness in the absence of compassion didn't seem to help very much. So, behind both of those in my priority list would be other forms of empathy, especially, I think it's important to understand other people, but sharing other people's pain although sometimes like a kickstart for kindness and compassion can also be really dangerous. It can burn us out. It can overwhelm us really quickly and it can make us want to avoid social contact instead of engaging. I mean, imagine walking down a block in Midtown Manhattan and feeling the pain of everyone you saw, you'd like collapse in a minute. So, I don't know that that type of empathy is very sustainable.

Dave:

Now, when you say feeling this pain of others, so what is our feeling apparatus for that? Is this a magnetic resonance from our heart? Is this an eye thing? Do we smell them? Is it how they walk? What is our transmission method if I wanted to walk down the street in Manhattan and feel everybody's pain?

Jamil:

Yeah. Well, I'm curious as to your experience of this. I think you've got such great intuitions here. When you see someone, let's say a stranger on the street and you can tell they're suffering, how do you feel it? What do you pick up on?

Dave:

I'm still thinking about in New York, how would you feel someone's pain? I mean there's the obvious, those things where you might notice with your eyes most likely. But if I'm in that emotional state... okay, I run a neuroscience thing that teaches people to be in advanced altered states of meditation and I've gone to Tibet and studied heart opening stuff. So yes, I can feel it in my heart if I'm open at that level,

which honestly, walking down the street in New York, that level seems kind of dumb and I don't do that. But, it's like you should use an energetic condom already but... So, I would say I have learned over the course of practice to be able to feel that and to tap into that, usually the eyes make it easier but I don't know that I do on a regular basis unless I'm choosing to. But I'm a part alien, I don't think I'm typical there. So, what do normal people do?

Jamil:

I think what you described is actually pretty normal.

Dave:

Okay.

Jamil:

Certainly the most prevalent way that psychologists and neuroscientists have studied empathy is by showing them things, showing them pictures of people who have just accidentally got their foot stuck in a door or have cut themselves while cooking or something like that and those visual images rapidly create sensations that are consistent with pain, right? So rapidly create brain activity that's consistent with pain, rapidly cause people to flinch or cause their palms to sweat and to the extent that people who have these reactions, they also tell us that they're empathic and they're also more likely to want to help those people, right? So there is a sense that when we see other people in pain, that site gets into our body really quickly and really powerfully and it's almost as though we simulate exactly their experience at some level.

Jamil:

I'm sure you've heard of the mirror neuron system, which is sort of one biological conduit through which that works. But it's also true that this can work through hearing. So there are all these interesting studies where scientists play for parents the sound of their own child crying or the sound of another child crying and it's extremely easy to demonstrate the emotional weight of hearing one's own child. So again, that's without seeing anything, but we've all... all parents have probably been there at some point or not.

Dave:

Yeah. I think they all have. Now that no one's flying, maybe we can miss the sound of a child screaming on an airplane. I mean, I used to, I'll admit when I was early 20s, an arrogant punk on an airplane like, why would you fly with your kids? Well, because I'm human and humans have kids and because that's how it is and so call that lack of empathy, which is not uncommon. But after I had kids, anytime I'd see someone with a screaming baby, I'm like, "You know what everyone's thinking, don't you?" They're like, "Oh, no." I'm like, "Well, they're thinking thank God it's not mine."

Dave:

So that would be the empathetic thing because of shared suffering versus non empathetic for whatever that example's worth. I feel like you can tell yourself a story to give yourself empathy and it's something I've shared with [inaudible 00:28:19]. If someone cuts you off in traffic, if you're low energy, you're tired, you're hungry, you're hypoglycemic, you're going to make up a story in your head about how they're a bad person trying to steal your pizza or they're disrespecting you and road rage, whatever. Or you make up the story that gives you empathy, which is like, oh my God, they're on the way to the hospital to feed

a dying priest or whatever. You don't know but something important. So that's going to give you empathy and like, oh, there you go but your biological response is very different.

Dave:

So I know the cognitive trick to do that and that one thing but how would someone listening to this, who's probably freaked out by hearing just constant news about how they're shifting anyone who died from anything and saying it's COVID related right now, which is happening in the data and other stuff like that but we're pretty much 24/7 news cycle of, there's an invisible enemy about to get you, even though the data isn't actually like that. But, you're feeling that and like, oh, now I'm going to feel empathy like what's the switch that you can flip in order to say, all right, I want to go from creeping threat to I'm feeling empathy for others. What's the trick?

Jamil:

I've been thinking a lot about this and I actually have been writing an op-ed on this topic that, it's terrifying to have an invisible, faceless enemy that can infiltrate any border, et cetera and that can get us exactly as you're saying into this state of total fear where we just want to cocoon ourselves away from everyone else. But I think it's important to know that one of the things that brings people together the fastest, that makes us care for one another the most is having a common threat, being on the same side of a fight. So there's all sorts of evidence of when, you know, during wartime and attacks and catastrophes that actually people band together.

Jamil:

I think that one thing that I've been thinking myself and that's helped me and that I've been telling other people is, remember in this moment that you might be scared, there might be this frightening thing all around us, but everyone else is scared of it as well. In fact, we all have a lot more in common than we typically do, even if we're apart. That sense of common humanity and common vulnerability can really actually ignite massive amounts of empathy.

Dave:

We're all facing this creeping invisible enemy that's even worse than kale and sorry, picking on kale is a sport. Anyway, we're all facing this and now we know we're facing it together except, well, over Skype anyway. I still don't feel empathy. In fact, I feel stressed because I don't have a job. There has to be something heavier than knowing it's a shared threat. What's the... is there empathy spray? Is there a drug for empathy? Is there some crazy spin around three times and chant a mantra? What is it? Like hack empathy, you gave a talk on hacking empathy. Come on, give it to me straight. Well, what is it? Like hack empathy, you gave a talk on hacking empathy. Come on, give it to me straight.

Jamil:

Well, so first of all, the realization that we have a common enemy is I think more powerful than one might think because it not only... it's not just a thought, it's a thought that can lead to action. It can lead us to feel more comfortable asking others for help. It can lead us to be more comfortable helping them. It can lead us to be more comfortable talking about what we're going through with other people and that type of social support is hugely powerful. But if you really want to hack, I think it's something that you probably have done many times, which is going beyond just saying we are suffering, the struggles that we're having are common and actually turning that into a contemplative practice, right?

Jamil:

So loving kindness or Metta meditation is one very simple practice where you acknowledge your own suffering, you acknowledge that it's similar to that of another person, even the person who cuts you off in traffic and then you express and sort of try to point goodwill at your suffering and others, and it sounds again very fuzzy, but it turns out psychologists and neuroscientists have found profound effects of that type of medication on the brain.

Dave:

You actually just described a substantial portion of the first couple of days of 40 Years of Zen, the neurofeedback training, the thing that I do. We actually teach people that skill with electrodes on their head. So no, you didn't do it, there you did it and if you do it a few times, you can literally... it's a physical sensation that you can do that allows you to protect that and someone else which magically makes your brain work better. It's one of those things you do like stretching and like, oh, like there, I did it but I don't know how to put words to it but your words were pretty darn accurate from my experience.

Jamil:

That's awesome. First of all, have you seen the work of Tania Singer and her colleagues in Leipzig, Germany? They've got this enormous project that they've been running over the last eight years where they train people in different forms of meditation, including something that's pretty close to... it's a kind of an adapted form of Loving Kindness and they scan their brains sort of... so they do these types of meditation training, three types of meditation, each one for three months and it sort of like this randomized control trial of-

Dave:

Nice.

Jamil:

... drug almost where they're using each arm as a placebo for the other one but I digress. Surprising to say that, not only does training in Metta or Loving Kindness, help people become kinder, help them understand other people more clearly, help them empathize more deeply, but also it changes their brain. The profound thing to me about this study, a lot of us do what is known as functional magnetic resonance imaging, where we're basically looking for where in the brain is active. But these folks in a paper published in 2017, did structural MRI and they found that parts of the brain that are associated with empathic connection actually grew in volume as a function-

Dave:

Which parts were those? Do you remember?

Jamil:

The anterior insula was one of the key regions that they looked at, which is a region... and let's be clear that when you think about something like empathy or kindness, there's not going to be one brain region that tracks something that complicated.

Dave:

It's all network, yeah.

Jamil:

It's extra knowledge, yeah. We now know that there's lots of regions involved in lots of things. But let me say that that said, the anterior insula does appear to be involved in the experience of empathy and it again, is deeply affected by this type of meditation practice. The Loving Kindness, the traditional open heartedness, a big heart, all that stuff, it appears to work from a neurological basis because you see these profound shifts in what people's brains can do and you can also spot electrically the brain of someone who does it regularly because the amplitude and the network effects are very different. So, I think it's important. It's a part of my practice.

Dave:

But, in your book, in the second chapter, you talk about how some people reject empathy as a choice. I can predict what that would do to your brainwaves, but why would someone reject empathy? What leads to that?

Jamil:

Well, I mean, you talked about in the Manhattan example, rejecting empathy and I think it's not always a bad choice. I do think that, again, if you're in a situation where empathy will overwhelm you, where it will actually interfere with you doing what you need to do, for instance, then you probably need to shut it off. A linebacker who empathizes with the running back will be really bad at doing their job, attacking, right? A soldier would be even worse, or a surgeon, right? A surgeon who feels the pain of a patient can't help that person. So, I think it's adaptive and to the good overall that we have control over our emotional experiences, which we do as I'm sure you know so we control all sorts of emotions. We can turn empathy up or down like the volume knob on a stereo and that's a good capacity to have. The problem is when we may make mistakes with that capacity, when we decide that we shouldn't empathize because we think it would be better to focus on ourselves and we're dead wrong and it actually hurts us.

Dave:

Okay. How do we know? We are sitting at home or binge watching Netflix, hopefully listening to a few podcasts here and there and are you doing this, are you not doing this? What's our method of awareness for this?

Jamil:

Of how empathic we're being [crosstalk 00:37:16]?

Dave:

Well, whether we're turning it off or not. I mean, I don't think no soldiers go, today I'm going to turn off the empathy and go win the war. It's not like, that. Seems like it's mostly unconscious. I don't go, well, I'm in New York today, so I'm going to put on my energy condom. I just naturally like... it's like if you're in a bright sunshine, you squint, right? To help block out some of the light. It seems like it's mostly automated whether or not we block out empathy, but you're actually saying you can choose to reject empathy, but you can also choose to take more of it in. So, how do you know if you're rejecting it without... like, when you're not paying attention?

Jamil:

Well, I think a lot of our mental lives are on autopilot in lots of ways most of the time. The question... again, that's a good thing because we couldn't be tuning all of our knobs all the time and also walk and chew gum, we'd fall over, right? So, it's good that we're on autopilot a lot of the time in a lot of ways. But I do think that there's a way to kick off autopilot and interrogate, become curious about what's happening inside ourselves. So, I think you aptly described a situation where if I'm hypoglycemic, if I'm stressed, if I'm sleep deprived, I'm going to have certain thoughts about people and I'm going to act certain ways that if I don't think about it, I won't realize I'm being unempathic right now.

Jamil:

But if you step out and try to see the interaction you're having as a fly on the wall for instance, I bet that it would be pretty easy to pick out when you've acted in a way that was unempathic or when you've had thoughts that are in curious about other people. I mean one thing that I try to do, and this is not me as a scientist, it's just me as a person is, if I'm having a conversation, I ask myself what someone said that surprised me or that I learned from. Because I think a lot of the time in conversations we actually are so focused on our own story that we have already decided is right before we have a conversation that we don't actually empathize or listen much at all and if we are listening, one sign is that we learn something or we are surprised.

Dave:

That was totally surprising. Sorry.

Jamil:

That's very [inaudible 00:39:29] of you.

Dave:

You laid that one out for me, I just had to take it. Okay. You also talk about something called Contact Theory in your War for Kindness book. What is Contact Theory? What does that have to do with hatred? Kind of walk listeners through that.

Jamil:

Yeah. So, Contact Theory is a really simple idea that was popularized by the psychologist Gordon Allport, right around World War II. The idea is, gosh, we hate so many people, but maybe we hate people just because we don't know them that well. I think that Mark Twain said something like, travel is poisonous to hatred and bigotry and that's why people need to do it more. The idea being that if you actually got to know people who are different from you, it would be very difficult to reduce them in the way that we do to dehumanize them. So, since Allport wrote about this... so, he found all these examples. For instance in World War II, white soldiers who had never fought alongside a black soldier, most of them did not want to be in integrated platoons. They didn't want to fight with black soldiers. But those who had already fought alongside black soldiers, a vast majority of them were happy to be in an integrated platoon.

Jamil:

So the idea is prejudice is easy from far away, but hard from close up and that once we get to know people, we open up to them. Since then there've been like hundreds of studies demonstrating exactly

that. That when we form close contact with other people who are different from us, who have different identities than us, our prejudice decreases and one of the reasons for that is that we have increased empathy for not just that person, but people from the group that that person belongs to.

Dave:

I had a podcast in the last 10 or so episodes where I talked about the Coronae cognitive epidemic, right? Where, what are we doing to ourselves? I usually call them moral panic fields of psychology that has been studied. We went into great detail, but the theory that we talked about was that, a lot of xenophobia and even racism is tied to our fear of germs that we got when we moved for the first time into closely packed agricultural cities. So we know there is a threat, people die from pandemics and bubonic plague and all that kind of stuff many, many years ago. So, we just learned as a survival genetic very deep seated aversion to this kind of a thing. So, someone comes in who doesn't look like you, they probably have germs. You don't think this, but your body knows it. They probably have germs. They might have cooties. I know in third grade we used to say, "Oh, you touched a girl, cootie spray," and the girls say, "You touched the boy, cootie spray." But this, so like cloud of badness, right?

Jamil:

Yeah.

Dave:

Do you think that that's going to get worse from this? Because we have less contact, we're going to have more hatred because literally we're exposed to fewer people since we are... some of us are going to lock ourselves away I think for quite a while.

Jamil:

Oh gosh, it's a really great question and it's a frightening one. I think that this disaster is such a... it's like a crossroads for us in so many ways and I think one is exactly what you're describing. Not only are we going to be more isolated and maybe see a less diverse group of people as travel is more limited, but another thing, in addition to potentially contamination risk that drives bigotry or let's call it just groupiness, sort of ostracism of people who are dissimilar to us is a sense of scarcity. So, there's all sorts of studies but one in particular that I saw was... that I really like is from Marjorie Rhodes.

Jamil:

She showed four and five-year-olds cartoons of a town where two different tribes live and the town has a well in the middle of it. She told some kids the well has plenty of water and there's going to be plenty of water for a long time. She told other kids the well is drying up. When kids believe that the well was drying up, they thought it was totally above board and fair for people in each tribe to hate each other and even like hit each other.

Dave:

Wow.

Jamil:

I think that... yeah, and I think that we're entering the economic ramifications of this pandemic are going to be massive and are going to make a lot of us feel like we're in a real scarcity mindset and that's not a

very generous mindset or one that's very conducive to kindness. So, that's one side, the very worrisome side. The other side is, again, this idea that when we go through collective struggles when disasters occur... so, Rebecca Solnit is the best writer on this, but she has a book called *A Paradise Built in Hell*, that's about all of these disasters that have occurred over the last century earthquakes, Katrina, 9/11, you name it and there's a narrative that we tell ourselves, which is that, oh, people will tear each other apart after these disasters, they'll panic and there will be disorder. In fact, people are enormously kind to each other and more open after disasters because they realize that they must work together in order to survive. We're back to the bait ball, aren't we?

Dave:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jamil:

So, I feel these two competing narratives about what disasters and this disaster can and will do to us. I think part of the next five years, a huge part of it is, which of those stories we decide to follow.

Dave:

If you had to flip a coin, which one do you think it will be?

Jamil:

I'm an optimist, so I do believe that we can choose to be together through this. I'm also fighting my hardest to get that... to make people realize that that is possible. Because, I think that too often we limit our imaginations. We believe that life is a zero sum game and that belief becomes self-fulfilling. If you believe that everything you give to someone else is something that you lose, you don't give anything to anybody else and then that becomes a norm and it ripples outward and you actually end up in a more selfish culture.

Dave:

It's really interesting, a friend of mine from Japan, a really wise person named Ken Honda, came on the show. He wrote a book called *Happy Money* a while ago. He's, I think the most successful author in Japan in the self-help genre, so like 17 million books sold. Just really nice guy.

Jamil:

Wow.

Dave:

But, he taught me this practice of, every time you spend money, be grateful to the money and grateful for giving away the money, and just, "Hey, thank you money," and just that little thing, it totally changes that scarcity mindset, the stuff you were just talking about there, where all of a sudden you don't feel the same thing even if you don't have a lot of money or if you do have a lot of it, it works no matter what because for some reason it flips that switch. It's not an empathy thing or even a kindness thing, it's more of a gratitude thing. Where does gratitude fit in in your framework? Because you're talking about those kindness versus empathy versus compassion. How do you integrate it or do you integrate gratitude into that?

Jamil:

So, I mean, I think of gratitude as a separate phenomenon apart from these things, but that doesn't mean it's unconnected to them. So, for instance, we've talked about empathy and kindness from the giver's side, but one of the biggest sources of gratitude is the kindness of others, when someone acts kindly towards us, when they empathize with us, we often feel gratitude for our connection with them, gratitude for their goodwill and gratitude for their help and in a way... So, I teach a class at Stanford called Becoming Kinder, which is about not just the science of empathy and kindness, but it has a lot of challenges that students do every weekend, sort of exercises to get them to try and stretch their kindness and empathy and one of them pertains to gratitude, which is really, I ask students to notice somebody else's kindness and reinforce it.

Jamil:

It doesn't have to be kindness to you, like notice someone being kind to somebody else and thank them for that behavior. It's hugely powerful for students because I think that a lot of us, because we're so stressed and busy and overwhelmed and now anxious from the situation that we're all in together, we have blinders on sometimes for the interconnectedness of people. When you focus on looking for kindness, guess what? You find it. You find it in enormous and vast quantities. Finding it and realizing not just this one person was kind to this one other person, but awakening to the kindness that's all around us, first of all can influence your behavior and make you more likely to be kind. But second, I think instills a deep gratitude about the nature of humanity, that we're not all bad, that we do have a lot of powerful compassion in us and I think that that's one tremendous source of gratitude for me.

Dave:

I really like that. It lands true. In the book you talk about kind systems and you've actually given a TED talk on hacking empathy and I'm a big fan of systems to do things like that because systems make things easy. You wrote a whole chapter in The War for Kindness on something called kind systems. So what is a kind system?

Jamil:

Yeah. I mean, so, we think of our psychology, whether it's our personality or our kindness and empathy or whatever, as just something that's inside us, the individual but as we've been talking about humanity is a hard species, we're the most groupie animal that exists. We conform to the norms and structures around us. So, I might want to be kind, but if everyone around me is being an asshole, I'll decide that in order to fall in line, I need to back that way too. Likewise, I might feel like being unkind, but if the people around me are emphasizing how important it is to be kind, I'll fall in line with that as well. So, it turns out that there's all sorts of evidence that one of the most powerful ways to change someone's behavior is to change what they notice about other people.

Jamil:

So, when people are exposed to or notice other people acting kindly, they are more inspired to do that themselves. I think that that's so important for anybody in a leadership position, in any type of structure, right? So, since the book came out, I've talked with leaders in hospital systems, school systems, prison systems, businesses and other organizations and they all... sometimes they ask me, "Is there a pill that I can give my team members to make them more empathic?" I'm like, "No, you are the pill. You're the only..." because by setting an example, by incentivizing, highlighting and amplifying kind behaviors, you make them stickier, you make them more magnetic, you make them more likely to ripple outwards

through a culture. So, I tell leaders to make... and people in general that they should make empathy and kindness loud in order to make it forceful.

Dave:

It reminds me of Mr. Rogers and he... do you know the quote I'm talking about?

Jamil:

Yeah.

Dave:

Yeah, I thought you would.

Jamil:

Yeah. Yeah, look for the helpers?

Dave:

Yeah. Look for the helpers. His mom told him that whenever you see a fire or disaster, look for the helpers to totally help him reframe it, oh look, there's always someone there to help. Talk about powerful messaging for a little kid, which is when he got that message. That's solid parenting right there. But it works for adults too. Even with the virus, I mean, I have so many doctor friends who are working 24/7, not just in hospitals, but also on doing research and figuring things out and sharing information about it and there's a whole bunch of people working on it, to the point that I'm way more confident than I would have been a month ago just, oh yeah, this is eminently hackable. In fact, there's enough data points now that I... I think I can pretty much see that. How do you stay out of the hospital path? Clearly, because there are thousands of very knowledgeable people helping not to mention tens and hundreds of thousands of people exposing themselves and working 24 hour shifts and things like that in a hospital. So, we can all be grateful for that.

Jamil:

That this moment is populated by helpers. I mean, you were talking about scientists, there's never been a greater global collaboration among scientists than this pandemic. I mean, it's really... as you might know, the scientists can be a pretty competitive bunch, they can keep insights to themselves until they publish them and get prestige. All of that has, well, not all of it but a lot of that has disintegrated in the face of this pandemic. Scientists are just collaborating at a scale that I've never seen before. One of the largest collaborations to run international clinical trials is actually called Solidarity. So, even the names of our studies are taking on this new characteristic of understanding our togetherness in this moment.

Dave:

I agree with you, there's an altruism from scientists and I'm seeing it from entrepreneurs too. They're saying, well, how do I help? It's funny because the altruism of entrepreneurs is oftentimes how do I make helping people self-sustaining? That's called a business. Then there's altruism, which is, I did too much of that so I have lots of extra cash so now I have to give it to someone to spend, which is another form of donation. But, seriously running a company that actually helps people with lower margins so things are more affordable, is a direct form of altruism. If you run it so that your margins are so low, you've got a business, that's not the behavior that leads to more altruism. So it doesn't work either. But I

may be going off the rails there a little bit, but I do see the community of entrepreneurs, some of them are saying, well, my business is probably trashed.

Dave:

But instead of saying, woe is me, and going into a pity cycle, they're saying, how else can I help people, because that's what I do. Oh and by the way, I get paid for that. So, I've talked to dozens of friends in that mindset saying, what's going to happen to my events business? The answer is nobody knows. But in the meantime they're saying, all right, next. I think there's a mindset there that is based in large part on service to others, which is part of that empathy thing.

Jamil:

I think you're so right and leaders have all sort of really incredibly stepped up in this moment. I want to say that it's so interesting to me that since the book came out, I've received hundreds of emails from people that say something along these lines, thank you for writing this book. I yearn for a more empathic, caring culture, but I'm the only one, everyone else around me is cruel. I'm like, can I get you all in a group chat or something? Because I think that oftentimes we don't realize that we're not just free agents swimming upstream against a culture of callousness and indifference, we build the culture together, we are culture when you aggregate us. I think that that's... when I talk about kind systems, that's what I mean is that we can be mindful, not just about hacking our own kindness but about creating systems around people and around ourselves that make kindness our first option, that make it clear that this is really one of the defining qualities of our species.

Dave:

Is there any data that says that people who are kind or empathetic or show compassion, are less vocal than trolls and haters?

Jamil:

Not that I know of. There's a study on trolls that's pretty interesting that suggests that they actually oftentimes have pretty high cognitive empathy so they're... and this is true of bullies, I mean, if you're going to harm someone, you have to get in their head and the better you are at understanding them, the better you'll be at manipulating them. Anyways, I digress. I don't know specifically about any work focusing on the relative volume of kind versus unkind people, but I will say that oftentimes unkind behavior becomes viral so-

Dave:

On social media for sure, right?

Jamil:

Yeah. So, for instance, William Brady and Jay Van Bavel and Molly Crockett, some of my friends have done this work where they look at hundreds of thousands of tweets and they quantify how much outrage someone in a tweet contains. It turns out that when people express outrage, especially towards people who are from a different group, they're more likely to be liked and retweeted, especially by people who already agree with them. From a reinforcement learning perspective, that little dose of social reward makes it more likely that people act in outrage later on. So, I don't know that kinder versus less kind people are inherently louder, but I think unfortunately parts of our culture amplify the unkind

voices more than the kind ones and that's something that is up to us that we could fix but I think it's unfortunately true right now.

Dave:

Okay. So, we have a social media amplification thing. I've just found that 4% or so of people, maybe 10% of people who are in that sociopath or psychopath, heavy duty, traumatized, I was bullied too much troll population, they sometimes can take over the room. So, the one who stands up and shouts, they're the one who leaves most of the garbage comments. I went through, an interesting experience about five, six years ago. One of the largest, pod-casters came after me, reputation-wise for financial reasons like that I have in writing from him. It was a really weird time because it went from Dave, thank you, I've lost a hundred pounds on your diet, blah, blah, blah, like lots of gratitude, kindness posts to overnight, just like, solid Dave, you're a con artist, snake oil salesman, you're a bad person.

Dave:

It was really jarring and weird. Then, I think it was... it was probably Tim Ferris told me maybe after one of the podcasts I did with him, said, "Hey, Dave, you just have to understand, you can click ban, delete on those guys and they'll go away and there's... really find out they're not that many of them." So I tried it and it turns out there really weren't that many of them, but they were 80% of the volume, right? But when you're just like, STFU you're gone and I could do that with empathy. But it was basically like you spent five minutes crafting an attack and I spent half a second deleting it, banning it, and not letting it get to me, you're going to run out of resources.

Dave:

It turns out it took like two weeks of cleaning my feeds by just ruthlessly banning trolls, it was gone and all the kindness came back. But when those people were there, the amount of net kindness it dropped a lot. So, there's some weird dynamic going on there where, when you're in that mindset that makes you want to cause harm to others, the number of times you do that, maybe it's just digital, but it seems like it would go up and then it chases away the, oh, look, look at the helper. So there's no helpers here, there's just a big bully.

Jamil:

Yeah. Sorry you went through that. It seems like you really Muhammad Ali-ed it. You pulled rope a dope where you got the other person to expend a lot more energy than you did. I mean-

Dave:

Well, it was many people, it was a big podcaster says a bunch of slanderous stuff about me. So, then a bunch of, I don't know, lonely 14 year old kids or something, I don't know who it was, I mostly, never did see them, most of them didn't have the real face on their social media profiles amazingly.

Jamil:

Yeah. In the book I talk about Tony McAleer who was a leader of a Neo-Nazi Movement and white supremacist movement in Canada and told me all about his descent into this life of hate and then how he got out. He describes hate group members... there was a conference in 2011 that was put on by one of the companies that is now part of Alphabet so it was like a Google related company that brought together hate group members from around the world. Tony tells me that he noticed these wild

commonalities between them. So these were all ex-hate group members. These are people who had been in hate groups and because obviously I don't think they'd want to get together if they were-

Dave:

Former vegans in there and stuff like that? You laughed, you're a bad man. You weren't supposed to laugh at that. Actually you were, It's okay. Shame on you. I was a former raw vegan. I'm recovered.

Jamil:

So, he said that there were these amazing things these people had in common, not when it came to their opinions, but when it came to their life history.

Dave:

Oh, interesting. Okay.

Jamil:

Many from abusive homes, were neglected in some way, really using hatred to paper over massive amounts of self-hatred, self-loathing and loneliness. There's a sense that these individuals had learned early in their life that love was not an option for them. So, they decided to protect themselves by whatever means necessary and one of the clearest ways to do that is to just be... if you can't defend yourself, be offensive, harm others so they won't harm you. Many of these people also got out of this life according to Tony. I don't know that there's research on this but this is his story, when they had the first kid. Because they realized that their child for many of them was the first time that they had felt unconditional love, not for the child, from the child.

Dave:

Interesting.

Jamil:

That being loved by a child and also loving them was the first time that they had experienced that type of care and that can snap them out of their need for hatred.

Dave:

That's profound. So maybe that's one additional reason to have kids. What do you think is the future of empathy and kindness as you put your future hat on? Keeping in mind that we have a whole coronavirus boomer generation coming out, all these people spending three, four months at home with their spouse, I'm pretty sure there's going to be a lot of babies nine months from now, but that these babies who were conceived and probably growing up during a time of economic crisis and pandemic fear and all that stuff. So tell me what empathy looks like three years, five years and 25 years from now.

Jamil:

Yeah. First of all, I agree with you. There'll be a potential boom, but I bet it will be made of almost entirely firstborn children. [crosstalk 01:03:17].

Dave:

Those of us who have children have learned our lesson, is that what you're saying?

Jamil:

Well, I don't know that people who are crammed into their homes with, I don't know, preschoolers are necessarily having the most romantic time on earth.

Dave:

No, they're just trying to sleep. I get that.

Jamil:

No. But to your question, which I think is the question. So, I think it gets back to what we were talking about earlier. If you'd asked me this six months ago, I would have told you about the role of empathy for future generations in helping us think about, well, what do we want to do environmentally? Who do we want to protect? How far can our empathic imagination go? How far can we extend the definition of us? Can we extend it to future generations who haven't been born yet? Now, my answer is really what will we do with this moment? As we were talking about earlier, I see a version of this where we become more scared, more isolated, where we see other people as vectors of infection and disease, where we see that there aren't enough resources and so we hoard our own, ironically producing increasing scarcity and where many of the bonds that we have fall apart.

Jamil:

I see another future. So, I guess we're in the three to five year time scale now where we again, rally and decide that this disaster has snapped us out of the belief that we're all separate from each other and into the realization that we can only survive by working together. Where the trends that we've seen in science and in communities increase and where we rediscover things like neighbors. Now that we're grounded and not traveling, maybe we'll create a more sustainable, more local life where we can have deeper, more old fashioned networks and communities. If we can get there then I think this could be... and I'm not trying to silver lining this horrible event in our lives, but it could be a moment of great growth and learning where we actually come back to our roots as a fundamentally social species.

Dave:

You really are an optimist and I share that view. Getting to know the people in your neighborhood is... It's interesting, I moved from Silicon Valley where it's exceptionally common to not know the person in the house next to you, which is surprising, but it's probably more common than not unless you've been in the neighborhood for 10 years or something, you might know one or two people. Now I live in a very small community, but I'm on 32 acres. Like [inaudible 01:06:07] I see trees and our pigs and sheep are roaming around out there. So it's not like we have occasion to see someone from your front yard situation but there is a community that's very different, I imagine, like it would have been 30 or 40 years ago. Just because, oh yeah, everyone knows that that guy has the tractor and that guy knows how to build a fence and that thing is still intact.

Dave:

I think a lot of the world still works like that quite a bit. The rest of us are like, I just went to YouTube, but then even if you go to YouTube to figure out how to build a fence or whatever it is, you click on the link and send a message to the guy who built the fence and he's like, oh yeah, you have to use a bigger nail or whatever. Don't ask me how to build a fence, I have friends who know how to do that. But, this is really happening and so it can be virtual but I do think we're going to see more. It doesn't matter if I

needed help, if the person's across the planet who in my social circle, who in my area has the skills that we need right now.

Dave:

I think that will happen because just distribution of those skills is really important now that we all recognize, hey, maybe a just in time supply chain so you can get your fried prepared nuggets on demand in one hour, yay. But maybe you need a little more system resilience for society and that to have that you're going to have to form connections and when you form connections, you're going to get empathy, when you have empathy, you will have kindness and maybe that will happen. I like to think it will. So let's all cross our fingers for it.

Jamil:

Yes, I love that. I mean, Michael Pollan talked about our food ecosystem, I think as efficient but brittle, right? That it's really good at doing what we are doing right now but any perturbation really puts it in danger. To your point, you said earlier that a lot of us still live in those interconnected communities, but it's actually less and less, right? So, in 1950 one third of humanity was urban and by 2050 at least, this was true a year ago, two thirds of humanity will be urban. So we're rapidly moving into these massive metropolis where we see a lot of people and don't know any of them. We're living alone way more than at any time in human history as well.

Jamil:

So, I think a lot of us have talked endlessly about the disintegration of those communities as we move to a system that's just about, again, this ultra-efficient but depersonalized market that is all about the poorly defined nugget that you can get at will, right? We've been building a culture for those nuggets and for those nugget delivery systems and maybe that culture won't survive whatever is coming next, but maybe it wasn't that natural or]healthy to begin with. One wonders whether some of what we'll lose might have been harming us all along. Again, I don't want a silver lining what is really a lot of pain for a lot of people, but I do think that even from trauma, we can learn and grow if we pay attention in the right ways.

Dave:

Very well said. Thank you for being on Bulletproof Radio and for paying attention to kindness. Your book title is fantastic, War for Kindness, is very memorable. That's your website too, War for Kindness. So, if you're at home right now and you're listening to this thinking, all right, kindness probably has a role maybe I'm feeling a little bit lonely, turning up empathy with the specific set of tools and instructions that are in the book is a very valuable use of your time. It's different than meditation. Although there are overlaps and there's some relatedness there, I mean, it's different than exercise, different than eating well and it's part of not staying sane, which is a terribly low goal, almost as low as, we're going to flatten the curve instead of we're going to eliminate the curve or lower the curve, which ought to be a real goal.

Dave:

So instead of saying I'm going to survive the pandemic, actually, how do I come out of it better and how do I not stress about doing too much to be better. But this is one of those things that has a very, very high ROI for you. So, hack your empathy, read the book and just pay attention to all the good stuff people are doing even in the midst of all the political maneuverings and fear-mongering and all the other stuff like that. Thanks for listening to the show. If you haven't subscribed, subscribe. I'd love it if

you take a minute to show some kindness and leave a review for the show. I've been doing some extra episodes for you because I know you have a little bit more time at home. I've been really targeting guests for you who are going to be useful and effective to keep you strong and resilient at all the levels, including your mindset, including your physical body and including your... even your spiritual side. I think you'll find all of these are touched on when you look at War for Kindness, have a beautiful day.