

## How to Increase Neuroplasticity and Strengthen Your Brain – Moha Bensofia – #1031

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to the Human Upgrade with Dave Asprey. Today's recorded live, which is my favorite, in person, and our guest today is one of Europe's best known investors in angel companies, and the CEO of a really exciting neurotech company, a kind of technology that I've been a fan of for 12 years and something that's been a part of my path of improving my brain. And it's not neurofeedback. It's something different. It's also something that you have read about if you've already checked out your copy of Smarter Not Harder.

When I wrote the book, I talked about this new form of brain hacking technology that had great promise, and I mentioned one of the companies doing it. And after the book went to press, I just happened to be introduced by a mutual friend to the CEO of the company, and didn't realize how far the tech had come along. So, this episode is to introduce you to a new idea behind how much control you actually have of your brain, a new way of accessing your meat operating system, and something I haven't really talked about on the show, and probably wrote a blog about maybe in 2012, but since then this has kind of been missing from the conversation because I didn't have a good way to get it to you, despite my best efforts. His name is Moha Bensofia. Moha, welcome to Austin. Welcome to the show.

Moha Bensofia:

Dave, so great to be here. Thank you for having me.

Dave:

All right. We're going to talk about neurotech, or we're going to talk about getting more blood in the front of your brain and doing it without drugs, although you could do it with drugs too. But before we get there, you're kind of a conundrum. So, you live in Stockholm, so, [foreign language 00:01:57]. I have connections through my former wife in Stockholm. But you don't look like you're from Stockholm.

Moha:

No, I'm from Costa Rica.

Dave:

And somehow you're Europe's most popular or best-known-

Moha:

Very active angel investor.

Dave:

And somehow you're Europe's most popular or best-known-

Moha:

Very active angel investor.

Dave:

Okay. So, are you one of those guys where, "I don't always drink Bacardi, but when I do I drink this"? You're the most interesting man in the world kind of things? You have that vibe.

Moha:

I only drink tequila and I actually have a tequila room in Stockholm that's pretty infamous.

Dave:

Okay, got it. So, you have this International Man of Mystery sort of thing. You're like, "Dave, I'm calling you from Dubai," and you're just bouncing all over the place.

Moha:

I'm an investor in a few companies, a lot of them in health, but I mean, my whole journey, so I'm a Costa Rican, everything kind of happened by chance. My whole journey happened, started out with me scaling a fishing app, and then from there I kind of became one of the tech guys. So when I got to Sweden, after my issues in Libya, which I have mentioned...

Dave:

Do you guys see why I'm like International Man of Mystery right here? "Yeah, I'm Costa Rican and issues in Libya."

Moha:

Got myself in a little bit of trouble in Libya, and I ended up going to Sweden. And what happened was that I ended up getting a job at a fishing app. And one of the first things that I said to, I don't know if you know this about Sweden, but it's very easy to access anybody in Sweden. You can literally Google anybody and get their phone number and their address. So what I did when I got there, and obviously I'm very close to one of the founders of Spotify, and I was like, "Well, there's this whole world that in Costa Rica is so new to us. We don't have access to these people building these incredible, it's not a common thing. But in Sweden you've got all these engineers building these incredible companies."

So, I started talking to Daniel and I said to him, "Well, how do I get involved in this? Because I don't know how to code. I'm not an engineer, I was a mediocre high school student, never graduated college. I don't know anything about engineering." And what he said to me is, "The skillset that you've got is very complimentary, because Swedes build, they want to build the best thing, but they don't want to talk about it."

Dave:

It's true.

Moha:

So my job just basically became to get the projects of smarter people and just talking about them, and it all just kind of happened organically. I remember, I Googled the top 20 hot startups. This is 2014. And I remember reaching out to all the CEOs of these startups. And half of them replied me, and half of that half ended up asking me out for a coffee. "Okay, let's hear what you've got." And I ended up taking a job with a fishing app called Fishbrain.

Dave:

This wasn't a dating app or a computer fraud app?

Moha:

No, no.

Dave:

It was that kind of good old-fashioned, "I'm catching trout" app.

Moha:

This is literally, yeah, it was the world's largest fishing app. It's the social network for anglers. And I scaled that, and I helped that company kind of blow up with just common sense, analog, Costa Rican. We call it [foreign language 00:05:28] where we come from, which is just that Native American evil thinking, kind of just common sense. The same skill set that it would take for you to sell a selfie stick to a tourist, that's the skillset. I just happened to be in these companies that have value and I managed to negotiate some equity, and that's kind of how it happened. I remember actually, my first conversation with this guy, I said to him, "I know nothing about fishing and I know nothing about apps, but you need to hire me. You need to pay me this salary," because I had calculated how much I would need for rent and food and to live comfortably. "And I want 2% of the company." And he said, "You're crazy." And I said, "Well, if I'm not crazy, I'm going to make you a rockstar." And that's how my whole career started, kind of.

Dave:

Wow. And then you diversified into investing and all. And then, when we were introduced by a friend, seemed kind of randomly.

Moha:

Super randomly.

Dave:

You actually described a little bit about what you're doing. I said, "There's one company in your space called Mendi that's the leading one, and I have the gear." And you're like, "I'm the CEO of Mendi." I'm like, "This is too crazy."

Moha:

Yeah, that was so exciting.

Dave:

So, why did you decide to go into running a neuroscience company given that you're a social hacker, if anything?

Moha:

I didn't want to, and I was actually retired before that. I can't even take credit for finding Mendi. So, the founders, actually, one of the founders found me, and after that Fishbrain period, he had added me on Facebook, on Messenger. That was in 2014. Then in 2019 he started messaging me. "Can we have a meeting? Can we have a meeting? I need to show you this thing I'm working on." And so, he had

identified me and he figured that I could scale it because I could have access to people like you for example, that could get the word out about this technology that him and his partner Rickard had built. Rickard's one of the smarter people I know.

Dave:

Is Rickard also in Sweden?

Moha:

Yeah, yeah.

Dave:

Okay, got it.

Moha:

And so, Rickard's the one that built the technology, and Sammy, yeah, so they're the two founders of Mendi. And I remember going to WeWork in Stockholm because I had to see another one of my companies. I'm an investor in dozens of companies. And I said to him, "You've got 15 minutes." And he came over and he brought this Mendi and he's like, "Oh, this is a thing called Mendi, and it will fix everything from your depression to your anxiety, to your ADHD, to your insomnia, to your lack of focus." And I said to him, "That really sounds like snake oil. Let's try it out." And then I tried it, and I'm struggling to control it, and I don't know what I'm doing, but it was definitely interesting. And I said to him, "Who's financed this? Who's bankrupted this? Because you don't look like you've got two dimes to rub together."

Dave:

It's a well-put-together product too. When I got it, I was surprised, because the one I used to sell 10 years ago was a foam headband. It was really shitty.

Moha:

Yeah. And he said to me, "Well, the EU has financed it, and Swedish Innovation Agency and stuff." So, I figured the due diligence has been done and I got on board and I started using it and it really helped me.

Dave:

That was probably a mistake, to trust any world government for doing due diligence on entrepreneurship.

Moha:

I didn't say I was the smartest guy in the world.

Dave:

Coming from 12 years in Canada, there's quite a lot of times where they just hand money out without a lot of diligence. But fortunately, you picked a good one, because I have checked it out. Well, let me explain a little bit about why I'm excited about this tech and what it is for people, and then I want to go deeper with you on it. But I feel like normally I would ask you to do it, but I guess I could, but I feel like I've been so deep in because of the 40 Years of Zen stuff, I'd like to frame it for people and then we can

go in on it. All right, so, if you've read Smarter Not Harder, you understand there's a chapter on the brain in there, and meditation, and all the things that work better, and there's kind of a stacked, ranked list of things that will just get you to these states more quickly.

And part of the challenge of hacking the body is how do you get a signal in that drives change quickly? And sometimes you impose a signal, sometimes you create a signal. So, an example of imposing a signal, you could use flashing lights, like with a Brain Tap, and you could have headphones that are playing certain sounds. That's an external creation of a state. Or you could use a feedback system like EEG, what I do at 40 Years of Zen, which is an electrical thing, I'm going to show your brain what it's doing electrically so it can change it. And electricity can do a lot, but there's some things it can't do. And what's intrigued me a lot is, what if you could consciously move blood around the side of your head? Not electricity, but actually the thing that allows electricity to happen.

The reason I care about this is that part of the chemically-induced brain damage from toxic mold that I experienced, the stuff that Daniel Amen's work pointed out for me, was that I had at one time three standard deviations less blood in my head than average. And guys, I've started a hundred million dollar company. This show has more than 300 million downloads. I'm a very successful guy, with that. So, if you have something like that going on, you can still do stuff, but you'll have room for improvement. For me, [inaudible 00:10:58] was, "Oh my God, what would happen if I got it up there?" And you didn't go to business school, did you?

Moha:

No.

Dave:

No, that was probably a good move. So, I went to Wharton. When I was at Wharton, I went to the program where it's a full-time number of hours, but they fly the professors in. Everyone who's there is also working a day job. And I decided I might just be dumber than everyone else. Because I would sit down to do one of the problems on a test in class, and I'd get a hundred percent on the first question. And the second question, I'd get like 50%. Third question, 20%. And after that, it was just blank. My brain was gone. And I was actually kind of scared, and I went to a psychiatrist. And I'd read Daniel Amen's first book, and the psychiatrist, actually, when they saw the blood flow and they saw the metabolic activity on scans, he said, "Yeah, you have ADHD. And in fact, inside your brain is total chaos. You have the best camouflage I've ever seen. I don't know how you're standing here in front of me today. Basically your brain is apple sauce in there." And I'm like, "Oh, thank God. It's not just me."

But it was because of that that I started looking at, how do I control the blood in my brain? I looked at blood volume and exercise and salt and hydration, all of which affect the brain. But then I came across this idea that you could basically bounce light off blood in the front of your skull, and see how much blood was there, and then you could train it, just like you can train yourself to make your fingertip warmer, which is the proof point for this. This is a very old biohack, from the first days of biofeedback. So, all of a sudden I'm like, "Oh, you can do this." So, I bought this cobbled together, crappy system that had really bad characteristics of performance, but the data showed every time that I would use it that my ability to pay attention would go up, and I can pay attention for as long as I want to now.

That was something that I was just like, "I don't know how to bring this to people," because I know that it makes a difference, but most people aren't going to do an open source version of this thing. It's soldering it yourself and just all this nonsense. So, I thought it was a lost art. One of those things that had potential but would never be available. And then all of a sudden, this well-made headband pops up on Instagram during the very first launch of the public selling of this thing. I said, "All right, I want it."

And guys, this is literally a random connection. We don't have any commercial connection. I'm just really interested in this tech, and I think it's really worthy, and I'll likely build it into some of the protocols that I recommend for you if you're a listener or if you're a member of the Upgrade Collective, because it is that powerful. So, that's my framing of it. Shine a light in your head, learn to have more blood where you want it.

Moha:

I truly believe that this can change the world. So, me, I have ADHD, but I also had really bad PTSD from Libya.

But I'll tell you, I truly believe that this can change the world. So, me, I have ADHD, but I also had really bad PTSD from Libya. And I had nightmares every single day. So, I couldn't get a good night of sleep, because of these nightmares. And when I started using Mendi, the nightmares started to go away, to the point where they were completely gone. And then I realized that it's really, a better functioning prefrontal cortex controls everything. So it did make sense that it would help you with everything from your focus to insomnia, and addiction, and anxiety, and ADHD, and ADD and depression, because it does sound like snake oil.

But in the end, it's the same, when you understand how it works, and I did not study neuroscience, and I am constantly surrounded by people that understand this better than I do. I know you understand this way better than I do, because I came in as a user and then basically, when they asked me to take the job, I said, "Yeah, but I know very little about this." And they said to me, "Yeah, but you believe in us, and that's really all we need." And then what I did is I just sought out the experts, the people that understand all of this, so that we could find the answer, why is it that people feel better? Why is it that when people use Mendi, the anxiety goes away? Why is it the panic attacks go away? Why is it that the insomnia, all these things go away? Why is it that you can focus better? It's been life-changing for me. I would be incapable of having a job where I have to sit down and focus, let alone answer an email, you understand? Sit there for hours and work.

Dave:

You still [inaudible 00:15:41] emails?

Moha:

Very rarely. And usually on my phone. I don't even travel my laptop most of the time.

Dave:

Do you send faxes too?

Moha:

I do.

Dave:

I'm with you. It's always been pain to do that. And now, if you're a listener that's going, "I don't have ADHD," actually, you probably do. If you live in the current world and you have a mobile device, you've probably given yourself ADHD. This is why our attention span is about equal to a goldfish, right? And if you're younger and you've been eating the stuff they feed you in schools, which is pretty much peasant

chow at this point. They've driven all the nutrition out of it. That causes changes in the prefrontal cortex, blood flow in particular. So, we have an epidemic of tech and nutrition stealing focus from people.

Moha:

Yeah, 100%. The layers of behavior that have been put in, for example, a child can't go to the bathroom without watching 10 TikToks and stuff. That's not how you and I grew up, right? So, the technology curve is absurdly quick, and the brain is the same brain that our great-grandparents had when things were a lot slower. So basically, it's how do you give yourself a fighting chance? By strengthening your brain. And that's what we do. So, what we do is very active.

For me, the reason why I do it, I'm so committed to it, is because I truly feel that a lot of people that are medicated don't need the medications that they have, or they need lesser. I feel that people are just forgotten. You just give them stuff to numb them, and we're not really trying to fix anything. And it's because it's a different business model. For us, we're not in the business of just milking people out of as much money as we can. For us, it's actually about providing a solution that helps. And that's the whole thing. So, for me, I always think, because I started using Mendi and I saw improvements in myself at age 40. I started to think, what would've happened if I would've had this technology at age 17? Maybe I would've graduated college. You understand?

Dave:

It would've made a big difference.

Moha:

It would've made a big difference. I would've had better relationships. Emotional regulation is a huge thing, obviously. There's studies being done in Sweden on juvenile delinquents, and the one thing that is a constant between them is that they have a lack of oxygenated blood flow to the prefrontal cortex. And obviously, as you measure it, there's the connection to neural activity. And basically, you can rehabilitate people, you can control your anger, you can control your emotions, you can control addiction. I was talking to a UFC fighter that just cold turkey stopped using nicotine through... This technology is available. Why doesn't everybody have access to it?

Dave:

85% of people in prison have brain disorders. And there's actually a study I cited for that. ADHD is the most common one. And then there's Asperger's, there's other associated things like visual disturbances, like you can't read because the letters keep moving, things like that. And it's a pattern. And when you treat the brain, I know I'm sounding a lot like my dear friend Daniel Amen, where you treat the brain and suddenly the person changes. And I'm actually a fan of anything that increases blood flow in the brain. In fact, I use nicotine as a cognitive enhancer, and it does bring laser focus in. So does modafinil, which I also have used for many years. I'm on and off. I'm on it right now, full disclosure. Thank you modafinil and Danger Coffee, because I love my brain on that.

We also know that things like the racetam class of family, the smart drugs like piracetam or Aniracetam, all my followers know about Aniracetam. If you've read any of my books, you know about it. It increases oxygen in the brain. We have all these feelings, all these sensations that happen in the body, and then we use our prefrontal cortex to make up a story about them. And that's why it's so hackable, because if you hack the body to do more of what you want, but you don't have your prefrontal cortex working very well, then even if your body gives you a clearer signal of reality with less emotional triggering, you're still

just going to, "I don't know." And it's that feeling of your brain not working. It's really kind of a horrible feeling. That's why I'm stoked on this. Is there anything I said in there that doesn't match your model?

Moha:

No, it matches completely. And obviously, the prefrontal cortex, I mean, the executive function. It's basically taking all those feelings and that information and deciding what to do with them. So, if the guy honks, like you said, it's what's going to stop you from getting out of your car and punching them in the face. It's what, inhibition, things like planning, all these things. It's basically the prefrontal cortex that controls them. So, strengthening it, it makes a lot of sense. For me, it was as simple as, I was basically, for example, I remember after a few weeks of using Mendi, I had an ex-girlfriend I'd had a bad breakup with tell me, "Why are you so nice?" And I was like, "I've actually heard that from a few people." That's a horrific thing to hear.

Dave:

Here's a question. Did you notice you were nice before they said it?

Moha:

No, I noticed it when everybody started telling me. I just knew that I felt better. I just knew that I felt better. And I had been using Mendi for weeks, and then all of a sudden it's like, "Well, what was wrong with me? Everybody's telling me I'm so much nicer." And she's like, "Yeah. It's still you." And she's fantastic. Her name is Elsa, like the Frozen movie, the Frozen cartoon.

Dave:

That was a very ninja dating move. Smooth over any things with a public comment like that.

Moha:

Yeah, yeah.

Dave:

I see what you did there. That was very crafty.

Moha:

I'll send her this. No, so basically, she was just telling what, "You're so much nicer. It's still you." And that's the problem with a lot of the medication that people take, because it's not really you. It's a numbed version of you, right?

Dave:

Amphetamine does not make you nicer.

Moha:

Well, I'll tell you that. But for example, and it's interesting, I had a conversation about Ritalin and Adderall and what they do, and there is a big overlap. Imagine if you could get those superpowers without the side effects. And that is possible through work. That is possible naturally. But for example, somebody that's depressed or somebody that has some sort of condition, you give them a drug, what you're doing is you're just numbing them. You're not really fixing anything. You're just making them 50%



less sad, but they're also 50% less happy. So basically, the whole point of being fully there and fully yourself, but better, to me, that's what it comes down to. I think that the cool thing about this is that obviously everybody's got their own limit, and everybody's got their own baseline. And I think your brain, and if you do a Mendi session, I've got a device here.

Dave:

Yeah, mine, I think it's not unpacked yet. I just moved to Austin.

Moha:

If you do a session, I do a session, your results are probably going to be better than mine.

Dave:

I'm not sure. I haven't done it in a while.

Moha:

But to me, it's like, I've been improving a lot. And it's like, I'm never going to be an elite swimmer, but I can become a much better swimmer kind of thing.

Dave:

That's the thing, right?

Moha:

And that's the thing. It's not about competing. So, the whole point, when I did Mendi, and one of the arguments at first when we launched on Kickstarter, and they were telling me, I remember they had done this sales strategy, one of the founders. And it was like, "Oh, then you can buy a few Mendis and stuff." And I was like, "Well, that goes against what I believe in. Why would you buy-"

Dave:

Share it with everyone.

Moha:

Get one Mendi and share it with your whole family. If you've got six people, why would we...? We're not Apple. We're not trying to sell a phone for everybody. I'm not trying to sell as many Mendis. I'm trying to impact as many people as possible. For me, it's literally more it comes from a sense of obligation. Because I've already made money doing other stuff that I don't care too much about. I told you, I've scaled everything from fishing apps to all sorts of stuff. I'm involved in some things that, I get to pick and choose more when I'm not broke than I did at first. But for me, Mendi's really about just helping a hundred million people. I speak to a lot of users, and when you talk to a parent that says, "My kid's panic attacks got better," or somebody telling me, "I can sleep," and they're thanking me, to me, it's just, that's everything.

Dave:

Yeah. Emotional regulation is precious for kids, because kids usually develop a feeling of shame that they don't have it, and you're not supposed to have it. You're a kid. Your prefrontal cortex, the part that does that, it isn't built yet. So, you're supposed to have really strong emotions, the teenage angst and

explosive anger. And then, if your parents have done their work, then they're like, "It's okay, little Johnny. You're fine. That kind of behavior isn't going to work." And they say it a thousand times, until the prefrontal cortex [inaudible 00:24:33], and they don't get triggered at all. If your parents were that good, that's amazing, because I'm not that good. No one's that good, because parents, we get tired too, right? Our prefrontal cortexes aren't perfect. But we all do our best. But then we end up basically being yelled at enough times for it and then we're frustrated.

So then, when you get a wave of emotion, even as an adult, it generates, [inaudible 00:24:49] from the body. Even if your prefrontal cortex catches it, instead of just being, "Oh, that's what that is," then you get shame and guilt. And that's a lot of deprogramming. A lot of EEG work I do is around that. But what you're doing with Mendi is very different, because there's no reset process, there's no forgiveness. It's literally just, make the curve go up. And when you do that, you wouldn't know it. You're just making the curve go up. But the thing you're doing inside your body that there aren't words for, it's forcing blood forward. And as soon as you slow down, you see the curve go down. You're like, "Oh, that's blood draining." And eventually, like, "Oh my God, I have a signal for this."

And if you're a long time listener, even in the very early days of the podcast, I talked about heart rate variability feedback, where you put a thing on your ear and you can tell when you're being triggered, and then you can learn to turn off your trigger. That's another form of biofeedback. But this is a new one, and it's one that was only written about in a few brain science journals, but even then, it was just a little tiny corner of neuroscience. And I had lost hope it'd be commercialized. But the reason it's so powerful is that now, once you learn how to do that, your brain will do it automatically. So then, all of a sudden, you're like, "I'm going to focus." And then laser focus turns on, and you kind of feel it in the front of your brain. And when an emotion comes up like that, you've got another level of focus. It won't derail you.

Moha:

I like to look at it as kind of the Tinder model where you swipe things left or right. Imagine if you could just basically teach yourself to not go into that dark place.

Dave:

There you go.

Moha:

If you could teach yourself to put down the bottle of vodka, because, for example, so I went through a lot of therapy, and one thing that I learned is that therapy doesn't really change you. It just makes you understand why you do the stuff that you do. What Mendi does is more like a physical thing. Literally, it's like going to the gym. It's like, I can have all the good intention of the world. I want to carry the shopping bags. But if my arms are not strong enough, I can't carry them. I understand I should carry them. It's like, we were talking about pull-ups earlier.

Dave:

And you can do 46 pull-ups?

Moha:

47's the most I've done. Yeah, I was doing them before I got here. But if I want to do pull-ups, but I don't have the strength, to me, that's the therapy. It's like, "Yes, I should be grabbing this thing and I should be

doing the pull-ups, but I just don't have the ability." What Mendi does is it helps you build the ability, build the strength, so that you can actually focus on the task at hand on your work, or so that you can put down the bottle of tequila or the bag of chips. So, there's a lot of people, because self-control is such a big part of what makes our lives better or worse, a lot of people that say, "Hey, I started losing weight because I can portion control now that I use Mendi." And it's like, obviously it's not a weight control device. But what it is is it's a self-control device, and that controls everything. That overlaps into any part of life.

Dave:

It does. And I look at this as you have these triggers or switches, and when your prefrontal cortex is weak, it doesn't take very much to hit a trigger. And if you've done therapy, like you said, well now you know have triggers, and you have this chasm or these areas. And the approach that I believe is the highest efficiency if you can do it is you actually delete the reservoir of whatever, you do a full reset process, like in Smarter Not Harder. And usually that requires electrodes or Buddhist meditation in a cave or something. And then you're like, "You know what? Even if the trigger's there, there's nothing to trigger and it's gone." That's a baller, heavy-duty spiritual practice.

In the rest of the time, and you're always going to end up discovering new little things through that too. The rest of the time, though, you're like, "Oh look, there's something I didn't know about. It's getting triggered." But if you have this incredibly robust prefrontal cortex, you're going to notice that your nervous system did that to you, and you're going to be like, "Whatever," and you're not going to lose your focus.

Moha:

Exactly.

Dave:

Right? And it's that strength of the trigger. It's going to take something really big to get me out of my focus state, because now I have a strong focus, so I won't be emotionally dysregulated. And if my strong focus is on following these things I have decided to do, instead of just being blown around by the wind every day, that's a unique form of willpower control, and grit and perseverance. And yes, guys, those are trainable. I have trained billionaires using this kind of technology. 10 years ago it just required a laptop and a whole bunch of crappy code, and it was terrible. So now it's a consumer device. And like I said, we don't have any kind of commercial stuff set up, although I'm probably going to end up doing something with Mendi, because it's awesome. But this is, I don't remember how much I paid. It was a Kickstarter. It was 300 bucks or something, 400 bucks?

Moha:

Yeah.

Dave:

What is the state of it now?

Moha:

Oh, it's the same. My dream is that within the next few years, people don't have to pay for it. It'll be paid for by insurance, and NHS will give it to people. But I will tell you, to use your example about in school about answering the first question right. So, NASA, for example, they use it on their astronauts.

Dave:

They use Mendi on astronauts?

Moha:

Yeah. So, they use it at the habitat. What they'll do is they'll get a drone, and they'll get these pilots to perform this incredibly tedious task. So, they'll get exactly the same thing with you and the test. What they'll do is they'll get them to fly a drone in a square. And obviously, the first square is perfect, the second one. But after square number 50 times of flying this drone, obviously you start to falter, because you start losing your focus. And that's where the resilience thing comes in. And resilience is basically a mother that has a baby that hasn't slept. Her keeping it together, a stronger prefrontal cortex. That's what it is. The same thing for any part of life basically. Having more resilience in your brain, and obviously the cognitive decay that happens with the years as we get older. You're talking about things like Alzheimer's and stuff. In my opinion, these things are completely preventable if we train our brains. Just like people going to the gym or exercising, that will keep them healthy.

Dave:

You're not alone. I mean, Dale Bredesen, who wrote *The End of Alzheimer's*, has been on, saying preventable. Daniel Amen's been on saying preventable. You're saying it. I wrote *Head Strong*, my big brain book, these are preventable. I don't know that blood flow alone is going to prevent all of them. It's a massive component, because mitochondrial dysfunction is an underlying problem. And if you don't have blood, you have mitochondrial dysfunction. If you have toxins in the blood, you still have to deal with those. But the rate of decline, if you're getting Alzheimer's that's the toxin produced kind, it'll be so much slower, because at least you have enough blood. So, I think this is, also, along the way, you would have more willpower.

Moha:

And the whole, "If you don't use it, you lose it," kind of thing, that applies to the brain, and that's the thing. This is not passive. This is not, you're just there, and passively something is happening. You're doing the work. So, when people talk to me about competitors and stuff, and I don't believe in competitors. I like all the wearables. I love the space. I've become a nerd about this space later on. I got into this in my forties.

Dave:

You don't have competitors on the market that I've found.

Moha:

But to me, the whole thing is about, I don't look at it that way. I just look at it like, together, what we're all trying to do is we're trying to improve the human status right now, where we are, trying to catch up with where technology is and give people a fighting chance. So, yeah, I'm a big fan of everything that's happening. What we do is different. To be honest, our competitor, to me, would be a squat or a bench press. Because if you think about it, what we do is, to be honest, physical gyms would be the competitor to us. This would be a gym for your brain.

Dave:

We are going to find that people who want to be healthy are just going to realize, "Let's see, if I could train my focus." In fact, you just reminded me, when I was doing this with clients, a couple hedge fund managers of people, this is like 2012, when I just was first starting Bulletproof before we got into all the consumer packaged goods stuff. I called it the Upgraded Focus Brain Trainer, because that's what, it upgraded your focus. You could actually train your brain to pay attention to whatever you want it to. And when you can pay attention to whatever you want to, a unique ability emerges.

When focus is effortless, and it doesn't cost you much to do, it doesn't cost much electrically, you can have built-in firewalls. I don't see ads. You put them on a page. My focus is so strong, I just see [inaudible 00:34:04]. Everything else is out of my visual field. It's gone. I couldn't tell you what ads were there, because they couldn't have the ability to, like they do for most of my life, and for most people, it's there and your eyes are inexorably drawn to it. And you look at it, and you're like, "God damn it," and then you look back. And maybe you send a little wave of hate to the company who interrupted you, and an additional one to Mark Zuckerberg and to Google probably, who are involved in the ad somehow. Or you just don't see it. But they're not seeing a trick, I think that comes about from having a strong focus, which you can train. So, imagine that. Advertisers are going to hate what you're doing. Are you afraid of that? Are you going to have an ad-supported model?

Moha:

It's funny because, so, right before we launched on Kickstarter, which, it was a historic thing, and for me, that's when I was like, "Our moral compass needs to be at the forefront of everything," because it's very easy to prey on people that have a condition, or people that desperately need something. They'll believe anything and they'll pay anything. So for me, it was like, "We need to basically not overpromise and we need the science to catch up." That's why I'm starting to talk about these things now, because I know there's some studies now, Olav Krigolson, some really interesting things, where it's unequivocal that this basically works. Stanford guys. You're going to see all this stuff, and it's really, really, really exciting for us. So, bottom line is for us, it was just, we don't want to overpromise anything, but what we want to do is we want to just talk about what's available in a way that is understandable to people. So, that's why we've got neuroscientists from Stanford now explaining what we're doing, explaining the science, because for me, the key is that everybody has access to it. That schools have access to it.

I will tell you, for example, we have had a couple of big companies in the US, big healthcare companies, for example, in the early days, say that they wanted to buy 30,000 Mendis and give them to at-risk youth as a CSR project or something. And I actually said no to them, because we weren't ready, and because what would happen is we would get noisy data. We would get bad data, because it would be like giving treadmills to people that don't want to use them. The data that we would get is that people don't use the treadmills, right? When in fact, what you have is you're giving the treadmills to the wrong people. The treadmills are fine, but you need somebody that is motivated to use them. So for us, it was, now we've gotten to the point where we have 20, 25,000 users, and now we can take that step and go into the hundreds of thousands because we have enough cohorts, enough data, we know what it does to people with insomnia. We know what it does to people with panic attacks, with anxiety, people with depression, people with ADHD.

Dave:

I just want to be clear, you don't diagnose or treat any of those things. They just go away as a side effect of focusing.

Moha:

So, I will-

Dave:

That's how it works, man. Same thing. Meat can't cure anything, but if you eat some grass-fed meat and all your stuff goes away, it was just magic. So, it's cool to be able to do magic, right?

Moha:

I like magic. Big fan of magic. Yeah. To be honest, three years ago, I'd never heard about this. I would've said all of this is bullshit.

Dave:

I would've said, "About time someone does this," because I've already done it to myself, and this is real serious. And guys, I have no reason to tell you this other than because it matters and because now it's accessible. And before, you had to be a real hacker to do it.

Moha:

And the average person, like me, the way that I look at it is, I was a 40-year-old Costa Rican guy who had some sort of level of success and basically slipped on a banana peel and had this company land on my lap for me to even know that this technology existed. So what chance does a girl in Mexico City have? It just doesn't exist. We need to make this mainstream for me, and that's why having access to these outlets, to these channels, people like you that actually understand this and have a following and can get that word out there. To me, that's how we create real impact and we help people.

I've had conversations, for example, with people. So, I've never been a meditator, I've never meditated. To me, it was always fluffy. It's just like, meditate. Go lift something. But the thing about meditation, even when you talk to people that are very into it, is that you can't really assess how well you're doing it, how deeply you're doing it. But when you have a score, when you're visualizing exactly how well you're doing, that's how you can really elicit change. So, for example, it's like, if you're on a treadmill, and you don't know if you're running at seven or running at 10 because there's no numbers there, or if you're bench pressing and you don't know if you're doing 80 pounds or 180 pounds, it's very difficult to make constant improvements. And the thing with Mendi is that over time, your results will be better. And that's a very tangible objective measurement. And that's why NASA and Stanford and these very, very, very legit institutions, they're like, "Okay, yeah, this works. Let's figure out how to simplify this so that you can actually explain it to people."

And that's kind of the process that we've been at. And people keep asking me why, over the past couple of years, I haven't gone and just leveraged my contacts, because I'm clearly very, very well-connected to get the word out there. And for me, it was just because the science needs to catch up. We need to be able to have everything so that we can show, because there's a lot of anecdotal data. There's a lot of people saying, "I sleep better, I feel better. I'm not depressed," or whatever. There's so many of these stories. But you need a certain amount of data so that you can really 100% say, "This is what it is." And that's where we're at now. And I'm very excited. I think within a couple of years, this will be mainstream and people will have better lives.

Dave:

If you're paying to put your kids through college or if you're paying, even worse, for yourself through college, is the way I did, this is probably worth it, just like smart drugs are worth it, cognitive enhancers are worth it. Because you're just going to get what I would call an unfair advantage, which was the name of one of my early products at Bulletproof, which makes me happy. My call for you would be, take care of your brain. And it's not just drinking your minerals in your coffee or MCT oil, or taking your supplements or going for a walk. This is actually direct rewiring of the flow of oxygen and nutrients in your mitochondria in the front of your brain. Kind of cool, kind of legit, and pretty shocking that I wrote about it, and then just meet you through a friend.

Moha:

That's so cool. That was so cool. In Dubai. It was super random.

Dave:

Yeah. And I do have some friends in Dubai now. I've been a few times. But still, just randomly at a dinner party. "I know Dave." And then just a WhatsApp comes in, and then hear you're in Austin a little while later. So, thanks for coming out. And I'm truly impressed, and you're inspiring me to re-up my Mendi sessions. We'll probably, well, if you brought your phone and your device, we'll do it after the show, and we'll see how my brain's doing. It's been a while. But, I mean, it's on here. The Mendi app's installed. Anything else? We should give a URL. Mendi...

Moha:

Mendi.io, code Dave.

Dave:

Mendi.io, code Dave.

Moha:

I'm very grateful because, honestly, you're obviously the godfather of biohacking, a lot of it. So, this is a big step for us in getting that awareness out to people, so that we can give them the training wheels to improve their lives, like I did. I'm just this dumb guy from Costa Rica that basically found this technology, and now I'm just thinking, why doesn't everybody have it? So, thank you because you would be the channel to get this information to everybody, and whether they want to do it or not, that's their choice. We believe in people choosing. We agree on that.

Dave:

Yeah, you're very welcome, my friend. And my job is to curate the awesome stuff that works, and let people know it exists. And it's like, "Here's the whole menu of stuff you can use to biohack, to upgrade yourself. You're probably not going to do all of it. I don't expect you to do all of it. Just some of the stuff is going to be shiny and exciting and awesome and worth your time and energy and some won't be." So, if what we talked about was there, go to Mendi, use code Dave. If you don't, then do something else. But you got to know it exists. And right now, I think 99.9% of people listening, unless you're a diehard, old-school fan of mine, you've never heard of HEG, the technology that's behind what Mendi does, and you certainly haven't heard of Mendi. So, this is a new part of the world of biohacking.

Moha:

Thank you for having me, man.

Dave:

You got it.