



Transcript of “Transforming Lives with Light with Helen Irlen”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #98



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Dave: Hi, everyone. Welcome to Bulletproof Executive Radio. This is Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that men's faces tend to be reddish in color and women's faces are usually more green. Now, part of me says that's because one of us is from Mars and the other is from Venus but that's not actually why. Researchers conducted a study looking at hundreds of faces, analyzed the main color hues to see what the pattern looked like. They also asked the participants to identify the gender of a blurred face image and the evidence matched. Most people say that men have reddish hues even if they can't make out the features and that women have greenish hues. Somehow we know this is our skin color. That's kind of cool.

I'd also appreciate it if you'd take the time to click Like on Facebook. We've got almost 60,000 likes at this point. The more of those we have, the easier it is to reach other people to help them with the free content that we provide there and on the website. My goal by the end of 2014 is to hit 200,000 people because we are changing and improving lives on a daily basis. Check it out, Bulletproof Executive on Facebook.

Now, this is a show that so many people have been waiting for. You've all seen me in my cool sort of Cyclops orange glasses on stage in front of thousands of people. People always go, "Why do you do that?" I like to say it's because I'm a genetic mutant but the real truth of the matter is because of the work of the woman that you're looking if you're watching us on iTunes or on YouTube or maybe if you're just driving your car, the woman whose voice you're going to hear. This is Helen Irlen of the Irlen Institute.

Helen graduated from Cornell with a master's in Educational Psychology and this matters. She's a school psychologist for 15 years and she started the Irlen Institute in 1983. She discovered something called scotopic sensitivity and visual stress, looked at how different colors affect brains. She did this with a federal research grant looking at how you could help people with disabilities. She's also done a ton of work

with wounded marines in the Semper Fi Fund, people who have brain damage who'd benefit from colored lenses.

Before I introduce you, Helen, there's one other thing that I am so proud of you for. This is the fact that you are one of the healers that I've worked with who has been mentioned on Quackwatch. For all of you listening to this, Quackwatch is a site run by someone who has discredited many times as a tool of the pharmaceutical industry and he picks on the people with the coolest stuff that works. The best bio hackers are almost always listed there. Helen, congratulations and I hope to one day be listed on Quackwatch myself. I'm really working on it. Steven, if you're listening, can you please put me on your site? I'd really appreciate that.

Helen: Thanks, Dave.

Dave: All right, Helen. I'm so excited to have you on the show. Tell me about Irlen Syndrome or Scotopic Sensitivity. What is it? How did you come about this? Just give me the story.

Helen: I'll give you the background to this. You mentioned that I've been a professional for 40 years plus already. To my credit, I'm a therapist, I'm a school psychologist, I'm an adult learning disability specialist, I'm an educational specialist but this all came about after working as a school psychologist and becoming very disenchanted with the fact that as a professional I was unable to identify all those children and adults who were struggling and suffering. Every time I couldn't identify someone is having an actual problem then that person felt that it was their fault that they were dumb, stupid or lazy.

I realized that we as professionals didn't have all the tools to know and identifying all the underlying issues. I think a lot of people listening to this can recognize that because they may feel as if they have a child and they'll say something is wrong but nobody is coming up with what the reason or the issue is.

Then as you mentioned, Dave, I started a program for adults at California State University here in Long Beach. Part of that was a federal

grant for me to take a look at what kinds of problems stayed within an individual for a lifetime. I, with the university students, they were bright. They had made it to a 4-year university but they were still struggling and not functioning up to their full potential. This was the group that I get to do something very different with. I got to ask them what they thought their problem was.

In education that's something we don't do. We tell people what their problem is. We never ask them, "Is this right? Is this wrong? Does this apply to you?" I get to ask them and the information that I got is what came and eventually formulated this whole concept of "Wait a minute. Here are all these issues and questions that we haven't asked that I then went ahead and had to find the solution for."

Dave: You found the solution for people by asking them, by measuring results and saying, "What do you want?" instead of "Here's what you'll get"?

Helen: By asking them to describe their problem and starting to pretty good at learning how to ask the right questions. It really makes the difference how you ask your question, what kind of information you get back. That brings up the point that most people aren't aware in the areas that I'm dealing with whether they're forming up to their potential or if they have a problem. Can I give you a couple of examples?

Dave: Please.

Helen: Interesting because we all cope or we avoid those things that are difficult or we develop strategy. Let me give you a couple of examples. If you ask somebody who doesn't like to read what reading is like, they'll just go "It's boring. I don't like it." What do they do? They try to get by without reading or doing skip reading. It's okay but then it can affect your advancement. There's just so far that you can go and cope.

When you ask the question in a different way such as "I want you to think about reading not when you start but when you get to that point that you want to stop reading, how do you feel and how do things look?" You get a whole bunch of different responses for some people.

Dave: It's kind of funny. I wasn't aware of your work and I read very, very quickly. I learned to read at 18 months and I did a lot of vision hacking. We actually testing my tracking and I had near perfect tracking. That's pretty fortunate because until I did the testing for my Irlen lenses, those cool orange glasses that you all see me wear, I would look at words and I could read but under bright fluorescent lights I could still read but I would notice I would get really, really tired. I knew that the lights were hurting my eyes. Now, I understand it's because there are some spectral differences in fluorescent lights. Because my brain is fast enough to pick up a flicker than other people don't even with those modern ones. They actually hurt. When I look at them I feel pain.

I looked at the page and when the guy was doing testing to see what color lenses caused the most eye relaxation for me, he said "Well, look around the words. Do you see anything?" I never paid attention what wasn't the word. When I looked there's all sorts of weird shapes and colors moving around on the page. I've never seen them because I never bothered to pay attention to them. I realized wow, that's kind of interesting. When I put these lenses on those things go away but my eyes are relaxed and I'm actually way more resilient. I wear those things especially indoors because I have 3 or 4 times as much energy all day because I spend less of my brain on filtering out frequencies that I don't like.

Helen: Yeah, that's exactly right. It's actually your brain that's on distress. That's an interesting concept because most of us when we think about stress, we think about divorces and children and work but they don't think about the environment being stressful. The type of stress that we're able to eliminate is stress from the environment especially fluorescent lights, bright lights, glare, high contrast which is black print on white paper, computer screens which is just staring into a fluorescent light, driving headlights at night. People don't think about the environment causing the brain to have to work harder. That's going to affect their functioning, their performance, their achievement, their energy and effort and generally their health and well-being.

Dave: It's really amazing but now that we've shown the will power math, around having unlimited amounts of will power, you only have so much

energy and your brain can be tired and you can use your will power to make yourself do something but what if you just took away the things that made you tired that didn't cost you much to take away.

Helen: That's a good way of phrasing it. The other thing is without realizing that you're paying a price. A lot of times it will show up when you're working so hard as being tired or fatigued and you just excuse it and think, "Oh well, everybody gets tired or fatigued. Everybody gets tired under fluorescent lights or everybody gets sleepy because reading is supposed to put you to sleep." I hear that a lot or "Of course you get headaches when you're under fluorescent lights or with reading or with driving, everybody does." I asked my mom and she says, "Sure, I do it too. Everybody does." We're also not aware that you don't need to pay this price.

I want to bring up other ... it's amazing to me how many people accept the fact that they have to pay a physical price, that they have to have eye pain or strain. You say that they have to have headaches or be nauseous or dizzy but anxiety, irritability, fidgetiness are all physical symptoms that maybe triggered by the environment that my Irlen Filters can remove or eliminate.

Dave: It's funny. One of the company that have publically traded one where I was a member of the executive team, we had this board room. It was the most horribly lit boardroom I've ever imagined. They had compact florescent lights in directional cones mounted right over everyone's head and over the middle of the table with extreme tilt towards the blue spectrum. That room gave me a headache within 3 minutes.

I'm pretty resilient but I can go without lenses for a while but this thing was like kryptonite. I don't think they ever had an effective board meeting in that room because everyone in there was hugely biologically stressed by the crappy design of the room and the lighting. Instead of doing work and making intelligent decisions, they made stress decisions. They had to go private because well, the company was sort of failing. I'm not going to say the lights caused it. There were a few other factors but I think they contributed because people didn't think at the nervous system center of the company.

- Helen: They didn't realize it. I think what happens is the fact that we have gone higher and higher tech. The higher tech we go, the more we've created an environment that makes it difficult to perform and function for some individuals and those are the ones that I've worked it. Think about it, fluorescent lighting, the brightness the lighting has increased by over 200% since World War II. We used to have blackboards then we went to green boards. Now we have white boards. We have interactive light boards. We have high glare, high gloss. Everything is higher contrast. Everything is brighter and everything then becomes much more stressful leading to difficulties and physical symptoms for those people that we can help.
- Dave: All right, Helen, this is a question I've been wanting to ask for a long time.
- Helen: Go ahead.
- Dave: Do Mac computers make your eyes weak because they have those damned glossy screens on them?
- Helen: People complain a lot more about actually the Mac computers and there's a lot of things that go online that I read about saying, "How do I dim them down? What do I do about them? I can't use the Mac. I'm going to go back and get a PC computer instead." Then think about what we've done, we've done that, we have iPads and iPhones and we're reading off of iPads. The brighter the better, right?
- Dave: I put anti-glare filters on all of them. The first time I got a Mac was a glossy screen, I had about a 6-month period where I really had a decline in performance and I couldn't figure it out. I was in a dream job. I was working for a VC. I was sitting in a room with fluorescent sconce, this very terrible indoor lighting and they were bouncing off my screen. I was trying to stare through the reflection into my email and whatever else and I couldn't figure out why I was a zombie halfway through the day. I did eventually figured it out.

I just wondered now that we've gone to super bright, super glossy screens, are you seeing an increase in demand for people who are saying, "Well, what's my color to cause eye relaxation?"

Helen: Well, again it's brain. It's brain that causes ...

Dave: I'm sorry. Yeah.

Helen: I keep having to come back to the brain because the brain controls how you think, how you feel, how you act.

Dave: Yes, it is brain, not eyes.

Helen: It's all brain-based not your eyes. Yes, and also look at the television sets. They get a lot of complaints about the HD TV sets. Again the more high-tech we go, the more difficulties we're creating for a lot of people.

Dave: I turn the brightness and the contrast way down on the modern things which helps enormously and I run a software on my computer called Flex which I'm ...

Helen: And you wear your own filters.

Dave: Yeah, I wear my own filters and sometimes two pairs of them ... I'm just kidding. It has definitely made me way more resilient throughout the day to the extent that I'm willing to wear them. I don't really care if people think I look goofy. I probably look goofy beforehand anyway. Now, tell me more about the science behind this. You say it affects the brain, not just the eyes. That's only my perception of it. How does poor lighting affect the eyes?

Helen: Poor lighting and let's define poor lighting again. You said it's fluorescent lights and very bright lights becomes poor lighting. What happens is if your eyes are open, it's not your eyes that have to read and process visual information. It's your brain. If your eyes are open, your brain is being flooded by light. Light is composed of all the colors of the rainbow travelling at different speeds. There are certain of those colors or wavelength of light that's coming in at a wrong timing.

If it's a radio, it would sound like a lot of distortion to your brain. Then your brain has to work harder and harder and it's not processing it correctly and then it starts to create physical symptoms and like you just talked about distortions on the page, that these things can flicker and flash. Once you look at it in your environment, you may not have depth perception and not even realize it. It can affect everything you look at whether it's trying to read right, copy or drive or function in your environment but that's the concept in your brain. Your brain is connected to your spinal cord. If your brain is stressed, it just goes throughout your whole system.

Dave: Do you have any imaging studies or what does it do to your brainwaves? How do we know it is really affecting the brain versus just a bunch of picky people with Asperger's Syndrome?

Helen: A good way of describing it, Dave. Let me show you and we can talk about it for those that are driving in their car. The top brain, what happens is when the brain is stressed ... this is SPECT scan where they're looking at somebody reading on the computer at real time and the parts of the brain, for those of you who can see this that is white is the part of the brain that is overactive and working too hard. That part of the brain that you're seeing that's working too hard is the back part of your brain which is your visual cortex but it talks to other parts of your brain. It triggers the central part of your brain that you can see is also white. That's anxiety and irritability and fidgetiness and nervousness.

To compensate the top part of your brain is underactive and that's not functioning well. That is your attention and concentration. That's somebody who needs to wear my filters. The bottom picture is the same person reading on the computer but they're wearing their own spectral filters now so that their brain can perform at its peak performance without any stress or strain. Look how calm that brain is.

Dave: Now, if you're listening to this in your car, we're looking at a top view and a side view of a brain. The top one, when someone has visual stress and brains stress as a result of fluorescent lighting, the whole brain is lit up, it looks like there's pieces of bubblegum stuck all over it. The bottom brain is just about clear. It's a relaxed brain. I certainly feel that

difference. The SPECT scan itself comes from injecting a radioactive sugar with radioactive tracer in it into the body and then doing a test in an imaging machine.

This is a kind of thing that I've done. The pictures of my brain that you've seen online are from a SPECT scan I've done on myself. Unfortunately when I did my SPECT scan, I did not have access to Irlen filters because I didn't know about them so I didn't do a before and after but I did a concentrating and not concentrating. My concentrating one showed basically flat line, no metabolic activity in parietal and frontal cortex partly I'm sure because of visual stress and partly because of environmental stress and the wrong foods and an untrained mind and all the other things that I've since hacked.

You showed us the brain scan, a pretty big difference. Did you work with Dr. Amen who is a big fan of SPECT scans or is this ...?

Helen: Yeah. This was taken at one of Dr. Amen's clinics, one of our clients. We have a number of them so yes, we work with Dr. Amen.

Dave: Dr. Amen, and for those of you listening who haven't come across his work, he's a very celebrated scientist who's so quantitative. He looks at the brain, sees what it's doing and then changes the environment to change it. He's an epic bio-hacker and one we're paying attention too. That's cool. I wasn't sure if that was one of his scans or something else.

Helen: Yes, it is.

Dave: Helen, we talked about sensory overload. You mentioned bright lighting, fluorescent lighting. What about sunlight? Is this causing problems for some people?

Helen: I think yes but let me take it a step which is interesting to me. A lot of people who are bothered by sunlight, they know they are bothered by sunlight. They quickly go and grab sunglasses but if they didn't wear their sunglasses and they stayed out in bright light, this same physical symptoms that would be triggered by sunlight are triggered by bright lights, fluorescent lights, glare, white paper, high contrast, certain

patterns, reading and doing any visually intensive activity. Your brain interprets all of these environmental that I mentioned in terms of the environment as stressors and has difficulty coping with them ... I forgot headlights at night as well.

Dave: Yeah, headlights at night have always bothered me. Here's a question for you though. I know bright lights and blue section light in the middle of the day signals our body that it's daytime so our circadian rhythm is normal. When I work at home, it looks like this. I've got a thousand watts of halogen shining down on me. It doesn't cause any brain stress which is kind of unusual but if I had 40 watts of fluorescent lights shining on me, I would really feel like headache coming on after a while. Why the difference between super bright almost sunlight intensity, if you're looking at this on video I just turned them on and if you're just listening I'm now glowing really brightly. What's the difference between those two settings?

Helen: Well, again it depends on the person's brain and everybody's brain is different. I have people who cannot handle halogen lights either. If you ask me what the best lighting is for the population that I work with, it's indirect natural lighting or incandescent lights which are being banned all over the world.

Dave: I will admit that I might have a thousand incandescent and halogen bulbs in storage because ...

Helen: In storage, that's a lot of my clients do. They have them in the closet in storage, right?

Dave: I like being able to see and I can tell you that the curly lights, those nasty compact fluorescent, not only do they emit a sickly glow, they do reduce human performance even in people who aren't a delicate flower like me. They also if one of them breaks, you should be trained. If you're listening to this, run out of the room because if you breathe a little of the gas in there, you can get mercury poisoning just from that. There are cases of kids who broke one in a room and then slept in the room with broken pieces who got profoundly ill as a result of that.

These are toxic things that don't belong in your house. If you can afford the iPad or the car you're listening to this show on, you can afford proper lighting and that means no fluorescents. If you care about your family, you care about your own health and your own long term performance, you ought to just toss them.

Helen: Except for the government is totally against that because they are saying you must have fluorescent lights on which is creating a huge issue. We've come up with position papers in Europe, in Canada and in the US saying, "Wait a minute. There's a huge population that cannot handle fluorescent lighting in terms of creating physical symptoms, difficulty performing problems with ability, anxiety, a whole bunch." Because we're not the majority of the population, the governments dismissed it and keeps promoting fluorescent lighting and is refusing to take away the ban on incandescent lights.

Dave: What about LED lights? Let's make this not just for sensitivity brains but just for people who want to perform well.

Helen: Yeah. I don't know about that. We haven't had enough time to really research and see it with the same population. It's supposedly the way of the future and the way it's going to go eventually is away from fluorescents and into LEDs.

Dave: I've started using LEDs in my light, in my office here as part of my lighting. I don't have the remote close to me but my eyes really like the red spectrum which enhances mitochondrial function anyway. Since it's a colored tunable light, it costs \$30 from Costco and it's a thrift. It's easy to get indirect light and you can tune the spectrum in the lights. I feel like the ability to create a natural spectrum and not stare at a super bright LED is already changing interior lighting design. I know the Bulletproof stores that we're opening starting in LA, we will have actually Bulletproof coffee shops that I've specked only LED lighting or halogen when possible because I won't allow fluorescent lights in the store.

Helen: Cool. You're controlling your environment. I guess my whole position is the fact that what happens when you can't control your whole

environment, isn't it easier to have a pair of glasses like you would that you can just put on and you have them on. It doesn't matter if you're in fluorescent lighting, if you're in bright lighting, if you're in LEDs or whatever bothers you, it goes away. Your whole environment 100% of the time stays stress-free and you don't have to worry about at being controlled or making changes because you can't control your whole environment.

Dave: Now, you can't control your whole environment. The best that you can do is you can optimize the environment so that the average person is as high at performing and as well as you can arrange but ...

Helen: Bright or not bright.

Dave: I hate to say this, people who are super high performance, they are outliers by definition. You're going to need to customize your own environment and that may mean you carry your butter with you if you're eating a high fat diet, like to bulk up your diet. Yeah, I do that. It may mean you have a bag of vitamins, yeah I do that, and it may mean that you have cool glasses. Yeah, I do that too. The same thing with wearing a jacket even, right, we do that and it seems very natural but controlling your spectrum is just so out there. What are the benefits that people experience when they put on lenses?

Helen: What are the benefits?

Dave: Yeah, what do you think?

Helen: It depends. The benefits of this in terms of reading, you can read faster, easier, longer, no physical symptoms. You don't have to reread for comprehension. You're not finding that you have to take breaks. Driving is not stressful. It's not hard to turn left in front of an oncoming traffic. You're not sitting there waiting because you're not sure. It's easier in terms of changing lanes, in terms of night driving. You don't have to look down. You can stay looking at the road because the headlights aren't too bright and they don't bother you.

You can be pain free and that's something that I always find interesting how there are people who just assume, "Well, I've always had headaches. I've had them for a long time. I guess I just have to have headaches." I always say, "Why? Why do you live with that thought that you have to have headaches when there's something as simple technology that can get rid of totally your headaches just in terms of ... I can talk about extreme cases, in terms of people being misdiagnosed especially ADD and ADHD. That has become a huge issue in this country. We're really diagnosing more and more children and adults and putting them on medication but what about if that's really a misdiagnosis and your inattentiveness and fidgetiness is related to the lighting, is related to you needing to take breaks and that you don't need medication and you've been diagnosed.

We see a lot of people who just need their Irlen filters and they say "You know, I don't have ADD or ADHD." The most severe cases and I want to switch a little bit because you can inherit this problem, so you get to blame either your mom or dad, or you can acquire it through head injury or concussion. That has become a big topic today in terms of sports and concussions. We've been doing research now for the last 2 years on head injuries and concussions with the military population. They are the most severe in terms of experiencing repeated explosions and experiencing repeated concussions and TBIs and then living, literally every day of their lives with headaches and migraines.

No longer can they read, nor longer can they do any kind of academic task that they used to do. With Irlen filters, it totally restores their capabilities and totally takes away their headaches and migraines so they're not living on a whole list of heavy duty medications in terms of surviving. We deal with kids in sports, professional athletes in the NFL and the Hockey Leagues who have had concussions and it has really affected their ability and performance.

Dave: I think I've always been somewhat sensitive to colors. Just I remember, even in the University years ago, I always wanted to wear baseball hat and sunglasses and things like that. I just naturally did that and not recognizing that it was visual strain. Just thought I was more comfortable that way. Now, when I did my SPECT scan, this is going

back 15 years, I've just been living in a really moldy house, had toxic mold in it. I did my brain scan; I've been trained by Daniel Amen for about 15 years. I did the scan, it came back with signs of toxic brain exposure in two other pages of things that weren't working well with my head. I oftentimes wonder if I actually got damage to my brain that made my light sensitivity worst because it does seem to be worse now than it did when I was a teenager, let's say.

Helen: There are a lot of things that you can inherit the problem and you can also acquire it, as I said but you can have things that even if you've inherited that had made your light sensitivity worst like toxicity and molds, in terms of Lyme Disease, in terms of a whole bunch of issues that can contribute to increasing your light sensitivity.

Dave: I have that too, come to think of it. All right.

Helen: Dear. Okay. I think light sensitivity becomes the key issue that we're dealing with here but people aren't aware of how much it can affect you and how much it can affect your whole ability and ability to perform and how you're paying a price because when I work with people who have severe light sensitivity, their putting their brain under chronic stress and chronic stress affects the immune system. That's serious.

Dave: There are studies that show classrooms with fluorescent lights have more days of absenteeism for the teacher and the students are sick more often too. These aren't all light sensitive kids, these are just normal healthy kids. It is chronic stressor, right?

Helen: It is. Yes, it definitely is. Then you have classrooms that really are going to maximize the chronic stress by having bright fluorescent lights, they have white desk, they have white walls, and white floors. The amount of headaches and migraines are phenomenal in classrooms that are like that.

Dave: The classroom of the future maybe could be all mirrors. That would make it even worse. Give them time. Now, what about people who are listening to this thing, "I don't really get a headache when I read"? My response to those people "Hey, maybe you're getting a headache and

you just don't even recognize it," which sounds weird but if it always feels that way when you read, you won't tag it as an unusual condition. It's just like "Oh, when you read it feels like this."

Helen: Yeah, or you can get eye pain or eye strain or you get very good at knowing when to stop before any of these symptoms occur. I find that people aren't aware of the symptoms when they read. They are more aware of it in terms of bright sunlight triggering them and that is why I keep saying "Think about this one on one correlation, whatever happens to you in bright sunlight after a while without sunglasses is happening to you when you're reading, when you're sitting under fluorescent lighting, when you're driving, when you're night driving. It's exactly the same trigger. You're just less aware of it or you're coping and compensating so you're not aware of it."

Dave: The more I've used like Neurofeedback, that 40 years in training that I do has made me acutely aware of "Wait, I'm wobbling from the state of high performance that I like to be in." Immediately I start asking why the more become aware of, like "Wow." This is a variable that I didn't understand and the first thing that brought into awareness was your work and wearing my Irlen lenses and it was profound, the difference in attention that I had. What about people who aren't sensitive to sunlight or whatever else like I am? Say you're a CEO, you can read pretty well but you generally feel pretty good, you're tired sometimes or you're a stay-at-home dad. Either part of the spectrum, you have different kinds of stressors. What use would this kind of technology you filters have or do most people not need this and only the special cases need them?

Helen: Well, let's call special cases. It's not 100% of the population. We're probably about 46% of the population out there who are special. That's on a continuum from very severe to not as severe and it just depends on how you're compensating and coping without realizing it. You're right, there are people who are very aware of it because they are dealing with major symptoms, physical symptoms and there are people who go "Yeah, I'm okay. I just daydream in class. When I'm in a business meeting under fluorescent lighting, I notice I kind of have to work harder at attending and then I start to drift off." They may not be aware

that that's what's happening and it's being caused by the fluorescent lights.

Dave: Helen, I've done some EEG experiments in being a Bio Hacker. That's just kind of how I roll and I noticed, during one of the 40 years that I was in training, I was staring at a bright screen in a dark room, a very brightly lit fluorescent LED screen and I was getting these symptoms that I get from super bright lights like that but we're looking at my brain waves with eight different channels. What I determined was that if I kept staring at this thing, I would go into this daydreaming kind of state but what my brain did is I had Eyes Open Theta and some Eyes Open Alpha and both of those are tied with Dissociation so I'm basically daydreaming and you should not have Alpha with your eyes open for most people.

My whole brain was going into this kind of chaotic state after about 15 minutes of staring at lights like that and if I didn't stare at the lights, it didn't happen. We looked at the electrical changes in the brain but if I started talking, it would go away and it illuminates something fascinating for me. Throughout my career as a student, if you can call it that, I would always get in trouble for talking in class and that was because my brain was about ready to shut off and I'd have to say something. I think a lot of my early career growth, I was attending board meetings at a public company when I was 26. It's because I was the guy who would not shut up in a meeting so they had to promote me. I think that was it because I would it coming on and then I would say something so I wouldn't pass out on the meeting. Maybe this is a gift after all.

Helen: You learned a great strategy. I don't think most people can use the same strategy. I don't think that's one we're going to teach people. It's just better to not get so overstressed out.

Dave: I wish I would have known about this much earlier in life.

Helen: I'll remember that. I have to teach people that strategy.

Dave: It is fascinating that engaging, at least in my case, I don't know if this is for everyone, that engaging my language centres would make the brain

get out of that highly stressed state and do something else. It was good for a little while. I could do things like eat sugar or eat fat that would increase mitochondrial activity and that would give me more resilience. I had all these strategies like "Oh, I'm starting to crater. Okay, I need to get a chocolate chip cookie. That's going to help. I can drink some more coffee and that's going to help." and I'll say something and of course I weigh 300 pounds from those strategies but it's amazing how something as seemingly simple as visual stress that ties to brain stress can affect everything that you do.

Helen: Everything that you do and I think that's a good point, Dave. I have a story about ... One of my students who came to see me and was a C student at UCLA and with her own filters, became an A student. Said to her brother "You need to go in and see Helen Irlen or one of her clinics," and he says "I don't need to do that. I'm a law student. I'm wonderful." Well, he failed the bar twice and therefore they brought him in, mom and dad on one side and his sister on the other side. What he would do is when he started to read, within 2 pages, he'd start to drink coffee, non-stop. Within 4 pages, he would have to hold his eyelids open to read so that they wouldn't close but he didn't have a problem. Right?

Dave: There's a thing, probably men are worst at this about admitting weakness and if you see this as a weakness thing, that's one thing. The way I look at it, even Michael Phelps, he has a special swimsuit that gives him an unfair advantage over naked people in the water. We all use tools to make ourselves stronger and to make ourselves faster. Identifying those areas where tools can help you the most, it only makes you stronger and that's what the best athletes in the world, that's what the most successful people do. The most fearful ones are the ones who go "I might have a weakness but I'm not going to admit it. If I don't say it, it's not there."

My eye-brain interaction and honestly, my auditory, my hearing in my brain, they don't work as well as they should and it's probably congenital and it probably has to do with sugar consumption and folic acid in my mom when she was carrying me. At least that's the theory and it's a pretty plausible one. I know my weaknesses pretty well at this point. I know my strengths and if I can make my strengths stronger or

make my weaknesses less weak or even stronger, I'm totally going to do that and it makes me more bulletproof.

Helen: I'm saying you're talking about maximizing your brain potential and I don't see that as a weakness. I see that as a strength to want to maximize your brain potential.

Dave: Now, I'm this soccer dad or CEO and how would I go about deciding whether Irlen Lenses are going to be something useful for me in my daily life or just when I'm reading or some other time?

Helen: There are two things. One is, we have a website irlen.com and we have various self-tests. It's very easy to identify, A, whether this is going to be helpful and then how much of a price you've been paying. We have self-test, general self-test, reading self-test, headache and migraine self-test available.

Dave: That's awesome.

Helen: We also work with Autism and Asperger Syndrome because a lot of the individuals on that continuum have a very, very distorted environment and we have different self-tests for that.

Dave: It's interesting you mentioned that. I'm going to be presenting at the upcoming AutismOne Conference and some of my non-profit work has been around supporting families with autistic kids in my first book is what do you do as parents before you even get pregnant to reduce the chances of autism happening. How do you reduce autoimmunity in the nervous system and things like that? I love it that you're helping people who are adults or who are kids who have a visual component of a condition like that to address and say it can change the whole of your brain works. If 46% of people have some degree of improvement here, take a little of online quiz. I'm guessing these are free?

Helen: Totally free.

Dave: All right. Take a free quiz, see if you're one of the one in two approximate people who might benefit from tuning your color, at least when you're reading or some of the time.

Helen: Or most of the time.

Dave: Most of the time.

Helen: Because you're under light all the time.

Dave: We may have like a whole bulletproof army of people out there wearing all different colored sunglasses in rooms after this. I'm kidding. Honestly, I know a few, one of my very dear friends is a C level Executive at one of the top five non-profit websites out there. She has this really cool pink and yellow tinted glasses at her collar and she doesn't wear them most of time but when she reads, sometimes she does and they relax her eyes and relax her brain and she feels better, right? It happens and it's not like you're going to wear this all the time but you may find that they're so useful, that you do and you would be like me.

Helen: I just want to point we do have them in contact lenses. For people who have colors and they don't want to wear them, we put them in contacts and we only tint the center portion so it doesn't change the color of your eye and nobody knows that you're wearing them.

Dave: Wow. If you wear contacts and you have this kind of thing going on, that would be true super power. I wish my eyes weren't so dry, I'd probably do it but I kind of like my glasses now.

Now Helen, towards the end of the show there's a question that I've asked every guest. We're nearing our 100th episode now and the question is what are the top three recommendations you have for people who want to perform better in all walks of life? Not just from your daily work but just your whole life, three pieces of wisdom that a high performer should know about.

Helen: I think one is know yourself and be aware of your own physical symptoms and be aware when you're using strategies or coping mechanisms to get by because you're also paying a price. That's one thing that I would recommend to most people. That's interesting in terms of your asking it that way, in terms of generally asking questions.

The other thing that I would probably recommend is it doesn't hurt to get educated and you know that all the time, Dave. You go online and you look things up and you question things and you ask questions. If you don't ask questions and you don't get educated, you're never going to know. Probably, the third thing is don't assume, just in general that stress is external that it can be related to the environment and you have a right to get rid of stress and if you don't, you're going to pay a price.

Dave: Very well said. Helen, would you please tell us your URL one more time so people can check it out if they want. We'll put it in the show. Notice we'll put links to the quizzes and all that there as well at bulletproofexec.com but just people who are driving or something who are wanting to enter this URL so they can check it out. What's your URL?

Helen: Okay. It's irlen.com. I've written two books but I think people first go to the website and they can find out more information.

Dave: Your two books are Reading ...

Helen: Reading by the Colors. I can show the pictures of them and then my other book is the Irlen ... Can we see that? The Irlen Revolution. It's a guide to changing your perception and your life.

Dave: It works. I can definitely vouch for it. Helen, thank you for the work that you've done. I know it's not always been easy to bring a condition that 46% of people have and don't know it to light. I can tell how much energy you've dedicated since 1983 to bring out something that is an obvious problem from where I sit. If you are listening to the show and you want to check it out, the way it works is you find on the Irlen website the local practitioner who can help you get the right color tints for your eyes. It's like a prescription tint almost and then they can cut the lens blanks for you. They can make lenses that are the right color and then you can get them fit in to whatever frames you want.

Helen: Dave, one point is everybody's brain is different and so there's no one size fits all. The color is totally customized to each person's brain and that's the art of this technology and that's why it works so well.

- Dave: Everyone would not be wearing orange glasses. Although at night time, you might want to block some extra blue spectrum to sleep better and that's a different problem than what we're talking about here.
- Helen: Thanks, Dave.
- Dave: Thanks, Helen. Have an awesome day.
- Helen: Thank you.
- Dave: I'm hoping that this Podcast really helps a lot of people. You've certainly helped me.
- Helen: Thank you.
- Dave: If you've enjoyed today's show, check it out on iTunes and click the button that says "This is a good show and you should watch it too." I would totally appreciate that and while you're at it, please swing by Facebook and give us a like if you haven't done that already. We're at around between 50 and 60 thousand likes. The way Facebook has changed their algorithms means that the more likes you have, the easier it is to share your message. I appreciate it if you help to share the message because this show and this work has helped a lot of people and it's making people stronger and better all the time. Thanks again and I'll see you on the next Bulletproof Executive Radio.

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