

## Control Your Mindset with 4 Questions – Legacy Upgrade ft. Byron Katie – #965

Dave Asprey:

Today's guest is a very well-known author and personal development world leader. Her name is Byron Katie. You might've heard of her book called *Loving What Is*. She's an inspirational guide who offers people a different way to think their thoughts to change mindsets and their lives. In 1986, at the bottom of a 10 year spiral into depression and rage, and, as she describes it, self-loathing. When she was 43 years old, Byron woke up to a state of constant joy that never left her. What she realized, and what she teaches to this day, is that when she believed her stressful thoughts she suffered, and when she questioned them she didn't suffer, and that that is true for every human being. She named her process of inquiry *The Work*. She's been bringing *The Work* to millions of people around the world for the last 30 years in public events, workshops, intensive retreats in something called *The Turnaround House*.

I wanted to have to her on the show today because, on my own path of being a biohacker, and after I dealt with some of my biological things to lose 100 pounds, I realized I had to deal with some of the stuff going on in my head. I learned early on that my powers of self-deception are legion. I've become aware of Byron's work. I've read her books, and I've learned you don't believe the thoughts in your head. You always question them. When you build that into your life, you perform better as a human being at almost everything you do. Now we get to talk to the woman who created this, which is a great pleasure. Byron, welcome to the show.

Byron Katie:

Thank you, Dave. So good to be here.

Dave:

Now, Byron, I want to understand. When you talk about a 10 year spiral of rage, and depression, and all these things that happened a while back for you, what got you to that state?

Byron:

I was believing my thoughts. That's the first version. The self-loathing, the anger, it was all an effect of the things I would say and do. Guilt really is the culprit here. I'll say, as that was running in my head I had no way out, so it really was a downward spiral ... The thoughts like, "I'm not good enough. There's something wrong with me," which was true. It was my thinking. My thoughts were aimed out at other people. It was their fault. Then when I would say or do something, I would experience the guilt, so I had this vicious circle going of judgment, guilt, judgment, guilt. It was debilitating. Agoraphobia. You know, I experienced that. Most of the time unable to leave my bedroom toward the end of that. Very painful.

Dave, what I do with my life is whatever I can to make sure that not one person has to suffer at that level, or really any level, because there is a way out. If there were no way out, I'd get it. For a lot of us, there is no way out. We just don't understand how the mind works. Then, in that moment, as I lay sleeping on the floor, just fast asleep, I opened my eyes and I saw how the mind worked. Oh, boy. Oh, boy. It was so radical that I was in the same body, but the shift was so radical that my children and husband wondered who am I. The shift, it was from a very confused, lost human being to my favorite, a kinder human being.

Dave:

A lot of the people who've had the biggest change in their own lives, and in the world, have gone through an experience where they hit rock bottom, or they almost died. Some of them actually did die in a hospital somewhere and came back from that. Some of the people, especially in the fields of personal development, but even just in medicine, saying, "I realized I had to do what mattered, because things were just so crappy." In my own life, hitting 300 pounds, and having many of the symptoms of being very old when I was in my 20s, arthritis and brain fog-

Byron:

Yeah. Yeah. I get that one.

Dave:

Enough is enough. I set out to consciously fix it, but I didn't have an experience where I woke up one morning and I had that level of clarity. I had lots of times where inspiration would happen, or I would see, "Well, I missed that." It seems like you just went to sleep and you woke up with this massive knowledge. Where'd it come from?

Byron:

Well, I just saw how the mind worked, but it's not as easy as it sounded. There was still this ego to deal with, this personality to deal with. It was like there were two of me. There was this wisdom and understanding the cause of suffering. I literally designed what I call a Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet. I literally would sit and identify the thoughts that were running through my head, the crazy thoughts. It's like I was unaffected by them. I saw they were crazy. Out of respect for the ego, I identified them. I put them on paper, and we began to make love seriously. The mind making love with itself. For example, if my mind would say, "Something terrible is going to happen," I would write it down, and I would just sit. The mind with the mind, just sitting down. "Is it true something terrible is going to happen? Can you absolutely know that it's true something terrible is going to happen?"

Then to notice how I reacted, what happened when I believed the thought. That's where people's blood pressure goes up. That's where the heart begins to race. That's where the physical stress and wear and tear on our bodies from the emotional like that began to happen. How do I react when I believe the thought? I see all these images of something terrible is going to happen, and they're false images. They're images of a false future. They're not images of now. It's fake. It's like fake news. Then images of the past when everything was wonderful. Images of the future when it's falling apart. When we're experiencing those emotions, we're coming from that movie. That is the cause of all suffering, when we believe our thoughts. They're not strong without the movie. You have this movie. The thoughts are the soundtrack we believe onto it.

Then the fourth simple question, who would I be without this? Who would I be without this past/future, just now? Then here's the world. That's how you get in touch with nature, your true nature, and out of that comes our choices radically shift, because we're sane. There's no mind there to argue or talk us out of what we know is right in our life ... It's just that simple for me. If something terrible is going to happen, something wonderful is going to happen. Well, it just did. I'm present. I'm out of the dream. I'm present. Nothing more wonderful than that.

Dave:

I had an experience once years ago. I've done a lot of my personal development work with neurofeedback, where I have a computer sort of helping me know when I'm playing a voice, or playing a story in my head that isn't accurate and all. I was doing some self-inquiry, and the little movie that

you're describing in your head. I was pushing on sort of asking for what I wanted. We needed to move into a bigger house, and I'd had some resistance just in my family from that, for whatever reason. I was frustrated by it, but instead of admitting the frustration, or at least admitting to myself how frustrated I was, I was kind of watching the video in my head with electrodes.

My consciousness presented an image of me pouring gas on myself and lighting myself on fire. This is something I would never do. I've never been suicidal. I've never thought of something like that. That was just so absurd, because I had developed the ability that you're describing to sort of watch it and look at what was going on. I started laughing. I'm like, "Seriously? This is clearly not me. What's going on in here?" It was that ability at that moment to switch into an awareness of what's really going on. It was, "Okay, there's totally some irrational fear going on here." Being able to see that for what it was, as something that would never happen, but it was my body working to distract me from doing something that it firmly believed was dangerous to do. Not pour gas on myself, but to actually say, "Look, we're moving into a bigger house already, because I need the space so I can do the Bulletproof stuff, and because our kids will be happier," and all the reasons I wanted to do it, but to just be insistent on something that was a requirement.

For whatever reason, I don't know why, there were parts of me that were uncomfortable with that. I got through it. When I read your books, that feels like one of those experiences where you talk about becoming aware of the video in your head.

Byron:

Yeah, false self ... the images. It's like if we wonder what we had for breakfast this morning. We look back on that. You can see yourself at breakfast. That self, you at breakfast. You see yourself at dinner tonight. That's your self. That's you at dinner tonight. It shows up that vividly in your mind's eyes, and we don't even realize it's going on until we begin to wake up to the mind, and what's real, and what's not. You see you at breakfast, you at dinner. Then here I am sitting here now. It's just clear what self am I. This is the answer to who am I. Not that. Not that. Not that of the past. Not that of the future. Present. Present. Everything we need to do can only be done now, and in a sane state of mind. We're really unlimited, or I can say that I experience that in my life.

Dave:

How does your work, or The Work, as it's called, apply to people who are maybe engineers, people who are successful in their careers, and saying, "Maybe I want a little bit more." Do you find that it works for them, that it's attractive to them?

Byron:

Oh, absolutely.

Dave:

Or is it too out there?

Byron:

Absolutely. Absolutely. If you're an engineer, and you love what you do, then question anything that would slow you down, stop you, anything that would prevent you. Like you from buying a larger house. It was nothing more than what you were thinking and believing. It could come out the other way, but you're going to come out sane and right with yourself, not to buy the house until another time. It was

time and you were good with it. You know we do things that we don't want to do, but there's no situation we can't make peace with, because now is when we need the peace. Now is where this matters.

Dave:

If you were to describe what you do to someone who's never come across your work, how do you describe it in a couple sentences? Is there a way to do that?

Byron:

Clear the mind.

Dave:

Got it. That is the shortest description of what someone does, three words, that I've ever seen, but that's actually a very powerful description.

Byron:

If I don't love what I think, I don't love what I see, because life is what we believe it to be. I look out, and what I believe onto the world ... We put all these Post-its on what we see. If we believe it, if those thoughts ... if they're not, I'll say it this way, a match to the heart or our true nature, I don't like what I'm believing. I'm not going to like what I'm seeing. The way to love the world, for me, was to question anything unlike that emotion. For me, love is center.

Dave:

I think you've landed on something powerful there, if you go through the four questions that are in your books in the process of clearing your mind. What clearing my mind did for me is it frees up a huge amount of energy to do stuff that matters, because if I'm putting the electrons that my body makes from food and air to work on judgmental thoughts, negative thoughts, playing stories that aren't true in my head, all the energy that went there didn't go to somewhere useful. Then I had to apply even more energy to then counteract and deal with the negative thoughts that I wasted the energy on by building a process in every day. In my case, it's based on gratitude, and forgiveness, and driving awareness. It's allowed me to move in my career, and as a parent, and all the different things I do. That's why, even for people who are hyper-logical, an engineering mindset, or someone who doesn't have a particular strong spiritual direction in what they do, The Work that you describe in your books, it's useful simply because it removes drag on your life. Everyone has drag. Right?

Byron:

Absolutely. Absolutely useful in our lives. If I'm an engineer, say, why can't I love my mind at the same time? When we're saying our decisions, again, our decisions, they're simple. They're easy. We don't even have to think them through. They're just naturally logical. The food we eat, the choices we eat ... Last night I fell, and I'm wearing this heavy cast on my left foot and leg. I went to bed last night as energized as I wake up, because my energy isn't going to a make believe world. It's present. What a radical life when I compare it to the unquestioned mind.

Dave:

There are a lot of spiritual traditions that talk in different words about the things you're talking about. They talk about building awareness, building consciousness, being able to see reality. I'm talking about Hindu traditions, Buddhist traditions, ancient Christian traditions. It seems like there's many different traditions that are all circling around this ability to see what's actually in the world around you without lots of filters that you don't have control of. Can you walk me through the four questions that you teach people in your books to do in order to quickly get that level of clarity about a situation, or just about their life? What are the questions?

Byron:

Well, the first thing is to identify the thoughts that are causing the stress in your life, or in your moment, and to write them down. Then take a thought or a judgment that you're holding on someone. This work is meditation, so we're just going to meditate on, "Is it true, what I'm thinking and believing about that person? Is it true?" I'm going to meditate there, and I'm going to hold an image of that situation with that person in my mind's eye. Maybe he said, "I don't like you," so he doesn't like me. Is it true? I'm in that situation. Let's say it was something that happened yesterday. In my mind's eye, I can see the two of us there. He said it. He said he didn't like me, but this is about my vibe, what I believe, and no airy fairy ideas. I want to go to the depth, so I'm just meditating on, "Is it true he doesn't like me?" I'm looking at his face, his posture. I'm seeing that.

Now, the answer is either yes or no. It's one syllable, so we just remain still in that until that yes or no comes. The immediate answer is, "Yes, he said so," but no. You'll get still in it. What else do you see in there? Again, don't try to make nice in here. The answer's yes or no ... Then the second question, if it's yes, I ask myself, "Can I absolutely know that it's true that he doesn't like me?" I sit in there. My answer could still be, "Yes, it's true he doesn't like me," but I'm going to spend some time in there until I draw that conclusion for myself, until I'm shown in that image of the two of us together yesterday.

Then the third question is to notice, "How do I react? What happened when I believed the thought that he doesn't care about me, that he doesn't like me?" Then I meditate on that, and I get really still. I can see myself. I can see him there. I get in touch with, "Did my attitude change? Did it become aggressive? Did I look hurt?" I'm not judging any of this. I'm just witnessing how I react when I believe the thought in that situation. We learn so much about why the body responds the way it does. It's such a radical thing to get in touch with. We cease to think ... that these emotions are just happening to us.

We're seeing cause and effect. When I believe it, this is how I react when I believe the thought. How do I react when I believe the thought? I see those images of past/future. I see him where he doesn't like me, and then I see him in the future where he'll never speak to me again. I'm meditating in, "How do I react? What happens mentally and physically when I believe the thought? Do I manipulate? Do I strike back? Do I get even? Am I silent? Am I giving him the cold treatment?" I'm just witnessing a moment in time. We've heard the expression, "Know thyself."

Then the fourth and last question is, "Who would I be in that situation without the thought he doesn't like me?" Now I've got to meditate there. I'm going to see him. Now I may begin to experience some compassion. I can see at the time he was really upset. He was out of sorts. I see enough to know that I wasn't the cause of that in that particular situation. I see. I see. I see. Compassion. What pours in there ... It sounds odd, but it's just our kindest nature shows up. We get in touch with that at the same time as well.

Then I invite people to turn it around, to just flip it over, and to try it on like a new pair of shoes. Just try it on. Does it fit? He doesn't care about me, turned around. I don't care about him. Okay, so where was it in that situation I wasn't caring, or was it I attacked him? I'm just going to witness. I don't

even need to take questions in there. I'm shown. I'm meditating on that moment in time with that human being. Then we see how it fits. I don't care about him. Now, this is that word you used earlier, Dave, forgiveness. This is where it starts happening automatically through this process. You can just fall on your knees to a person like that, that pushes you to know yourself to become a kinder human being.

Now, another way of turning it around. You never know how many will be there. Maybe just one. He doesn't like me. Turn around. I don't like me. Okay, now I'm going to meditate in, "What is it about that situation? How did I treat him? What did I say or do? How did I react that I don't like me for?" ... I don't like me when I hurt another human being, when I say something or do something that is against my heart. It's just simply not wise. It's not airy fairy. It's just not wise in life. Aggressiveness in my world holds me back, and it shows up here in this process.

He doesn't like me. He likes me. There's another opposite. Okay, now it takes a lot of stillness to go back and listen to his words. Look at him. What do I see? I'm trying it on like a pair of shoes. Maybe it fits. Maybe it doesn't. Basically, Dave, that's the simple process. Anyone that wants to heal their life. If I have anything of value, it's always free. No charge on TheWork.com

Dave:

I appreciate that. When you have really precious knowledge like that and you choose not to share it as widely as you can, it feels like you're out of integrity. At least I feel that way. I like to put the most important things I know out there.

Byron:

Yes.

Dave:

In this case, I look at this. I come from Silicon Valley. I'm a former computer hacker. There's a portion of the audience who is totally spiritually tuned in. We're all meditating. We're doing all those things. I've seen a shift in the last 10 years where some of the very best computer programmers, developers, tech CEOs, whatever they are, they've started meditating because they felt the performance improvements.

Byron:

They're hacking their brain.

Dave:

They are hacking their brain. What you've described there in those four questions, when I ran it through my own filters, it's a logic problem. You can take any situation, and you can make a little truth table. You can look at all possible solution sets to that thing. The line of inquiry that your four questions in The Work invite is to say, "All right. Let's evaluate both sides of the equation or the problem we're working to solve. Let's look at all possible angles from it," which is what thinking human beings do anyway, but you're providing a framework for doing that, which makes it much faster. Instead of eventually realizing there's some sort of murky answer in all of this, by just putting it in a Q&A format, and then putting it in, you always look at both sides of each thing. You end up with a very different solution to the problem than you would end up-

Byron:

And you end up with a friend, and they don't have to like you back.

Dave:

Yeah.

Byron:

Yeah. You're connected. Under all circumstances, connected. In that, we're excellent listeners. A connection like that? Oh my gosh. Being with people changes our lives. It always ups our game.

Dave:

It does up your game. I love the way you think about that. That's been exactly what's happened in my life. You said something else, though, in your books, and in some of your interviews. You say that, "When you discover that all happiness is inside you, the wanting and needing are over." What replaces the wants and needs when people do the work?

Byron:

You have everything you want, and you have everything you need. It's just simple. Just consider this moment now, and I ask your listeners to do the same thing. Other than what you're thinking and believing, look at what you've got. Look at what you've got. That'll take you a while. You couldn't count it all if you just sat still and looked around you. I mean, I'm sitting in a chair. These clothes I'm wearing, they're layers. I don't need them all. The chair is holding me. The chair is taken care of. It has these cushions and this color. Then what's holding the chair is the ground, but that's not enough. There's this nice rug under. What holds the ground, and what holds that, and what holds that? You can't count it all. You can sit out on a log with grass on it and just look at one blade of grass. All the secrets of the universe are there, and it's for you. You begin to experience it so close that it is for you. Everything for you. Oh my gosh.

Obviously I fall easily into rapture. I am so grateful for the way things are. Now, if someone stands in front of me and says, "I'm going to kill you," why is it I don't have a problem? I'm not dead yet. Now, if I imagine what he's going to do, I have lost my life. I'm in a future that is terrifying and I am missing this given moment in time. My life is here. I've joined it. Now, let's say he shot me. Okay. Am I going to scream and yell before I even see if it hurts? ... I don't know. Don't know. I'm saying this. It may sound a little radical to some of your listeners, but I am about the end of suffering, and to the beginning of let's do what we can do where we are and change things. It's a powerful life we're given. If I'm in past/future, people say, "Be here now." Well, why? Well, because this is where you are. This is where it works.

Dave:

You've cultivated a sense of gratitude for wherever you are, even if there might be better places you'd like to be?

Byron:

Well, I've just simply noticed, and there's nowhere I'd rather be. That would be crazy. Where would I be? Where could I be that I wouldn't take this thinker with me?

Dave:

Wouldn't you want to be somewhere not with a guy with a gun about to shoot you?

Byron:

Well, I can run, but I don't think I'll outrun a bullet. If I can outrun that bullet, I'm going to run. I'm not crazy. Peace doesn't mean crazy.

Dave:

Exactly, so you could be in a state of peace even if you're in a-

Byron:

Running.

Dave:

Bad situation like that. Peaceful running, I like that.

Byron:

Yeah. Yeah ... A man did pull a gun on me one night. I think it was about 2 a.m., but it was the most beautiful evening. The clouds in the sky, and I could smell the river that was running not far away. It was a glorious evening. A man, I guess I frightened him. I was on his property or something. I was just out walking as I tend to do, and smelling the air. I guess I frightened him, because he came up ... "What are you doing here?" I'm sure his language wasn't that polite. He put a gun in my stomach, and he said, "I'm going to," and then he used a word, "Kill you." I looked at him. Oh, I don't know why I tell these stories other than I do. It must be important. He looked into my eyes. I looked into his eyes. I saw terror. I saw terror. At the same time, I can see the moon in the sky, and the clouds, and how the light from the moon hit the clouds in the sky. It was amazing.

Now, the other way is to imagine the bullet hitting me before he pulled the trigger, to imagine the pain, to imagine me not ever seeing my children again, to imagining me. All of this on such a beautiful night? Now that, to me, is crazy. I wasn't in a position to run, but I was in a position to look into his eyes and experience compassion, and he put the gun down.

Dave:

Why do you think he did that?

Byron:

What I can tell you is I was completely connected, and I think in that there's a kind of meeting where there was no room for his fear as well.

Dave:

You just felt that what he sensed from you was not the response to his terror that he was expecting, and just decided-

Byron:

I think so, Dave, that in the absence of fear, what is there to fear? No one pulls a gun if they're not fearful.

Dave:

That is very true. That's a powerful story, and the idea that you could stay present even in a situation like that is a testament to the growth that you've done.

Byron:

Also, again, who wants to miss the rest of their life? That could be it.

Dave:

What advice would you have for the gun who pulled the gun on you if you could talk to him now?

Byron:

I had a thought when he said he was going to kill me. My thought was, "I hope he doesn't do that to him."

Dave:

Yeah, because that does come at a great personal cost. One-

Byron:

Yes it does.

Dave:

One they don't show you in the movies.

Byron:

I wouldn't wish that on anyone. He was about to hurt himself.

Dave:

Do you think that most people listening to the show can reach that level of inner peace?

Byron:

I have a lot of people across the globe that are saying their lives are shifting so dramatically they're unrecognizable, but I don't call it The Work for nothing. It does take stillness. It takes silence, and it takes being courageous enough to look at the thoughts in your head without trying to change them, and accept them the way they are. I spoke earlier to loving the ego. You can't fight the ego. It doesn't rest. But you can love the ego. You can identify it, question it with the other part of the mind, and allow it to speak, meaning to show you. He doesn't care about me. Is it true? If I get still, the ego is going to offer it all up.

This last book I wrote was A Mind at Home with Itself. That's what we're talking about. The ego is like a lost child. As long as it's lost, that's frightening. It's a frightened identity. Once it finds a home in itself, that's all it's looking for. I've given the mind a home, so it's happy there.

Dave:

How do you define the ego?

Byron:

A false identity. He doesn't like me. There's something wrong with me, or I think, or I should, I need, I. I am Byron Katie sitting here with my friend Dave. I, I, I. What happens in inquiry is identification falls away, and I just remain ... Not before and after, but here I am with my friend Dave, having this discussion, and I hope it serves people. I'm present.

Dave:

Where do you think the ego comes from? Why is it there?

Byron:

It's really not.

Dave:

What does that mean?

Byron:

Well, you just asked a question. You'd have to go back to the past to leave the impression with yourself that you even said it. There's before, and after, and now. Now that now that I spoke of is gone.

Dave:

So the ego doesn't live in the present is what I'm getting out of that.

Byron:

No. No. Ego is a will of the wisp.

Dave:

Why is the ego there?

Byron:

I just spoke to it's not really, but the ego ... It's got to be identified, because ego is mind, and mind is nothing. You can't take it out. You can't touch it. You can't feel it. It's nothing. It's not even air, so it's looking for a home. Its first identification, let's say, is I. Well, that's not much of a home. I am. Well, now it's kind of getting settled in. I am a woman. Well, now it's kind of settling in. I would say now I am. I, and now it's he, she, them, me, I, but it's all about this false I.

I like to invite people to consider who would you be without your story, and to just get still in that, and to notice how quickly that story will come ... The ego's looking for a home because it can't have one. It's mind. It is not an object. Mind is not object ... I am sitting here with my friend Dave. Who cares if it's true or not? I'm present. I'm at home in myself, and I'm fully aware this body, this object, is not I. Where's the problem?

Dave:

One of the things that's interesting about the English language is that we say, "I am hungry," but in most other languages, we would say, "I have hunger." Right? The difference there is that we're so clearly identified with our meat, with our body. Some of it's linguistics. Some of it's cultural. I'm paraphrasing, but it sounded like you said, "You are not your body." Right?

Byron:

Mind is not body.

Dave:

Right.

Byron:

Mind is not physical.

Dave:

So then what is mind, if it's not physical?

Byron:

We spoke to it earlier, but mind is false identification. You know what? You asked me, Dave, so I'll just tell you. Mind does not exist. It cannot exist unless it identifies, and that is false identification. Mind isn't body.

Dave:

Isn't that similar, though, to saying love doesn't exist?

Byron:

I'm speaking out of my own experience. It's like I loathe myself, and now I don't. What is that self? I don't really care. I'm at home. To me, that's love. Love is balance. It's connection. I used to tell my children ... They'd say, "I want. I need." ... I'd say, "Sweetheart, make friends with mediocrity. Stay in the center." I understand why you wouldn't. Balance, center is the closest thing to knowing no self and no handicap. There's power in presence.

Dave:

Absolutely. I'd like to get your take on a technique that I use. I recognize that, as I mentioned earlier, my powers of self-deception are strong. I think all humans are. If I get to choose the story I'm going to believe about something, then I might as well choose the story that's the least amount of work, and the most amount of joy and happiness.

The example, I used to have a very overactive middle finger when people would cut me off in traffic. I had lots of working muscles on just that one finger. The story was they're cutting me off because they're more important. They don't respect me. Blah, blah, blah. In one of the personal development workshops I just realized, I can also say they're cutting me off in traffic because they're on the way to the hospital to see their mom on her deathbed. Right? I have no idea. Both stories are complete BS, but I just choose to believe that story without any facts, because neither story has facts backing it. All I know is they cut in front of me. I've found that, by doing that, it reduces the amount of stress and friction in my life dramatically. Is there-

Byron:

Oh, absolutely.

Dave:

Is there value to choosing a story that may not be true, just because it's more pleasurable than one that is false and unpleasurable?

Byron:

Well, the reason that worked, to my mind, is that it was just as logical.

Dave:

Right.

Byron:

So you balanced out. I mean, one is just as insane as the other. You don't know.

Dave:

Right.

Byron:

But you balanced. It could be just as true, so you got that center play.

Dave:

Is that a technique that you would recommend for listeners? We recognize that whatever you have might not be true, which is built into your questions in *The Work*, but then to intentionally select the story that is as equally likely to be true as the first story. Rather than saying, "I don't have a story," just making up the story that, "Hey, the universe is conspiring in my favor." You know it's not true, but you can still choose the story and say, "Since I'm going to choose a story that isn't true, or one that I don't know to be true, I might as well choose the one that makes me feel the best." Is that still self-deception that's going to be harmful in the long run?

Byron:

Okay, so here's what I would say for your listeners is try this one on. This universe is friendly, and anything that doesn't match that, then I would just open my eyes and see where it's true, then that balances. It doesn't have to be such an individual thing. We can just take one and keep it. I'm for the end of suffering. What you described ... beautiful. The universe is friendly.

When I fell and did that thing with my foot and knees about a week and a half ago ... My gosh, it's a friendly universe. I knew that falling. I knew that when I hit the ground. I knew that as they were putting the cast on. I know that as I sit here, so it shows up for me all the time. All the time.

Dave:

So maintaining that mindset is a part of what brings you happiness and presence all the time?

Byron:

I think it was maybe Einstein. I don't know. Anyone could look it up. He said, "The universe is friendly." Just that. I would say the universe is friendly, and I invite everyone to test it.

Dave:

I feel like I can't prove right now with what I know that the universe is friendly, so I'm going to assume that it is and tell myself that story, because life is a lot easier and better with that mindset than without it, while at the same time holding the knowledge that I don't have proof that that's the case. Some would argue, though, that that is an unhealthy self-deception, or an unhealthy state of mind, versus being completely neutral. I just find it doesn't work very well to be completely neutral. I'll choose the story that motivates me the most, that encourages me to give back more, and to have more energy, but I also recognize-

Byron:

Well, see, that's very wise.

Dave:

Okay, so you're in alignment with that, because I do-

Byron:

Oh, completely.

Dave:

I do question that. Am I deceiving myself in the right direction, even though it's not provable? I'm sort of thinking, "I don't care if it's provable. I like it better this way."

Byron:

Absolutely.

Dave:

All right.

Byron:

Optimists have more fun.

Dave:

Oh, that's true. They also live longer. There was a recent-

Byron:

Optimists live longer?

Dave:

A recent study around skeptics versus optimists, and skeptics die. They tend to have cognitive dysfunction earlier and die earlier than people who are optimists.

Byron:

The reason it feels good is it's closer to what I have come to understand. The universe is friendly. It's just a step closer each time.

Dave:

So your belief is that the universe is actually friendly.

Byron:

Actually.

Dave:

Actually.

Byron:

Completely.

Dave:

Got it. I like to believe that. I haven't proven it yet, but I'll continue to believe that story, because it's just a lot easier to do good work that way.

Byron:

I am still a skeptic. Believe me, I am a skeptic. That's why inquiry is such a part of my life, and it always comes out when I question this silly head of mine. Yeah, the universe is friendly. Yep. Got it. Got it.

Dave:

How did you keep your ego in check as you went from someone who was depressed and agoraphobic to someone whose work is seen by millions of people, and a leading voice in personal development? How did you avoid the spiritual ego side? "Hey, everybody. Look at me. I'm so good." Other leaders have fallen off the path. I've interviewed some of them. Why did you not fall off the path? What was different about your approach?

Byron:

If I had the thought, "Oh, I am so enlightened," I would have to question that. I cannot think a thought that wouldn't end in a question mark. It just wouldn't serve me.

Dave:

So you would run your four questions against the, "Oh, look at me. I'm so special and sane. What if I'm not special?" Okay.

Byron:

Oh my goodness, yes. It just can't hold here.

Dave:

Got it. That's how you can stay humble and still do that. That's actually a funny answer when you think about it. You're like, "God, I'd just use my own work to not fall into my own ego," which is fantastic.

Byron:

I don't know how humble it is. I've never really ... considered myself as humble, but I certainly do what hurts and what doesn't.

Dave:

That's beautiful. Byron, I have one more question for you, and it's a question I've asked every guest on the show for more than 500 episodes, and a question that I statistically analyzed for my next book called Game Changers. It comes out December 4th.

Byron:

Good.

Dave:

I'm really curious to hear your answer to it. If someone came to you tomorrow, based on all the things you've experienced in your life, and said, "I want to perform better at everything I do as a human being," what are your three most important pieces of advice? What would you say when you had to just boil it all down?

Byron:

Oh my goodness. Do the work. Do the work. Do the work. Another way of saying that is just identify any thought that would stop you from living your highest dream, your highest good. Anything that would stop you, question it.

Dave:

Beautiful, so that constant self-inquiry. You're voting with all three of yours. All of three of those answers is do that one thing, and it's the one that matters the most.

Byron:

Ask it again.

Dave:

If someone said, "I want to perform better at everything I do as a human being," that includes being in relationships, your work, giving back to your community. All the things we do as humans. The three most important pieces of advice you'd have, and you would say all three of those is that one thing, the self-inquiry?

Byron:

Yeah. Yeah. Get still. Question the thought that would get in your way ... Have a happy life.

Dave:

For you, it's all about getting in touch with the incorrect voices in your head, getting on top of them and editing, or at least becoming aware of what's happening there.

Byron:

I would question anything that would keep me from having a happy life.

Dave:

Byron, thank you for your stories, your questions, and for your work, and for The Work. I very much appreciate what you've done for the world. Listeners can find your work at [TheWork.com](http://TheWork.com).

Byron:

Yeah. Thank you, Dave

Dave:

Thank you, Byron. Have a wonderful day.

Byron:

Thank you, Dave.

Dave:

If you liked today's episode, you know what to do. Go out and ask yourself those four questions. Is it true? Can you absolutely know it's true? How do you react? What happens when you believe that thought, and who would you be without the thought? Give it a try. You'll find it works. If you like that, why don't you pick up a copy of one of Byron Katie's works? They are definitely worth your time to read. Very, very powerful stuff around not necessarily hacking your biology, but hacking the thoughts in your head. When you look at the definition of biohacking, it changes the environment around you and inside of you, so that you have control of your own biology. The thoughts you have control your biology, and getting on top of those is as powerful as putting the right stuff on your plate. Thanks for listening.