



Transcript of “Jia Jiang: Rejection, Overcoming Fear & Entrepreneurship - #237”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #237

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Dave: Hi Everyone. It's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Radio. Today's cool fact of the day is that smiling, when you are in a stressful situation, can minimize the effect of your body's responses to stress even if you're faking it. Next time you're feeling stressed out, you can put on that fake wooden smile and it will have a measurable physiological impact even if you look dorky. That's based on something from the Association of Psychological Science.

Before we get started today, check out moldymovie.com if you haven't yet. So far, more than sixty thousand people have seen the movie, the feedback has been amazing. If you just go and check it out, you'll find that there's a source of Kryptonite that's either affecting you directly or someone nearby and you probably have no idea what it is. Once you see this movie, you'll get an understanding of it, and it will help you or someone you know. While you're at it, head on over to bulletproofconference.com. On October 23rd, we're having a third annual Bulletproof conference. I'm expecting up to a thousand people this time. We had 500 people last year and this conference is not like a normal conference.

Of course, you get world class experts coming in and helping you understand what high performance is all about but you could get that in other conferences. This is about hacking the human body and giving you the chance to touch the toys, to play with the toys, to see the stuff and experience it. It's an experience that you're going to go through, not just the conference. That's why we put it together that way and it's been that way for the past few years. It's been phenomenally successful, fun, and you get to meet a lot of other people who care about how they think, and how they feel, and how they function, and perform the way you do. You'll meet some amazing people there, and it's one of my favorite things to do each year is to put on that conference. It's a lot of work but it's worth it; bulletproofconference.com.

Today's guest is actually a podcast I've wanted to have for quite a while and this guest is ... I'm going to say his name right, I promised myself, Jia Jiang. I said it right, I got a thumbs up. You can stay in your cars but that was good. Jia is author of "Rejection Proof: How I Beat Fear and Became Invisible Through 100 Days of Rejection" and the reason I've wanted to do this podcast with Jia is that, his idea is absolutely brilliant.

The idea is, look, if you have the normal neurological response to rejection, which is stress because there's this little thing that happens in your head, it's like, okay, someone said no, and that triggers all that ... Someone told me, "No" when I was a little kid and when you know, then I was bad and all of this weird programming has nothing to do with your conscious brain and it raises your stress levels.

A lot of people unconsciously avoid things, things that they could do, things they should do, things they want to do because they are afraid someone might say no, and they sort of craft their life to avoid it and so Jia said, "Screw that, I'm going to hack it," and wrote a book about it with really, just a way of just heading or facing down the fear head on. He runs fearbuster.com, and he's an entrepreneur, and he's also CEO of a tech start up, and the man behind the Krispy Kreme Olympic symbol doughnut video which you probably did see because five million people saw it on YouTube. This is a guy with lots and lots of skills and does cool amazing stuff but mostly, he hacked rejection and that's why he's on the show. Jia, welcome.

Jia: Thank you for having me. By the way Dave, if you're not doing this, you can be a heck of a PR person. That info was awesome.

Dave: I don't know if I'm offended by a PR person or I'm complimented, but I'll take these words. Thank you.

Jia: Take it as a compliment. It was great.

Dave: Really, I first heard about what you were doing a couple of years ago like, "That's smart." What is your story? Give me your story. How did you end up at this rejection thing? Can you tell me how you got here?

Jia: Long story short, I've always want to be an entrepreneur. I met Bill Gates when I was in China where I grew up. He inspired me to become entrepreneur but then, it didn't happen until I was thirty that I could step out of my job and really try this. It wasn't for lack of opportunities. I had a lot of ideas I wanted to try, but it was every time there was a chance for me to do something, to try something new, to step out or even at work to speak up to give a new proposal, I had this fear. What if it sucked? What if people wouldn't like me? What if they will reject me? That type of rejection held me back for a long time. At age 30 I said ... my wife and I has this agreement for me to give, right before our first kid popped out, we said, "Give this entrepreneurship thing a try before you become too old and miss the boat. Try this for a few month and see what happens." Then pretty quickly, I was rejected. It was an investment after I started my start up and I just wanted to quit. That type of fear made me realized, "Wow, I can build a better team, I can build a better product but one thing for sure, I got to be a better person. I got to be a better leader. I cannot let this fear of rejection hold me back forever." I started this blog called "A Hundred Days of Rejection."

Everyday, I would go out and look for rejection and I'll talked to strangers. I will going to borrow a hundred dollars, go to a burger joint and ask for a burger refill rather than a drink refill. Just knock on stranger's door, try to play soccer in someone's back yard. Things like that for sure will get rejected. I did this for a hundred days and to experience rejection. I want to hack my brain to lose that fear. The basis of this is exposure therapy, right? It's also based on this Canadian guy, his name is Jason Comely. He invented this thing called "Rejection Therapy." It's based on this concept of looking for rejection but overcome the fear in the meantime. That's the origin of my story.

Dave: Sometimes did you get the burger refill?

Jia: No, I did not get a burger refill. If I did, I would go back there everyday. I'll probably die by now. The thing is, I got a lot of yeses, not burger refill but I go quite a few of yes which ...

Dave: What's the weirdest yes you got?

Jia: Day three, as you mentioned, the Krispy Kreme one, that was really weird where at the time I thought there's no way anyone would say yes to me, any of this request. Day three, I went to a Krispy Kreme. For those of you don't know, it's a doughnut shop based here in the United States at the time I was living in Austin, so it was really popular in Texas. I went into the store and asked them to make me doughnuts that can be interlinked and looked like Olympic symbols. There's no way they were going to say yes, right?

Dave: Yeah.

Jia: The doughnut maker took me so seriously and she was so nice. 50 minutes later, she came out with a box of doughnuts that looked like Olympic symbol. I was just floored and not only that, she paid for it and she was like, "This one is on me." At the moment, I almost cried because it was totally unexpected, I did not know I was going to get a yes but also, that human kindness that was just shown in that video would just blew my mind. Also, the thing is, after that experience, I asked myself, "How many Olympic doughnuts experiences have I missed because I didn't ask? Because I was afraid of that no? Because I kept saying no to myself?" Ever since that, I said, "You know what? I'll let people reject me, I will not reject myself anymore."

Dave: There's a natural instinct people have to help other people. This isn't something that I really knew about when I was growing up. I remember I started university at UC, Santa Barbara and I was 16. I skipped kindergarten or early grade. I was one of the youngest people in college and I had no idea that people actually want to help you because I just didn't see the world that way. I remember this guy, my freshman year, his name was Clark Kent, like Kent Clark Superman but backwards

that's why I remember it so many years later. He was this really successful music guy, had done a series of startups and he was talking to a bunch of kids. I remember just thinking, "What does he want?" There's an ulterior motive and I didn't understand that what he wanted to do was to help.

I would never ask for help because asking for help and receiving help would be a weakness. It's funny when you said you felt you wanted to cry, when you were, "Wait a minute, someone actually is willing to do something out of their way to help me without expecting anything in return?" That's our nature to do that but I never grew up expecting that. No one consciously trained me to think otherwise. It never occurred to me. Was that, for you the moment? Why did you feel like crying there? Was that the moment you're like, "Oh my God, people are actually nice." What went through your head when that happened?

Jia: Yeah. Basically, I did this thing as away to get a rejection so I could strengthen myself. I wanted to toughen myself up and become a badass at the end. That was my goal, but people said yes to me, that means people are so much nicer in the society, and the world in general are so much nicer than I thought. That unexpectedness and that discovery in the sense of possibility of, "Wow. If this is possible, if Olympic doughnuts is possible, what else is possible if I try?" If I just ask, "What else can be accomplished? What else can be a dream that had and experienced?" That possibility, that make me wanted to cry.

Dave: It's also hard for us to reject people. A lot of people say yes because they are afraid to say no. It's the opposite of we're afraid to hear no, or also afraid to say no, right?

Jia: Yeah.

Dave: How many people said yes to you because they were afraid to say no?

Jia: I think there are probably some of that. People have a tendency of saying yes. I'm one of the worst ... I used to be, at least one of the worst

examples of people who can't say no, because I feel like a jerk. I feel like by me saying no to people, they are rejecting me. That fear of rejection is manifested in me giving rejection. I'm sure, there are some people who felt that, but there are people also as you're mentioning, people have the tendency to say yes. For example, this person, her name is Jackie from Krispy Kreme. I know there's also a Jackee working for you as well but they're both nice.

Dave: Different Jackee.

Jia: A different Jackie but this Jackie Brown from Krispy Kreme, later on, I became friend with her and asked her, "Why would you say yes to me?" She's like, "Wow, how can I say no? Because I wanted to make every customer happy and thank you for coming up with a weird request because that challenged me. It gave me a chance to perform. It gave me a chance to show that I care." She was very grateful and this kind of pattern was showed again and again in my a Hundred Days of Rejection when I talked to people afterward. They're like, "Thank you for coming because I love that challenge. I love to make customers happy. I love to make strangers happy." That's why in the end, I got 51 yeses and 49 nos. More yeses than no's and I'm pretty sure a lot of that was based on the fact that people just love to help. Of course, there are some people who are afraid of saying no, I'm sure there are that as well. Actually, we're doing some study into that right now to see what's the percentage of the people are willing to say no versus the ones who just want to say yes.

Dave: Yeah. It's a tough thing and it could be some of both, right?

Jia: Yeah.

Dave: I used to be one of those people who had a hard time saying no and one of the learning experiences for me was when I was an entrepreneur residence for Trinity Ventures on Sand Hill Road and I actually wrote an early blog post about that. Here it is, this is a group of people, everyday entrepreneurs like you come through and put up their Power Points and they give us a story, "My company is going to be worth a billion dollars"

and all these pictures. There's a room full of venture partners there and like, "Okay, we'll let you know."

You get 10 of those a day coming through. You have to say no to 99% of deals because you only have so much money. These people, the venture capitalists were some of the best and worst at saying no. There were some who were like, "No," and rude but not at Trinity where I was working, but what I found was the kindest thing you could do was to say no when you actually wanted to say no. Because if you said yes or you string someone along because you're afraid to say no, it totally doesn't do them a service and it doesn't do you a service because your natural wiring is to help someone.

The best way you can help them is be like, "Look, it's not a fit and it's not going to happen." Watching it through my own experiences there and also just raising money from venture capitalists as an advisor to startups over the years, watching the way different people who are some of the best in the world at saying no, the way they did it, there were some who were kind and humble and like, "No." There were some who were just maybe not that kind of humble. When people said no to you, what was the worst no you ever got? The rudest nastiest one?

Jia: It's interesting you mention this. I didn't get a lot of no's and there were some no's that were really good. There were some that are really bad. The worst ones are people who tried to belittle me but the thing is, that happened extremely rarely. The reason is, I learned if I was respectful enough and if I give a good reason when I ask when I make that request, it's tough for people to be rude. It really is because that means, it showed ... They started to not conform to my energy, my positive energy and they show negative energy. People don't do that.

If you call me with positive energy, if you tell them it's okay to say no, they're usually more respectful. The worst no's are very far and few in between, but they're a little bit rude but the vast majority of them are people who are really nice. On the other side, I've seen some really good

no's that make me a fan of them. Even though I didn't get what I want, I walked out of there thinking, "Wow, that was a perfect rejection."

Dave: Tell me about the very best rejection. That was going to be the next question anyway.

Jia: There is one of them was I went to a 24 Hour Fitness. I wanted to get free training basically, just wanted to see and I want to give a barter. I want to teach them something for them to teach them something. It's kind of weird...

I went in, this guy named Jordan and he was a young trainer. He gave me a very straight forward no and he gave me a very good reason saying, "Sorry, we have this non-compete agreement, meaning; if I train you without taking money from you, I'm competing against the company. I might get fired" which is like, "I don't want to get you fired." Then he showed me an alternative of getting a yes. He was like, "I've got this friend and she runs this private gym, I'm sure she's much more flexible. She can give you all the free training you want and tell her that I sent you and then I'm sure she'll help you." Then I went to his friend and she was really nice.

He showed me an alternative of getting a yes. That showed that he was not rejecting me as a person, he was rejecting my request and in turn, he was trying to help me. That was a great rejection. Another example I want to give was, I went to Costco, I talked to the manager and said, "Hey, can I speak over your intercom to your customers?" He's got, "No, sorry," but I was like, "You know what ...?"

At that point, I learned how to negotiate. I was like, "I'm a customer not only I'm a customer, I'm a loyal customer. I love Costco. Here's my membership card, check my history, see how many thousand dollars I spend here this year and I want to say the best thing about Costco." He was like, "Okay, how about this?" He was trying to help me now, "If you want to say nice things about Costco, why don't you put a article, give the article to me, I'll help you submit it to our magazine called Costco

Connect. I'm sure can get in our mailbox and the corporate loves to get that." I'm like, "I just want to speak on your intercom." He was like, "Well, are you hungry?" I was like, "Excuse me?" He was like, "Are you hungry? If you're hungry, how about I buy you dinner for you and your family? Sorry, I cannot say yes to you on this request, but I love that you're a loyal customer, get whatever you want."

I walked out of there with a full stomach of hot dogs and pizza. He said no to me but made me a concession. When I say concession, I'm not talking about pizza or hot dog, but I'm saying he gave me a real concession. In that case, it's tough being mad at someone or even disappointed when someone gives something to you. These are the skills I learned of how to say no to people that not only don't offend them but have a chance to make them a fan of yours.

Dave: One of the things that not show you feel when someone rejects you, especially if they do it in a rude way, is you feel anger and you're pissed off and you play it over and over in your head sometimes. What did you do or what did you learn to do over the course of being rejected at times to handle that side of being rejected?

Jia: Yeah, absolutely. The natural reaction is the lizard brain ... whatever you call it. The fight and flight response, right? Our brain naturally, the reaction didn't cast in our brain, not my brain but a subject explains in this research that they found, when people are rejected, their brain is secreting some sort of opioid as if they are physically attacked. It's like people talking a slap in the face, right? It's actually, our brain is treating a verbal slap of face as a real slap of face.

Dave: Yeah, it's distressful. Right?

Jia: Yeah. Naturally, we want to either fight or flight, meaning we want to argue, "How can you reject me? This request is so legit. I'm the best person for this job. This is the next billion dollar company, you're stupid if you don't fund it" Things like that or just we get so down. We're like, "Oh gosh, we got rejected." Naturally, our energy lowers, we just want to

get out of there as soon as possible. These are the natural responses, but I learned that if you stay engaged and say, "Okay, may I know why?" The possible question why, "May I know why you reject me?" Now, people will have to explain themselves, right?

Sometimes you can find the underlying reason for the rejection. A lot of times, really, it has more to do with them than you. It doesn't fit, it goes both ways. People will always think about rejection as a one way street that our ideas sucks and whatever, right? We're not worthy, but it actually says a lot about that person than his needs or her needs as well, or maybe the mood of the day, maybe a lifelong education or a prejudice. Who knows? They have nothing to do with us sometimes, but we can find out those reasons by asking why.

Sometimes we can ask, "I really want this to happen, here's the reason. How can you help me to get this happen?" Now, you're collaborating with them instead of arguing with them. Ask why, stay positive and respectful, stay engaged and collaborate with them. These are some things you can just do. Once you do that, once you are not that afraid, once you don't run away, that fear will be reduced substantially.

Dave: One of the things that's really frustrating for, especially people early in their career, is going for an interview and you don't get the job and you're like, "It's because I'm a failure." No, maybe because you're asking too much money or because someone who is even better came along or because they closed the position. If you do what any self-improvement oriented person would do and you call up the higher manager say, "Look, I thought we connected really well? Can you tell me why you didn't hire me?" You're going to hear, "No, I can't tell you."

They can't tell you because they'll get sued and there's, when we said big companies, there's very strict HR policies. You can get fired for telling someone why you didn't hire them kind of thing, which is really sad because it's a huge avenue for learning. I learned about this very early in my career. People don't know this, I used to weld Toyota truck frames. I worked in an auto parts warehouse for five years during

summers. I was also an entrepreneur and I sold the first things over the Internet but I'm like, "I need whatever I can get to pay for this constantly increasing intuition."

Jia: We need a breaking news like ticker, "Breaking news: Dave Asprey used to work for Toyota doing welding."

Dave: It was a Toyota sub contract. I highly recommend, you not buy any truck I might have welded. Let me just put it that way. I didn't weld for that long because I did a lot of putting parts in boxes but during the training, and they were training hundreds of people, bringing in the factory. At the end of all the training and all the stuff, they didn't hire me and I was pissed. I'm like, "Are you kidding me? You're going in the news saying there's a lack of qualified workers." I'm like, "Here I am, I'm almost done with college, and you're saying I'm not qualified to weld truck frames." I took it really personally, right?

Finally, I agitated about it. I was pretty mad and finally, the guy broke the rules, the plant manager. He sat me down and said, "Dave, I'm just going to tell you this, I'm not supposed to tell you this. The reason we're not hiring you is that you don't fit in with the rest of the workers." It was kind of saying, it was like, "Dave, maybe you should be working in the computer department or something, but your personality isn't well suited for this kind of work. Maybe you're not that much of a team player." I don't know, I'm an entrepreneur, I wouldn't have been happy on a factory floor. Let me just put it that way.

He was right about that but if he hadn't been kind enough to pull me aside and say that, I would just have been like, "Those jerks" and I would have carry that for a long time, right?

Jia: Yeah.

Dave: What I'm getting at in that story is that, in order to overcome that rejection thing where you feel those stress hormones, the antidote for that is actually forgiveness. Where you like, "Okay, I'm going to forgive

that person for what they did." The the easiest way I know of to do it is to say, "All right, I don't know their situation, but I could make up a really dire story." "They didn't hire me because in that night, their significant other ... had a heart attack, they went to the hospital and then ..." You just don't have any clue. You can make up all the stories that it's all about you or you can make it all about them.

Jia: Absolutely.

Dave: What worked best for you? Did you have a specific thing to let go of that? Did you call it forgiveness? How do you do that? You practiced this, a hundred days in a row and you paid attention and you did it and almost no one ever does that.

Jia: A couple of things. One is, as you're in that, that's a perfect example because I learned that I can make the same request to 10 different people and I will get different answers. Some say yes, some say no, some couldn't get away from me faster, some would give me a hug, right? It says everything about that person. We live in a me-centric world, I mean universe, right? We call this in psychology, a spotlight effect. We magnify everything about ourselves. We think that in a middle of the universe, everything people are doing and reacting says a lot about us. Actually, it's not the case. Most people care, almost everyone care most about themselves. Their rejection reflects their needs, their mood, their background, their lack of knowledge or whatever. It says a lot about them.

Having that perspective about, as you're mentioning, forgiving them, coming up with excuses, I even just before I make the request, before I ask anything, I give freedom. I said, "Okay, they have the full freedom. They have the agency to say either yes or no to me." If I have the freedom to ask ... I learned I have the freedom to ask anything I want, if I give a good reason, anything. The other side is, I have to give the other side of the freedom to say whatever they want, either yes or no, being nice or rude, and I can't be too mad. I don't want them to be mad at me

asking them a request, I have to not be mad at them for saying either yes or no.

Dave: You've let go of attachment outcome and you're going to ask the question, be okay with either answer?

Jia: Yeah, absolutely. The detachment is a key in this, just because for two reasons; one for emotional reasons. It gave me the confidence, and freedom, and swagger to just go ask. If I don't care about outcome too much, I can be as confident as persuasive as possible. It's counter-intuitive, right? If I don't care about the outcome that much, then I can become even better at my negotiation and persuasion.

Also, from a performance perspective, and we're doing research on this right now, that if you care about the process more than the outcome, you can actually improve performance. You can actually get more yeses by focusing on what you can control. Because in the end, a yes and no acceptance or rejection, you can't control that. What you can control is what you do, is go on and ask. If you have focus on what you can control, that means you are much less stressed and more confident as a result.

Dave: What do you say to panhandlers when they come up and ask you for money?

Jia: Sometimes, it depends because I panhandled myself in Hundred Days of Rejection. I stood on the corner of Austin just in the summer heat and I asked for money, but I didn't ask money for myself, I asked money for charity. I see it from their point of view, is to me, it stunk. It is really horrible because you're asking them for money and people stop, right? The car stops and most of them, they establish a quick eye contact, they were like, "Okay, I don't want to maintain eye contact with that guy." They just look down on their phone and stuff. I had to give all kind of coping mechanism to stay engaged, to saying to myself, to talk to myself, to not get down on myself but I'm sure if you do too much panhandling, you desensitize yourself from that, right?

There are some panhandlers, there are few of them that actually need the money for a good reason. I've seen them. I've talked to a few of them, but also, of course, there are alcoholics who don't, right? A lot of times, it really depends on you. You can have an interview with them and find out the reason but sometimes, you're like, "Okay, is this the right thing to do? Do I do this?" Then if you focus on, "Is it the right thing to do? Should you do this?" You disregard what the other person, whether they might be lying or they might be telling the truth. I try to do that sometimes, "Should I give? Is this the right thing to give?"

Dave: I had a guy once he said, "I need money for medicine." I said, "What kind of medicine?" He looks me right in the eye and he goes, "Beer."

Jia: Alcohol is a drug, right?

Dave: I'm like, "Here's a buck, man. I don't really support alcoholism but with that answer, all right, you win."

Jia: They try to play this too, right?

Dave: Yeah.

Jia: The messaging is important. Some people play with humor, some people try with honesty, and some people try to pull your emotional strings with, "I'm a veteran," and stuff like that. Sometimes people come with really creative ones and that sometime you're just like, "You know what? Just for that messaging, you're a marketing genius. I got to pay you for your work."

Dave: That was one of those clear cases and sometimes, I don't carry money much anymore. It's usually digital when I'm traveling because you have credit cards, and phones, and all that kind of stuff. You don't want to be like, "So do you take Apple Pay?" It's not quite like.

Jia: Do you have a square?

- Dave: Yeah. Sometimes, I'll just be like, "Look, I'd like to help you. I'm sorry, I don't have any cash but if I did, I give you some." Right?
- Jia: Yeah.
- Dave: You know what? I'd like to hope that that makes them feel more human than that sort of desensitization mode. There is no reason to be a jerk to someone who is panhandling whether or not they are homeless, whether or not they go get in a BMW and drive away when they are done. You have no idea.
- Jia: Also, as you are saying, there's no point of anyone being a jerk when they are saying no to people. It does no one any good. The worst thing you see that people are ... those things are happening when people are having revenge or anger, road rage is just because people are rejecting them rudely. No one should other people ... or maybe that's one extreme example but no one get extremely mad if you reject them nicely.
- Dave: There's no reason to spread anger in your wake by rejecting people, really. Some manners actually have a place.
- Jia: You don't feel good yourself either most of the times. You think that by you, being rude, maybe you can feel better somehow. It doesn't in the long run. It actually just telling yourself that you are not a nice person in a way.
- Dave: I find that most people, they have a hard time sleeping at night if they are like, "Man, I really was rude, on the one hand. That guy deserved it, "but on the other hand, they're like, "I'm a jerk."
- Jia: Right. If you are nice to people, if you are respectful to people, you don't get nightmares from that. You don't lose sleep over that.
- Dave: One of the things you write about is "How to Make Your Team Rejection Proof?" You talked about that. How do you make a team of people rejection proof?

Jia: It takes some training. You really have to ... First of all, you have to get that idea ingrained into your team and talking about it's okay to ... First of all, it's okay to say no to other people. Also, it's okay to take no, but the thing is, you have to communicate. You can't be a jerk, you have to communicate. When you say no, you have to give a honest reason to each other, why I don't agree with this. Also, it's okay to have a back and forth.

I ask my team to say, "If you say no to people, give your reason but also listen to the other person's response and go with the negotiation." I love negotiation. I love a back and forth in any communication with my team, with my kid. If my kid reject me saying no, but giving me a good reason, I'm so happy. I can encourage my kid to say, to get back to me. That type of rejection training, that type of rejection-seeking, and that type of negotiation over the long term, it actually does you really good because we are afraid of no.

The word "no" is the most painful word in the English language and a lot of times, we really crave yes and hate no as that. Their study have shown that we want yes so much, we don't try as many times. We just want to have a ... we have a confirmation bias. We just want to confirm what we believe in then move on, as soon as possible because we are so afraid of being rejected by other people, by fact, by science, or we don't look for data that's contradictory to our beliefs and that, long term, is really harmful to our productivity in business.

Dave: That is good advice. I like to think that the team Bulletproof is. This is largely rejection proof, but I know that there are some people who just naturally ... For a while, you hear no and you don't want to hear it, so you start to tell yourself that you didn't really hear it and it didn't really mean no. It's really interesting, different roles if you're in sales. You probably don't hear no very well because you just keep asking and you hear seven no's before you hear a yes, and that's just how you get paid. There are other people where it doesn't happen and it really upsets you and to try and build that into the culture where acceptance of failure like, "Yeah, if you didn't fail sometimes, you probably weren't working

very hard. Were you?" When you were working, you are working on avoiding failure instead of on stretching for goals. It's really tough to build into a company culture I'm not sure that I know how, but we'll work on doing some of what you're talking about there to make sure that we don't have people who have rejection phobia and working all through.

Jia: I also have couple of points. One thing you can do is to celebrate a failure and really genuinely celebrate something that, if it's something someone tried is audacious enough and you get rejected or failed, celebrate that. Celebrate the audaciousness, right? If you try something safe, you probably wouldn't get out rejected by people.

A real innovation, especially the study shows that everyone say, "We love innovation or love creativity." Really, in our mind, we hate it. Our body hates that because it's not what we know. You think the new thing is not something we usually know, and our brain doesn't like that. A lot of times, you have to try really audacious things and see if they get rejected, that's fine and that's how you learn and achieve great goals. Also, another thing you can do is to set up a system where someone has to reject you. Disney does this the best, there is the story of Disney, every time they run through an idea whether that's maybe direction of the company or maybe it's the animation film, how they want to run this idea is they go through three different rooms. One of the room is the creativity room. You get all the stimulus and all the creative things and get as many idea as possible, but once they move two or three rooms, the last room is the critic room. That room is everyone have to find some shoot ... poke some hole into this argument into this idea, so it forced everyone to reject you.

If you can withstand that rejection, you're going to give a counter-argument, if after all those rejections, if after all those negativity, you can still want to go forward with that. That means this idea is a sound. It forces you to give rejection, but it also forces you to take rejection, and you go share it, and counter-argue those rejections.

Dave: It's funny at bed time with my kids, I actually do talk about failure. I'm like, "Tell me something you failed at today." People are like, "What? You're having a five-year old tell you how he failed" I'm like, "Yup" and sometimes, he's like, "Dad, I didn't fail in anything" and I just go, "Oh." He goes, "What?" I said, "What you're working on something is so hard, that it was hard for you, and that you are still trying to learn how to do it. Isn't it better that you fail at something because you pushed so hard, but maybe tomorrow you can turn it into a win?"

Whenever there's a failure, it's part of the bedtime ritual but like, "Oh, that's great. You worked so hard on something, but you didn't know how to do it." I'm hoping to instill that in the kids so that as they grow up like, "Yeah, of course it didn't work. Whatever. I'll figure it out tomorrow or I'll do it differently, but I learned something from the failure" instead of, "I'm a bad person because I failed." I'll tell you in 18 years if I did that right, but I'm hoping it works.

Jia: Hey, that's a great idea. I'm going to start tonight, trying it out on my kid. I've got a three year old so...

Dave: The other part of it that I do teach them, and three might be a little early for the new ones but there is also gratitude. I'm like, "I want three things every night that you're grateful for" and those are not optional. "You can tell me something where there was a win or when it's something you really worked on that you got, and fail is something that you worked on and you didn't get." Gratitude has to happen and there's three of those and it could be, "I'm grateful we had steak for dinner." It doesn't matter, you just have find three things that were good that happened. It makes them reflect on the day, but I don't know if the win-loss thing, the three would, if they would get it? They probably couldn't understand failure like, "I tried this" but certainly gratitude, they can do that when they are old enough to talk.

Jia: I'm going to try that tonight. I'll let you know.

Dave: I'm curious. My kids love it. I want to ask you about some of those specific things you tried, because they're hilarious. You wanted to interview president Obama?

Jia: Yeah.

Dave: How did you ask him? What happened?

Jia: I tried different ways and I used social media. I tried to make a petition at the White House and I tried to use a news article as the channel. I tried different ways, and then it turned into this huge, huge media task. I see, there's a straight way of getting this done but that involved me really, really being involved in this thing for a long period of time. After that I'm like, "Man, do I really want to interview?"

I developed this thing, it's called "How Many No's Can I Take Before I Give Up?" Because to quit or not to quit, that's actually a skill. It's a long debate of, "Do we give up?" When you give up, are we being smart? Are we being trying to try something we're better at? We're just pansies, are we are giving up or not tough enough? I did this to myself and actually, advocate to other people through this is, before you ask anything, ask yourself how many no's can you take, will you take before you give up? Now, you can make rejection a fuel instead of a detriment. You're like, "Okay, I got rejected but haven't run through my fuel yet, so I'm going to keep getting rejected until that number runs to zero"

That way, once you tried all the channels and get all the no's, you have no regret. In this case, I ask myself, "How much do I want to interview president Obama?" It turned out to be not really much, so the no I give myself isn't a whole lot. Because I've talked to my heroes, I've talked to famous people but it's like, "What can I know? He gets interviewed everyday from news and media. Why does the world needs me to talk to him about it?"

Actually, my number of no's were pretty low. After running through it, I'm like, "I've got to do something. What's the most meaningful thing to

me?" It turned out, I want to change someone's life and in this case, I want to change my wife's life. Together, we add a new project and I tried to help her find a dream job, and she did. Using everything I will talk about today, everything I've learned, and I actually also teach other people on that as well, how to find their dream job in a rejection proof way.

Dave: It's interesting there, people like President Obama and anyone who's in the public spotlight, after a very short order, they developed systems of filters to say no automatically. Because we only have so many decisions in us that decision fatigue and saying no is a decision that actually takes some amount of mental energy. You got to imagine to get to President Obama to get a yes or no. He's never going to say yes or no, He's going to show up and do the interview and he's going to have a briefing document and says, "Who is this guy and why do you care?" He's going to give you your two minutes and then his handlers are going to have them off. To get through there, there's probably 42 layers of people who say, "Yes, how are you? Yes, no, yes no" and stuff like. That's just going to be a lot of no's because there's a lot of filters.

Jia: After a while, I'm like again, if my life depends on it, I can go through a lot of nos. The thing is, at the moment, I feel like I don't want to spend a whole year or six month doing nothing but trying to get to President Obama and didn't get my two minutes. It really wasn't that meaningful to me.

Dave: The number of no's that you should take is tied to the value of the product.

Jia: Yeah, absolutely. It's a great way to gauge how much you care about this; how many no's can I take to get a value, to get a good deal on this car? Maybe I can take 4-5 no's, after that, I'm like, "Screw this. I'm just going to buy it." How many no's can I ... If one of my family members is sick (knock on wood), how many no's can I take to find a cure? The number would be extremely high and I would not give up until I find that.

- Dave: That's human nature but knowing the amount of energy ahead of time that you're going to put into this, it affects your negotiation for sure because, say, "All right, are you going to spend an extra four hours to save an extra two \$250 on the cost of your car?" If you make \$12 an hour, you bet your ass. If you make 60 bucks an hour, you probably not. Right?
- Jia: Yeah.
- Dave: It comes with the territory.
- Jia: We make that mistake of not knowing should we quit or not all the time. Sometimes we try way too hard on something that's so meaningless, it's laughable but in that moment we're like, "Oh my gosh, I can't quit. I got to get this done."
- Dave: You ever buy something at an auction?
- Jia: Yeah.
- Dave: It's like, "Why did I just buy that? I just had to say yes."
- Jia: I know.
- Dave: You also decided you are going to give a speech on the street. What happened with that?
- Jia: I went on the street of Austin and just wanted to give a public speech and the reason I'm going to do that is, I was looking for rejection but also, I want to toughen myself up. I started getting a lot of speaking inquiries from great companies and conferences to teach people how to overcome their fear of rejection because I did this. I'm like, "Okay, if I can do ..."
- I know I can talk when people pay me or the audience pay to be there, but what if it's on an empty street, just people walk by some of them

might be drunk, what's going to happen to me? I tried that. First of all, help up a sign saying, "Public speech in 10 minutes or something. Stop if you are interested." People walked by and drove by, no one stopped. I'm like, "Okay, maybe this is over." Before leaving I was like, "Screw this. I made this far already, let me just give a speech. Let me just start telling my story to the empty street and see what happens." By the way, it was tough. I'm not saying it was easy.

It was really tough to get over your own fear or embarrassment and I did. I got some people to stop, there are five of them, and I gave a 10-minute speech, and they gave me applause at the end. That gave me so much strength, so much strength and so much strength. Later on, I was giving talks at much bigger venues in front of much larger crowd. I kept telling myself, "I went through that in Austin, on the street of Austin where no one was paying me, where no one was wanting to stop. If I could do, I can do it here when people were paying attention or when people choose to be here."

Dave: I pushed my limits a lot that way. A few years ago, I read the Neil Strauss book "Emergency." I've had a chance to hang out with Neil, he's a totally interesting guy. Because I have met him though, in Emergency he writes about this urban escape and evasion course, and you get trained for two days on how to tell if ... how to be kidnapped in a foreign country, like what to do. It's like James Bond school for adults. The final exam is they hood you and they handcuff you for real in the back of a van, and they kidnap you and then they say, "Don't leave the van" then of course, they give you a chance to escape. You pick the handcuffs, you take out the hood, and you run away, and you have these missions to accomplish. You have no resources unless you hid some things around town, and the things may be there, they may not.

You're basically like, "Oh my God, I'm entirely relying on myself or on whatever I can ask people for." That actually provided incentive so you just used raw willpower. For me, I'm like, "Okay, I've got to get across town, and I don't have any money, and I don't exactly know how. Do you hitchhike in California? How do you this?" That pushed a lot of limits

and I remember really specifically, the bounty hunters ... By the way during the day, there's a dozen bounty hunters looking for you and if they catch you they, handcuff you, and drop you off further out of town and you're like, "What do I do here?" There's literally teams looking for you. It's scary. You know you are not going to be harmed but you really get into it. It's a psychological thing to push your limits.

I'm freaking out and there's these guys driving by. I know that they're the bounty hunters. I'm wearing a baseball cap and trying to not look like myself. I need to go into a store, and I need to hang out for a while and not be recognized. I'm wearing this dorky fake pony tail thing so I look different. It's supposed to be somewhere in Santa Monica where there are celebrities. "I need a quote on the wheels for my car" and they're like, "Where's your car?" I'm like, "It's at home." I'm just like these stupid stars, and there's four people looking like, "This is obviously a celebrity because he's wearing these weird sunglasses." I just remember feeling, looking down on myself and just been like, "I'm asking all these people for stuff I don't want, but I have to do it because someone is going to catch me and handcuff me." I was really uncomfortable with the whole situation, but that was why I done it, was to push that. It was intriguing that it was easier to do that when there's the perceived bodily threat. It's not really a threat, they're not going to beat me up, they're just going to handcuff me and say, "(laughing) We caught you," but you get into it psychologically. You've bypassed all the motivation and yours was just, "I'm going to improve myself so I'm going to take these things."

Jia: What you were saying is almost a Stanford prison experiment, right? People really get into these experiments and pretty soon, they started performing as if they are in real situations.

Dave: It's designed to be real. Half the people in class were going to Afghanistan and the other half were basically, one guy was a child abduction attorney specialist and international travelers. I just makes it sounded really cool but these are people where you might be kidnapped. They tell you, "Here's how to tell if you are being tailed."

Here's how to get out of zip ties" and all these weird James Bond stuff, but it was great fun. One of the Miss Americas was in the class, it was ridiculously cool. I owe it to Neil for recommending that class. That was, for me, a big like, "All right, I'm just going to face rejection here because there's bounty hunters chasing me which made it easier." Was there a rejection you had that just didn't matter like, "I didn't learn anything at all?" Was it like whether meaningless rejections or did everyone of them have a lesson?

Jia: Because I was doing a blog at the time, I need to write a learning lesson from every one. There's the incentive for me to find learning out of everything and I just can't believe how easy it was to find learning in everything. Everyday in every situation, if you want to find learning from that, you find learning and that makes you so much better the next time. I got so many yeses after a while because I learned to be really good at this, how to talk to someone, how to disarm them, how to be asserted but not rude right, how to get a yes.

There are a lot of them are supposedly meaningless in that in real world situation, but I use them as a training tool to train myself, to learn how to say yes, how to get a yes, to learn how to handle no, to learn how to get over myself. Also, I made a rule that I want to ask something that there needs to be cool, and there needs to be something I'm willing to do. Otherwise, if I ask something that's not pleasant, my body will force me to get a rejection and that's not something that I want. I actually want to, if I get a yes, I want to go through this. There's not anything that's so meaningless because I try to find meaning in everything, in every learning situation.

Dave: What did Barnes & Noble say when you went in to borrow a book? I'm hoping it was a copy of the Bulletproof Diet, but I'll forgive you if it wasn't.

Jia: I forgot the book. It could be. It could be your book, but I think your book came out the last year?

Dave: It was December of last year, yeah

Jia: I think it's before that so it probably not your book.

Dave: You're off the hook then?

Jia: Yeah. I went through, I tried this two times; one with a guy who was overly rude who was like you know. He wasn't extremely rude, he was like, "How are you, man?" He said no, but then, I talked with the other person, it's a girl and she give me smile from beginning to end, really nice customer service smile. She told me, "Sorry, we can't. We are not a library, we can't let you borrow a book, but you can buy a book and return it or something like that." She was helping me to try to get a yes. The thing is, I think the only difference between these two people are one had a smile and other didn't. That made a huge difference in how I perceived that rejection.

Dave: Also, one was a male which is a threat and the other one was a female which is, I'll be crass, but a mating opportunity. I don't mean you think about it like this, but this is a biological response. Men and women interact differently than men and men and women and women. We're animals on some level.

Jia: I'm denying that because my wife might be hearing this episode.

Dave: You know what I mean. Do you find that because you're male that women say yes to you more than all the men do?

Jia: Maybe but not enough for me to say, "Okay, is a woman that's a sure to fire yes and this guy is going to be difficult?" I've learned that if I'm nice, and I get a lot of yeses from guys as well.

Dave: People are people. I was hoping you would say that, but there's definitely a different approach that guys will take when they are asking for a yes from a woman versus from a man. It's not to say that the woman is more likely to say yes or more likely to say no, but that if you

are good at asking for things through interaction with the person as an individual human being regardless of gender, it's going to be one way. The gender is going to probably bias the type of smile you have or something like that.

Jia: Of course and if you are an awesome looking guy, or especially if a great looking girl and talking to a guy, you probably get a lot more yeses.

Dave: We are suckers for that. We'll basically say yes and then, "Why did I say yes?" That's just how it is.

Jia: I've seen this once where there's a door-to-door salesperson. She looked like a model and I'm pretty sure ... She couldn't even speak English that well and when I opened the door and she was trying to sell me something, I knew at the moment that, "Okay, there is probably the reason why they sent her over here" and for moral reasons, I had to say no. I have to reject the hot blonde because otherwise, I'm succumbing to their scheme or something like that.

Dave: That's hilarious. I can respect that. We are coming up on the end of the show and there's a question that every guest hears and that is, based on all the stuff you've learned, not just from writing "Rejection Proof" but from your entire life's experience, if someone came to you tomorrow and said, "I don't perform better at everything," what are the three most important things that I can learn from you? What would they be?

Jia: One thing is practice, just practice. When I was going to graduate school, I had this professor his name is Dan Ariely, he wrote the book "Predictably Irrational." I called him once and he was on the TEDx Asia a few times. He was a very accomplished speaker. When I started getting these speaking engagements and I'd call him and ask him, "Hey, what do I do? How do I get better at this?" He told me, "The only thing is, you practice but practice in real situations." Just like the rejection thing, I was using rejection to the small rejection, the safe rejection, to practice for something much, much bigger.

The same thing with public speaking. If I start speaking in a very small environment, maybe two to three people, maybe 20 people, maybe 50 people, it gradually increases stake but you learn what line people like, what line people don't like and you use real feedback and then you can become really good. I gave a talk at TEDx Austin, that was probably why I landed a book deal. It becomes a very popular talk and the people who were there, they were the scientists, artists that did amazing things. I was like, "I'm the rejection guy, what can I offer?" The thing is, I gave a few talks, the same talk before that big stage and I got experience and confidence that I nailed it on that stage. Practice is a huge thing and don't think you can wing it, don't think you can with your natural ability and charisma to do anything that's amazing. A lot of times, you have to practice so that's the first thing I want to say.

The second thing is, you need to get over the comfort zone and by doing that, you have to slightly put yourself outside the comfort zone a little bit, little by little, just like when you were training your muscle, your physical muscle. If you become too comfortable, you don't grow. If you become a little bit uncomfortable, then your comfort zone grows with you and even truly, you become better at whatever you are doing.

The last thing, I didn't prepare for the last one so I would say, be extremely conscious about the learning experience in every situation you go into. It's amazing that how much knowledge we can accumulate every day but we don't because after something happen, we just don't pay attention to it and we let it go. As a result, we lose so many learning opportunities. I want to tell you one thing, I read your about ... the article you wrote about training yourself using a heart rate variability. I read the article just recently, and it's something that is so interesting and made me so interested to be on this show because it's something I'm really into now.

Dave: Cool.

Jia: Yeah. Think about this, I wear the heart rate variability before a rejection session, right?

Dave: Yes.

Jia: That will make me know how stressed I am during that situation and gradually, I know how much I can get better at.

Dave: We have the Bulletproof Stress Detective app and you wear the heart rate monitor, and all day, long it records your heart rate variability. You could actually feel like, "Oh, at this time I was asking for this, and my heart rate variability dropped." For a while, it really did freak me out. You can, even in the middle of it, look at your phone if you can go without breaking the connection with the person. There'll be a graph on your phone telling you how stressed you are in real time. It's also for any kind of meeting whether there's rejection or not because you're like, "Just meeting my boss always make me freak out and if so, maybe I should work on that." Right?

Jia: Yeah. What happened is ... When I try this what happened is, I felt the first one is always feels the worst.

Dave: Which app are you using? It's probably not mine. I don't know.

Jia: No, it's your ... I need to find out the name of this thing, but I'll let you know. I need to find it. The thing is, what I have found is the first one usually has the biggest draw, and then it gets better. It make me feel every time when something important happens, I should try a couple of times before I pretend to have tried a couple of times before I go to a real situation. Then I become more comfortable in that third or fourth or fifths try, right? Maybe before giving a speech, I practice a few times and then when I get on there a fourth and fifth time, it doesn't become a stress anymore. I'm just at the very beginning of exploring this. I'm tying stress thing to the heart rate variability. I don't know where it's going to be at, but that's the direction I'm going.

Dave: It can teach you a lot and what I think you'll find, I'm a certified coach, I worked with the Heart Math people, I'm on their advisory board. They're the guys who make the training device. It's not the one you'd

wear all day, like the stress detector. There's a bunch of other heart rate variability monitors, but they're sort of the gold standard for training and what you'll find ...

Jia: What it's called?

Dave: It's called "Inner Balance Sensor."

Jia: Inter-balance Sensor?

Dave: Inner, I-N-N-E-R. I carry them on Bulletproof, but they're made by Heart Math. They're friends and I've them for many years.

Jia: Got you.

Dave: It's really cool because there's a feeling in your body when you go under fight or flight mode. The light turns red on your iPhone when you're monitoring it, so you get this real time thing. What I found is that my body would go into fight or flight mode when I hear a rejection, but the second thing you learn when you do this regularly, is you learn how to make the light turn green, which is how to take yourself out of fight or flight mode. You go up and you say, "Hey, could you make me the Olympic Kreme doughnuts?" If they say no and your body is like, "Kill them" and I'd go, "Okay. Got it" like, "Chill down." It becomes like an almost automatic whack-a-mole. Your nervous system stop that and you tell it to stop, and then it stops, and you go back into the parasympathetic dominant. You can be like, "No, really. I'd be willing to pay for it, it's okay." You negotiate your thing whatever it is you're trying to do.

I found that that's changed the way I negotiate enormously, because when you take something personally, you're going to go into fighter flight. When you accept it as a decision that's outside of you and isn't affecting your safety or your survival, then you can react in the way you want it to react instead of involuntarily.

Jia: I used the Polar H7 app.

Dave: Oh, you're using the app that comes with, okay. I used H7 monitor with my app. The H7 is actually one of the monitors that I recommend. It's a good one. They run about 60 bucks so if people are interested in a heart monitor, that's a perfectly acceptable one the one that plugs into most of the apps that run on your iPhone or your Android. Awesome. I know we talked about your URL at the very beginning here, is the best place for people to find you at fearbuster.com, or is there another place?

Jia: Come to the fearbuster.com, I have a lot of projects coming up, but that's where it's the best place to go find me.

Dave: All right. That's very cool. I appreciate you being on Bulletproof Radio today. I'm looking forward to maybe hanging out sometime in Silicon Valley.

Jia: All right. I'm glad to be here.

Dave: If you enjoyed today's episode as much as I did, head on over to iTunes and say like on Bulletproof Radio, and maybe tell one of your friends about it, or pick up a copy of the Bulletproof diet. Head on over to the Bulletproof Conference, I'd love to see you there in person and definitely, watch Moldy the movie, just something to support this idea that there's lots of things in life that are good for us and lots of things in life that make you weak. By sorting them out, you can do some amazing things and while you're at it get someone to say no today. Have an awesome day.

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