

## How To Be Your Future Self Right Now – Benjamin Hardy, Ph.D. – #966

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to The Human Upgrade with Dave Asprey. I made you a promise at the beginning of the year that I was going to tell you what you get out of a show. So you can say right at the beginning, "This has my attention," or "I'm going to listen to one of the other 1,000 or so episodes that are available." I just want this hour to be more than worth it for you. To be perfectly honest, if it's not, then you should do something else. Take a nap, go for a walk, whatever. So high value or nothing, go big or go home.

I asked a guy onto the show today, who is going to tell you how your ability to imagine the future, changes what you do right now. But looking at the past actually doesn't change your behavior right now, at least not for the better. This in turn, teaches you how to manage threats to your future self. How to recognize truths about yourself now and in the future, so that you can actually create the version of you that you want. This comes from a guy who knows a lot about intentional self-transformation.

He's actually a PhD, an organizational psychologist, and he's written multiple books on how to fix your mindset, like Willpower Doesn't Work and Personality Isn't Permanent. He's co-authored some of these with my dear friend and mentor, and guest on the show, who is Dan Sullivan. You might have seen the Gap and The Gain or Who Not How. So basically, Ben's a prolific author, one of the most read guys on Medium, and a friend. We've known each other for quite a while. Dan hasn't been on the show since episode #485. I think this is your first time Ben, isn't it, on the show?

Benjamin Hardy, Ph.D.:

It is. Yeah.

Dave:

Awesome. I should have had you on before.

Ben:

We've skipped around from book, to book, to book, to book. For some reason, here we are so the stars aligned.

Dave:

It's funny because I would've had you on before now because we've crossed paths so many times and got to know each other, that it's funny. I think I was thinking I had, and it sounds weird like, "Dave, you talk about memory and smart drugs."

Yeah, we've got a lot of episodes here. And if I interviewed someone six years ago, I might need a cue to remind me of the topic and then it pops in my head. I'm just thinking, "I know you well enough that I almost had to have had you on the show," so my bad.

Ben:

Not at all. No, I'm all for timing on things and this is cool. This will be an interesting conversation. I'm intrigued. I guess what I like about talking with you is it's not just you just trying to cater to anyone, you're really trying to get it right. There's a really good quote from Brené Brown where she says, "You're either trying to be right or get it right."

I think that you're one of those people who's trying to get it right. I am too, and I'm open to myself also being very wrong, so I like talking to you. It's always fun, stimulating, and it takes me places I don't expect to go sometimes.

Dave:

Likewise, my friend. Curiosity is important. Who is it? I'm actually reading another one of David Hawkins books, *The Eye of the I*, a pretty well-known, personal development, spiritual [inaudible 00:03:51].

Ben:

Oh, I love David Hawkins. Oh, I love his work personally.

Dave:

His stuff is great. I've used it for years. Some of his stuff around forgiveness is actually built into the process for resetting it 40 years it was in. When I look at this book, he was just recently talking about how the desire to be right is actually backed by anger. If your desire is to be right, that means you necessarily have to make the other person wrong. That the more ardently you argue your thing, it's actually an expression of anger, which is itself an expression of fear.

Basically, if you're afraid of being wrong, it's because everyone knows that if you're wrong, then mommy and daddy won't love you. Then no one will feed you, and then the wolves will eat you and you'll die. So if you could just drop that fear, maybe you could be curious and you could be interested in maybe getting it right. I swear I would go vegan if it actually worked. I would also be a graveltarian if it actually worked, and I have tried them extensively.

Ben:

I know you experiment. I know you test.

Dave:

Yeah. My commitment to myself and the world is I just want to do what works and I'm going to share it. I'll try to know why it works for me, because maybe I'm different than you. But it's that curiosity that I think motivates you. That's why we always have fun is you're like, "Okay, I really do want to get it right." Your studies of organizational psychology and self-transformation, always lead you to write really interesting books and self-introspection.

What is biohacking? Change the environment inside yourself and around yourself to have full control. Well, you got to measure the environment. It means having awareness of it and that's where your book comes in. I want to know, as we open up the interview, what evidence is there that us humans are driven by our view of the future rather than the past? Where's your science?

Ben:

Yeah. I like that. Freud would argue we're mostly the byproduct of our childhood.

Dave:

Yeah.

Ben:

For a lot of psychologists pre-neuroscience, they would've argued similar things. One of the only ones who was providing a counterargument was Frankl. Frankl's whole theory was the opposite. He felt a human's wellbeing and their psychology was based on their views of their own future. He talks heavily about this in Man's Search for Meaning, that if a person lost a sense of hope in their future or a goal, a sense of purpose, then the present became meaningless.

He specifically said in Man's Search for Meaning that everything they did, those who were trying to help those in the concentration camps. He said any attempt to alleviate the pathological effects of the concentration camp, had to point out to the victim a future goal. To which they could actually work towards because without that, they lost their spiritual hold. Frankl was unique in that sense. He believed that a person's wellbeing was based on having meanings to fulfill in the future.

Nowadays with neuroscience, the brain is essentially considered a prediction machine. So what the brain is always doing is predicting what's going to happen, and learning is essentially just updating its sense of predictions. The brain is always anticipating the future. In terms of positive psychology, there was a paper that Roy Baumeister, who I know you're aware of his work, and Marty Seligman wrote. Actually, it's called Driven by the Past or Navigating Into the Future.

It's all about a concept called prospection. And prospection is a topic that's heavily studied these days in positive psychology. And what it is it's basically the idea that as humans, we spend about two-thirds of our thinking time thinking about the future. We think about our prospects. We think about options. We think about what's going on. We think about potentials. We think about decisions we're going to make. We spend a lot more time thinking about the future than we do thinking about the past.

And prospection is based on what's called a teleological view of the world. Teleology being a concept that all things are driven by an end, that the end is actually the cause of the behavior. From a teleological standpoint, every human behavior is goal-driven, and a lot of psychologists actually believe that. So if I pick up my pen it's because I had the goal to do it. If I drop it, it was because I had the goal to do it. Psychologists define goals differently than the average person.

The average person might think of a goal as something I'm trying to achieve. If I actually just get up and walk to the bathroom, it's because there was a goal to do it. The end may have been to go to the bathroom. So from that standpoint, we're all being driven by goals. I would argue that a lot of those goals are unconscious, or triggered by the environment, or fed to us by the environment. This book [inaudible 00:08:47].

Dave:

What's an unconscious goal? It doesn't even make sense. Isn't a goal conscious? If it's unconscious, it's a behavior, not a goal.

Ben:

Well, this is what I'm saying is if it becomes a goal, even for a moment. It's that idea of between stimulus and response. I may be triggered to hop on social media for some reason or another. So in other words, the environment fed me the goal, and I then maybe automatically do it. So as an example, if I leave my phone notifications on, and I'm sitting here in flow trying to work. All of a sudden I hear a ding, my environment just fed me a goal. I might out of habit or instincts, just go for it.

A lot of the things we pursue, often are just done because they're triggered. But for a moment, it became something that you were making the decision to do. I asked my wife, as an example, she was wearing a baseball hat. I said, "Was it your goal to put on that hat?" She said, "No." She said, "I was cleaning the house and I just threw it on." I said, "Well, but if you didn't want it on, would it be on?"

If you absolutely didn't want it on, was there a moment in time when you saw it, and you picked it up, and you put it on your head? So even if for a moment, she grabbed it and did it, for a moment she decided to do it. That's what I'm saying here.

Dave:

Okay. Got it. So for a moment you said versus the flinch game that Alan, my 12-year-old, and I played for about a year there, where you go boo. Then if the person flinches, you punch them in the arm.

We got that from Stand by Me, the movie. That's an involuntary thing that wasn't a goal. That's some other system. That's not what we're talking about.

Ben:

No, I wouldn't say. Yeah. No, I think that's a really good distinction.

Dave:

You had a fleeting, that's what I'm looking for. You had a fleeting moment of desire or goal to put the hat on, so you did it. You flushed the cash and then you just went on. Okay.

Ben:

That's what often triggered behavior leads to, is you get triggered by the environment. Then for a moment you decide to redirect yourself towards that action.

Dave:

Got it. In fact, my all-time, favorite brain book is one that almost no one read. I can't get the author to come on the show because he's actually a Silicon Valley executive. The guy who invented PalmPilot, which was the first handheld organizer that was basically the great-grandfather of the iPhone. It turns out I worked at the same company with him early on in my tech career. My first big tech job was in the same company. The book is called On Intelligence and he argues that our brains are very provably with math, prediction machines of a microsecond in the future.

So to even move your hand, you predict that, and then the brain ignores everything. Unless when you move your hand, it hits something you didn't expect, and then you would notice, but otherwise, it's entirely invisible. I find that to be the most convincing, and awesome and workable solution for how a lot of distributed system stuff in the body works. But what I want to know from your book and from all of your deep study. You read these guys, you're citing them from left and right, which I love about you. You've got that database in your brain.

So how far in the future do we have to have a view, in order for it to change who we are today? Is this like, "Here's my five year goal, or I want to feed a billion people," which might be an ego goal. I don't really know. But how big, how far out? Dan Sullivan is giant and way in the future. He's a mentor for both of us, but what's your take on this now?

Ben:

Yeah. I like the question a lot. I'm going to share a quote to start, and then I'm going to share with you some of the interesting research from Hal Hershfield, who's one of the top guys. He's at UCLA.

I'm going to talk about Daniel Gilbert's work, who you may be aware of Gilbert. He's been at Harvard for a long time talking about future self for a really long time.

Dave:

Hershfield I know. I don't recall Gilbert, but I might have.

Ben:

Yeah. Gilbert gave a main stage TED Talk in 2014 called The psychology of Your Future Self, laid out a lot of really interesting stuff. Hershfield's been studying it for a really long time at UCLA.

This is the quote, I'll start with the quote and then I'll share with you some of what Hershfield and Gilbert have found. The quote comes from Robert Greene's book, The 50th Law, which I actually really like. It's surprisingly a really good book.

Dave:

He's one of my favorite authors.

Ben:

Here's the quote, "By our nature as rational, conscious creatures, we cannot help but think of the future. But most people out of fear, limit their views of the future to a narrow range. Thoughts of tomorrow, a few weeks ahead, perhaps a vague plan for the months to come. We are generally dealing with so many immediate battles, that it is hard for us to lift our gaze above the moment. It is a law of power, however, that the further and deeper we contemplate the future, the greater our capacity to shape it to our desires."

I think they say a lot in this that most of us are dealing with too many immediate battles. It's that whole urgent versus important thing. It also taps a lot into dopamine just that we're often driven by short-term dopamine hits. So this is what Hershfield found. Hershfield talks a lot about how the quality of your decisions in the present is based on what he calls your connection to your future self. Hershfield talks a lot about how the quality of your decisions in the present is based on what he calls your connection to your future self.

He's spent a lot of time studying this in different capacities. By the way, connection to long-term, future self, which he argues is very difficult for people to do for a few reasons. One is he actually believes humans are not evolved to do it. If you think about human beings thousands of years ago, most of what they were trying to do was get food for the week, for the month, or they were avoiding being eaten.

Dave:

Right.

Ben:

To plan for a retirement nest egg for 30 years, for age 65 is pretty foreign, especially because life expectancy even 150 years ago was 39 years old. To plan for a future that's 30, 40 years into the future, Hershfield does not believe that mass human beings are evolved to do that effectively, which is why often we set up our future selves for disaster. Connecting with your future self long-term, 20, 30 years into the future is very difficult. He also combines that with the pull of the present.

There's a lot of research and even a great TED Talk by Daniel Goldstein, who's a psychologist called The Battle Between Your Present and Your Future Self. The argument is the present itself usually wins because short-term rewards are immediate. Whereas, to invest in your long-term, future self, it's a pretty hard proposition for most people to invest for delayed gratification. That's pretty tough.

Hershfield's whole research has been how do you get connected to your longer term future self and what happens when you do?

He initially talks about how the first step of developing a relationship with your future self or getting connected to them. And by the way, he's found, and there's lots of research on this. If you are connected to your long-term, future self, obviously you're going to invest more financially. Save more money, make way better financial decisions, way better health decisions. You'll do a lot less stupid behaviors like criminal acts and whatnot. Essentially, the quality of your connection to your [inaudible 00:16:29].

Dave:

Be a politician basically.

Ben:

Yeah, exactly. Why would you do that? The quality of connection with your future self, the better decisions, more intentional decisions. That's actually what Aristotle called intelligence was intentionality. He based everything on what he called final cause, which is very similar. Yeah. He said that to get connected to your future self, you've got to start to have empathy towards this person. You've got to realize they're a very different person than you are today.

Even in five years from now, your future self's going to be different from who you are today. They're going to see the world differently. They're not going to value the same things you do. They're going to have different goals. You got to start to have empathy for them and recognize they are a different person, totally different person. That's actually one of the things that Daniel Gilbert found. Have you ever heard of the concept the end-of-history illusion?

Dave:

I do not recall that. No. I really like this idea of having empathy for your future self. Because a lot of the training that I do with people, is actually having empathy for their past self around forgiveness.

Ben:

That's big, 100%.

Dave:

But interesting on your future self, I want to know more about that. Then I want to know more about the other thing, whose name I already forgot.

Ben:

Yeah. Daniel Gilbert.

Dave:

Yeah.

Ben:

Well, I'll give Gilbert's idea because it connects and then I'll explain the empathy piece. This is all in Gilbert's main stage TED Talk. He writes a little bit about this in his book, *Stumbling Upon Happiness* because Gilbert's been [inaudible 00:17:54].

Dave:

Oh, that's his book. I have that book. Okay. I got it now. Thank you.

Ben:

Yeah. That whole book is about how people, they predict incorrectly what will make them happy in the future. People are really bad at predicting the future.

Dave:

Like money and fame, and all that stuff.

Ben:

Yeah.

Dave:

I did that in my 20s. It's a waste. Okay. I gotcha now.

Ben:

Okay. What Gilbert does is really interesting. He asks people, "Are you the same person you were 10 years ago?" Then he really asks them to go deep. Like, "Let's talk about the type of music you listen to. Let's talk about your habits. Let's talk about your interests. Let's talk about your friend group. Let's talk about your income. Let's talk about your environment." He gets them to go really deep and he helps them realize. "Okay. From a mental model perspective, you're pretty different from who you were 10 years ago. You're actually very different from who you were 10 years ago."

Actually, even if you measured it closer a year ago, two years ago, three years ago, there's quite a bit of differences, but then he invites them to look at their future self. So after recognizing and appreciating, "Okay. I'm pretty different than I was 10 years ago." By the way, me 10 years ago was living in my in-law's basement, just got rejected by 15 grad schools. Didn't know where I was going to go to school. Didn't think I was going to be an entrepreneur, a lot of funny things.

Dave:

By the way, it's been awesome to watch your evolution, and Genius Network and with Dan Sullivan, and all just over the time. You've really shifted so much.

Ben:

You think so?

Dave:

No, I really do think so. You said 10 years ago?

Ben:

Nine years ago, I didn't join Genius Network. I joined Genius Network in 2017, so this was during my PhD program.

Dave:

Still, that's five years ago. That's 50% of the time we're talking about. Okay.

Ben:

Yeah. Four years ago, my first book, *Willpower Doesn't Work*, came out. 10 years ago in 2012, actually I got married 10 years ago in two months. We got married on September 1st, 2012 and we were living in her parents' basement. I had just gotten rejected by 15 grad schools. No clue what I wanted to be. I was thinking I'd probably be a therapist. But what was funny was, and I'll get back to Hershfield and empathy.

But one year after our wedding, so in 2013, we made a nine year time capsule for our future selves. We filmed videos of ourselves talking about where we thought we'd be on our 10 year anniversary. We wrote letters about where we thought we'd be. Then we put the flash drive and the letters into a mason jar, and we stuck it on our shelf. We're going to open it in two months. I think it's going to be hilarious, but here's just a funny thought experiment.

Is if my former self nine years ago, who wrote that letter and spoke, could come to talk to me, who is his future self, he would then find out that I got a PhD in organizational psychology. I now have six kids. I have a 14 year old, 13 year old, 10 year old that we adopted from the foster system. I am an entrepreneur. He would be baffled because I know my former self thought my life was going in different directions.

Dave:

Yep.

Ben:

I only bring that up because I actually invite everyone who's listening to this, to do a time capsule of some form. I actually shared this story in the book about Mr. Beast, the YouTuber who did multiple time capsules and published them on his YouTube. They're fascinating to watch, back when he was a 17 year old. But the only reason I bring all this up, is by looking back at your former self and appreciating how different you were, people can do that.

When Daniel Gilbert asks people after he's done this for them, "What about your future self? Who do you think your future self will be in 10 years?" This is a phenomenon in psychology. Even after appreciating how much you've changed in the past, people vastly under predict that they're going to change at all in the future. It is very common for most people to think that their future self, even 10, 15 years into the future, is going to be primarily the same person they are today.

That phenomenon is called the end-of-history illusion, just the belief that you're not going to change much in the future. Gilbert's research actually shows that 18 year olds predict changing in the future, as much as people who are 50 year old actually do and he talks about that. Kids who are in their teenage years, think that they're not going to change much in the future.

Dave:

It's totally funny. You're so right. A lot of what I've done over the past 10 years of content, is stuff I wish I would've known when I was 18.



It would've just prevented so much suffering, and just stupid decision making and all of that. The problem is when I was 18, I probably would've been too arrogant and stupid to listen to me.

Ben:

The 18-year-old version of you might not have been paying attention to the Dave Asprey podcast.

Dave:

I was a huge dick, I admit it. Didn't even know it. How do we solve that same problem? What if everyone listening, including me and you, what if we're actually huge dicks and we don't know it, just like I didn't when I was 18, so we're not going to listen to our future self anyway? How does contemplating future self actually change anything?

Ben:

It changes a lot. It actually helps a lot. Number one first off, and the point of all of this conversation is the appreciation. The full on appreciation your future self is more different than you predict they will be. All of us are under predicting how different our future self will be. And connecting that to Hershfield, you seeing your future self as a different person and having empathy towards them, allows you to start making different decisions now. Because you start to take into account who they are, what they want, where they're at and that it is different.

They probably want something totally different than you. One thing you can do, and Hershfield talks also about learning how to develop a friendship with your future self so that you start. If someone's really your friend, you don't see going downtown to pick them up because their car got a flat. You don't see making sacrifices for someone you really value as a big deal. Whereas, if it's someone you don't really like, you get put off. He talks about how to actually develop a friendship in such a way that you want to make sacrifices for them. I don't like the word sacrifice. I prefer the word investment.

Here's one example and it actually goes right back to Frankl. Frankl, one of the quotes he talks about in Man's Search for Meaning, is he says that you should live as though you already lived this moment once, and you acted as poorly as you're about to act, and that you had to face your consequences. Imagine that this moment is now the past and that you can come back, having lived it once, and try again. What I do to apply this is one day I was driving home from work. I often come home from work and I'm fried. I just zone out and I got kids who want to hang out. I'm just like, "Whatever." That's me some days, admittedly, of course.

Dave:

Sure.

Ben:

I thought about it and I said, "What if my future self 20 years from now, who's now all of my kids are gone. They're all at school or doing whatever they want. What if future me 20 years from now, could come back and sit in my shoes and just chill in my life for the rest of the afternoon?" Got to come back and play with the kids when they're three years old and chill. I just played with that for a minute. I just thought, "I'm just going to just pretend like I'm my future self and I got to come back and kick it."

I walked inside my house, totally a mess because I got all these kids. Rather than being upset, I just thought it was freaking cool. I'm like, "Holy cow, it's like going back in the Twilight Zone." What it allowed me to do was first off, I realized that a lot of the things I get upset about are irrelevant. It just

made me way more interested in my kids. I'm like, "Holy cow." I wanted to talk to my 14-year-old son, Caleb, and see what was interested in him, rather than just telling him go do the chores.

If my future self 20 years into the future could come back and just talk to him, what would he say? And you could say the same thing about yourself, but I think you can use it. You don't have to go 20 years, but you can think, "How would my future self handle this or what would my future self want me to do?" There's a lot more in-depthness about this that I think is useful. It's the idea of once you actually imagine your goal, whatever it is. Your future self, where you want to be specifically, you actually use that to start designing your behavior now.

You actually think from the goal rather than to the goal. So you can use this to be more present. You can do this to be more contemplative, more thoughtful, make better decisions, maybe value your life more. That's actually one of the interesting things, is that your future self views your current situation enormously more valuable than you do, because there's massive implications of what you do now. But you can also just use it to better strategize, better behave.

Dave:

Okay. You talk about threats to your future self, things that could take you out on your way of visualizing this in the book. The threat number one is you got to have hope in your future. You say that's even more important in trauma. It's not that you don't have freedom, but if you don't have purpose and meaning, that's the threat. I've talked to so many people, especially under 35, who just went through two years of social isolation.

Especially if you're under 25, that purpose and meaning like, "Look, I'm in debt, there's not a career prospect, the world's collapsing. I've been brainwashed into thinking that basically I will be drowned under the ocean in the next two years." There's a lot of doom and gloom that comes from the media. In fact, I would argue the media's main function now is to remove purpose and meaning, especially from young people.

Okay. If that's the big threat and it's actually happening, what do you recommend for people who are saying the future looks bleak right now?

Ben:

I think that you hit it on the head hard, as far as the media's major goal. Obviously, if it bleeds, it leads. There's a lot of really interesting research on hope. Dr. Charles Schneider, who's basically he developed hope theory. I think he's passed now, but he laid a lot of the groundwork for now research for people like Dr. Duckworth, Angela Duckworth and stuff. A lot of her work on grit is built on the foundation of hope. She even acknowledges that hope gets you started and hope sustains you, so you can't have grit without hope.

You can't have motivation without hope. You couldn't be motivated towards something if you had no hope in its eventuation. So hope is a fundamental human need. I like Seth Godin's quote that he says, "Without hope we wither and perish." I've already hit Frankl pretty hard, so I won't go down that path too much further, although he does provide the antidote. But one of the things that Schneider did was he broke people and students into categories, high-hope versus low-hope people.

You can look at the research on this, really interesting. But some of the core differences is high-hope people have very specific goals. Actually, and just to break it down, hope essentially has three core factors. Factor number one is a high-hope person would have specific goals. And hope and optimism are actually two different things.

Dave:

Yeah.

Ben:

Optimism is a more general, positive sense towards the future, whereas hope is actually a lot more specific. So hope is three things. Hope is a specific goal. The second one is what they call pathways thinking, which is where you find and generate multiple pathways to your goal. A high-hope person, if they're working towards their goal and they hit a roadblock, they use that as feedback to find different avenues. Whereas a low-hope person, if they hit a wall, they just disengage. Then ultimately, they keep trying the same thing over and over and over again and get no results.

They don't learn from their experience, and so it's the Einstein insanity thing. They're not high on pathways thinking. Ultimately, finding and strategizing. The third aspect of hope is just agency. What psychologists would call agency thinking, which is essentially similar to what psychologists would call an internal locus of control. You believe you have choice, you have action that you can exercise some form of free will towards your goals, or you can learn and figure out pathways.

I think it's just important to first off, appreciate the power of hope, that it is essential. Did you ever read the book Zero to One by Peter Thiel?

Dave:

Yeah, a while ago.

Ben:

The only reason I bring this up is because I think one of the most interesting things in that book is his framework about the future. He talks about how there's four attitudes about the future. Either you have a definite optimism, which is what he believed America was. We're going to go to the moon. Definite optimism, meaning you have a positive view of the future. It's definite, meaning you actually have goals.

Indefinite optimism, meaning you believe the future's good, but you have no idea what it is. Pessimism, definite pessimism, and then indefinite. The reason I think that's important and hitting exactly what you're saying is, it's actually quite obvious when you think about it, that whatever view you have in the future is going to determine who you are in the present. So if you have totally pessimistic views of the future, it's going to impact who you're being in the present.

Dave:

So you're saying that Peter Thiel had that specific, positive view of the future and that's what led him do a lot of [inaudible 00:31:58].

Ben:

Peter Thiel pushes for a definite optimism. He says the other three views are ultimately negative.

Dave:

I like that. A little trivia there, he was the first guy ever to offer to invest in Bulletproof.

Ben:

I didn't know that.

Dave:

Yeah. I met him years ago at the Presidio and he's like, "All you have to do is put a Bulletproof coffee shop near my office or my house." And I'm like, "Peter, there's no foot traffic at your office here. It will go out of business, but I really want to do a deal."

He was just a really fascinating human being. I'll have to hang out with him again sometime, it was fantastic. I always remember that meeting because it was just so like, "What, Peter Thiel, huh?"

Ben:

Yeah. That's pretty epic. Do you care if I read you a direct quote from Frankl?

Dave:

Yeah. I was thinking we'd do more Thiel, but do a Frankl.

Ben:

Well, Thiel has an insanely good quote that I actually lay out in here. He just mostly talks about the difference between indefinite attitudes and definite attitudes about the future.

Dave:

Okay.

Ben:

He talks about how we've really shifted to a place where we celebrate indefinite attitudes. We celebrate not knowing what's going to happen. We celebrate not being definite. We more focus on the process rather than on the purpose. He pushes people in that book to be more purposeful, to have convictions. He says, "If you're purposeful, you have firm convictions and you stand for those convictions." He thinks we've gone down this way of celebrating essentially what he would call an indefinite optimism.

Although I think that American culture right now, has shifted more toward an indefinite pessimism. I think it's pretty clear that a lot of people have pessimistic views of the future. When they have pessimistic views of the future, they're less likely to invest in their future self because they don't think they have any control over what's going to happen anyways. This is the Frankl quote that I think is pretty much my answer to your question, which was to all these people who just came out of the pandemic.

The only reason I love Frankl is because he was, from my standpoint, in a more isolated context, I think he had less. I think about agency and contextual form. We all have contextual agency. Obviously, the context is inside, but it's also outside. I think that we still have insane freedoms, despite the fact that we do have a crazy media system feeding us hope destroying media and stuff like that. This is basically what Frankl said directly.

He said, "Any attempt at fighting the camp's pathological influence on the prisoner by therapeutic methods, had to aim at giving him inner strength by pointing out to him a future goal, to which he could look forward. Instinctively, some of the prisoners attempted to find one of their own. It is a peculiarity of man that he can only live by looking to the future, and this is his salvation in the most difficult moments of his existence." Frankl, he was not talking about a broad, random future.

He was talking about what is the most absolutely crucial, most important thing that you can do with your life right now, that gives your life meaning? Essentially, he was asking, "What is the future

that's strong enough to sustain you through this?" That's why he would always quote Nietzsche, "He who has a why that's strong enough can bear anyhow."

Dave:

Let me ask you this. Do you find it easy now at this point in your life, to think of that definitive future positively? So many people come in and they're doing neurofeedback, and it takes two or three days sometimes for someone to figure out their purpose.

That's a part of this. If you don't know your purpose, what's your specific goal that's within the purpose? Also, can you just close your eyes, snap your finger and be like, "Ah, there's my specific goal," or do you take days of contemplation to do it?

Ben:

I think it's a complete drafting process that's never-ending. By specific purpose, for Frankl and he literally lays it out in the book. His purpose was to get out of the camp so that he could rewrite his book that was stolen from him and shredded.

He was working on his first book, which was called *The Doctor and the Soul*. He said in the book, "My desire to get out of the camp and rewrite my book kept me alive." Pretty much that's what he said.

Dave:

Wow.

Ben:

The specific goal could be anything. For me as an example, I grew up, my father was a drug addict. He was a meth addict. There were meth, crazy, weird people throughout my house.

My friends and I would be playing *World of Warcraft* in one room, and my dad would be doing weird stuff, crazy stuff with odd people in the next room.

Dave:

Wow.

Ben:

It was a really chaotic environment. I grew up, it felt like the walls were caving in because things just got weird. I barely graduated high school, but I actually did have a goal. In my case, it was actually to serve a church mission. The only reason I bring that up is because had I not had that, and I almost gave that up. But because I had that, I actually graduated high school because I knew if I wanted to go on that church mission, I needed to be a high school graduate.

I kept going to school, even though I missed 50% of my classes and had to do all sorts of community service, but I graduated. The only reason I did was because I thought I might want to go on that. That was the only reason I didn't get involved in a lot of the drugs and other things that were around me, was just because I thought I might have this thing I wanted. That was my specific goal at that time. That purpose gave me some form of North Star to navigate the crap around me.

I wouldn't have graduated high school, my brother didn't. My brother ended up getting into all sorts of crazy drugs. Tried to join the military, got kicked out. I only use that as an example to say what's something specific that's worth working towards? Because if you don't have something specific, and

that's why he literally says this is their salvation in the most difficult moments of their life, because you have something meaningful to work towards to actually have your brain work on. My son, Caleb, as an example, he's 14, he's really into tennis.

Because he has goals around tennis, then if you have nothing, Frankl says you lose your spiritual hold and you just mentally and physically decay. If you have nothing to work towards or to deliberately practice on, or to stretch yourself on, then you almost have no hold of your mind. You honestly do become a ping pong ball just to all of the dopamine hits around. I do think just choose something that you can work on, even if it's just for a year. It could be learn Spanish.

Honestly, pick something that you feel is useful that you could work on and be deliberate towards. Deliberately practice on, stretch yourself on, imagine a future self on. I do think it's important though, when you start to build some confidence, because confidence really allows you to have more imagination. And confidence takes time to build. Confidence is the byproduct to past performance. If you make even a little bit of progress, you start to build confidence.

You can really start to stretch out your future self. For me as an example, I first recognize my future self as totally different from my current self. Albert Einstein said imagination is more important than knowledge. I know my future self can have totally different skill sets, totally different knowledge bases, totally different personality even than my current self. That lends to a growth mindset fundamentally. You know that your current self is very limited. Your current self, you're going to be different in a day, a week, a month, and so you don't have to try to be right.

Back to Brené, you can just try to get it right. Fixed mindsets essentially trying to prove your current ability. If you know that your future self could be massively different, then you no longer need to prove yourself. You can have massive compassion towards your current self. You can give massive grace to the dumpster fire that your life may be. My life is often a dumpster fire, but the great part is that my future self's different.

Dave:

So even now today with all of your success and all, you're saying life is often a dumpster fire?

Ben:

Yeah. Isn't yours sometimes?

Dave:

Sure, quite frequently. What I'm questioning is how much ignoring of the dumpster fire do you do, because you're being Pollyanna about your future self?

I get to ask you these questions because you just wrote a book about this. I'm going to ask you the hard questions, right?

Ben:

You can ask me. That's why I actually love talking to you, Dave, is because I'm not going to get hard questions on 90% of the podcasts I'm on.

Dave:

Yeah. I'm not looking to be mean or anything. I'm just like, "Okay. So maybe you should put out some of that dumpster fire, my friend."

Ben:

Well you do, you do.

Dave:

Okay. Tell me more about how you manage this because I'm assuming you're a master here and you actually are. You've studied deeply on this and you've managed to resynthesize it in a new way. Then I love seeing how someone who's mastered a set of information [inaudible 00:41:09].

Ben:

I don't think I've mastered this.

Dave:

Well, enough to write a book. You and I both know how much it takes to write a book that's worth reading. It takes a certain level of mastery, it just does. In order to organize it, you have to know it well enough to frame it. That's one of the reasons I write books, is because it makes me have to know it that well.

Ben:

Yeah.

Dave:

I suspect you're the same. How do you apply this? You, who knows way more than the vast majority of people, but doesn't self-identify as a master?

Ben:

Thank you. I feel like the present self is always in a state of flux. One example being when I was writing the book, I'm actually writing a book right now as an example and way behind deadline. We've had to push it back and it's not looking good. We could call this project a dumpster fire right now.

Dave:

It's every book that's ever been published, has been a dumpster fire before it got published.

Ben:

My life situation is in a much more stable place than it was a year ago, three years ago, five years ago. I still deal with so many situations that seem way above my head. In fact, that's really how I view deliberate practice is failing towards your future self. Josh Waitzkin calls that investment in loss. So as a father, we have kids that we adopted. A lot of emotional challenges, a lot of issues. Me and my wife often not emotionally equipped to handle those situations.

We could call this a challenging situation or a situation where we're in the messy middle. One important thing is just if I have completely pessimistic views about my future with my kids or myself as a father, I won't even consider trying to learn how to handle it and deliberately practicing towards it. Instead, I will go to an avoidance mindset and I'll just numb myself because it's so hard to deal with.

Dave:

Is that through a World of Warcraft addiction or some other one?

Ben:

No, now I just watch YouTube videos, usually skate videos or ESPN.

Dave:

There you go. All right. That's your drug of choice, ESPN.

Ben:

If you guys want to know. Yeah, if you guys want to know. But that's really what you do is if you don't have confidence or if you don't have hope, or if you're just not committed, then you ultimately just disengage. By the way, the psychological definition of identity is what you're most committed to. Whatever you're most committed to is your identity.

I think a lot of solving the dumpster fire, is getting your identity really committed to whatever it is you want to do so that you can start working on it from a more committed state. One is first off, I'm not a perfectionist. I'm very okay with being in a messy situation, because I know that tomorrow things could be better and probably will be because my future self will be different. I give myself a lot of grace. I actually don't deal with perfectionism.

Dave:

I deal with perfectionism all the time in others. I use pepper spray for it. It works great.

Ben:

You do? Pepper spray just smooths it out?

Dave:

Yeah. Whenever they're a perfectionist, you just spray them a little bit and they stop complaining about their perfectionism. You should try it.

Ben:

You could either connect with your future self or just use pepper spray.

Dave:

Pepper spray is for nitrate, so you have to check for nitrate sensitivity before you do it just to be safe.

Ben:

I would use both, but I would love pepper spray. What else does it do?

Dave:

It's good for parenting as well I hear. I haven't tried it yet, but I've been tempted a few times. Okay. That's all I can say.

Ben:



I think just work on it. I think work on it with the kids seriously. That's what we do. We actually just took a six week trip in Europe.

Dave:

Yeah. That's big.

Ben:

I was pretty blown away at some of the ahas that happened. It reminds me of sometimes you have to have a breakdown to have a breakthrough. While we were traveling, there were some really dark moments, but there was a moment when my daughter, who is actually the hardest of the three, she's 13.

We were having one of those moments where she was just fighting. Then she just had this moment where she's like, "I want to change." And I didn't actually believe her but I'm like, "So do I." Trust me, I'm like, "So do I," because I sometimes freak out.

Dave:

Sure.

Ben:

And since that moment, I won't say it's like a light switched, because certainly we have our moments, but it's not even correlated. She's changed a lot and her energy's changed. She's working on a lot and I don't equate it to just one moment. We had a lot of great peak experiences during that six weeks. But if you have hope and if you have a goal, and if you have a reason, it allows you to work at it.

It allows you to keep trying at it, and being okay having bad days and working through that process because there's a reason to do it. If you don't have hope in it, there's no real reason to go through that hell and so you just disengage. It goes straight back to pathways thinking, just that there probably is a path. Who knows what it is, we'll find it though.

Dave:

Okay. I like that. The pathway thinking, that's the whole hacking thing. That's what hackers do, we just keep going. There's a path that you didn't think about, and that's how we hack it. We were talking before we hit record about my next book.

It's like there's lots of paths to getting whatever health thing you want to do. Just pick the one that's the shortest path, because well, I don't know. Maybe you're lazy like I am.

Ben:

I think you'd dig the study in pathways thinking.

Dave:

Yeah. I think I'm going to have to read that. I probably will regret not reading it.

Ben:

There's a lot of literature on pathways thinking.

Dave:

Okay. I'm going to dig into it. Thank you. You talk about some threats to your future self in the book. I really like your structuring, by the way, just as a fellow author. Nice job on framing it, because it's very hard, especially in a book that could be this mushy, but isn't.

So you've got threats to future self and you got truth to future self. We don't have time in an interview to tell me the whole book. That's why you buy the audible. By the way, did you read your own audible?

Ben:

Yeah. It's a short audible, by the way, four hours, two minutes.

Dave:

Only four hours?

Ben:

I purposely carved this thing down, man. One of my favorite concepts lately is called constraint theory. Have you studied constraint theory much?

I only bring this up because there's a quote within constraint theory that a system is only perfect when there's nothing left to take away.

Dave:

This is the Mark Twain quote, "If I'd had more time, I'd have written less and I [inaudible 00:47:47]."

Ben:

Yeah.

Dave:

I love that.

Ben:

This one took a lot of stripping away the David, in other words. So many drafts, how much can you take away? Yeah. Perfection is not when there's nothing left to add, but when there's nothing left to remove. I tried that with this book. Yeah.

Dave:

So four hours is impressive and reading your own book is tough. Then in your truth number seven is your view of God impacts your future self. You mentioned that having a religious practice and a spiritual practice helped you avoid addiction when you're growing up in a messed up house with addiction.

So how did you feel as an author about bringing your view of God in the book? Is this your view of God? Or you're saying that the reader's individual view of God impacts their personal self? Unpack what God has to do with your future self in the context.

Ben:

I'll tell you, I will say I was very hesitant to put this in a book like this 100%.

Dave:

Yeah. It's risky.

Ben:

Yeah. 100%, I'm fine with that. I also felt I would be intellectually dishonest if I didn't include this section in the book. I start this section by saying, "Let me be direct and honest. I'm not trying to convince you whether or not you should believe in God." That is not the purpose of this section. The purpose of this section is just to highlight that whatever views or lack of views you hold of God, are going to directly influence your views of your own future self, because views of God are pretty existential.

A lot of people, their views of their future self are impacted by their belief system about God. They may believe that there's a heaven and a hell, as an example, they may believe in reincarnation, whatever it is. But whatever views they hold, and even if you believe there is no God, I have no problem with that, by the way. All I'm saying is whatever view you hold of God, is going to impact what you believe to be your own trajectory. Do you disagree with that?

Dave:

I believe that your view of whether you want to call it a god, gods, or your spiritual view of the world has a massive impact on your future. It doesn't necessarily have to be God based.

Ben:

Yeah. It impacts how you view your own future, right?

Dave:

Yeah.

Ben:

That's pretty much the point here.

Dave:

Okay. But it's not join my church.

Ben:

No, no, no.

Dave:

It doesn't come across that way at all. It was a courageous move as an author in order to say, "I'm going to include this." Just like any academic says, "Yeah. I'm going to study this massive thing that people have been doing since we have recorded history, but it's not scientific so I can't look at it or I risk my tenure."

So unless you're a religious studies professor and you talk about that in the context of medicine, or health or psychology, you almost automatically become fringe, even though science is supposed to be about curiosity and measuring what works. Honestly, if convincing yourself that a leprechaun tucks you in every night and it makes you a billionaire and happy. Well, shit then all hail the leprechaun and that's okay.

Ben:

Yeah. I don't think Hay House would've let me proselyte to a certain religion in this book. I do lay out generally speaking, some of my own views of God and how those impact my own view of my future self, and how I view other people based on that view of God. I lay out a few classic frameworks of God and just say, "Here's the psychological impact on your future self with this framework. Here's the psychological impact on your psychology with this framework."

And just show that everyone has their own views of all this stuff, but I invite introspection to say whatever existential or big picture views you have of God, non-God, multiple gods, that's going to have some bearing on how you view your future. It really connects with the idea that whatever view you have of your trajectory, essentially is a direct impact on your own identity. That your identity and perceived trajectory are completely connected.

Dave:

Okay. I like that a lot. All right. Now I got to ask you this. You've got seven threats to your future self. You've got seven steps for being your future self.

You've got seven truths about your future self. Were there actually seven of each, or did you do mental gymnastics to make it seven, seven, seven, and why seven?

Ben:

No reason for seven. It was actually originally 10, 10, 10.

Dave:

It just worked out to be seven. Okay. That's cool.

Ben:

Well, I whittled it down. Yeah. Originally, I had worked on this book for three years, but I wrote Who Not How, and The Gap and The Gain in between. I came across the research initially when I was writing Personality Isn't Permanent. I was like, "What the heck? I didn't even know this stuff existed." I've been messing with this stuff for a long time, and I knew I wanted to have it be closer to a blog post style book, where it was concept, concept, concept, make it really easy on the reader.

I was just thinking 10, 10, 10 would be really easy, but it was just like 10 is too big. I then tried to chunk it down to eight and I was like, "I could chunk this down even more." Some of these ideas are actually just one idea or I could merge them and so seven, seven, seven just felt smooth. There's a really famous statistics quote that says, "No models are true, but some models are useful." Everything's a model and this is just a model. It's not true, it could be useful to some people. It's just a model. It's just a perspective.

Dave:

I do think models and frameworks are how most people learn most quickly.

Ben:

I agree.

Dave:

That's why anyone who listens to me for more than five minutes, probably hears me can talk about the four F words as my model for decision making that's unconscious in humans and how you would want to retweet that. I do think you did a great job on framing it so you can figure it out. Here's what's likely to mess you up. Here are the things you need to know.

Then here's the steps to actually using the things you need to know, so if there ever was an actionable book. I think that comes because you learned to write not as an author, but you learned to write as a Medium blogger. Attention span has gone down, even since I started writing where long-form journalism, where you write a 3,000 or 4,000 word article about all the 34 studies supporting mycotoxins in coffee, even if other podcasters who make money selling moldy coffee, tell you it's not true kind of posts.

Now it's down to a 15 second TikTok, and you have to dance while you have three bullet points and you point at them. I'll admit I'm struggling, not just with the dancing part. I can twerk pretty well, but I'm like, "How do I pack all this crap?" There's so much here and I can boil it down, but at a certain point, you boil it down and all this left is one amino acid. You're like, "I wanted to give you a peptide, seriously."

Ben:

Yeah. Well, I know and when you're writing a book, you have volumes you want to share. To write a book, you must read 100 almost.

Dave:

It's been a challenge. I think because instead of saying, "I'm going to start with writing books and then make it long-form and then get to short form." Even Tim Ferris has funded a scholarship for long-form journalism.

You get guys like Steven Kotler, who's a friend, most of his career was long-form and then became books. Your style's very different. It's refreshing, it's young, but it's very readable.

Ben:

Thank you, man.

Dave:

In the book. I think you've done something good here and it's a little bit different than your other ones. How did you evolve? This is me being a selfish author wondering how you did it.

How did you evolve your style from the last book to this book? Was there a conscious decision? Was there an advisor?

Ben:

They said you want me to explain the process, the evolution of it?

Dave:

It feels different, but I want to know what you did. There's a lot of authors that listen to the show. So just give me the 30 second how do you evolve your writing teaching?

Ben:

Admittedly, I've spent a lot of time working with Tucker Max. Tucker got heavily involved in the collaboration with Dan. It was a three or four way collaboration, and so he's coached me a lot through writing Who Not How, and then writing The Gap and The Gain. He's helping me a little bit on 10X is Easier than 2X. He's less technical helping me now. With Who Not How, he was very in the weeds. We were talking through structures and stuff like that, and he helped me think differently about structures.

I actually really am proud of the structure of Who Not How. Even The Gap and The Gain, The Gap and The Gain is only a two-part book and it's got three chapters for each, so he's helped me think that stuff through. With Be Your Future Self Now, I think the thing I did differently about this book, because The Gap and The Gain's pretty short. I would say that Who Not How is probably 45,000 words. The Gap and The Gain is about 48,000 words. This book's closer to about 40,000.

Dave:

I'm pushing 75 to 90, so these are really short.

Ben:

They're short. They're short.

Dave:

Yeah.

Ben:

My audible book, audibles with Dan are always two hours longer because we do free-flowing interviews between the chapters. So I'll read a chapter of the audio book and then I'll interview Dan about it, and we'll have a 20 minute conversation.

There's two hours of interviews that are bonus material on the audibles with Dan. That makes the book seem longer than it is. This book, it's actually way shorter than it looks because we have 50 full page quotes in here from Dan. This is The Gap and The Gain.

Dave:

Okay.

Ben:

This book has 60 pictures from gaping void in it, so it actually looks bigger than it is. This is something I learned from Medium. One of the things I love about Medium is, and I don't write there anymore, but aesthetically, it had a lot of white space on the screen. So if you're reading a Medium article, the font is pretty big and there's a ton of white space. It's just aesthetically pleasing, it's easy to read. It doesn't feel there's a lot of words on your face.

With Who Not How, they put way too many words on each page. Honestly, I just didn't like it. I told them with Gap and Gain and then with this one, way more white space, put two-thirds of the words on each page. It's easier on the read, it's sexier. It just looks better. That's more design thinking. With the writing itself, I think what I learned that's different with this, is I'm very much a conceptual thinker. I'm really bad at thinking stories.

I love just tell me a theory, tell me a model, tell me an idea. I'm just going to think through that and that's what I want to talk about. But the thing that I've been forced to get better at is driving with

the story. Finding really interesting stories and then using the research to make it really thick, and then just adding elements. I think that's what I'm getting better at.

Dave:

Interesting. There's an old collaboration with Ryan Holiday, who's one of the masters at that. He and Robert Greene, he learned it from Robert Greene and did it with Robert Greene in 48 Laws of Power. I like Ryan's writing. There's always a story in it, as well as Robert Greene's. Then Ryan and Tucker worked together for a while, because I'd hired both of them to help me on The Bulletproof Diet just to understand the marketing. I'd already written it, but I just wanted to make sure I was going to get it out there.

Then Ryan had to go do something, so I ended up working with Tucker on it. Then not a lot came out of that. I think Tucker was still figuring out all of his models and things having done a couple books. But you fast forward, that's almost 10 years ago. So you fast forward and you look at all of the transformation, but it's neat. Your book just feels different. I think it's like you said, you looked at the layout and the design. I think Hay House supported you on that, but most publishers don't.

Our listeners could be getting really bored by publishers, and authors and whatever stuff. But if you've ever thought about how the book you're holding gets made, I believe that reading a book that's a worthy book, it's installing an app in your consciousness. It actually changes your lens and the way you process reality. That's what I'll explain to my kids. "No, that's why you have to read that one. That's an app that you need to have installed, so that you know that and you can use it, and take action on it."

There's a thought that goes through it and we can do this podcast. We could publish the transcript and put pretty fonts on it. The information density here is not as dense as reading your book, because your book is the considered effort of 10,000 plus hours of research, plus all the boiling down, and structuring, and framing and all that. Then you pick this thing up and like, "Oh, it was a four hour audible," but it's ever clear instead of beer, is what a book is like that.

I just want listeners to think of it every time you absorb a book instead of a podcast, even this one, which I do my best to make information dense, you're getting the highest ROI on every second, on every word, at least I believe that. But you're changing the layout so it's more absorbable probably increases ROI instead of decreases it, which is a cool hack.

Ben:

Yeah. I'm a big believer in just working through over and over. I think that's probably the thing that I'm more aggressive at in my later writing. I write less but I think better hopefully, is I work through the content probably 10 times more but in faster feedback loops. I'll work on the outline for a year. Then once I feel like I've got it and I've thought through it, I've connected all the dots, the writing comes really easy. I'd rather spend an extra five passes on the outline, just seeing if the ordering's right, or if I can chop it.

Yeah, I just love structuring and connecting dots or creating models. I will say one more thing about this book versus even Gap and Gain, which Gap and Gain only came out last October, was I did have one or two additional editors of this book that have different angles. Even with less than a week left on this book, I brought someone in and had them read through it, and they chopped, they cleaned it up and the book was done. Hay House had fully accepted, but they went through it one more time and just did one other cleaning.

I was shocked at how much cleaner and just more chiseled it was, with just one more pass from a different angle, from a really good writer gone through it. I felt like holy cow, that one pass that might

have taken it from there's a big difference between something being 99% good versus 100%. That 1% is really hard to reach when you get to that place. I was like, "This book is maybe 20 times better, simply because of that 1% better."

Dave:

Well, congratulations on a cool book. You're standing out because you're publishing quickly, and publishing with density of content, but enough space to make it more absorbable. It seems like it's an emerging new look and feel for a way to absorb information.

Because if you're listening, you're going, "Well, hold on. What's the book again?" It's called *Be Your Future Self Now* by Ben Hardy and it's [benjaminhardy.com](http://benjaminhardy.com). Actually, now you're Benjamin. Originally, it was Ben. Are you going by Benjamin now in person or is there no difference?

Ben:

No. I've had the website, [benjaminhardy.com](http://benjaminhardy.com), ever since I started. [benjaminhardy.com](http://benjaminhardy.com) is just what I've had.

Dave:

Benjamin or Ben, it's a cool book, man. The idea of considering how you relate to your future self is awesome. It could easily just be an academic like, "Yeah, I should do that." I really like there's actionable steps that we didn't really get into in the interview, just because there isn't time to do the whole scope of the book. But the idea of having empathy for your future self is like you have no fricking clue. I think for anyone under 35, you're listening to this.

Let's see, when I was 35, I don't think I'd even started blogging. No, I hadn't started blogging. I was a Silicon Valley guy. I was going to be a CTO and co-founder, and I was a CTO and co-founder of tech startups and all that. I was going to be an old, grizzled CTO and that was that. Maybe I'll teach tech at some point. I would've never in a billion, gazillion years thought that I would ever be in *Vogue* magazine as a fat computer hacker, or that I would do anything that I'm doing. There was just a zero chance.

I would've put all of the Bitcoin that I didn't have, because it wasn't invented yet, I would've bet against myself being this so you just don't know. But even if you don't know, you can still pick a future direction and at least you'll move. If you're open to multiple paths, ultimately I would suggest that creating a future self that includes a goal of happiness, instead of wealth or fame, or power might be a better goal. Would you agree from what you've seen so far?

Ben:

Yeah. I think that's healthy, natural.

Dave:

Yeah.

Ben:

I think that there's actually a really good book called *Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life* by, I think, it was a Jungian psychologist. It's a pretty interesting book, but he talks about how the first half is all about acquisition, and about material and about social.



Whereas, the second half and whatever age you reach that is more about relinquishing, letting go. It's more the spiritual, the inner development and more of seeking and finding happiness. I think in the last year, I finally started to cross that path.

Dave:

Yeah. We all get there. It's true there's Eriksonian stages of adult development, which you've probably studied in all of your work. As I move along through a very extended lifespan, I'm definitely seeing that Erikson had something right, but it feels like they're getting stretched out because we actually are living longer than we thought we would. Our definition of elderly just shifted in the last 25 years, to add 10 years to what it takes to be elderly.

So maybe when you're 18, 30 or 40 years ago, it's more like being 21 now. Either that or it's that same thing that as people age they're like, "Young people these days." I have no idea which of those is true, but there's something going on. But whatever age you are, I do think that there's something about choosing your future self. And as Dan Sullivan has taught both of us, it doesn't matter if you're 70, choose your future self because Dan is a bad ass at doing that.

Ben:

That guy's almost 80 at this point, man.

Dave:

Yeah. Yeah.

Ben:

He thinks he's going to live to 156.

Dave:

Yep. That was his goal last time I interviewed him and I teased him about being a small time thinker, so we'll see what happened. All right.

Ben:

Yeah.

Dave:

Guys, [benjaminhardy.com](http://benjaminhardy.com), a really worthy book and just a guy who's making tracks and has had some big books already, and just some good thinking. That's what it's really all about.

So thank you for tuning in today to listen. And thank you for choosing a future self, who's maybe less of a douchebag than I was. That would be helpful. Have a great day.