



Transcript of “A Shamanic Biohacker with Alberto Villoldo”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #79



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- Dave: Today's cool fact of the day is that men's noses are ten percent larger than women's noses, at least in people of European descent. Researchers measured these and hypothesized that it's not because men like to smell more than women, it's because men need more oxygen to support lean mass. Men normally have more lean mass because of their testosterone. The funny fact is that women smell better even though they have smaller noses. When I say women smell better, I mean, they have the ability to smell better, not that I think they smell better, although that's true too.
- Dave: Hey everyone, it's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Radio. Today's guest is Alberto Villoldo. Alberto is a PhD and a Cuban-born psychologist and author who studied the shamanic healing practices of the Amazon and Inca shamans for twenty-five years. He's the founder of [The Four Winds Society](#) and he has a two-year-long program in energy medicine and leads Ayahuasca journeys to Peru. I've actually taken one of Alberto's classes with The Four Winds Society, which was really intense and quite useful. It's my pleasure to have him on my show today. Alberto, welcome.
- Alberto: Thank you Dave. Good to be with you. Just a correction, I don't lead Ayahuasca journeys to Peru. We used to do that. We still go to Peru, to the Andes and the Amazon to work with the shamans, but we don't promote that aspect of our work. It's good to be with you, and I understand we're going to talk about the brain, spirit, the mind, and everything in between.
- Dave: That sounds exactly what I was hoping we'd talk about, Alberto. You're actually a medical anthropologist and a psychologist, not just a shaman, right?
- Alberto: I started on with psychology, and the problem with psychology in the West is that it's really centered on two parts of the body, your mouth and your anus. You have either oral fixations or anal fixations and this theme, it's not got a very good cast of characters. It wouldn't play well in

Hollywood because you got mommy issues and daddy issues and infancy issues. If you really limit it to the scope of your pathology and the, you know like Woody Allen says, the secret to being stable mentally is to turn your pathology into shtick. Western psychology really collapsed a human being into a very narrow band between your mouth and the other end of your alimentary canal.

Whereas in traditional societies, the psyche was expansive as the universe. The realms of the archetypes of the Gods of old were realms that one could traverse. You weren't stuck in mommy/daddy issues your entire life. You learn how to embrace the mother. Mother Earth is your great mother. And the heavens, Father Sky is your father. You were able to release your parents. At about the age of thirteen, you put them in the fire so they could become your friends and instead of turning them into dysfunctional parents. So I broke out of psychology and actually got a grant to go to the Amazon from a pharmaceutical company. A very famous Swiss pharmaceutical company wanted to discover the next blockbuster cancer or heart disease drug, and I had done work in the Amazon before and there were a lot of terrorists, a lot of terrorism happening in that part of the world, in Peru thirty years ago. I was one of the few fool-hardy anthropologists to go into the Amazon. They funded my research. They wanted a blockbuster drug for heart disease, cancer, and six months later, I came back from extensive travel in tributaries of the Amazon and villages that really had not ever seen a white man. In fact, the kids would come running up to me and rub my skin to see if the dirt, the white would rub off. I came back empty-handed because what I said to these pharmaceutical company was, "Hey, the people that I visit did not have heart disease. They did not have cancer. These are the illnesses of the West. They died, but from other conditions."

They thought I was holding out on them. They said, "Look, you can become very, very wealthy and help a lot of people." I said, "Look, I didn't find the plant you were looking for, because these diseases do not exist outside of Europe and America at that time."

Dave: When you take Americans or Westerners down for a healing journey with the native shamans today, are they finding the right medicine plants to treat those conditions? Have things changed?

Alberto: The shamans basically have three kinds of medicine. The first is the medicine for what hurts you. If you have a headache, they have the aspirin tree. You treat that. You got a headache or you're bleeding. You've got to stop the bleeding. The second kind of plants that they work with are plants that turn on the body's innate healing systems. They don't attack a cancer. They don't treat the heart. They switch back on the body self-repair mechanisms. That means at the cellular level, they switch back all of the antioxidant systems that are built innately into the cell but got switched off after about the age of forty, which is why we call these illnesses the illnesses of old age because nature, in effect, programmed us for reproduction, not for longevity.

Biology programmed us to have babies, not to live long lives because that's not economically practical for the species. Now, I'm not interested in having any more kids but I am interested in living a long healthy life and having my health span equal my life span. What these plants do is they turn off systems that switch off at around the age of forty like your human growth hormone, like your production of glutathione, of superoxide dismutase. They switch on and they turn on, they switch on the longevity genes. They reset the death clock inside ...

Dave: The telomerase.

Alberto: Yup, inside the cells, absolutely. This is the second category. Turn on your body's innate healing systems. The third category were the plants that repair the brain because the brain is the commanding control center. If that screwed up, if your motherboard is screwed up, forget about accessing any data, you're going to be getting error messages. That's what happens when DNA goes unregulated by consciousness is that it starts printing the error messages which are the aβ proteins that are the cancerous and create heart disease.

Dave: You don't sound like what most listeners to our show would imagine a shaman would sound like. You just talked about the same bio hacking

chemicals like glutathione that I work with, yet you're taking this from the perspective of someone who's looking at the energy and the consciousness aspect and how it affects chemicals and genes. Have you done science-based data thinking about these to measure whether there are differences?

Alberto: Yeah, we have actually, we have. The reason that I'm not talking feathers and rattles is because that's just part of what the shamans do. They use that to get into certain states of consciousness that we can't get into anymore in the West. These are the shamanic states of ecstasy. We can't access those anymore because our brains are broken. They've been broken by the toxins in our food, the poisons in the water, the chemicals that we're exposed to, the damage to the hippocampus in the brain which is the area responsible for learning. When that area in the brain is damaged, we're living in a constant state of fight or flight, a fear based off scarcity behavior, getting your slice of the pie.

When you live in fight or flight, the brain secretes two hormones, two very, very toxic substances that are actually steroid hormones, which are cortisol and adrenaline. You're always pumped up, always hyped up. That prevents us from accessing the ecstatic, blissful states where we can actually be creative, where we can dream the future into being differently, where we can dream our health differently into being. What it does when you see, when you have this cortisol cocktail in your brain with stress hormones, is that this pathway for fight or flight is actually called from a standpoint of medicine, the HPA axis, the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis.

When this HPA axis is turned on, it's dedicated to the fear hormones. The pituitary is only manufacturing and triggering the stress hormones. It keeps the pituitary from running the alchemical laboratory because that's the alchemical lab. The pituitary is able to take things like serotonin or melatonin even, what we use to go to sleep, into DMT, which is Dimethyltryptamine, which is the most powerful psychoactive substance in the planet, which is what triggers the chemical component of this visionary ecstatic states. That's one of the things the pituitary is excellent at doing when it's not stressed out, when it doesn't have a gun to its head.

Dave: Alberto, you're saying the pituitary gland can take melatonin and turn it into DMT at will?

Alberto: Not at will. It does so between four or five o'clock in the morning when the brain is in these very, very calm states of consciousness and when you're distressed because the reason these psychedelics that, I'm really into the brain science because the shamans were the very first brain scientists.

Dave: Yes, the first biohackers.

Alberto: Absolutely. They knew how to create. They knew the blend for Ayahuasca. How do you blend these two plants to go through the gut wall? They knew how to prepare curare, which is this incredible neurotoxin that is, it's the basis of modern anaesthetic. The reason these psychoactive plants work is because we have receptor sites for them in the brain. Why would nature give us receptor sites for these plants out there in the wild? The reason we have them is because we produce them naturally. We produce morphine, the endorphins naturally. We produce DMT. We produce psilocybin. Psilocybin is magic mushrooms. Psilocybin is a methylated dopamine. Dopamine is the common neurotransmitter, a feel-good neurotransmitter.

And methylation is what the pituitary does. It methylates. This is the alchemical lab and the way to do your biohacking is when you're in these states of lucid consciousness, where consciousness itself can modify your genetic expression.

Dave: It's amazing what methylating common neurotransmitters will do. There's some other new things coming out around that that are amazingly effective for enhancing consciousness.

Alberto: Absolutely, yeah. This is the juicy thing for me about being in the jungle is because I have little bit of background in brain science so I could get what these guys were doing. They weren't treating stomach upset. They were switching on the brain so that the nervous system could upgrade the quality of the information in the entire operating system so you can start running software that nobody's ever run before.

Dave: Now, one of the things that surprised me about you, Alberto, is that you've got a very strong spiritual side of what you do, but when I went to your healing academy at the Four Winds, I was surprised that you spent so much time talking about neurotransmitters and brain chemistry and things like that. It seems like at least half of your perspective on how to upgrade human experience or just increase people's consciousness is biochemically based and maybe half is energetically based. Am I reading that right? How do you draw the line between those two? How do you integrate them?

Alberto: You know we're spirit embodied. We're spirits in a body. The reason that we came here to this world and to this earth from the spirit world is so we could experience chocolate. Chocolate is, among other things, good coffee, the senses. When spirit becomes embodied, suddenly spirit is being modulated by and regulated by electrical activity, hormonal activity and the problem is that you have to get these systems, the electrical and hormonal systems into balance so spirit can adequately sit in this protein wrap that we are. So that in the shamanic traditions, we work with the chakras, with the energy centers in the body.

People ask me, "Aren't chakras Hindu? Do shamans have chakras?" I say to them, "Aren't kidneys European? Do Africans have kidneys? It is part of your luminous anatomy. It's universal." The way that the chakras are actually disturbances in the field, in the energy field of the body that are caused, created when the endocrine system meets the nervous system. Nerve bundles coincide with endocrine glands. You know what endocrine glands produce, it's hormones. If you've had a teenager, if you remember being a teenager, you know what hormones are like. This is where these two communication systems in the body meet, this disturbance in the field is the chakra.

So the shaman will work through the chakras to download or upload information into the system, into the nervous system which runs electrically at the speed of light. The hormone system which is an analog system. The nervous system is digital, speed of light. Hormone system is chemical primarily transmits feelings. What you have happening today is that the amount of information and our thoughts operate at the speed of light, nervous system, but our feelings operate on snail mail. They're

going on the hormone system which is really slow chemical carriers. There's this great disparity, this junction between what we feel and what we think today to the point that is so hard to bridge that gap.

When you have this incredible schism between what you feel and when you think, you cannot be spirit-embodied. You're living in a war zone. That's why we focus our attention more now into how do you turn your brain on. How do you create health so that disease goes away? We're not just teaching people how to heal disease, we're teaching them how to create health. How do you do that by upgrading the quality of the wisdom in the system of the information? Not treating cancer or treating heart disease or treating symptoms, upgrade the information level. Make the system smarter and the body attains states of health that are extraordinary.

Dave: One of the more interesting studies I've come across in the last year talked about how people cannot get smarter unless they believe that they can get smarter. Once they're taught you're capable of it, they are capable of it. Without that, the intelligence is limited. How does that fit in with your experience of working with people?

Alberto: You know the story about the UPS guy? Remember that story?

Dave: No.

Alberto: Well there was this ashram. I don't know if this really happened or not but I love this story. There was this ashram. People practice meditation and they got UPS packages everyday or every other day. Right in their front office, there was a photograph of the guru in meditation. One day, they put the face, the image of the face of the UPS guy on the painting of the guru. When the UPS guy comes, they start bowing to him, "You're here. You're back, thank you so much. Come be with us some time." The guy's bewildered, leaves, comes back two days later. They're bowing to him again. He sees his photograph up in the face of the Maharishi. "We've been waiting for you." They welcome him in. He comes into their meditation and begins to speak and this wisdom starts flowing through him, this exquisite wisdom. He said, "Before meeting you guys, I was just

the UPS guy. I didn't know that that spirit that I was the one you were waiting for.”

And a few days later, he discovered everyone is the one that they've been waiting for because there's a new UPS guy with a new face up on the wall. Yes, the minute you believe you can do it, then it becomes possible to do it. But it's not a given. I worked with Olympic teams. You have to get the athlete first to believe that they could do it. Then, they had to train as if they had already done it.

Dave: Why is it that way? Why do you have to train as if you've already done it? How should people who listen to this, a lot of them are driving in cars right now, how can they take that perspective into whatever they're doing?

Alberto: That's a shamanic perspective, which is that you envision that it's already done, it's already happened. What you're trying to create in your life has already been created and it's just simply a matter of it manifesting, of it waiting for you around the corner.

Dave: Now if that sounds weird to people listening, it's not that particularly unusual. Look at Napoleon Hill's work, same exact thing. You write it down as if it's been done. You have the people, the Secret, things like that. If you're going to set an intention, the rule is not, "I'm going to do it some point in the future, maybe whenever." It's that, "I already did it." That seems to make it happen.

Alberto: Totally, what the shamans are the shamans are the medicine men and women. We never defined who the shamans were. They are the wisdom keepers of the Americas, the ancient wisdom keepers of the Americas. They were the first scientists. They were the first astronomers. They were also the healers. That's what they did for a living. What they did for themselves was to commune with the wisdom of the universe and to help to dream the world into being.

They discovered you couldn't only dream a nicer car or a better looking spouse that you thought you deserved; you couldn't just dream the individual thing into being. You could but it would backfire. You had to

dream the whole thing into being, the whole universe, the whole world. Peace on earth, water clean, air breathable. Then, the nicer car and the spouse would appear and everything else would come. If you tried to do it reductionistic, one thing at a time, it wouldn't work because you were then feeding your personal dream and not the great dream of humanity.

Dave: I very much agree with what you're saying. At the same time, I think a lot of listeners have a hard time drawing the line. We have a Western perspective that medicine man or shaman is someone who's irrational or illogical. Some of what you said there, dream the world into being. Those words, when I run them through my rational, cognitive filter in my head, I don't get it. For people who are skeptical, what do you say? I'm not a skeptic, by the way, but what do you say to the skeptics?

Alberto: The reason you don't get it is because your brain is broken. No, not yours, Dave, I know. I know that everybody who's driving out there and listening to this says, "Hey, I'm together. It's the other guy that's all screwed up." The truth is that ninety-nine percent of us have brains that are broken. That's why we cannot hold or entertain the idea that we dream truly our reality and it manifests. It comes true, that the higher you dream it into being, the higher the order of magnitude, the more effective that this cascades down to the day-to-day and the immediate.

But the reason our brains have been broken is because of our diet. Can I take you through that tour quickly?

Dave: Yes, please do.

Alberto: Okay, so around ten thousand years ago, there's a revolution, the agricultural revolution. We stopped being hunter-gatherers, Paleolithic. We have the agricultural revolution, where we discover a new kind of food, which are grains. Now the human genome DNA takes about forty to fifty thousand years to adapt to a new food, we discovered this new food and began producing it in quantity and we settled. We're no longer following the game, going to the waterholes, hunter-gatherers. We started settling.

Then, around six thousand years ago, agriculture really spread. Cities began to develop. You find that the grains are widespread. Population increases and religion appears. Before that, our primary diet was fats and proteins. Now, our diet becomes carbs which are sugars. You have the religions that say, “And give us this day our daily fats and proteins,” right? “Give us this day our daily bread.” You have two classes of people that appear. You have the class of masters and slaves. The slaves were the pyramid builders who religion promised a reward in the next life. The slaves were fed the high sugar rich carbs. The slaves were the pyramid builders and the warriors, the soldiers, fed the sugars, feeds that region in the brain that lives in fear and that in fight or flight and in scarcity.

Now, the masters continued eating the ancient diet. If you look at what the Egyptian priest ate, if you look at what the Inca Kings, they had fish run up to Machu Picchu to the mountains from the sea four hundred miles away by runners. They continued to feed on the good quality protein and good quality fats, primarily non-animal fats. They have full access to their brain. They understood that whatever you set your intention to, you could bring about.

Today, we don't believe that because we're living in a very disempowered world and their great corporate interest that want to keep us so in that slave mentality. What you and I are here to do and all of you who are listening to this show is to say, “Hey, we're masters of our own destiny. We can dream it into being.” You're not your genetics. You're not your genes. You are your dreams. Your genes only account for five to ten percent of your health. The rest is your lifestyle and your communion with nature and the beauty that you bring to life.

The first step for the shaman was to repair the brain. I think for us as well, that's an important step. We can a little bit later go into what the plant substances are that repair the brain.

Dave: I think that you've definitely got our listeners interested in what those are. Before we get there, though, you mentioned in this high-fat, high-protein diet. When I look at what the average CEO eats, it's the guys that I talk to before I start working with them as clients. They eat garbage.

They're not eating these kinds of foods. If in the old days, the Egyptian pharaohs or Incan kings ate a diet for a fully functioning mind and everyone else didn't, when you fast-forward to today, the vast majority of leaders of industry, don't have brains that are functioning, at least they don't eat like they do.

Then who are the people eating that way, pulling the strings? Or did we just forget this knowledge and now we're walking around like a bunch of robots?

Alberto: Yeah. I'll tell you the, one of the foods that repairs this is DHA. We're going to get to DHA, the Omega-3's in a little while. I know you're very familiar with them.

Dave: Do share. Keep talking, yeah.

Alberto: The reason that these guys, the CEOs, they're still slaves to the system. They're making a little more money than we are. They don't have any more free time. Their lives are screwed up. Their health is screwed up. Their relationships are screwed up. You walk in to consult with them and you see that their children hate them and that they can't stand their image and that they're overweight. They don't sleep well. They're losing their hair. They got rashes on their skin. They're depressed. The fact that they appear to be more successful doesn't mean that they're having more successful lives but it begins with your diet. Then, it goes on to your spiritual practice.

Dave: Yeah. If you don't have adequate brain fuel, how are you going to use all of your brain? That was a big learning for me personally.

Alberto: Totally, yeah. If your brain fuels only carbs. You know what the minimum daily requirement of carbs are?

Dave: I would argue it's about 15 grams for long periods of time.

Alberto: It's actually zero, unless you're a marathon runner. We have minimum daily requirements of proteins and fats. The carbs or the grains and we can work with the carbs. In fact, I include grains in my diet, which the strict Paleolithic people don't. We have to remember that diet is only

half of it. We have to also recover the Paleolithic mindset, which is the shamanic mindset, which is the communion with all life and all of creation. The relationship to the earth is one of stewardship and not a predatory one where it's ours for the taking so it starts with the diet and the brain runs on sugars but it prefers, the higher brain functions run on fats, particularly a fat called beta-hydroxybutyrate which is...

Dave: [Brain Octane](#) makes that, right?

Alberto: Jet fuel for the brain and when you get that, if you want a little bit of that, you can get it in a drive-thru service station but you can get some coconut oil or coconut butter which is ... and eat a spoonful of it, imagine it's vanilla ice cream, pure food for mitochondria. It's a fat. It's a medium-chain triglyceride and it turns on the brain. If you got a difficult problem in your hands, you got to feed the brain with the right fuel.

Dave: Alberto, when we met, I hadn't quite started shipping [Brain Octane](#), which is four percent of coconut oil that converts to BHB the fastest. This is what I put a tablespoon of in my coffee in the morning, which is equal to eighteen tablespoons of coconut oil in terms of BHB.

Alberto: Really?

Dave: Yeah.

Alberto: I want to order some.

Dave: I'll just send you some. Consider it done.

Alberto: Thank you. Thank you. Let me take us to another area which is not only that our brains have been damaged. We have two brains in the body. One of them is in our heads. Guess where the other one is?

Dave: That would be the gut.

Alberto: The gut, right, the gut brain. It's really fascinating because humans are colony organism so we are ... If you look at a grain of rice or at a tape worm, a grain of rice has ninety thousand genes in its DNA. A tape worm has seventy thousand genes. A human has twenty-four thousand genes.

We have far fewer genes than rice or tape worms. Why is that? That's because we have over six hundred microorganisms that live in our gut. We have hijacked their genetic machinery to have them produce vitamins and extract minerals. They're the workers. In fact, they outnumber us, ten to one, so that ninety percent of our DNA belongs to them. Only ten percent of who we are is we.

If you ever wake up in the morning and say to yourself, "I'm not feeling quite myself today," you're absolutely right, because you're not. Because nine-tenths of you, of your DNA belongs to these symbiotic creatures that are part of our colony. What the Western diet and fluorinated and chlorinated water does in antibiotics is that they destroy the flora in the gut so that the colony has been decimated. If the colony is decimated, we can't extract foods. Not only that, we start getting a problem known as leaky gut ... because the lining in the gut, if you were to spread it out, it would be the size of a tennis court. It's only one cell thick. These cells have very tight junctions. They don't want to allow anything through that hasn't been processed by the flora.

What happens when you have grain that contain gluten is that the gluten will wedge itself between these tight junctions through a protein that allows the gluten to get into the blood stream. The immune system recognizes that gluten as a pathogenic bacteria and attacks it. You have this huge immune reaction happening. All of your life force is going into this immune response to fight off that piece of bread that you had this morning.

Dave: Yeah, it sucks you.

Alberto: Totally. We have to repair the brain but we start with repairing the gut with the right probiotics. We can do that.

Dave: When you say the right probiotics, I've spent at least fifty or sixty thousand dollars on probiotics over the past while. I took antibiotics for fifteen years, about once a month for chronic sinusitis and all. What are the right probiotics in your experience?

Alberto: If you go to your local pharmacy, you buy strains of probiotic, twelve billion per ... you're buying soldiers that are going to recolonize this territory that you lost. But these are not necessarily smart soldiers. Better to have ten Special Forces guys than ten million chaotic crazy guys with spears. You got to get the smart probiotics and the high quality probiotics. Now, there's a company that manufactures what I think are the best probiotics. What they did is they collected probiotics from the soil of these blue zones around the world which were the high longevity regions around the world. Then, they train them. They make them smart bugs. Regardless of whether you use it ... I can give you the name of this company.

Dave: We'll put it in the show notes.

Alberto: Great. Get a probiotic that you refrigerate, needs to be refrigerated. Make sure it comes from a good source. Most of the time we're getting dumb bugs, which is why this really ... This company also makes a toothpaste, for example. You need the probiotics in your mouth because that's what keeps your teeth healthy and you need them in your sinuses and in your lungs. The other place where the flora lives is in our skin. We take a shower with chlorinated water, we kill all the good bugs in our skin. We end up only with the bad ones. They keep us from getting skin diseases and rashes. We need to repopulate the ... We've worked in the West. We're focused on chemicals, which are dead.

The shamans focus on the living. What are the living ingredients? The probiotics in your skin, in your mouth, in your GI tract, they're enlisting the help of nature to maintain your health optimally.

Dave: I laughed when you said probiotics from soil, because I've done a lot of research on what different strains that you buy in most common pharmacies and whatnot, what they do, and a lot of them form histamine or they form nitrosamines in the gut. They actually make you weaker.

Alberto: Totally.

Dave: Soil-based organisms I recommend.

- Alberto: Yeah, so you got to be careful what bugs you buy. You're buying life forms. Some people spend more money buying fertilizer for their yards than they do buying fertilizing bugs for their gut.
- Dave: It's astounding to me what people spend on taking care of their dog that they won't spend on taking care of themselves.
- Alberto: Yeah.
- Dave: Why is that?
- Alberto: I don't know but I took my dog to the vet the other day. I had to go to the doctor myself. The first thing the doctor asked me is what medications are you on. I took my dog to the vet and the first thing the vet asked, what do you feed this dog. I'm going to start going to the vet from now on because it's all with the food. It starts with the food.
- Dave: My dog doesn't really go to the vet but my dog also eats a diet high in [MCT oil](#), raw meat and a few vegetables and funny what that does.
- Alberto: It's incredible. It's healthy. You know how many cancers pets get that if you would slip in a tablet of Resveratrol into the dog food, it's extraordinary. It's the missing ingredient, Resveratrol switches on all of the longevity genes in humans and in animals. That's one of these great hacking tools.
- Dave: There's been a lot of controversy about Resveratrol. Some of the early studies were fake. There's concerns about estrogen activity. Despite all of that, in your experience, you recommend Resveratrol.
- Alberto: I do. Yeah, Pterostilbene and Resveratrol.
- Dave: By the way, for people listening, Pterostilbene is a strange spelling. We'll put that in the show notes. That's what I take. It's two trans-Resveratrol stuck together.
- Alberto: Tell us about it.

- Dave: I want to make sure that we give you the most time to share your knowledge but for people concerned about the Resveratrol problem, there was some scientific fraud but Resveratrol itself as an antioxidant and as something that replicates the effects of a low-calorie diet without the negative brain impact of a low calorie diet, it's pretty magic. I take the Pterostilbene and I take [Upgraded Aging](#), which also mimics caloric restriction. That combination can increase mitochondrial function and hopefully slow the aging process. How does that map with what you know?
- Alberto: Reverse the aging process. We consider aging is not natural. The brain fog and ... that was harder to get out of bed every morning. No, I think that you can keep your clarity, your sexuality, your sense of humor, your vitality until the day you drop dead. Unfortunately, in the West we all have to fit within the Bell curve. The Bell curve, it's already picked a death sentence for you. It says that thirty-two percent of us will die of heart disease, twenty-nine percent of cancer. Only one out of a hundred will die in the arms of his or her beloved at the age of a hundred and twenty after great sex. This will be ...
- Dave: That will be the best way to die that I can think of.
- Alberto: That will be the outliers. That's what we ... When you look at the shamanic traditions, this is how people live. They die of old age. They died of accidents and some parasites but we know how to treat those today. We have the opportunity to really live smartly. That means we have to have smart bugs in our belly, smart brains and the brain foods that do that.
- Dave: So far you've mentioned DHA, you mentioned soil-based organisms and you're going to give me a link, we'll put it all on there. I'm not sure there's so many different SPOs now. Then, you just mentioned trans-Resveratrol or Pterostilbene. What are the other things that fix the brain that you referenced earlier?
- Alberto: I'll tell you a couple. When I was in the jungle in the Amazon as a medical anthropologist and eventually as a student of the shamans, I was going through my training which included fasting and fasting is

extraordinary. I fast one day a week. The shamans would say to me, “Well, you've got to eat the bark of that root, of that tree and those roots over there.” I go, “Why?” They say, “Because it's always been done that way.” That wasn't good enough for me. I wanted the science behind it but science belongs to us in the West, not to ... I went ahead and ate. It tasted like crap, awful. I boil it, I chew it. Then, we took it to the laboratory twenty years later and we found that what they were doing is that they were repairing the brain. They were turning on the longevity genes, the Sir2 genes and there are few substances that do that.

First, Omega-3s, which we used to get from fish. They're essential fatty acids because the body does not produce them. That's why they're called essential. Today, we can't get it from fish anymore because all of our fish is farm-raised and they're fed corn, cannot make DHA from corn. DHA, breast milk is forty percent DHA because the brain needs it. If you don't know somebody who's lactating, you got to supplement because you need the DHA to repair the regions in the brain where learning happens. If you're not learning, you're repeating what you already learn. You're repeating the same job, the same relationship, the same arguments with your spouse, the same attitudes, been there, done that. You stagnate.

What happens when you do that is you become a grouchy, crabby old person. My wife and I were having dinner the other night at a restaurant. There was this couple sitting about six tables away, not too many people there. You could tell they've been together for a hundred years and they hated each other. They weren't talking to each other. We're kind of watching them. Finally, after about twenty minutes, he says to her, “Pass salt.” You can read between the lines and what he's saying is pass the salt bitch, you're ruin-, so this is what happens when you don't repair your brain. You become a grouchy old guy whose world has collapsed or a gold woman that's bitter and angry. If you repair it, you keep learning all your life.

Dave: Alberto, I have to tell you that one of the highlights of the entire podcast history is that you just said, “Pass the salt bitch,” on the show. I would not ever have predicted you'd say that. What a great story.

- Alberto: I should've watched my language, I'm sorry. You can ...
- Dave: No, no, no. I wouldn't have predicted that would ever come from you but what a perfect story. It made me laugh.
- Alberto: DHA, we're on the brain foods, DHA is essential. Curcumin, which is from turmeric, curcumin, a gram a day ... Let's go back to DHA and EPA which are the Omega-3s. You should be doing about three grams of Omega-3 a day.
- Dave: What's your favorite source? I recommend krill on the [Bulletproof Diet](#). Do you like krill? Or do you like salmon? Or do you like sardines or some other kind of fish oil?
- Alberto: I love salmons and sardines but I like my DHA from algae.
- Dave: Okay, got it, the purified stuff.
- Alberto: Yeah. As long as you have a good supplier, they're all equally good.
- Dave: I try to get the phosphorylated DHA because then your body doesn't have to put it in the brain. Is it worth the extra money for that in your experience?
- Alberto: Sure, you're saving energy to the system. Turmeric, in America, if you live to be eighty-five years old, the odds of being diagnosed with Alzheimer's are one out of two. Fifty percent of Americans who live to be eighty-five will have diagnose with Alzheimer's, which means that it began twenty years before. If you look at the statistics in India, where they eat a lot of curcumin and turmeric, it's only fifteen percent. If you go to some Native American populations, it's only five percent or is non-existent if you go to the Amazon.
- The curcumin is essential because it switches on both mitochondrial biogenesis and production of new mitochondria as well as the sirtuin genes and it's an amazing anti-inflammatory, nature's best anti-inflammatory.

- Dave: That is exactly in line with my understanding. People should always be eating food cooked with it or they should be taking that as a supplement.
- Alberto: Absolutely, and then eat colourful. Eat for the rainbow. Go for the colors in fruit. Avoid anything white. In fact, if you want to really stay healthy, avoid anything that has a label, anything that's like ... don't eat it. If you can't pronounce what's in it, don't buy it.
- Dave: I eat at least ten servings of vegetables a day. I recommend that on the [Bulletproof Diet](#). I found when I went down to a zero carb diet for three months, I'm talking one serving of green vegetables a day, I developed leaky gut and got new food allergies, which is why I try to keep about fifteen grams or more occasionally of carbs to allow mucus formation.
- Alberto: Yeah, but don't get your carbs from grains.
- Dave: Okay. I also say if you're going to eat carbs, to refuel glycogen once a week, sweet potatoes are first but white rice is the lowest toxin, non-sweet potato thing that I could find that would provide starch. What's your take on white rice?
- Alberto: Yeah, I like rice. If you look at the great religions in the world and the traditions in the world, you could see them in Europe. The Europeans are people of the wheat and their religions there are around the wheat. In Christianity, you have the wheat, the wafer that becomes the body of Christ and Demeter was the goddess of the Greeks that was the goddess of the wheat. In Asia, it's the rice, they're people of the rice. In the Americas, it's the corn. The traditions around corn; corn is seen as the mother. I like rice. I think that the real critter here is gluten.
- Dave: Yeah. You can't have a fully-functioning brain and eat gluten on a regular basis. I don't believe it's possible.
- Alberto: I don't either. In fact, if you want to have a fully-functioning shamanic brain, where you develop all kinds of what we would call extraordinary abilities, where you're able to see things that other people can't. There was a wonderful book that was published about forty years ago called

[Executive ESP](#) among Top Fortune 500 companies. They found that the executives that had the highest ESP scores, which is the ability to see things that other people can't see, actually more than doubled their personal net worth and their company's net worth in the same period of time, where the executives with the lowest ESP scores actually lost money for their companies.

Dave: This book explains how they determine what an ESP score is?

Alberto: Oh yeah, absolutely. They use standardized ESP test. I'll show you the book.

Dave: Awesome. I'm going to have to read this. We may find that there's a shortage of this book used on Amazon after the show goes public.

Alberto: You've got to get it. Friends of mine actually wrote it. You've got to get it online. Can you see it?

Dave: Yeah.

Alberto: It's a brilliant book. Actually, it was co-authored by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, which wrote the book *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain*. What we were calling psychic phenomena, which we think the voodoo priest and shamans and psychics are mediums of, they're actually natural abilities of every human but we find them in such a small number of the population that we consider them super normal or super ordinary. They are ordinary. They're natural. They're normal. When you repair the brain, repair the gut, feed the brain with a high mitochondrial foods and trigger the mitochondrial repair, these abilities begin to appear on their own.

You don't need to be a yogi or chant ohm, though it helps, you just have to do the basics and then the human potential begins to reveal itself to you.

Dave: That is so well said and it's been my own experience. You just end up gaining intuition and creativity in a way that you didn't before when you remove the self-limiting foods and you add in the things that increase brain power.

Alberto: Precisely.

Alberto: We're only two or three days away from feeling well. Take for granted the fact that well, I'm just getting older or I haven't exercised or ... No, we take for granted the fact that we're waking up every morning not feeling good. It only takes two or three days of first of all getting the dairy out of your diet, getting the gluten out of your diet, getting the inflammatories, the sugars out of your diet and getting the junk out of your diet. Within three to four days, you feel better. In fact, we have a program we call [Growing New Body](#), where in seven days, we trigger the growth of a new body that's healed, that's healthy.

Dave: I will include links to that. That sounds pretty interesting. My own experience is you really do feel massive reductions in inflammation when you start eating "a clean diet". You get rid of all the various sources of things that slow you down. All of a sudden, you wake up and you have a level of mental abilities you didn't ...

Alberto: You're sleeping well and your brain fog clears. You laugh again. It's important. You laugh for no reason sometimes.

Dave: Let me ask you another question. We're coming close to the end of the show. Do you drink [coffee](#)?

Alberto: I love coffee.

Dave: Does coffee in your experience, increase your ability to do some of the more high functioning mental states that you work with as a shaman? Or is it more just like an energizer thing?

Alberto: Let's go back to the brain. In Western science, we look at pathways, neuro pathways, chemical pathways because when you find a pathway that a chemical works on, you can patent that and you've got a pharmaceutical remedy, you can make a lot of money with. We look at single active chemicals, whereas a shaman works with the entire plant, you can't patent comfrey or oregano. If you take an extract from it, you find the active ingredient, you can. We look at pathways. The shaman instead looks at the whole plant, looks at networks which are bunches

of pathways. Then, you want to look at systems which in a bunches of networks. If you go back to the pathways, there's a ... coffee is the best stimulant of a detox pathway called the NRF2 detox pathway.

What it does is that it switches on. There are a number of products that do that, turmeric, broccoli, all the cruciferous vegetables do that. They turn on the detox pathways inside the cell that shut down after about the age of forty. They turn on the production of glutathione, of SOD. Within thirty days of taking these regulators, you find that you return to your your antioxidant production you have when you were eighteen years old. What does that is turmeric, cruciferous vegetables, coffee is one of the best ones to turn on this pathway. You begin to detoxify, switches on to longevity genes but you can only have coffee and enjoy it really if your fight or flight is turned off because living in a world that is dangerous and you need to be hyper alert and stimulated, then the coffee is going to be affecting negatively the adrenaline pathways.

When you're able to relax and de-stress by repairing the brain, repairing the gut, coffee is manna from heaven. Some people react to it and should not have it but even if you have the [decaffeinated coffee](#) and it's a quality decaf because it's non-toxic and you can talk about that I'm sure, it still activates that same pathway.

Dave: That's exactly the reason that I made a [decaf](#) of grated coffee bean even though I believe it's better for people to have the fully caffeinated coffee with all of its oils intact, there are benefits to the decaf stuff that I've seen in multiple studies. I consider it a core part of what I do on a regular basis. I just wanted to get the kind of shaman meditation perspective from you on it. We didn't line this up ahead of time or anything. I just ask a lot of the guests about this. Some say they like coffee. Some say they don't.

Alberto: Are you selling the intravenous, the long drip that you can take to the vein directly?

Dave: Intravenous espresso, totally.

Alberto: A shot to go. Everything in nature has its beauty but there are certain plants that when you take them, the body interprets them as poisons and mounts this huge antioxidant response to them. They're not really poison. In fact, all of our spices are plants that we haven't fully adapted to. The example is when you have iceberg lettuce. Iceberg lettuce doesn't taste like anything. You got the whole bunch of olive oil and blue cheese on it for it to taste like something. If you take arugula, arugula is delicious, got a little spice to it. That's because we have completely adapted to iceberg lettuce, to the chemical defenses, but arugula, we're still adapting to as a species. It's got a little bite.

All the spices are plants that we're still adapting to but that are not toxic, but some of them, the body reads them as toxins and when they're not and mounts this huge antioxidant response to them and it turns on the machinery that has crept slowly to semi-death inside the cells, switches it back on again full force, starts producing new mitochondria and starts regenerating. This is what fasting does. Curcumin, coffee triggers that same mechanism. Shamans learned a long time ago that if you wanted to heal an illness, you don't treat the illness. In fact, you look at the illness as the best effort that the body is making to heal itself, not as the enemy but the best that the body knows how to do to bring about healing.

You work with the illness and not against it. You work not by treating the illness but by turning on the self-healing systems inside the body.

Dave: Yeah, that is a wonderful way of looking at it. It's so much more holistic than I'm going to fix this one thing, not knowing what else will change around it.

Alberto: Yeah, I mean especially today when you look at Western medicine and you have doctors by geography. The doctors specialize in the head and some of them in the gut and some of them in the feet and the heart. The head docs and the neurologist don't talk to the gut docs. Most of the head problems come from the gut. Doctors specialize in organs and in diseases. Nobody specializes in the whole body. If people want to learn more about this, they can visit our website at The Four Winds, where we

have in the additional reading section thefourwinds.com, T-H-E-F-O-U-R-W-I-N-D-S .com.

Dave: You actually read my mind, which I guess is a skill that you've trained. I was going to ask you what's the URL that people should be going to? Is that the only URL you want to share?

Alberto: That's probably the best one. If you friend me in [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) or like me in Facebook, we feed a lot of interesting material. That's under The Four Winds as well. The Four Winds, F-O-U-R-W-I-N-D-S. Lot of good shamanic insight with brain, sprinkling of brain material.

What amazed me when I went to the Amazon is I saw them prepare curare one time. Can I tell the story? Do we have time?

Dave: Please, yeah.

Alberto: They're brewing the stuff and I get a whiff of it at a distance. It smells delicious, smell like bread baking. I start getting closer to it. They stop me. They said, "Don't go any closer." I go, "Why?" "Because you'll die." Curare is prepared by mixing seven plants. It's a neurotoxin that you ...

Dave: It's like the smell from Subway with that ...?

Alberto: Yeah, not quite that bad. They'll put it in blowdarts and blowguns and you need to cook it seventy-two hours exactly, no longer, no shorter, seven plants. If you smell the aroma, it kills you within twenty seconds. When it's prepared, it's a very thick paste and the shaman says, "Open your hand." He puts a glob of it in my hand. I asked him, "What is it?" He said, "Curare." I dropped it. He says, "No, no, no. It can't hurt you." You could swallow it and it'll go through your full digestive tract and to put it in your hand but if it comes into contact with blood, that's when you're in trouble.

I asked him, "How did you learn which seven plants to cook?" They couldn't have smelled it because they would've died. They wouldn't have been able to tell their children what to do or not to do. The shaman said, "Well, the plants told us. The jungle told us how to do it." These are people that still have an active dialog with nature and with spirit. They

can learn directly from nature. They can learn directly from the wisdom of the universe.

Dave: That's pretty profound. Alberto, every guest on the show gets asked the same question at the end of the show. What are the top three recommendations that you would make for someone who wants to perform better across the all the mains of their life? Your entire life's wisdom and work distilled into the three most important things for the average person. What are they?

Alberto: I don't give advice. The first one would be don't give advice to anybody that you're not doing yourself. The second one would be laugh a lot. At the end, it's all funny. It's all very funny. It's all a good, good joke. The third is prepare to die so that you're living your life complete in every moment and you know that you have lived it to the best that you possibly could and that life continues beyond death.

Dave: Thank you Alberto. Awesome, awesome points and what a great interview. I really appreciate you taking the time to be on Bulletproof Radio today. We have links to your Facebook page, to The Four Winds website and all the other things we talked about today in the show notes so people can find them. For people listening, I would encourage you to look at Alberto's work. He's a true brain hacker who's absolutely willing to look at biochemistry and then goes straight up to meditation and see how the two come together. I've learned a lot from him.

Alberto: Thank you. Thank you Dave and blessings and blessings to everyone listening to us today. Don't forget to send me that product. I want to try that.

Dave: You'll get some [Brain Octane](#).

Alberto: All right, be well. Bye bye.

UJ: Talk to you soon, Dave.



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