

Dave Asprey:

You are listening to The Human Upgrade with Dave Asprey. Today's show is going to be a little different than what you're used to because I want you to get a preview of my Smarter Not Harder book.

I talked with the publisher and said, "How about I just give them the audiobook?" And they said, "Over our dead body," which is okay because that's how publishers actually make their living, and I'm grateful for Harper Collins.

So I thought about what else could I do? How about I ask a retired Navy SEAL commander, author, expert in leadership and human performance who's been on the show with me. I'm talking about Rich Diviney, if you haven't guessed already, and have him interview me about the book. Because when he came on the show, we talked about mindset and optimism and resilience and stress. So I'm going to flip the script. I get to be the victim of the interview? Is that how it works? When you're a Navy SEAL?

Rich Diviney:

I wouldn't want to call you a victim. That wouldn't end well.

Dave:

I wouldn't want to call myself a victim either because victim narcissism is a toxin in society right now and I don't play that game and neither do you.

Rich:

Right. But interviewee, I'm so excited to be here 'cause I've, as you know, been a fan of your work for several years, many years. So I was really excited to be asked and honored to be asked, and excited to talk about this new book. I just have a lot of questions and I know it'll be a great conversation.

Dave:

Thank you, Rich. I appreciate it. I thought you had the right mindset. My intent in this interview is to educate and inform and maybe install some new capabilities in our listeners operating systems.

There's some awareness that I'm hoping the book brings, and guys, I hope you buy the book. It would actually make a difference to me, not financially, but just in terms of impact in the world. But I hope you buy it for you because it'll give you a whole bunch more time and energy back, and that's why I wrote it. My intent here is even if you don't read the book, that you walk away from this interview with a brain that works better. So there we go.

Rich:

Let me ask you this, Dave, because one of the reasons why I love the book and really love what you do, and this book is so practical and so accessible, and one of the things I'm always fascinated with having come from the SEAL teams is how do you take some of the extraordinary things you learn and do and bring it into practical everyday life?

That's something you do brilliantly just on the outset, but certainly this book helps us in ways that are really, really meaningful. I want to talk about applied biohacking, I want to talk about accepting normal. If I could, can I just launch in with an initial-

Dave:

Of course, it's your interview, man.

Rich:

Great, I get to do what I want. Awesome. You've been in to biohacking for so long now. Couple questions here. First, how have you seen biohacking evolve over the many years would be the first question. The second question is inside of that, how is Smarter Not Harder a book for everybody?

Dave:

Well, when I started the biohacking movement, I was looking for a name for it. The original idea came to me, this will sound like one of those things that someone made up, but it's real. I was on the side of Mount Kailash, which is the holiest mountain in the world where Buddhist and Hindus believe essentially, their gods live. You go on this really remote five day four-wheel drive track to Western Tibet, and you walk in really rough 18,000 foot conditions around the mountain. It's a 26-mile walk, it takes a couple days.

When I was there, I still have my journal somewhere for that, I was like, "What do I call this thing?" I have to bring together the anti-aging field where I've already been doing nonprofit work for probably five, seven years at the time. There was all this knowledge and then the nootropic, the cognitive enhancement and the neuroscience side, and actually Navy SEALs was on the list because you guys know some stuff. The most elite people, astronauts and things like that where it counts more from a impact to society or financial impact, so we're willing to invest more.

Even from racehorses. You want to know the best biohacks, talk to someone who owns a \$2,000,000 horse. They know everything. My first laser was a horse laser because it wasn't approved for humans.

I wanted to bring all that together so we could... Oh, and bodybuilders of course. The name biohacking came out from that, but it wasn't just the name, and this was a three-month trip. I had lots of time meditated in monasteries and all. I have a 20 plus year vision for biohacking.

When I started it, I have the whole palette of everything that works and maybe some new stuff we haven't discovered that'll get added. But you can't do a PhD in biochemistry if people are starting in eighth grade. You just can't, it's a lifelong learning thing. So which of the pieces of biohacking can we introduce first that have the biggest return on investment, not dollar investment, but investment of attention and time.

And then how many of those can I put into the world and maintain the credibility of the movement and not lose people? That's been my challenge for the last, I guess I started... I put the name out there in 2011. It's been 12 years, so about halfway through the initial one. What's changed in the field of biohacking is actually very conscious. So when I started, I mentioned things like psychedelics, but it wasn't a main focus.

I mentioned things like tantric sex. In fact, very early on, I did a lot of content about that, but didn't call it that because a lot of the words that we've used historically are triggering for people.

I also didn't introduce some things like light therapy, I trickled it in at the beginning because if I had just stood up in 2011 and said, "Hey guys, you need to electrically ground yourself by walking barefoot outside. You need to wear these red glasses," which I already was wearing, but I didn't, didn't put as much emphasis behind it. "Oh, and you need to have lasers pointed at your brain. You should also hook electrodes up to your brain in order to measure what you're doing, and you should take these drugs that make you smarter, and you should put this weird stuff in your coffee, and you should stop eating a lot of the ultra processed garbage foods that everyone tells you're healthy."

You can see that's only at the beginning, people would say, "This guy's a alien, tinfoil hat." So what I did is I picked the most important things and it turns out at the beginning, it was let's get your energy back. Let's focus on removing some inhibitors from your food and let's focus on putting some more power back in your cells. Since that time, I've been able to introduce things like peptides, talking more about hormones.

We're getting more into the spiritual, we're getting more into the fact that tantric sex is at least as powerful as psychedelics, and we're getting more into the brain in neuroscience than ever before. Some of the things coming down the next couple of years for anti-aging are truly transformative.

Rich:

It's really quite apparent how when something starts, there's no language around it and then as it starts to build, a language builds around it as well. So even biohacking as described now, there's now a language and people are talking about it. When people can talk about it, it obviously usually grows, which is interesting.

However, I do want to ask you about one approach because you talk about empathy and compassion when you talk biohacking, and it's really fascinating to me because I talk about empathy and compassion in the Navy SEAL world, which people don't expect. Talk to us about empathy and compassion and how that fits into this whole world.

Dave:

Sure. All right, so if you're listening to this, you're going, "Dave wrote Smarter Not Harder, it's a book on biohacking, and he put empathy and compassion in there." Biohacking, it's the art and science have changing the environment around you and inside of you so you have full control of your own biology.

You can look at empathy and compassion as states, you can look at them as traits, you can look at them as I do as specific tools for managing your state. They are technologies. You could say, "Dave, you just took away all the crystals, and bells, and white robes," but I'm not because those help you to apply the tools.

In Smarter Not Harder, there's five big buckets where people actually want to improve when they say they want to be healthy. But what you do after you get enough of those five is you get to the point of I'm still not happy, but I got my energy back and what's going on there? And then you start doing emotional work and pretty soon, you start having spiritual experiences.

Some people will react viscerally and say, "How dare you call these spiritual things that we've sought after for thousands of years, if not tens of thousands of years. How dare you call them technologies?" Well, okay, you want to call them techniques, methods? But what they are is, at least what I'm teaching in Smarter Not Harder is the ways you can access those states or get it to those tools most quickly.

Because if it takes you a lifetime to feel empathy, in Buddhism, well the first of the three states you're working towards, the first one is empathy. At least you can feel other people's pain now, that's pretty good. After we have empathy, then we have compassion, which is considered to be a higher state.

Compassion is when you can feel empathy for other people, but you don't have to take on their pain. This is really, really critical is you automatically, automatically means in your meat operating system, not in your brain. You automatically wish well for others and the world. That's very hard to do. When people achieve full states of compassion, they oftentimes are compared with religious figures, this is like a Jesus level thing, right?

Rich:

Yeah.

Dave:

And then you get to the next level above that. The highest state, according to Buddhism, is equanimity. That is when you can meditate in the middle of a storm and you choose your state. It can be the state of a warrior defending his family, it can be the state of a person feeding their community or serving in whatever humble way it is, but you chose that state and no force, no power, no government, no angry person anywhere, not even a DMV employee can take you from your state.

Rich:

Let me just see if I can read this back to you 'cause it's really fascinating what you're saying though, I think, and correct me if I'm wrong, is equanimity allows you access to any state and allows you to metabolize and use those states proactively and deliberately versus reactively and perhaps non deliberately. Is that correct?

Dave:

That that's a great state. In special forces, Navy SEALs, and first responder situations, I actually interviewed Lieutenant Colonel Grossman who wrote *On Combat* and *On Killing*, and undoubtedly you've read his books.

Rich:

Of course, yeah.

Dave:

But the idea that you are, and I'm using this term, it's from the book and if you're listening to this, by now you've already heard me ask you but still, would you please pick up your copy of *Smarter Not Harder* right now? I read it for you. I might get a buck out of that, I just want other people to see the numbers so that others will find the book because it's worthy of your time. So thank you for buying it now.

Now, what we're talking about within the state of being an operator is that your meat operating system, the term from the book, it will take over because it is provably faster than your conscious brain. One of the reasons I love being able to talk with you, and with Mark Divine, and with others like Jocko who've been really deployed and had to face this, is that you understand the line between automation in the body that keeps you alive and conscious thinking. Is your brain fast enough to respond during combat?

Rich:

Typically, no. You're responding way faster than that. Your brain's part of the system, but not all of it.

Dave:

Anyone who's listening who's gotten halfway decent at something like tennis, or ping pong, or a high speed paddle sport, at a certain point, or even some martial arts, your body just hits the ball. If you try to think about it, you will miss the shot, if you just let it happen, and it's the weirdest thing.

But what we're playing with is the interface between the operating system and the brain. It's very interesting, especially in the context of being an operator. One of the big proof points for the fact that your meat operating system exists in the book is called P300D. It's a measure of the speed of your brain, but not how fast can you think of something, that's different.

This is when I clap my hands, you hear it instantly. You also know because you're trained to listen for how long it takes for a shot to pling on a target, you know that there's a speed of sound involved. So you're like, "Okay, after the speed of sound gets it to me, then I heard it right away."

Rich:

Right.

Dave:

That's not true. If we have electrodes on your head, an average brain is about 350 milliseconds, call it a third of a second before the first electrical wiggle in your brain says that the brain got the sound. A little bit more time before you knew if it was my hands or a car backfiring or something else.

Who's in charge for that one third of a second? It's not you. It's probably not you. But you know that because you've trained that system so that when it's in charge, it does what your training says, and that's why you can do things that appear superhuman, that's also why Bruce Lee could do it, that's also why people who play Olympic level or pro-level ping pong, it's like how do they do that? Because their operating system is doing it and the operating system is faster than humans are.

Rich:

Yeah.

Dave:

We're fast and slow, it is dumb and fast. That difference is so dramatic, but it provides a little window into something that's supposed to be invisible because that part of you that deleted the third of a second lag time on reality, I don't see it either, but it's there.

Well, who's in charge during that time? We have to ask ourselves that because that's who we are, biohacking with spirituality, with emotional work, and even some of the physical work that we do on the body around improving your metabolic performance, it reduces anxiety because when the meat operating system is worried about something dumb, because it's fast and dumb, you'll feel the worry and then you'll blame your partner, and you'll blame the DMV, although it actually was their fault.

Rich:

Yeah. All right, well, there's a lot to get in here. We're not going to have time to go through everything because the book is so dense and I will echo Dave's plea, get this book, read it. There's so much in here, but we're going to dive into a little bit of it.

One of the places we have to start, and you've kind of alluded to this in a little bit of what you've said already, is this idea of the laziness principle and how our bodies actually show up. I'm just going to stop there. Can you describe to us what you mean by the power of laziness? It's a phenomenal phrase if defined appropriately, I think.

Dave:

Did it trigger you?

Rich:

No, because I know what you mean. As soon as I said it, I was like, "Okay, I know that. This resonates." It resonated with me.

Dave:

I imagine some guys like Jocko or Mark Divine, the idea that you have to suffer and struggle is baked into all of us and especially into high level operators. You can put on the 80 pound bag full of lead and hold it above your head and do things that are ungodly, and it's amazing.

The ability to do that is virtuous, but doing it all the time to make yourself a good person is actually bad for your operating system. So what we've done is we've used habit, which is how we overcome habit and training is how we overcome our impulses to just let our meat do whatever it wants to, and I'll use the word, to fetishize hard work even when it's not called for.

Not only that, we added a layer of guilt about it. Do you want to be the last guy who comes in after a run? No. Part of the reason that you don't want to do that is shame. We're all pushing each other and you don't want to be the one who holds everyone back, and God forbid you're the guy who gets everyone some sort of group punishment, which is particularly bad for humans, right?

Rich:

Yes, definitely.

Dave:

So when we're going really, really deep on our body and looking at what's happening on that stuff, you have to recognize the body is lazy in and of itself. The reason is it wants to save energy because you might not have enough food. What it does is just like it erases that third of a second of reality from us, it also makes laying on a couch appear to be really, really sexy and attractive versus going to the gym.

Now cognitively, you know that exercising is probably better than laying on the couch, but it feels... Because your lens on reality is your body, your body's like, "No, no, no. Look at that couch just lay on it one little bit." And then pretty soon, didn't have time to go to the class and then you missed it. Here's the thing, we feel bad about that we feel shame.

The laziness principle is acknowledge accept and accept that your body is lazy and it's that way to keep you alive, and not only that, all human progress has come from laziness, every little bit of it. All the people invented labor-saving devices, which is pretty much all of them, they did it to save energy because the body wanted to save energy.

The reason that you just have to order in to have food delivered to you despite all the plastic and the fact they're going to use restaurant oils is because your laziness principle kicked in. You could feel guilty about it or you could say, "What do I do?" What you do is you recognize if the body wants to save things and it makes savings feel so much better... The best example I can give is everyone has a time where they go out and they buy something that was on sale, and you come home and you say, "I saved \$200." And you tell your partner, your spouse, your friends, you never tell them, "I spent \$300." You don't think about that.

Well, you know that how much you spent is all that matters, but you think the other thing, in fact, we oftentimes feel like, "Well, why do I do that?" You didn't do that. Your

body made the savings feel bigger than they were and we actually go by feelings, not thoughts, way more than we like to admit.

All right so if that's the case, next time you want to go to the gym, you could say, "I'm going to spend an hour on a sweaty bicycle with someone yelling at me to pedal faster and then feeling guilty if I don't pedal as fast as the person next to me." Or I could say, "I'm going to spend five minutes doing something." In other words, I'm going to save 55 minutes, and then you focus on the savings that's feeding your laziness principle. You're motivating your meat with labor savings.

If marketing companies can use coupons that hack your operating system to make you think they're bigger than they are, why don't you give yourself a coupon for your workout so that you realize how much time you're saving by doing any of the biohacks in the book, including the ones you can do at home. You never say, "I'm going to go spend a half hour exercising." You say, "I'm going to go save a half hour exercising." And when you just make that one switch, the body's like, "Oh yeah, this was a lot less work. I like this path better." It's crazy, but it works.

Rich:

Yeah, no, that's fascinating. It's interesting because, and I think we talked about this last time we were on together, I talk about optimal performance and I talk about it versus peak. And this idea that we look at performance, I'm going to do the very best I can in the moment, whatever the best looks like at that moment.

I often joke that I bust a myth about Navy SEALs that before some mission, they're all huddled up and hoo yawing and high-fiving like an athletic team getting ready to take the sports field. That never happens. I always say that we would be in the helicopter on the way into combat, and the guys around me would be napping. The reason why is because they are saving energy for when that matters. We don't know how long we're going to be out there, we don't know how long things are going to take or what's going to be required of us.

So this idea of understanding that we are energy and energy is not, it's not unlimited, and if our bodies are defaulting to saving energy wherever we can, we can switch our brains to that default as well. So I think it's a brilliant way to look at that and a brilliant way to reframe action in our lives, so I like that.

A couple things I want to ask you about. There's the fast on, fast off principle that you talk about, and this idea of hacking your own laziness. I just want to have you explain those two concepts, how they might be intertwined, because I think it's really important for people to understand this at a very elemental level.

Dave:

Sure. I call this slope of the curve biology, which is my nerdy way of saying fast on, fast off, but it's a little more nuanced than fast on, fast off, which is why I didn't call it that. I did think about it though.

It appears that almost all ways of hacking your operating system, of driving adaptive change in your body, that they work better with a fast on, fast off approach. Problem is

because we like to save electricity in our brains, we have dozens, if not hundreds of cognitive shortcuts that don't take much electricity so we can make fast decisions.

If you really want to ponder something, you sit down, you have your coffee, go for a walk, and you just think. And after a while, all right, you got it but that took a lot of time and power and electricity. We don't want to do that. So the cognitive shortcut that we most often make is that if something is good, we didn't define what really good was, we just kind of felt it was good, then more of it must be better. And if something is bad, without really defining bad, then less of it must be better.

We tend to do this. We go, "Well, exercise is good, therefore more exercise is better." Laziness is bad, therefore no laziness is acceptable. That drives us to send a signal into our body that is not very effective around exercise because we've done that more is better without actually validating that more is better for exercise.

Turns out when you do look at how to get that signal for rapid transformation, the best thing is to bring the body to the very edge of what it can do as fast as possible, which actually creates a little bit of a panic response at the cell level, at the automated meat operating system level going what is going on here? I must have to adapt to this. As soon as you get the signal in, then you stop and you take the battlefield nap you just talked about.

You chill out as much as you can. You bring yourself back to baseline. When you do that, the body says, "Oh, a tiger almost ate me, but I got away. Now I have plenty of nutrients and I'm not in a state of distress, therefore the tiger's gone. Therefore, I can fix the problem right now. I can make myself stronger so if the tiger comes back, I'll be fine." But if you do what most people do, because more better, then what you do is say, "Well, the tiger chased me, now I'm running at 50% of my capacity for the next 30 minutes because that's what the little algorithm on the bike told me to do, or what the instructor told me to do, and I know that sweating is good and I'll probably get high from endorphins if I do this long enough." So you keep doing it.

Now the body goes, "Well, damn. I got away from the tiger, but it's been hunting me for the last hour. I'm not going to adapt." And the difference in just one of the dozens of technologies and techniques that I talk about in Smarter Not Harder is that you can get six times better adaptation from doing this in the... This is in the case of cardio. Six times better in five minutes instead of an hour.

I'm going to save 55 minutes today on cardio and I'm going to spend that extra time doing anything fun. Now your meat operating system's like, "All right, I can do this five minutes of whatever, but I got the big thing." So you've tied this into the laziness principle because you're saying, look, the savings you get from using rapid on, rapid off signaling is really meaningful.

It works for meditation, it works for strength, it works for almost anything. We change the signal that goes in and then we let the body have the space to adapt. And what we'll do naturally, because we're so ashamed of the fact that our meat is lazy, is we never give ourselves time to recover and restore and adapt. This is based on a lot of work at Upgrade Labs.

The idea here is how do I help people recover quickly? Because in the same time you would spend just going to a normal facility to do something, you can, in an hour, actually

do strength, and cardio, and neurofeedback, and other recovery technologies, and you walk out going, "I saved six hours when I was in here. I think that was worth it." But the knowledge in Smarter Not Harder came from eight years of running Upgrade Labs.

Rich:

Could you just give it maybe one example, maybe a physical one, of this idea of fast on, fast off. I'm thinking I'll go around here where I live in Virginia to one of our huge hills and instead of running five miles, I'll just kind of run a half mile and then just sprint up the hill a few times.

Dave:

What you're doing with that is typical high intensity interval training, and that's not what I'm talking about.

Rich:

Okay, all right.

Dave:

The problem with high intensity interval training is just what you said. You get yourself up to a warm-up and then you do a sprint, so let's say you warm-up, you're running at 50% capacity after the warm-up, then you sprint to 100%, then you walk for a little while which gets you probably down to 70% maximum exertion, maybe 60%, and then you sprint again, and then you come down, and you sprint again, you come down, and do it three, four times and it doesn't take that much time.

That is way better than just jogging for a long distance. It just works better, it's better for time, better for the ejection fraction of your heart, it's just a better workout and you won't have to have knee replacements later in life.

So what reduced exertion hit looks like, and I've done several podcasts with one of the pioneers from the University of Colorado on the show. What it looks like would be this, you pretend like you ate some THC gummy bears and you walk so slowly that it's boring. Literally, people are going to look at you and be like, "That guy must be on an important phone call 'cause he's barely moving." In other words, you're one step away from taking a nap while you're walking, and you do that to get to the base of the hill, and then you sprint up that hill like you were going to die, like there's a tank chasing you or whatever your worst possible scenario is. Literally for your life and for you, maybe with some weight on your back.

When we're doing this with an AI system at Upgrade Labs, I can change the amount of exertion you have to do. When you're at the hill, it helps, but you're going to have to run maybe for 20 seconds. We have a smaller interval because we can put more stress on the body with the AI systems at Upgrade Labs.

So you're going to sprint up that hill for maybe 20 seconds, but to the point where you couldn't sprint again. Literally, you were going to die, you had 20 seconds to put everything in your body, all the glycogen, everything in your muscles, turn on that

cortisol adrenaline and just go. Then you're going to lay on your back. So people are going to be really sure that you were on THC at that point.

Rich:

Or they think you just had a heart attack. Either one, right?

Dave:

Yeah, that's true. It could be both. And then you're just going to really deep breath, almost to the point of taking a nap. Drop in. It's going to be hard to do that, but it's the speed that you returned to baseline that told a big part of the body to adapt. It's also how rapidly you turned it on. If instead, you just kind of jogged up the hill, and you're like, "I could go a little faster, but I'm not," it doesn't get to the edge. You got to bring the body to the edge of disequilibrium and to the point where the body's like, "I really can't do this, and I understand you're asking me for everything and I gave you everything. There's nothing left."

Right when you do that, stop, drop, almost sleep. That signal is so powerful that when I do it with an AI system, it's easier because you don't have to have the hill, and the sunshine, and ants climbing on you or whatever. But the idea is how do I chill really quickly? And to be able to go, okay, we talked about equanimity earlier, to choose your state and control it. We're training equanimity and we're telling the body to become much more powerful.

Since the return on investment for time and energy on doing that is way higher than high intense interval training, way higher than going for a jog or running a marathon, well, there you go. Now you can check off that you got a 12% improvement in your vo2 max, which is correlated with living two years longer. If that was all you got from Smarter Not Harder, I think by now it's a really, really good investment.

But there's the same for strength, there's the same even for meditation. Hurry and meditate faster. What are the ways you can drop into that state even faster? You want to be able to, with one breath, to be able to close your eyes and drop into whatever state you want. Now, even the Dalai Lama has a \$100,000 prize for neuroscientists who can help him drop into one state he likes, it takes him four hours of meditation to get there, to get there.

There are some states that are just expensive, but the goal is to be able to choose any state at any time, and to be able to go there quickly, stay there as long as you want, and then come out.

For you, that would mean, if you were still in active deployment, what that would mean is that before you were going into combat, just like your friends in the helicopter like, "Okay, I know something's coming. I'm going to drop into this state of energy conservation." And what a heroic thing to be able to do, because most people would be basically shitting themselves. I'm not saying that in a mean way, that's actually what most people would do. That's what Lieutenant Colonel Grossman says usually.

Rich:

That's right.

Dave:

You shit before you get in the helicopter too, right?

Rich:

Yeah. Usually you try to 'cause you don't know when the next chance is, but yeah. It's funny, it's interesting because we were working on that even when I was still active and we were putting together the Mind Gym and the concepts around just developing a better working relationship with your brain. We were talking actively, at that time, I was calling it micro recovery moments.

What are those things you can do to recover in between gunfights? This is exactly what you're talking about, is being able to immediately drop into a state where you are accessing all the recovery, biology and physiology that you can, and then coming out when you need to. I think it's wonderful, it really is. The book is full of so much stuff, but you're right, even just that one thing is so valuable. That's great.

Dave:

You brought up something that's really interesting there. For about 25 years, I've used adaptogenic herbs, and most listeners by now have heard the term adaptogenic herbs. I started bringing that in relatively early in the arc of biohacking, of just making it into a global movement because they'd made such a difference for me as someone who just had a high sympathetic activity.

In other words, I was always in fight or flight. There was biological, and emotional, and psychological, and spiritual reasons for that, and I've gone through all those, and I'm generally not in fight or flight most of the time because that is hackable.

One of the things that helped enormously though was these herbs. Adaptogenic herbs are like... You can see them in cans of cola at the store now, it's been a big change in the last 11 years. But they came from combat, from war in China and Russia for the most part, and probably some at Ayurveda that I just don't know that that's their origin.

The reason these herbs work, most of them anyway, they allow you to turn your stress on more quickly and turn it off more quickly. Without the herbs, your stress goes up and it takes a long time to turn it off. These were given to warriors because it allowed the warriors to recover from combat faster in case there was another battle. Who would've thought? And we're still working on the same problem 5,000 years later.

Rich:

Yeah, it's amazing. Any type of ingestible in the military has to be very, very carefully scrutinized, so of course, we were trying to do it. How can you do it internally? Just like you said, you can hack into your own system and there are ways you can do that.

We could talk about that one concept for hours. People need to get the book and read about it. Let's talk about removing your friction, and we're talking about energy and

energy's so important, we want to conserve it. Talk to us about the energy enemies and removing friction in our system.

Rich:

Energy's so important, we want to conserve it. Talk to us about the energy enemies and removing friction in our system.

Dave:

Well, if you wanted to take your car and turn it into a race car, and let's say that you drive it into a mechanic, say, "I wanted this thing to be faster." Now you could spend a huge amount of time and energy replacing the motor, and having higher octane gas, and putting in a whatever makes it faster. And yes, you could, if it's a Tesla, just install the upgrade, but let's just assume it's a normal car.

You could also open the trunk and take out the bags of cement that are sitting back there. Reducing the weight of the vehicle reduces friction. It turns out most of us are walking around, without knowing it, with tons of sources of resistance and friction. We're driving with one foot on the brake, and instead of getting a more powerful motor, it's actually easier just to take your foot off the brake.

In the book, I teach about things you're doing that you probably don't know you're doing that are sucking energy from your system every day. One of them always being in fight or flight when it's not called for, that's a massive energy drain.

Another one that's in the spiritual chapters is around notifications in your brain. You have notifications on your phone turned on for every app that wants it, you can't even use your phone. It's just bling, bling, bling, bling, and you never get to see the screen. Your interface on reality is pretty much that way unless you have a high degree of training because it'll be alerting you of all sorts of things that might be tigers.

Criticism, the way you look in the mirror, all the weird voices in your head, those are notifications. A big part of spiritual practice is turning those off because those are a source of friction. But the low level sources of friction we're all doing oftentimes are things that you're putting in or on your body that reduce your electrical power.

One of the biggest ones that I wrote about in the Bulletproof Diet, when it first came out, in the first chapter, I said there's five problems with food and some of them are more your problem than others. I talked about lectins, and I talked about omega-6 fats, I talked about oxalates, these are things that you'll find in spinach, and kale, and rhubarb, and even to a certain degree, in sweet potatoes.

I also talked about phytic acid, but I talked about so many things 'cause I wanted the complete landscape, but I think phytic acid has not had nearly enough attention. In the world of nutrition today, we have a mineral wasteland in people, we are powered by minerals. Our cells do things with enzymes that require trace minerals and other macro minerals and when we have enough in the right places, we can do powerful, amazing things. We can access spiritual states, we can choose kindness over anger, everything works, your cells stay younger.

When you're out of just one, some systems turn off and the body says, "Well, I got a signal from this amazing biohack that you just did, but I couldn't actually use the signal because I don't have what it takes. I'm missing something." When the body is missing something, it feels, by itself, a sense of unease and anxiety. I call that physical anxiety.

And then because you're slow, a third of a second later, you feel a sense of anxiety, like something's missing, something's not right. I don't know what it is, I can't put my hand on it. You might also feel a craving. But right now, because of so many of these just completely wrong-headed ideas about plant-based diets... Plant-based diets are peasant diets, they always have been. When you look at that, I'm not talking about vegetarian, I'm talking about plant-based. Vegetarian diets are animal-based with plants because a lot of the calories comes from ghee and eggs, that's how it is.

Plants, for the most part, the ones we eat that provide the bulk of things like grains, nuts, seeds, even a lot of the healthy green vegetables aren't that healthy because what they're doing is they're stealing minerals from your system. The not only do they contain no minerals you can use, or almost no minerals, they pull them out of your body. Case and point spinach, it's full of oxalic acid, but people say, "It contains iron. I am anemic, I need more iron." The iron in spinach is 1.7% absorbable, and the oxalic acid is why, and it also will pull iron out of your body in addition to zinc and calcium and some other things.

What I want people to do is understand fake food, fake burgers, plant-based whatever, it's pulling minerals from your body even if the minerals are in the plants. When I was a raw vegan, I was looking at my minerals, I was even supplementing them, and I was eating all these plants that were full of this mineral, full of that mineral, not understanding that the plant didn't want me to have the mineral so it wouldn't give it to me.

This is a major misconception, so I just teach people, here's where the minerals are. If you were to only take two vitamins before you take all the awesome nootropics, and listeners know I've formulated nootropics, I am a huge fan, I take lots of them. Before you do that, before you do any other vitamins, there's two you need.

One is a multi mineral formula that contains the big macro minerals and it's going to be at least three pills in order to do that. The second one you need is vitamin DAKE. That's D-A-K-E, and yes, I made up that name and I have a vitamin DAKE coming out, but you can make your own vitamin DAKE by getting some vitamin D3, some actual vitamin A, not the plant-based nonsense vitamin A, beta keratin, that doesn't work.

It's D, A, K, and E. The reason you need these four in particular is that they control where minerals go in cells. If you take enough minerals, you're low on DAKE, you don't get the minerals where they need to go. If you take your DAKE and you don't have minerals, the cells were ready for the minerals but they couldn't get it.

Still, if you only take one of the two, you're better off than not taking it, but the combination of the two, that's your foundation before a multivitamin, before B-vitamins, vitamins, and before you take ashwaganda or some sort of exotic blend that I'm going to be really attracted to.

That's where it starts. These are the least sexy, most unloved, but most foundational things. It's kind of like you pull up to someone's house like, "Oh, it's so beautiful. Look at

your windows." And an engineer might go, "Yeah, but what's your foundation like? Did you pour a slab?" No one talks about the slab of your house. Do that part wrong and see how long the house stands.

We are, right now, undermining our foundation through the lack of minerals. And that's why Danger Coffee, I drink that every single day, I take multi mineral, I take the vitamin DAKE, and it matters. It's okay, if you're listening to this and you don't ever buy any supplement I make, that's not what this is about. This is about if you put your dollars behind getting your minerals in your body, before you do some fancy class, before you do anything, you're just going to be a better off human being on all levels.

It's that big of a return investment. It's actually bigger than some of the other biohacks that you'll see more quickly because getting enough zinc and copper changes your sex hormones, it changes your growth hormone, it changes your skin. It's a big deal.

Rich:

Yeah. You outlined this in great detail over a course of several chapters in the book, so I want people to know that when they read the book, they'll get all of this because it's quite fascinating, quite tangible and doable, and you can exactly what to do when you read, which is great.

I want to talk about the targets. You talked about the five areas that people really want to improve, and then you start outlining what you call hack targets. I'd love to get an overview on what this means and what people should take away from this idea of hack targets.

Dave:

Thank you for asking that question. It's one of the most important things that you'll learn in the book. The only time in my life I've ever said, "I just want to be healthy," first thing I woke up was when I had severe chronic fatigue syndrome and I had massive brain fog, everything in my body hurts, and I'm like, "I don't even know how I'm going to make it to work today, but I will." But really bottom of the barrel, I just want to be healthy. I would do anything to just not have all this pain.

If you're not that person, you actually don't want to be healthy. Your meat operating system wants very different things than you, and that's okay. You can actually go in and say, "Well, what's my rational brain want?" And some of that's going to be based on feelings from my operating system.

After running tens of thousands of people through Upgrade Labs technologies in Santa Monica, and we opened this underneath Arnold Schwarzenegger's office about eight years ago, and you learn when people come in. I had 25 different pieces of tech that you're unlikely to be able to buy at home or have space for that you could come through and try and change your state.

What people really ask for is one of these five things is most important. In the book, I'm like stop trying to say you want to be healthy because it doesn't mean anything. What you really want is you want more muscles, you want to be stronger, or you want more cardiovascular fitness. You don't want to get tired as quickly when you climb stairs, or

play with your kids, or do whatever. You want to get your energy back or lose weight, those are actually the same things. I just want my energy back.

For some people, it's I want my brain to work better. The number of people who work out for their brain isn't as big as you might think, but once they come and try the neurofeedback workout for your brain at Upgrade Labs, it's going to explode. It's very different the way you can do at home because this is clinical grade stuff.

The final thing is reduce stress or managing anxiety better. For the first time since we've ever measured it, more people ask for stress management than weight loss. As a SEAL, you trained your stress response. You're like, "Yeah, I'll take a nap before battle." That sounds impossible, but you mastered that at an extremely high level. But a lot of people, they have that vague sense of unease because they just ate a fake burger, followed by some kind of garbanzo beans and a handful of healthy grains, corn flakes, all that stuff that's just sucking minerals out of their body, lowering their sex hormones, and not making them happy campers.

So they're doing that. I can't handle all this stress, I just feel overwhelmed. Well, then they want to reduce that, they want to be able to take a nap before they're going to battle, but they can't even conceive of it. Those five things, you got to pick one. Once you've got your hack target, this is what I will change first, this matters most, then that parts the veil.

And then you look in and you go to that chapter in the book and it says all right, here's all the things we know work better than the two kinds of exercise or the other things, or meditation, whatever it is. For instance, for putting on muscle all of human history it's pick up rocks, and then someone got the idea, what if we concentrate the rocks into metal plates? Then like, woo-hoo. Okay, there you go. That that's the history.

So I go through the technologies that work better if that's your goal. But if your goal is I really want to run a marathon, you probably shouldn't be doing a lot of strength training because you won't be able to adapt it. You've suppressed your growth hormone and testosterone by being an endurance athlete like that. You might want to work on a different thing because if you choose two goals that are opposing each other and try and do them at the same time, you are going to get very mixed results.

Rich:

Yeah. How does someone know what great feels like? In other words, there's the boiling frog syndrome. If someone lives a certain way for years and years and years, you just get used to a new baseline.

How does someone know how good it could be if they shift their baseline? And then from there, what does that look like if someone just doesn't know what good looks like or what great feels like?

Dave:

What a profound question. I can see you possibly asking that because my friends who've served our country, especially in active duty, the amount of physical damage, and especially even pressure wave traumatic brain injuries, you're just always off. It's common.

I just had a chance to actually chat about this with Jared, one of the founders of Black Rifle Coffee at dinner the other night, and people are like, "Oh, you guys are at different coffee companies." No, we're all working on the same team to do good stuff in the world. We talked about that, about how well, my brain was kind of scrambled when I was doing my day job before I started the coffee company, and what do we do for it? Well, it turns out we could do coffee and that we lived on this stuff, and there's actually reasons people at TBIs like coffee.

Of course, there's stuff that I'm famous for adding to coffee that could have been involved, and that I do know for sure was used at the height of Mount Everest and in active duty because I had brain injuries and it helped my brain injuries. So people would be gravitated to that. But even then, you just don't know.

For me, I woke up every day with horrible pain, like a candle burning between my shoulder blades, really eight or nine out of 10 pain and it was just always there. I've had arthritis since I was 14. I thought it was supposed to hurt when you walked because it always had my entire life. I just didn't...

So how would I envision a life without that signal that's always present? For you or me, now that would be imagine a life where you didn't have to breathe, and you're like, "What? That can't be. That's not how it is." So people who've chronically had health conditions either for their whole life, or for so long they forgot what it's like, I don't know that I can tell you with words.

I could say, "Well, you might try a day where you go on a cleanse, you might have been fast for a couple days. On the third day of a fast, a sense of clarity will come on that's crazy. And if you really wanted to feel what was possible, that's the day you would put butter and MCT oil in your Danger Coffee, and you might take a modafinil, which is a prescription smart drug that increases blood flow to the brain. While you're doing that, you might try some breath work, or you might try some form of meditation, maybe even a brain tap or some of the other things that are present in the brain thing. So you're in a state of high energy and peace.

Rich:

Yes.

Dave:

When you do that, you're like, "Holy crap, what if I felt like this all the time?"

Rich:

You'd be proud of me. I actually did this a few weeks ago, I did a five-day fast and it was awesome. The feelings you have after that third, fourth day, you're getting that glimpse. I would recommend people read the book and think of if they feel like they're in a

position of, "Gosh, I don't even know what good feels like. What the hell?" Do some of those things. Put yourself into some of those scenarios and try to get that glimpse.

Once you have that glimpse, chase it and pick one of these hack targets and then start working on it. I believe especially after having read your book, if you don't know how to do it, pick one of these targets and just work on the target and see how it changes your life, changes your feeling. That'll be enough of a proof to say, "Oh, okay, wait a second. I can do this for all targets."

Dave:

You reminded me, a couple of my friends have gone through Mission Within, which is specifically taking veterans through ibogaine ceremonies, as I understand it, in a place where it's legal and safe and medically supported and all that, with profound results on traumatic brain injury and PTSD from battle.

I look at PTSD as just basically very strong notifications and alerts coming from the meat operating system. It's flashing a danger thing, sort of if your computer, a warning pops up that you can't click around on your screen and you're like, "I'm trying to do stuff here," but it's so present that it just interferes with life.

I did have PTSD that I worked through, and when I see that in combination with brain injuries, it's amazing. Some of these altered states of high performance are also altered states of high healing. Plants can do it, sex and love can do it, neurofeedback can do it, and even some of the newer things where they can use guided ultrasound inside the brain.

We are now actually able to fix and modify and upgrade our own hardware inside our skull, and it's so cool, especially for people recovering. Shout out to anyone who's willing to do that level of work because it's as scary to think about what you might find in your brain as it is to go into battle.

Rich:

Well, I want to say this because I want to make sure people who are listening who may not identify or even resonate with the idea that there's trauma there. I have friends who, like me, we don't really have PTSD, we're very lucky, we're fortunate. Everything we did and happened, we're comfortable with.

But I've had friends who've done this type of treatment, and it's allowed them to remember who they are because when you're in an environment where you have to compartmentalize so effectively and so viscerally, sometimes you have to release those blocks, you have to reach that tension so you can actually figure out wait a second, let me remember who I am.

I think any of these targets can not only help you with maybe some trauma there, of course, but also just deconstructing and remembering who you are because we're all in this environment of stress and complexity, and we find ourselves having to behave and assume identities that may not be our true self. That's a discovery in of itself as well. I would shout out as well. But I really feel like these hack targets, you pick one, you work on it, and you're going to find yourself deconstructing and getting a sense of that.

Dave:

I'm happy you picked up on that nuance in the book. Part of what motivates you to do this is that meat operating system laziness. For each of the hack targets, I actually have a chart in the book, if you focus on this one, you'll get these benefits in the other areas. It's kind of like buy one, get one free, and that's stuff that motivates the heck out of you.

So if I do this, I know my brain will improve. Or if I work on my brain, I know my stress management is going to improve. You're stacking the benefits when you do one of them, and the cool thing is when you do any of the big five hack targets, magically you have more energy and then you can use that to tackle the next one and the next one. Eventually you're like, "Oh, I didn't realize I could do all these things."

This is my life. I have no idea how I can do half the stuff I can do. It was not in my consciousness that I could feel the way I do, that there could be just the sensations and the sense of ease. That happens some of the time. I work my ass off, I don't always feel good, but my ability to bounce back is... I've never had the level I have now in my life. Who knows, maybe it won't be as good tomorrow, but I know that if it's not as good tomorrow, it doesn't matter. I'll just bounce back from it because I have the tools, I have the knowledge, and I've already seen the states, and I know that's the state that I want to be in.

Rich:

Yeah, and this idea that the only way you can see the next few ridge lines is to climb to the top of that first of all.

Dave:

Wow, that's so true. Also, you mentioned something about trauma there, and we've already proven that your meat operating system can hide a third of a second of reality that you and I can't see it. It also, there's a little round circle the size of a dime in the middle of each eye where you actually are blind.

Rich:

That's right.

Dave:

You don't see that, do you?

Rich:

No.

Dave:

That's funny, neither do I. Neither does anyone here, unless you have some special chart that lets you do it. So we know it's there, we can prove it's there, but we can't see it. I don't use the word can't very often, but right now at least, we can't see it.

Why? Because there's a system in there that's taking things out of your conscious awareness that it thinks aren't good for you. Like knowing there's a third of a second, like a hole in your vision, like the fact that you're reactive to certain things that trigger you. Oh, those are traumas. I would've said I had no trauma. I'm like, "I've never been in combat. I mean, yeah, I was bullied. I might have been in a hundred fist fights as a teenager and kid and whatever. That's not combat." That just felt like it at the time, I'm sure.

Rich:

It's a form, yes.

Dave:

It's a form. I have not done what soldiers do, but I had actually very substantial PTSD. It's going to be hidden, it's going to be invisible, and once you recognize that you might have trauma, you're already halfway there. I argued vehemently that I didn't have trauma because there was no reason for me to have trauma. The trauma's not rational. There's that.

Rich:

That's right. Yeah, that's true. It is true. Well, listen, I want to make sure we land this plane. You were gracious enough to pass me the baton, so before I hand it back to you, I will just say, first of all, thank you for what you do. Thank you for this book. I'm recommending this book to everybody. Everybody listening, please go get this because it is truly a roadmap to doing better in all aspects of life.

So thanks for doing that. Thanks for everything, dude, and thanks for your friendship and your support over the years, and thanks for having me on. With that, I will pass the baton back to you and we can close it out.

Dave:

Thank you. Thanks so much, Rich. I appreciate you being here for me, and I also appreciate our friendship. I know I've said it before, but thank you for your service because I don't think a lot of people understand all the work and just hard work and dedication that goes into what you do now and what you've done in your life, so I honor that.

I would ask for listeners, if you haven't bought Smarter Not Harder, I am doing this straight up marketing guy thing and saying I could tell you all the reasons you should buy it, but Rich already did that. I'm just going to say straight up, would you please buy it? Because if you do that now, what it's going to do is it's going to help a bunch of other people find the book.

It is my sincere promise to you that if you do any of the things in the book, that you are going to get at least 10 times the amount of energy and time back than you put into it. These are very highly effective. This is not what we've always done as a people or as a society. This is something new and I just want you to do what makes you happy. This book is your manual for that. Thank you for listening and thanks again, Rich.

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