



Transcript of “Mastering Memory with Mattias Ribbing”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #140



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Dave: Today's cool fact of the day is that Americans eat 100 pounds of chocolate or more per second. The reason this is the cool fact of the day for today on Bulletproof Radio is that we're going to be talking a lot about memory. You might have seen on Google or somewhere, and if you google chocolate and brain, you'll find all kinds of interesting results about what chocolate does, much like coffee, for human performance.

Today's guest on the show is Mattias Ribbing. Mattias is the leading brain trainer in Sweden. He's an educator, a public speaker. He's also a three-time Swedish memory champion, and he's ranked No. 75 in the world. He has actually been awarded the title of Grand Master of Memory, which only 122 people have every done. He achieved all of this in the past, basically, six years, because he only started hacking his memory in 2008.

When we're talking about hacking memory, it's not little things like remembering the names of people you met. It's memorizing a thousand random digits in an hour. It's memorizing the order of ten decks of cards in an hour, or one deck of cards in under two minutes. That's pretty amazing. These skills are fully trained, not things that he was born with.

Mattias, welcome to the show.

Mattias: Thank you so much, Dave. It's a pleasure.

Dave: We're talking today, you're in Sweden, right?

Mattias: Oh, yeah.

Dave: Awesome.

Mattias: In Stockholm.

Dave: I'm here in Victoria, BC, so we're almost as far north as each other. It's funny. I got married in Stockholm, which is where you are.

Mattias: Wonderful.

Dave: I want to understand something. You say that memory is a sport. Or memory championships and memory training is a sport. Do people get mad when people say that? That's a sport. Because that's not a sport. You didn't have to take a hit. You didn't have to lift anything heavy. You just had to look at sheet of paper for a while and then play it back.

Mattias: Yeah, that's the reason that us and chess, we can't get into the official counsel of sports because we don't move enough. But, hell yeah, this is a sport. It's a funny one. It's been around for 23 years now. There are world championships and all kinds of international tournaments . Yeah, we meet basically for a weekend and there's a decathlon with ten different events, with ten different kinds of information. We have to take in as much information as possible and then be able to recite it exactly as it was. For example, as you said numbers and decks of cards. But also we have words, images, names, faces, sounds. Different things. So you should be able to use your brain for any kind of information that you might encounter during a day.

We do these crazy things. For example, as you said with the numbers, that's one of the marathon events. We have both speed events and marathon events. The marathons, we get like a sheet of paper, just random digits to stare at for an hour. After that, we get a blank sheet of paper and a pen, and then have to write down exactly the order of as many as we can remember. If you only have small mistakes, you get a lot of stuff deducted.

After that time, as you said, I do something like a paper like this. You may be able to see it. This is a thousand digits correct, all after each other. That's the official what you need to do to become a Grand Master in one of the events.

Dave: So, if you're listening from your car or something, not watching on iTunes or on YouTube, you would have seen a whole sheet full of basically small numbers maybe spaced a quarter-inch apart. So you just stare at that thing, and you memorize it, then you write down all the numbers from memory again.

Mattias: So, this is the sport. It's a fun thing to do. It's a bit silly in a way, but it's good to prove to people that this can all be done with brain training. It's a super quantifiable way of brain training that you can test. You can see that before I was only able to, as anyone, I was not a genius in any way. Average in school and so on. From maybe able to remember ten digits or so. Then some brain training in between, you can do a thousand. That's really to show the quantifiable way of increasing your learning in a dramatic way.

This is just competitions. What's really interesting is how to use this in daily life. This is why I started to train my brain and train my memory to be able to. I love learning. I love learning all kinds of stuff. I wanted to work as a teacher, also. I love the aspect of teaching people. I saw that this can be increased in a dramatic way, both teaching other people to make them learn quicker, and also of course for yourself with some basic training principles.

This is what I started in 2008. That's now a few years ago, but it only took me a few months to gain my first Swedish record, and then becoming a champ. It's like you learn to drive a car. It takes a few months, then you have this ability with you for the rest of your life. You use it in daily life. When you read interesting books or you sit in lectures, or whatever you do. Or at work when you need to store, taking in lots of new information. Then this skill can increase and become even better over the years, just like hopefully your driving or so.

So, this is the interesting thing, to find a working strategy that you can have for learning any kind of information. This is what I trained and this is what anyone can train. The basics of it is to teach your brain how to think in images. To train your visualization skills. Because what to do then in the brain by visualizing images, you get like a shortcut to the long-term memory by thinking in images. Then the brain can take in a lot of information quick.

This is interesting. When you compare our five senses, our sight, our seeing sense, is the most important to the brain. This is true for everyone. You can actually see that three of each neurons, all the

neurons that work with one of our sense, actually three-quarters of them all work with our sight.

If you compare it by learning through sound. For example, if I want to learn something by saying it out loud time after time, like a telephone number or anything, you just repeat like a parrot. Then the brain can only take in a small small small amount. That's in the characteristic of our sense. It's not very different for different people. There are this bullshit stuff that everyone learns different in a way. We have different likes and dislikes, but our brains are pretty similar in basic structures.

We who compete in memory and in learning, we all know that it's the same for all of us. We have to see images, train our brain to visualize better. Then we can take in much more information fast.

Dave: Help me understand this. I've clearly read a few books on memory, and I'm interested in this. I'm actually working on some more intuition creativity, but also some memory-training software. How does this work? Walk someone who's sitting in their car right now and saying, "I'd like to be able to memorize just a hundred numbers. To heck with a thousand." How do you visualize a number? You look at it. It looks like a number 1. What's the trick?

Mattias: Let's pause with the numbers. That's the most difficult. Let's take something much more easier. Let's take every time you read something. Let's say that you read the newspaper. That's a perfect opportunity, when you're reading, to do some brain training at the same time, then it doesn't cost any extra time. What you do, at the same time when you try to read something, at the same time that you read, what you should do is try to see the contents as a movie.

Dave: The contents of what you're reading?

Mattias: Yeah, exactly. So if you read about let's say in a newspaper article about the robbery. There's a robber fleeing, coming out from a bank, fleeing down the pavement. He has black hat, green jacket, yellow pants. He's running down, chased by two cops with guns drawn. Can you see this in a way?

Dave: Right.

Mattias: What you do really to train your visualization skills is to hold that image for a little bit. Try to make it bigger. Try to see this robber with this green jacket and yellow pants. Start to see the pavement with more detail, and so on. Make it big. There's actually very interesting research published in Cognitive Science that has proved that everyone think in images even if we don't believe we do. Even the people who say, "I'm not visual." They do it.

They tested this with measuring eye movements. You can see the people, that they see images. Their eye movements correspond to how they speak. If you think of it, maybe if you have read a novel in a way, and then seen the same story as a movie, maybe then you're always disappointed because you have already formed your own images of this novel. That's the thing.

We all have seen these images, but only quick and by chance. It's through these images that we've all seen that we can follow the full story and remember stuff around and so on because we create these inner images. Now we change from these images popping up automatically to now do them consciously. That's the thing. To train this memory and this visualization skill.

For example, take something simple if you want to become better at visualization. Let's say for example, visualize a dog. If you decide specific type of dog. First thing that comes to mind. You should always use the first thing that comes to your mind. See a dog in front of you. Try to make that image bigger. It becomes like a meditation. It's super-good visual meditation to see this dog, and to see it as clear as possible. To see it in three dimensions.

That's also very important aspect of becoming better at visualization, to visualize in 3-D. There is also great research that has shown which images that stay the longest in the brain. That is images who have these clear shapes, sharp edges or rounded parts. These 3-D images. So trying to see that is very important.

When you want to learn this in the beginning, it's a bit tricky. You have to almost force your ... Can use your hand almost as "Can I see something between my hands. A dog, for example." Like this. Each time that you do it, the brain becomes more and more used to it, and it starts to get automatic. That's the thing. You can encode any kind of information.

Now, we started we started with this newspaper article. Something very clear. But you go step and step through this, and learn to translate all kinds of information into images. Even you can do crazy math formulas. We showed you can do it with numbers also. Always to try to do this. Also when you listen to someone speak. Can you try to make, see what images pop up in your mind and hold them there, and try to see it in front of you. Then your brain will work almost like a magnet, sucking information into, and you will remember so much.

That's interesting, because these images, they work like clues for your brain. They're clues that you can remember and find your way to code back to what was being said. If after you read this newspaper article and you have this small mental movie, small YouTube movies in the brain, then you retell the whole thing by these clues. What you will notice is that you will remember far more that is in the article. Even if it's not all in the movie. The movie gathers information like a magnet. It sucks lots of stuff, too. You can quickly get things into your long-term memory.

Dave: Interesting. It's all about the quality and the type of visualization. You trained yourself to do that sort of by default.

What about things like basic intelligence. Do you talk about what you're IQ is?

Mattias: I have actually no idea. I haven't tested it. A bit for a reason also, that this is nothing to do with it. Step by step, I haven't encountered now for the five years I've been working with this, writing two books and being out both in schools and at companies to train different people, I have not encountered a single person who is too stupid or so.

What I did notice, however, it's so much faster for 7th grade person to learn this than for an executive or a researcher, or some high-profiled company people. That's actually amazing. One of my books in Swedish is for how to use this kind of thinking in school and to get this thinking in images to become automatic from the early start, so you have this for the rest of your life basically.

This is the new step within memory and memory training, because there are all these old techniques people talk about. Creating stories and so on. That is too tough for the brain. Seeing violent and sex things. It's too much strength from the brain needed for that, so it becomes exhausted. You can't use that every day. The thing is to have it become automatic.

For example, we all learned to write, to store information on paper. Through learning an alphabet, using the pen, so now we don't need to think we do it. What I've learned and that anyone can learn is how to write directly into the brain. Then you need a new alphabet, which is an alphabet which consists of pictures. And a new grammar to form new words. How to connect these images together in a way that you can always find yourself back to them and remember what you would. Then it's using your mental pen, which is your visualization skills. I never need to think about how to store the information. It just happens when I decide it.

Dave: Having a built-in new skill on demand is something a lot of people would be interested in having. Me included. What kind of commitment does it take to learn this? How much time? How much effort? How hard is it? How long do you need to do this before it really becomes automatic?

Mattias: For me, it took about four months of training two hours a day, four days a week.

Dave: That's a substantial commitment.

Mattias: Yeah, but look at how much time we do a lot of stuff. People who learn to ... It's like ... Yeah. Two hours a day, four days a week for four months.

Then you have it. You get your driver's license and then you have it for the rest of your life.

Dave: It's like a one-time upgrade, and once you've got it you've got it.

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: There's great value to that. I am interested in doing that. Although honestly, for me finding two hours a day for four months right now is probably ... You need to find time in life when you're willing and it's a good time to do that. For instance, you have a new baby, right?

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: So, would you recommend -

Mattias: I'm happy to have that behind me. What I did, I did it through an online training, which is super. Where you have 60 lessons, where you go through all kinds of information. How you do that and how you train it to become an automatic skill that it can use for anything. This kind of an online training I do it myself in Sweden. It's call Mind Academy there for Swedish people. For English people, you can find it at Pmemory.com It's easy. Just start to train. Doing each lesson for 60 lessons, then you're done. Then you have this skill. That's a good recommendation to really get it done.

The key is also that even if you don't have the time to be smart. Even when you read something, try to visualize it in front of you. Make the images bigger and try to see things in 3-D ahead of year. For example, people who learn ... You can make anything in 3-D. For example, people who learn new languages, when you learn new signs, for example. It's almost magic what happens when you draw these signs. Like here I go on a sign, or a Japanese, Chinese ... When you draw it out, then it becomes 3-D. The brain then starts to, when these visual connections that goes much quicker into the long-term memory directly.

You can have control over it. This is a controlled way to use your memory, so actually you know what you know and you know what you don't know also.

A little funny thing is that, I've learned this so I can decide whatever I want to remember. Even if it's a complex thing I know how much time it will take, but I quickly can learn it and be sure that I know it. But the funny thing is that I can also decide for how long I want to remember this. If I want to remember it for a few days, a week, a month, six months, a year or for the rest of my life. This I can decide.

Dave: How do you make that programmable. That sounds really interesting.

Mattias: Yeah. What I do, when I have make these visual connections, I connect. Basically what I do is I connect two images at the same time together. I train my brain to two images at the same time, so that's become more or less automatic. Those kinds of connections in the brain, I know they will be with me for about five hours. That's for how long. After five hours, I might start to forget some of those. If it's competition event, then it's fine if after five hours I can forget it. But if it's something important that I've learned, then I know that I have to strengthen these visual connections before five hours.

What I do is that I them mentally just look through the images I have created. It's very fast and it's like you browse images on a smartphone. Image after image, very very quickly, and you do it mentally. If I do this before the five hours has passed, then I know the things will be with me for the whole next day basically. This is approximation, but this is what is true for me, where I am right now. It's very close for people. If I want to have it longer, for the next day, then I know I have the full next day to sometime go through it again quickly. Then I know it will be with me for maybe three days.

Dave: You're doing the space repetition where we figured out how much time can elapse if you want to remember something forever. You're applying that to the memory sport. That's really cool.

Mattias: The interesting thing is also that this kind of mental repetition, I never need to look at the original material again. I don't need to have the papers or listen to whatever it was. So then I can do this at dead times during the day. If I wait for someone, I go through a couple of images. I brush my teeth, I can go through a couple of images. Next time I have a

short time, then I go through, continue where I was, go through a couple of images. I don't give any extra time into this.

Dave: Isn't that kind of stressful. Sometimes don't you want to just take a break or just play with your baby or something like that? But you're like constantly cognitively spinning here? It seems like that would maybe not be a relaxing practice.

Mattias: No, definitely not. It's all controlled. It's all chosen. I choose when I want to do it and I stop when I need to stop. Just like learning how to write. Just because you can write, you don't go around writing down everything. This is so quick. It takes two minutes to go through a quarter of memorized stuff. It's very very quickly. Then it's done. Then I don't do it any more.

Dave: Okay.

Mattias: And it's only these first days, because the next time I do it ... For each time you do it, it stays with you longer. Then if I do it after three day, then it will stay with me for a week. Then I do it once during that week, it will stay maybe two weeks.

Dave: Okay. You decide if it's important, you spend a little extra time on it. Is doping a problem in memory sports?

Mattias: Not so far that I know of.

Dave: Are there rules against it?

Mattias: No. There are some kind of ethic rules, though. But this is another very interesting area, smart drugs and so on. I'm starting to learn more about, and what works and what doesn't. I just did some, me and my wife. My wife is a PhD in medicine, she set up a blind study for me, because I got my hands on some Ciltep. You know those -

Dave: Yeah, we carry it in the Bulletproof store, right.

Mattias: What I did, we did a blind test where I for ten days, each morning ... For five days, I had placebo. For five days, I had Ciltep and I didn't know

when. And I did the same routine, the same thing. Had my Bulletproof Coffee every day, of course. That's how I always start my day now. At the same time I did the official rules of the event speed cards, where you look through a deck of card and you time it for how long it takes, and then you try. So I did two tries each day for ten days. I had no idea if I was on Ciltep or not, but I saw which day worked the best.

Then when we put the ... Because I never told my wife. She knows what I was taking, but I didn't tell her about the memorization results, just wrote everything down. Then we checked. Out of these twenty trials that we did in these ten days, my four fastest ones were all on Ciltep. The failed tries, the rules in memory sports are super strict. Even if you have a single mistake, it's considered a failed trial. I did eight failed trials and only two of those were on Ciltep.

Dave: Wow.

Mattias: And six of them were on placebo.

Dave: That's substantial.

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: That's impressive. I'm a fan of Ciltep for sure. We've had Abelard on the show, the guy who invented the stuff. If you're listening to this, it's Ciltep. If you've never heard of this, it's an extract of artichoke combined with an Ayurvedic herb called forskolin. When you combine these things, they basically can long-term potentiate these cells in your brain so they work better. I don't use it every day, but I do definitely use it for cognitive boosts. Are you going to be taking it every day now?

Mattias: No. I don't want to do ... I tried not to do so many things each day, except maybe Bulletproof Coffee, though. I think it's important to cycle things.

Dave: I cycle things, too, except Bulletproof Coffee. Just because it's obvious when I cycle that, it's not the same.

Mattias: I can tell you the story, actually. After my first year of memory competitions, I noticed during these days that we compete, there are tough days on the competition. Memory sports is the most tough thing you can do for your concentration. There's some instance where each millisecond is important, because a single other thought that makes you lose the points, basically. It's very like that. I noticed we have very long days from early in the morning to late in the evening. I noticed my first year I was getting incredibly tired, and I was always doing worse in the afternoon. So I'm not living up to my standards here .

What I then did, I switched. I found out about what it is about the low-carb high-fat diet. This was a total game changer for me in this. I heard about this diet, you lose weight and so on. I was not very interested. But I had already started doing some quantifiable tests when quit. Then I was doing all kinds of energy drinks and so on. But even if when I was stoked with energy drinks, it was horrible for the concentration and focus. It's worse. Even when I forced myself to quit those, massive headaches, tired, I scored better.

Then switching to the low-carb high-fat diet really changes this. Immediately I had a strict ... Three weeks before each competition, I was super-strict on this. What I noticed was that I could go on these days like I don't know what. The food there, I was not even tired in the evening.

The important thing for me was that I didn't have these dips in the afternoon.

Dave: Cognitive endurance, you get the cognitive endurance because you have the ketones. It's like burning a giant piece of coal instead of like a bunch of pieces of grass. That's what sugar does. It just puff, and then it's gone.

Mattias: Definitely. And sugar and stuff, that all messes with your hunger sensations and so on. If you really want to focus, you can't be hungry. Most people know that you don't have a big bowl of pasta if you want to perform in memory sports in the afternoon. Then they try to eat a small

salad or so. Then they get super hungry, so they can't perform on that either.

But with a low-carb high-fat diet you're more in control of your hunger feelings and you're not a slave during this. You can go on for a long time, even if you need to and you don't have food, because the brain had the fuel it needs anyway. It's a total myth, this thing that the brain needs ... That you need to eat sugar or carbs for the brain to work. That's like someone who tries to stop smoking cigarettes and say, "Oh, not smoking cigarettes gives me terrible headaches" or whatever. It's a change.

Dave: When you go super strict for three or four weeks, don't you find that your sleep quality declines after a while?

Mattias: Well, super strict is a ... I do a low-carb high-fat, and it's not no-carb high-fat.

Dave: There you go. This is important for people listening. On the Bulletproof diet, a lot of people, they get into it, like "Oh, I just have some green vegetables and meat, and I feel amazing." I'm like, yeah, that's good for a couple of weeks, but when I did this for three months straight, I actually got new food allergies. At a certain point you need some carbs to make polysaccharides, which line your cells. They make mucous, they make tears. I had gotten below that threshold. There's some minimum effective carbs. A few people, people who have been on the show can have zero carbs for the rest of their life, and they seem to be fine. But they're a small minority from my experience with clients and myself.

So, you're the same way. How many carbs do you eat every day?

Mattias: I basically get my carbs from vegetables above ground and so on. I don't need so much. But I do it cyclic, sometimes with some rice or something in the evening. Have some, you talked about chocolate. I love the Lindt 90% chocolate. It's the very best brand we can get over here at least.

Dave: That's good stuff.

Mattias: I'm not always that strict. It depends on what I have to do and how the coming week is. I'm not doing the same, eating the same thing each day. My wife is also a very big fan of Terry Wahls protocol, so we eat tons of vegetables and so on.

Dave: If you eat tons of veggies and a high-fat diet, and a moderate amount of high-quality protein, and every now and then you have enough carbs to go out of ketosis, that's going to get you there. Terry and I are friends. We see things very much eye-to-eye. I'm a fan of her protocols. She uses, actually, brain octane oil and the glutathione. I would endorse her writing for sure.

It's funny that you've noticed that. Another thing, in fact, we first met in person when you were out here on Vancouver Island.

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: Right? And you were out here to do The 40 Years of Zen neurofeedback thing. It's interesting. During that kind of training, which for me not having done a memory competition, the most mentally taxing thing that I know is to sit in a neurofeedback chamber for hours and hours, focusing all of my energy on making my brain what a Zen master would do. Like you said, one little slip up, sounds get quieter, your score goes down. It's like laser focus. It's like running a marathon with your brain.

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: For me to do this without, in this case you don't even use coffee during that time, which is painful. But coffee can suppress very high alpha waves. Which isn't a problem in daily life, but if you're trying to do Zen Mastery work in a chamber it is. Even then, the replacement for Bulletproof Coffee is Brain Octane butter and vanilla. Because without the fats, I don't know how to ... I just don't know how to bring it the way you can when you're on a high-fat thing.

Did you notice a difference when you were doing the neurofeedback training, 40 Years of Zen? Does that kind of intent focus feel like a memory competition? Or is it a different thing. Because I only know about the one, not the other.

- Mattias:** It's a different thing in one way, because if you did really super focused visualization on certain shapes and so on, that brings the beat away.
- Dave:** Visual, of course.
- Mattias:** But it's all about control. It was a fantastic week. Super intense. But it's very complimentary to what I do in my kind of memory training. That's a conscious thing that you want to become an automatic skill. That's my impression of being in there, finding the highest alpha and remaining there, to find this relaxed focus, where the place where all the ideas come to you, basically. When you are just there, so you understand things. You see connections. New ideas pop up and so on. To learn to be there consciously and to use that state for working on yourself or on ideas or basic stuff. That was a really phenomenal week. I would like to do it even more, if I had the chance.
- Dave:** Interesting. Thanks for explaining the difference there. One of the things that you learn when you start to raise the alpha in your brain is that when you open your eyes or when you think about 3-D shapes, that it lowers alpha. What I don't know, though, is whether there's some line between alpha and beta, which is what you bring on when you do this visualization. Beta's not a good or bad thing. Excessive beta with a lack of alpha is bad. No cortisol, you die. Too much cortisol, you die. There's always somewhere in the middle where you want to be.
- You may be one of the most experienced people on Earth in terms of switching between a functional beta state, not a fight-or-flight beta state, but "I'm using my brain for this", and an alpha state where I'm not using my brain for that. How does it feel when you switch from one state to the other?
- Mattias:** The sensation of control is amazing. That you can decide. The experience of sitting in the chamber with the tones and you can be able have them go up when you want to basically ... It's like afterward this rings on. It's like okay, should I put on my tones now? Yeah, that would be a good idea. I don't have the tones, but I've done this so much in that week. What do I need right now? Now I need focused writing, then it's

that kind of focus. It's like taming this focus to go into different modes, basically.

What is important there, shown in that training, that it's because in your state of mind at certain time, that state is filled with so much emotions and your past and stuff. To be able to control and make those higher or lower when you need to, you also have to be more in control in your emotions and know about them. These are also a very important thing when it comes to brain training.

When it comes from my memory training also to switch on my super focus during competitions. That I couldn't have an argument with my wife before I go into competition. That would be a disaster. I have to work long time with this, and have done a lot of meditation. But to do it with neurofeedback training to get the constant 50 times per second feedback when you're doing the meditation correct is just phenomenal.

Dave: So you do meditate as part of your mental training. Is there a kind of meditation that you focus on that helps you best with being a memory champion?

Mattias: No, I'm very open. I've done so many different kind. I started, actually, my whole inner journey of mental training, I started with transcendental meditation back in the days. That totally blew my mind off, and I saw there were huge possibilities in life that we are not aware of, that we're not told about in school. From there on I noticed with, discovered with quantifiable ways of training your brain, and how this interacts with diet and food. Food is the number one smart drug there is. It's amazing that it's not in the mainstream how much our food decides our, how it applies to our way of focus.

Dave: Yeah.

Mattias: Why is this not talked about in school?

Dave: When the Bulletproof Diet book comes out December 2nd, there's actually a couple of chapters on food and focus, because it's such a big thing. The mechanisms, I've mapped that out as best I can with studies and science and anecdotes. Like you said, if they'd just tell you that,

every 9th grader I know wants to pay attention. They're just as frustrated as we are when their brains are bouncing all over the place. And then we're adults and we're trying to work. You're in a meeting and you start thinking about whatever the heck it is you think about. That is tied to what you ate. It's just non-obvious, but it is.

You've got that because you've developed this laser focus so that you can just focus and remember things. You'll notice when the laser breaks up, and then you correlate that to what you ate. What's the food that's most kryptonite for you? The thing that just doesn't work?

Mattias: That's the interesting thing. When I first started with this, it was just basic low-carb high-fat. Then getting into it more and more, and I love your word, to really learn more the details. That's been a big thing for me now has been to quit gluten totally.

Dave: That stuff rots your brain.

Mattias: Yeah. Even I know it because when I'm in between competitions so I can have a piece of bread, but that's not worth it. You can have some other stuff and that's okay. But don't eat gluten. That's been a big thing to me. Then to really explore Bulletproof Coffee has ... Now I don't compete anymore. But Bulletproof Coffee has taken my daily performance to a whole new level. That was, since last year, I started doing daily Bulletproof Coffee in the morning and it's just transformed my day even. After this, now I'm checking even more stuff like with good, for example, Ciltep, also. But you can't do the top things in the pyramid first. If you don't care about your food, everything else is just a waste of time, basically.

Dave: You can take a cow pie - that's American for cow manure - and you can put chocolate frosting on it, which would be your Bulletproof Coffee or whatever, it's still a lump of crap.

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: You've got to fill in the right foods and get your biology working, and then you can really do it. I don't know if this is popular in Sweden but,

you ever see like a 500 dollar car that's falling apart with 5,000 dollar wheels on it?

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: Honestly? Upgrade the car before you upgrade the wheels with Ciltep or Bulletproof Coffee or these advanced training techniques. All of those require a foundation. So, thank you for saying that Mattias. It's so important and it makes me sad when people eat french fries, pizza and beer, and their like, "Yeah, I'm going to go train my brain." You might get some benefits, but you're not getting it. Screw the brain training, just eat something that's good for you.

Mattias: Definitely, and things will start to happen. To add to that whole scheme, I would say also to care about, you need to pay attention to both the software of your machine, and to the hardware. With the food and all this hardware, it's super important. What I do with the memory training is like getting the best software program for the brain. This will correlate. You can't have a high-speed working software if you have crappy hardware, and vice versa in a way. Their both important. To throw a bit of heart in there, you also need to work on your emotions and relationships, and all that kind of gooey stuff.

Dave: The super geeky part of me being a computing guy and computer innovator, there's hardware, which you got to get your cells working, and your hormones. Eat good stuff. And then there's like all your firmware, which a lot of people don't even know what that it. But these are like the chips that have software on them that are in your computer, so when you turn it on, it knows how to load the actual software.

That firmware layer is like your sympathetic nervous system. Your fight-or-flight response. That gooey stuff you just mentioned? If that stuff isn't working very well, it doesn't matter what you're trying to do with your thoughts. Because you're firmware that's sitting between your hardware and you're thinking, it gets in the way. The lack of focus from being hungry? Well, that's a firmware function. Firmware's like, "Argh, I'm freaking out here. I didn't get the bagel I wanted." Then your software gets a glitch.

For me, I had to start with the body. I've been transformed. Then I had to deal with the emotions. All of a sudden then I could do things like pay attention.

Mattias: Yeah.

Dave: I could use the attention for anything. Whether it's memory training kind of stuff, which admittedly I haven't done a lot of your kind of memory training at all. I've read about it. Or like The 40 Years of Zen. Or anything like writing a book, or just being fully present. I don't know that you can achieve the heights of memory mastery that you have if you have all sorts of emotional stuff stirring. Did you use TM to get rid of your, not get rid of, but at least to tame the emotional spiritual stuff that sits between your thinking and your body?

Mattias: Not in particular. TM was much earlier. I worked a lot of actionable meditation in action. Almost trying to distress myself as much. What I used for that was I actually did a lot of something called Gurdjieff movements. Gurdjieff was one of these Western spiritual teachers which in a very practical way wanted to challenge your focus. There you basically do different things with different parts of the body at the same time. One thing with the arms, another thing with the ... So, you do too much and then you learn to be focuses when it's the most hard. That's where all the emotional stuff come up also, that you have to do something with.

I took that also into the memory training. In this program, I did the online course. There's this phase where you use computer software, where you have learned to do the basic stuff. So you can do numbers, for example. Then this computer program shows you each two sections. Shows you a new number and you try to memorize it. That you have learned, you have trained this for a while. In the beginning, you need total quietness basically. I started it like that. After a while, I could get it.

To make it harder, I put on the radio with music. Again I tried to memorize the same thing. That was super tough on the focus, because the focus goes to the music, then you have to pull it back to the numbers.

Dave: What's the worst kind of music for focus?

Mattias: I actually did both music I love and both music I hate. I tried differently styles. It was basically not so much different. It was all difficult.

But then I trained, I didn't give up. After a while I could keep the focus. Then I took it to the next level. Then I turned on the TV or radio with talk, talk radio basically.

Dave: That's very distracting.

Mattias: Voices talking. I tried to find programs that I thought were really interesting. Interesting stuff with people talking about, but all the time focus on the numbers, the training. Then again results dropped terribly because I wanted to listen to this stuff. But I continued pulling my focus back to the numbers. After a while I could do the focus even there. That has been a very solid part of it, being able to have super focus.

You can see that in memory competitions most people sit with a big ... They have both ears plugged and big building head or cups. But I never use any of that stuff, because I'm prepared. Even if people are making noises, I can put on my focus because I've trained it like that. I don't need to make everything quiet around me because I want to use my focus and memory skills anytime in any situation.

Dave: I've got to say if people aren't impressed by that, this is no different than someone who is practiced that incredible focus to power-lift, or to become an advanced martial artist. You're just training focus, which is harder to see. But those skills do not come easily. They come with a lot of work.

Your comment about it, it causing, like as far as the Gurdjieff movement exercises, causing just frustration. I did something a while back called Five Rhythms dancing or movement. It was something that made me feel like an absolute complete failure, and that's what it's designed to do. You stand in a circle and there's someone in the middle banging a drum. There's someone else playing this crazy Brazilian instrument that's stringed. It sounds cool. I don't remember what its name is. Then

there's a dance. They show you the dance, and you start doing the dance. Then they change the music and they change the dance constantly. It's overwhelming, because you're trying to put your feet in the right place, you know. Get it right.

Then your nervous system, basically that firmware layer, gets in there and goes, "You're dumb. Everyone else is doing it. You're not doing it right." And everyone else's mind has the same thing going on, but you don't know it. You spend like six hours feeling like the world's dumbest person. When you're done, you're like ready to cry. The whole point of it is to make you face those feelings so that they'll shut the heck up.

Mattias: Exactly.

Dave: So what you did was you trained that early on, and then you went in later and decided I'm going to train while I'm doing my skill with all these crazy distractions. That requires a lot of willpower and focus. Kudos. That is not a simple practice that you developed there.

Mattias: It's interesting what you can do, really. I didn't even tell you the last step of that ladder.

Dave: Oh, what is it?

Mattias: When I had the noise from the TV and so on with people talking, and then ran the numbers, two-digit numbers coming randomly. The last step was that I start at the same time I counted loudly, "99. 98. 96. 97", at the same time memorizing completely other random numbers.

Dave: That's impressive. Wow.

Mattias: But this actually, because this happens in the different senses, that it almost gets easily. Because the hearing sense I put that automatically on "99. 98. " So, the numbers that come on, it's only visualization. That is the key to remembering. So I don't say the numbers. The other, my speaking, is basically the other stuff, so I can only focus on that.

By the way, I had to upgrade that system also. I said I had an image for each two-digit numbers. That made me too slow and I had difficulty

reaching my Grand Master title with the numbers. I had to upgrade it. So now I have a different image for each three-digit number.

Dave: So you have a thousand images that you stored.

Mattias: A thousand images just for numbers, which makes it that I need less images to get more like that.

Dave: What image is associated with 999?

Mattias: That's like a tie, a turquoise tie.

Dave: A turquoise tie.

Mattias: It's a kind of bow tie.

Dave: Okay, a bow tie. I got it.

Mattias: That's the interesting thing. Language is limited. There are only so many words, but there's an endless amounts of images. If you say elephant, I can easily have a hundred images for elephant. I can have pink elephant in plastic. I can have a elephant that is sitting down that's made of chocolate. Or a half-cut elephant in iron. All those are elephants. Basically some of those images I have, I have to think how would I describe this elephant.

Dave: Because it's a picture, not actually ... It's not just the concept of a bow tie. It's a picture of a specific bow tie in a specific color and a specific knot kind of thing.

Mattias: Exactly. It's a specific shape.

Dave: Awesome. You have a fascinating brain, Mattias. We're up against the end of the show. There's a question that I'm sure you're expecting me to ask because you've heard the show before. And I'm hoping you haven't prepared ahead of time for it. If you have, you remember your answers.

The question is what are the top three pieces of advice you'd have for people who want to perform better at whatever it is they're here to do?

I don't mean just memory tips. I mean if you want to kick more ass at being human, what are the tricks?

Mattias: We have talked about so much, but I want again to say to find a way to work on your emotions, to work on upgrading your relationships. Not to sit by yourself, or try to upgrade yourself with different supplements or a training mechanism. But to upgrade your relationships. To upgrade with opposite sex with the experience of sex. The relationships with your parents. All these things really have to work. That can really clear away stuff so you can take your mental focus or whatever you want to do into whole new levels. You can't skip those things. For some people it's too much. "Nah, I want to do this fun little chemical." You won't get anywhere if you don't deal with your emotional issues. I know someone said it's a very good thing I thought. "If you have parents, you have issues." So get started working on your relationships to other people. That would be one thing.

This is more of a summary then. We have to speak for the heart, then for the mind to train yourself to become a visual thinker. Everyone can do it. It's just a matter of getting into that new habit. You can take in information and use it, and understand things much quicker. It also becomes a very creative thing that we haven't talked about, but never mind.

For the mind, and then for the body. Stay off the grains, sugar. Eat plenty of butter with coffee or whatever, and you'll be fine.

Dave: Great advice, all of the above. Where can people find out more? And I should say, by the way, we should have mentioned this earlier. You run the Swedish distributor for Bulletproof products in Sweden. Definitely give your URL so people in Sweden can order those things, and also learn about your memory training and the other things you do. People in the rest of the world may be interested in these things as well, especially to the extent you have them in English. What are the URLs we should know about?

Mattias: You can always contact me on Twitter @mattiasribbing. I have not an English personal webpage yet, but I will have to get that stuff now, I

guess. I have to tell you about this, our new company. I teamed up with a leading paleo-educator in Sweden. Jonas Bergqvist, an expert in the body. Me, expert in the brain, and my wife, PhD in medicine without outstanding scientific skills. We've started this company Succeeder, which wants to find new, the real solutions for optimal physical and mental performance. Your Bulletproof products, we absolutely love them. We are now, I just heard the other day. We are also allowed to ship them out to the whole of Scandinavia.

Dave: Oh, beautiful.

Mattias: So, go to Succeeder.se if you want to have it much easier with the customs than if you have to import from the US.

Dave: We ship to Europe because people ask us to. We don't like doing it either, because there's always some immigration guy somewhere, border, we have no control over it. By all means. I love it that they're willing to do that and they are helping people get the good stuff over there.

Mattias: In Sweden, if you're Swedish, the memory training is Mindacademy.se If you're in English, go to Pmemory.com That's exactly the same way I learned. You can do it the same way. Just take the lessons one by one. There you have the whole thing. I would love to hear some thoughts from people. Just contact me on Twitter.

Dave: Mattias, did we confirm? Are you going to be coming to the Bulletproof conference on September 26th though 28th?

Mattias: Yes.

Dave: Yes. We've got it locked down. All right. And you'll be speaking there.

Mattias: Definitely it will be fun. Then I'll do some showing off with the skills, also.

Dave: Awesome. So, if you haven't signed up for that Bulletproofconference.com I believe, actually by the time this goes live, we'll probably be out of early bird passes, but there may still be a



chance. So Bulletproofconference.com. You'll get to hang out with me and with Mattias, and ask all sorts of questions about Ciltep, memory, Bulletproof Coffee, and training your emotions and your memory.

Mattias, it's always a pleasure. Can't wait to see you again in person.

Mattias: Me, too. Have a great day.

Dave: Check out Ciltep smart drug. This is an herbal preparation that was recently discovered where a synergistic combination of natural ingredients helps long-term potentiation in the brain. You can buy Ciltep now on Upgradedself.com.

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