



Transcript of “285 with Jason Silva”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #285



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Intro: Bulletproof Radio. A state of high performance.

Dave Asprey: Hey it's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Radio. Today's cool fact of the day is that if you're someone who has a really great sense of direction, even in places that you've only been once before, it means that you have different nerve cells in your hippocampus and those are activated by different locations. Your brain is basically drawing a map of where you are through your nerve cells. They just discovered these cells, and they're called grid cells. They are almost exactly like a GPS for your brain, and they're often impacted when you have a stroke or Alzheimer's.

The cool thing is, they're actually laid out in hexagons. There's a big hexagon, there's a medium sized hexagon, and a smaller hexagon; and they pinpointed the exact cells that do it. You actually have these cool high-tech looking grids inside your brain that allow you to triangulate where you are on a big map, on a medium map, and where you are in your local space. In my case, I pretty much barely know where I am most of the time, so mine must not be working, or mine are maybe like big kind of blobs instead of hexagons. Anyway, it's cool to know that we all have these.

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Today's guest is a guy who I've wanted to chat with for a long time. Very well known, because he's the host of the National Geographic Channel's number 1 rated and Emmy-nominated series called Brain Games. His name is Jason Silva, in case you haven't heard of him. Jason, welcome to the show.

Jason Silva: Hey, thank you so much for having me. It's a privilege. Thanks.

Dave Asprey: Likewise. Your show's been out for 3 years now, right?

Jason Silva: Yeah. It's crazy, been around for a while. It's broadcast in 171 countries on the National Geographic Channel. It's just wild that ultimately what is an educational series has somehow found an audience that finds it so entertaining, and enthralling, and really have just a loyal fanbase that we continue to be able to do it for multiple seasons. It's been really great.

Dave Asprey: It seems like there's a bit of a renaissance for this stuff.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: We used to think you're born with so many gray cells and that's all you've got, and they're fixed. Then, you die.

Jason Silva: Right.

Dave Asprey: Now we have all this power, and control, and just knowledge about the brain's capacity for change. I think you just hit the nail in the head with your timing. When you watch the show, and you're like "Here's what cognitive scientists are doing. Here's

what your brain can do," which is why. I'm a big fan. I was really stoked that we could connect.

Jason Silva: Yeah, yeah. Well, look I mean I love doing the show because ultimately the message is what you see is not what you get.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: Through exposing these loopholes in our cognition, these cognitive biases, the ways in which our brain very much frames our reality, interprets our reality, fills in the blanks from the limited information we get through our senses, shows us that we really do create our world. I remember last year when that, "the dress" thing went viral on the internet. People were like what...

Dave Asprey: What color is the dress?

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: What did you see?

Jason Silva: Exactly. How could something so trivial become ... cause such hysteria. I think it's because at the end of the day, when your entire reality is called into question by something so trivial, it's a big deal. It's like an ontological panic, you could say. People used to think that was a Brain Games guerrilla marketing thing. Everybody kept tweeting on Twitter, and my Twitter went crazy when that happened. People made the immediate connection between "the dress" and the show, which to me says, we really gotten there. We've reached people, especially young people. They love the show. It's been a treat. Yeah, like you said, there's so much science coming out on the brain these days. Exponentially more in our capacity to understand the brain. I think it's just nice to have a show that's bringing this stuff to the masses, you know?

Dave Asprey: I saw somewhere somebody called you a Timothy Leary of the viral video age.

Jason Silva: I love that.

- Dave Asprey: What do you think about that?
- Jason Silva: That was a writer for The Atlantic named Ross Andersen, who is ... He's a wonderful guy. He wrote an essay on the Hubble space telescope, and the James Webb telescope that was one of the best pieces of writing that I'd ever read in my life. I remember when he contacted me to interview me, he sent me this particular article he'd written on the space telescopes as a way for me to vet him. I was like, "Are you kidding me?" Anybody who can write about space and time the way he could can interview me. It was when I was first doing some of my digital content. It was right before Brain Games blew up. I do a lot of videos on the web.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: Short, 2 minute videos, Shots of Awe, you've probably seen some of them.
- Dave Asprey: They're great.
- Jason Silva: Thanks! Thank you very much.
- Dave Asprey: No, really.
- Jason Silva: One of the key ideas of Shots of Awe is not just, look at the immense speed at which technology is progressing. This sort of exponential Moore's Law, growth curves of information technology, biotech, nano-tech, promising to kind of redefine what it means to be human through this insane symbiotic relationship we have with our tools. Also, this idea that most people don't think about that there's a great book by John Markoff called "What the Dormouse Said."
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: John Markoff, from the New York Times. Which is about the counter culture or the cyber culture in the 1960s in Silicon Valley. Most people don't know that the origins of the tech revolution is Silicon Valley are, in many ways, psychedelic.

- Dave Asprey: Yes.
- Jason Silva: You know, the whole Burning Man ethos. A lot of these engineers, Hewlett Packard, all these guys back in the 60s were ... Douglas Englebart was the famous dude that was doing it.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: Or experimenting with psychedelics and then doing problem solving stuff for computers. The idea was that in the end, and Timothy Leary was the key futurist that articulated this, that computers could be re-conceived as the new psychedelics. Psychedelics, the etymology means to 'make manifest mind.' What is an iPhone if not manifest mind?
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: What is a computer if not manifest mind. So, this is the kind of stuff I wanted to put out there in my videos, this cyberdelic, as they call it, messaging.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: Ross Andersen picked up on that, and so that's when he was, "Oh, you're the Timothy Leary of the viral video age."
I was like, "I'll take it."
- Dave Asprey: It's a great description.
- Jason Silva: Sounds fun.
- Dave Asprey: You take it. I was wondering if you'd be like, "Yeah, that's good." Or, "You know what? Maybe that's not accurate."
- Jason Silva: I like Leary.
- Dave Asprey: I do, too.

- Jason Silva: I happen to think he's a friggin amazingly eloquent writer. Yeah, I mean he was a rabble rouser, and there's a lot of controversy there. Some of that stuff he did, I think was really important.
- Dave Asprey: He was probably connected with the CIA. I've seen some really deep research by, from another guest on here.
- Jason Silva: Oh really?
- Dave Asprey: There's probably more to Timothy Leary than the common thing, but there's definitely some interesting stuff there no matter whether you like him or hate him. It's noteworthy, right?
- Jason Silva: Yeah, sure. Sure.
- Dave Asprey: To your point, though, I've actually had more out-of-body hallucinogenic experiences from really advanced neuro feedback, than I have from any hallucinogen. I've done Ayahuasca with shamans in Peru, and my share of spiritual exploration with chemicals in a non-party spiritual settings.
- Jason Silva: Yeah, sure.
- Dave Asprey: As opposed to the, "I went to a rave."
- Jason Silva: Yeah, of course.
- Dave Asprey: "And magic stuff happened," kind of thing.
- Jason Silva: Yeah, yeah. No, it's good to pre-configure your set and setting.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: It's a lesson we could learn from the psychonauts and the psychedelic explorers that we should actually apply in our normal waking states as well. Setting matters when we're sober, too. Many of us live lives of quiet desperation because we've chosen to put ourselves in spaces and dwellings that have terrible feedback loops.

Dave Asprey: Well said!

Jason Silva: We're depressed, and we don't realize, maybe it's because we don't like our job, or maybe it's because we're in a miserable relationship, or maybe it's we're not doing something meaningful, you know? We could learn a lot from those ideas, those heuristics of setting. It matters.

Dave Asprey: I've been working a lot on that. I just finished building Bulletproof Labs up here in my backyard. I'm on Vancouver Island, I live on a 32 acre organic farm. I wanted to have views of the forest, because those are actually good for your brain.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: I wanted to have my own food that grows right over there, that's good for your brain.

Jason Silva: Amazing.

Dave Asprey: I also wanted an inspiring place to work. I've got orange walls and all sorts of weird decorations.

Jason Silva: Awesome.

Dave Asprey: That thing behind me.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Is the world's first hard drive.

Jason Silva: Cool!

Dave Asprey: In 1885, it won an innovation award as the best filing system, at least in North America, Canada and the US, right? When you had to access data really, really fast, you've got one of these things.

Jason Silva: oh my...

Dave Asprey: It's like my iPhone is like an infinite number of those.

Jason Silva: Yeah, sure.

Dave Asprey: Those are there to remind me of those things and to just keep it playful, because it is set in setting. If I'm going to create the next book that's really good, I don't think I could do it in a mobile home. That would have been the cheapest office for me.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: But it just wasn't right, so this is a converted wood barn that is the studio.

Jason Silva: No, it's brilliant. I could see other artifacts behind you as well, so it seems like you've created your own library of human imagination.

Dave Asprey: I'm working really hard on it.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: There's some stuff off camera, too, that's really, really cool from the 50s.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: The idea here is almost all of it fits on the iPhone, but having it around is this remind of "Look how far we've come," either in my life or in my parents' life.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: If you look at the shape of the curve.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: You read the Peter Diamandis stuff.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Peter and I have become friends. Do you know Peter?

Jason Silva: Sure, of course. He's a friend of mine, and Steven Kotler as well.

Dave Asprey: Both of them are friends of mine, too.

Jason Silva: I speak to Kotler all the time. Kotler and Jamie Wheal. Those are my 2 favorite people in the world.

Dave Asprey: Okay, those guys are crazy. I'm actually an investor in the Flow Genome project.

Jason Silva: Excellent, smart! Yeah, I talk to Jamie all the time. Altered states to altered traits. Hacking to blow that whole thing. Yeah.

Dave Asprey: It's true. In fact, that's something we should chat about.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: There's so many people who are like, "I want to perform really well."

I'm like, "So you want to be abnormal, right?"

They're like, "No. No, I want to be normal."

It's like, "No! High performers are abnormal by definition!" If you're an average performer, you're normal.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Otherwise, you're kind of going to be a tweaker on some level or another. I don't mean tweaker on a drug level. I just mean people are going to look at you and go like, "That guy," or "That woman, they're odd."

Jason Silva: Yup.

Dave Asprey: "Like they're doing something different. Like they don't care about what I care about."

- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: The commitment to be non-average is actually scary for a lot of people.
- Jason Silva: Yeah, I think it's always scary because you're kind of outside the consensus trends. You're probing at the walls of, Robert Anton Wilson calls the reality tunnel. You're a little bit more like Steve Jobs with his reality distortion field.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: You're pulling people towards different visions. You're operating under the beat of your own drummer, and sometimes that can be isolating. You get really effective at being yourself, at being high functioning; but then it makes you sort of alienated from everyday people.
- Dave Asprey: Let's talk about intuition.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: I've actively trained my intuition with unusual forms of neuro-feedback.
- Jason Silva: I plan crosstalk to do that. I've never done neuro-feedback. I need to get into that.
- Dave Asprey: All right. I will connect you with some resources there offline.
- Jason Silva: Okay.
- Dave Asprey: I put a bunch of CEOs, celebrity types, through this 40 Years of Zen program that, while it's correlated with an IQ boost that's pretty substantial.
- Jason Silva: Wow.

- Dave Asprey: It's the biggest thing I've done. I spent 10 weeks of my life with electrodes glued to my head, and there's a \$40,000 gel-free neuro-feedback set-up that I use most evenings for an hour.
- Jason Silva: Wow.
- Dave Asprey: In fact, if I illegally download a copy of Brain Games, I can actually watch Brain Games as my feedback.
- Jason Silva: Wow.
- Dave Asprey: Unfortunately, I can't do a streamed version.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: What happens when I'm watching your show ... I suppose I could rip it or something. Anyway, I have to get an AAC format of your show.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: When I'm watching it and my brain is the state that I want, I see your show in color and full size. When my brain is in the wrong state, I see it in black and white, with half size. The brain hates black and white half size stuff. The brain goes like, "Huh?! What?! Huh?!" Then it gets big again, and as soon as I drift, it goes down. Literally, I'm learning something. I'm watching something.
- Jason Silva: Wow.
- Dave Asprey: I often times just watch like the latest science fiction whatever. The cool thing is, I actually got to watch TV, and my brain gets trained. The downside is like after 45 minutes, you're cooked. You're done.
- Jason Silva: Yeah, right. It sounds like it would probably be very intense. It teaches you how to kind of focus in a deeper way or something?

- Dave Asprey: It depends on what protocols you're training, but it's enhancing connectivity between different parts of the brain.
- Jason Silva: Okay.
- Dave Asprey: Which can make it easier to stay in one state. It can train down ADD things. There's also this default mode network, and I think you've covered that on your show, right?
- Jason Silva: I'm not sure, but yeah the default mode network. I remember reading Michael Pollan's article in the New Yorker about psychedelics and he was saying.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: That pretty much what they do is disrupt the default mode network, right?
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: That's like the ego, the sort of sense of self. The heart and separation.
- Dave Asprey: That's probably ...
- Jason Silva: No?
- Dave Asprey: That's probably more of the active mode network, I'm guessing.
- Jason Silva: Okay, okay. Well, please, enlighten me.
- Dave Asprey: No, no. I didn't read the article but I'm thinking about it. We used to think either you're doing something, so your brain's in active mode; or you're doing nothing, so you're in default mode.
- Jason Silva: Okay.
- Dave Asprey: Then, in Oxford, they figured out "Oh, you're always some in both," which is kind of how biology works, right?

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: It's percentage of time.

Jason Silva: Okay.

Dave Asprey: It turns out all the good stuff happens when you're in default mode. When you're doing adult coloring. You're playing with clay. You're going for a walk in the woods, but you're not actively doing something, then all the creativity, and intuition, and all the good stuff that's been percolating in there, that's when it happens.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: That's when it comes out.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: The problem is when you're in that default mode, you're usually in such a beta state that you don't remember it. It's like you don't remember your daydreams, you don't remember your dreams. The ability to dredge up what's happening in the unconscious and when you're in that default mode, and to have enough active mode to keep a memory thread running, that's a trick to getting more out. For me, all my best product naming ideas, and like, "What should I write about next? What's the whole topic of my next book?" It comes when I allow the default mode to do something, so if you can train the strength of the default mode with electrodes.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Well of course you should do that, right?

Jason Silva: Well, it's funny. I feel like I've somehow figured out a way to train that. I think for me, it's always been the video camera. Because when I'm in that re-associative state with or without herbal enhancement. What happens is, you get a ... your frontal lobe

flooded with dopamine, pattern recognition increases, free association increases. You're in flow, as Steven Kotler says.

Dave Asprey: Right.

Jason Silva: Whatever it is, that walk in the park is triggering that flow. I've always had at the same time really high executive function. In fact, there's a incessant journalist reporter in me that needs to document the moment. When I'm flooded by those patterns, when I'm flooded by those ideas, the daydreaming whimsies, I manically remember to transcribe verbalise.

Dave Asprey: You train yourself to be more creative and to have more intuition.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Just by that act, right?

Jason Silva: Yeah, yeah. There's always been this obsession with transience, and the fact that the inspirational moments are so fleeting. I think the video camera there was a way of stretching and immortalizing the moment. It just became second nature to me. If you watch my Shocks of Awe, they're not scripted. There is no script. There's barely even an outline.

Dave Asprey: Right.

Jason Silva: Sometimes I'll have a quote, or a name of an idea that I think would be cool to explain. The majority of times, we're out in Big Sur Sea Ranch, me and like 2 guys, one camera guy and my friend. We just go for a walk. Go for a walk, we'll get in the zone, in the flow. Yeah, and then it's like all subconscious. When I tap in.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: The episodes just vomit out. The reason that they're like that is because I want it to feel like I'm going for a walk with you, and I got inspired, and I'm explaining to you an idea.

Dave Asprey: The yoga people call that connecting to source.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: You can pick whatever hippie name you want to call it.

Jason Silva: Of course.

Dave Asprey: There's a specific neuro-chemical biological and probably magnetic thing, who knows.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: When you go there, I don't script most of my stuff, either.

Jason Silva: There you go, there you go.

Dave Asprey: It's like, I go on stage.

Jason Silva: Well it's just like life.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: The best conversations are not scripted.

Dave Asprey: Right.

Jason Silva: It's about whether you can summon that when there's a camera or an audience.

Dave Asprey: In fact, one of the things that teenagers, they often do as their brains are growing their prefrontal cortex, they're sitting in a conversation with you or with another teenager. Instead of listening, they're thinking about what they're going to say next. Their whole brain is consumed by what they're going to say next. That's pre-scripting, and it actually takes away a good conversation. It makes them crappy listeners. No offense teenagers listening, you're actually listening to this and doing a good job; but on average, your listening skills aren't trained as

well as they are going to be when you're 30. You can probably be the outlier abnormal person who's a great listener when you're 15. It's just harder, right?

When you go through that whole process, and you realize at some point like, "Okay. I'm going to actually listen fully and I'm not going to plan, and then I'm going to trust and be comfortable with what comes out of my mouth." Just like this interview, we didn't script this. I have some notes about your background.

Jason Silva: Yup.

Dave Asprey: So I remember to say all the good stuff you've done, but I'm not reading questions.

Jason Silva: Right.

Dave Asprey: I'm bringing them down.

Jason Silva: You're responding. Yeah. What happens to me if I try to be a good listener, but a lot of the times, if you're telling me something ... If somebody's saying something and maybe you're like a third of the way into what you're saying. By the time you're only a third of the way, I'm already getting some crazy response. Then, there's the desire to interrupt you that's on a chime-in on the side. It takes discipline to just hold it in and just trust that I'll still remember by the time you're done.

Dave Asprey: There are some communicators who have to communicate every little detail in linear order before they'll stop.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: That can be frustrating.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: What's running in my head when I'm recording an episode, or when I'm talking with someone, it's like "Is what I'm saying useful

for the other person? Is it useful for the audience?" Otherwise, I'm okay to just shut up and be quiet.

I think some people it's like, "I have to get the whole story out. If I don't get the whole thing out, like I've somehow not succeeded." I think there's different cognitive styles. I'm not saying mine's better, I'm just saying that's what it is.

Jason Silva: Sure, yeah.

Dave Asprey: Have you done any research into things like Myers Briggs, or like the Kolbe Score?

Jason Silva: I have not. That has to do with like bumping up your intelligence or something, or measuring your...

Dave Asprey: Well, Myers Briggs is sort of that 'what are your personality traits most likely to be?' It's a personality inventory.

Jason Silva: Okay.

Dave Asprey: The Kolbe Score is something that Dan Sullivan, one of the big entrepreneurial coach guys who's been coaching for like 40 years, some very, very successful entrepreneurs. He coaches me. He uses this thing called the Kolbe Score, which is just 4 numbers. You answer a bunch of questions and it gives you a score. The first number, it's called your fact finder index. I find it fascinating because some people, like if you're a 9 or a 10 on this scale, you're going to get every bit of information before you make a decision. If you're a 1, you're like, "Sounds good," and you just go with it, right? I'm like a 4, so I'm kind of in the middle. I'm going to get enough information, it doesn't mean I can't get all the info, it doesn't mean I can't move quickly. It's because my instinct is to get enough info to be reasonably certain, and then to take action.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

- Dave Asprey: Then, course correct over time. There are other personality types where their instinct is, "Oh no. I will take no action until it's perfect." It's really intriguing when you figure those traits.
- You're like, "Oh wait. That's what I do when I'm not thinking about it, but when I think about it, I may do something entirely different."
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: That self-awareness for me from that score was pretty cool.
- Jason Silva: Well, we've done little games on Brain Games that show that we're in such a rush to make a conclusion from the stimuli assaults us that we often miss little details.
- Dave Asprey: Right.
- Jason Silva: Most of the time, it doesn't really matter or cost us anything; but for the purposes of entertain, we'll have somebody read ... what is it, like New York in the the spring, for example, We'll write the word 'the' twice.
- Dave Asprey: Right.
- Jason Silva: We'll have a bunch of volunteers read the sentence out-loud, and they'll read it 15 times before they catch the extra 'the.' The reason is because their brain is doing a quick snapshot and already extrapolating the meaning from just seeing a couple of the words in the sentence; and of course, missing the error because they don't expect to see an error. They just simply don't see the error. That would be an example of us just very quickly making a decision about the stimuli that's coming in, deciding what something means without paying attention to the details.
- Dave Asprey: It makes so much sense.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.

- Dave Asprey: Especially if you're going to apply that back to yourself.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: I think it's even harder, because there's some sort of self defense mechanism against paying attention to yourself. I think you called that the ego. How much of your personal learnings have been about the ego, and the ego's role in how you behave?
- Jason Silva: Yeah, very much so. I think the book that affected me the most is a book by Ernest Becker called 'The Denial of Death,' which distills the human condition to the fact that we are uniquely aware, in the animal kingdom, of our mortality. It's not about imminent demise. It's just about a fact that one day, and the kind of anxiety and distress that that causes the ego. Man cannot live without a continuous belief of something indestructible within himself, and so the ego is constantly tense.
- The reason in many ways that we subordinate our environment, or that we seek fame or power, is as a defense, or sort of as a raging protest against this impending doom. It makes a lot of sense. I also think it's why psychedelics, psychotherapy, at least for people with terminal cancer.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: Seems to be so effective in making them let go of that terrifying fear. The same time, though, the ego is necessary.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: For ingenuity, and creativity, and goal seeking behavior. I think it's mostly about the knobs and lever, as Jamie Wheal and Kotler talk about, to editing subjectivity, to editing our fundamental logical experience. Maybe it's not fully obliterating the ego, but maybe it's just knowing when to set it aside, when to dissolve it temporarily. Then, once you reconstitute, maybe you'll have a different set of priorities, you know? I'm interested in that whole space. The subjective space, and how to play with it.

- Dave Asprey: It's pretty powerful when you get a model that works for you. I look at the ego as the meat operating system, and it's job is to make sure the species doesn't die. It's going to tell you to eat everything so you don't starve. It's going to tell you to screw everything to make sure there's enough babies. It's going to tell you to run away or kill things that are scary, right? Pretty much that's the operating system you need for any species to survive.
- Jason Silva: Sure.
- Dave Asprey: It's only 3 things. Pretty much every ego-driven behavior is one of those things, including avoid death, is avoid scary things.
- Jason Silva: Sure.
- Dave Asprey: It will create these amazing, fantastic fantasies just to avoid death, or the thought of death, because it's too scary.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: Even though that might not be in your best interest, it's still going to do it.
- Jason Silva: Makes sense.
- Dave Asprey: That's at least what's lead me to be able to make more decisions that are free of fear, instead of-
- Jason Silva: Free of fear? Have you been able to get there? I mean I think that if I ... I would say that my greatest creativity comes from letting go for sure. However, I think a lot of my effectivity and just ... and my ability to get things done, that hustle, and the anxiety, and the fire in the belly, has been equally important to take that creativity and turn it into something prolific and impactful in the world. I grew up in Venezuela. I'm Jewish. I'm neurotic. Venezuela is very dangerous. I was always afraid, "Are we being followed? Are we going to get kidnapped?" Like, "Is somebody breaking into our home?"

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: It's a messed up place to grow up. Even in the nicest neighborhood, you're still kind of a target. That vigilance has probably turned into a tool that makes sure that when I'm inspired, I have the camera around.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: There's this kind of dance between the creative musings and the sort of effective piercing will to do something with that.

Dave Asprey: If you take the anxiety and you generalize it to passion ... The anxiety is a form of passion, and so is desire, right?

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: If you're going to shoot the most amazing 2 minute YouTube thing, ever.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: You come to it with like, "I have a certain degree of anxiety fueling me," and you can make something amazing. You can flip it over and say, "I have like passion to create something amazing, or something that's going to help a lot of people." For me, my whole career, especially in the early days, it was driven by curiosity, but it was out of this like, "Oh my God. I'm going to starve. I'm not good enough," and all the negative anxiety things.

Jason Silva: Yup.

Dave Asprey: I had full on PTSD from very early childhood.

Jason Silva: Yeah?

Dave Asprey: From birth. I was born with a cord wrapped around my neck choking me. That gives you PTSD, like everything's a threat when you come into the world this full of threats, right?

- Jason Silva: Yeah. My dad was born with a cord around his neck. I've also read recently that Holocaust survivors will pass down the trauma in their genes.
- Dave Asprey: My first book had that in it!
- Jason Silva: Okay.
- Dave Asprey: Yes, that's totally true! Yes.
- Jason Silva: Yeah, which is insane. Then of course, my parents divorced young. I was ... That was traumatic. Then, a dangerous country like Venezuela. All those PTSD issues. Then you have already this philosophical mind, an inquiring mind.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: Reading books about 'The Denial of Death.' It's like when I have bumped my head against the cabinet, I want to go get a cat scan to make sure I don't have micro-bleeding, you know? I can veer off in that direction, you know? Then people see Shots of Awe, and Brain Games, and like "Oh he seems so relaxed and passionate!"
- I'm like, "Well, you know." It's a dance, you know?
- Dave Asprey: It's because you're in that state. When you're in that state, you're not in that other anxiety state, right?
- Jason Silva: Right, right.
- Dave Asprey: Well there's, for me, what did it was heart rate variability training, which consciously trains you to turn off that fight or flight. Then, when you have a lie detector, basically, on your head looking at brain waves. You're like, "I'm not afraid," and it's like 'BZZ!' You're like, "aw, fine."
- Jason Silva: Yeah.

- Dave Asprey: I guess I am afraid of that. It's like, "I've let go of whatever that trauma was," and it's like, 'BZZ!'
- You're like, "damn it!" Right?
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: Basically every time I've done the training, you either cry or throw up.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: -Because you come to some horrible self truth.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: You're like, "Aww! Man!" Like, "you know, I guess I still have some work to do there." Then, there's ways to go in and re-pattern things. For me, that's let me not give up any of those states, but actually access more states and to do it without the stress and anxiety. Part of the whole philosophy behind Bulletproof, the brand, is that it's not supposed to be a struggle.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: Like the Buddhist's, "Life is a struggle." Well yeah, it is, but it doesn't have to be a hard struggle. It can require effort without you struggling, right?
- Jason Silva: I love that.
- Dave Asprey: The difference between working your ass off and struggling to work your ass off, is that one of them hurt and the other one can be joyful.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: Right? I am opposed to struggle.

- Jason Silva: I agree. I mean, if you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: That's what everyone says, you know? I feel like for me the struggle is when I come up against perceived biological limits, you know? When I'm jet-lagged, when I didn't get enough sleep, when I'm just like "oh, shit," you know what I mean?
- Dave Asprey: Right.
- Jason Silva: In general, if I'm able to take care of those variables, then I usually feel pretty good.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah. The biological limits piss me off the most, because I weighed 300 pounds, because I had arthritis when I was 14 in my knees.
- Jason Silva: You weighed 300 pounds?
- Dave Asprey: I did, yeah. I had severe brain fog in my mid 20s, and just all sorts of auto-immune things. I was diagnosed fibromyalgia , and chronic fatigue, and I had toxic mold syndrome. I was living in a moldy house. It just jacked my brain up, so emotional irregularity.
- Jason Silva: Wow.
- Dave Asprey: Inability to remember stuff, just like my biology was really bad. I became like hyper focused from that anxiety space we talked about.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: On like, "Okay, I'm old when I'm 20." Like I have stretch marks, still, that I don't know how to get rid of. It's like, "Okay, all that stuff. I'm going to just own it." I learned all that from old people, like anti-aging experts who are like twice or three times my age, because their techniques for turning on biology were working for me.

Jason Silva: Wow.

Dave Asprey: I was like, "Wait a minute. What if, now that I'm back to health, what if I keep going?" You keep hacking the human body more, and more, and at that point you're like, "All right, I hang out with a lot of transhumans," you consider yourself a trans-humanist, don't you?

Jason Silva: Yes. I think transhumanism ... I mean look, I have no doubt that there are scenarios that people can envision that sound really scary in the whole like, of course the eugenics with the hacks is horrible stuff.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: Like from the perspective that I'm coming from, and I think that people like Ray Kurzweil, or Peter Diamandis, or Steven Kotler, or even Jamie Wheal, are ... Martin Mcluhan said it, we build the tools and the tools build us. We use our tools to expand our limits. We use our tools to extend our reach.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: We've had a symbiotic relationship with technology forever. We've used technology to overcome problems, including doubling the human lifespan. Even though new technology sometimes cause new problems, they solve more problems than they create. We can always evolve newer technologies to solve those unintended consequences. I'm a fiercely optimistic, and I'm philosophically pro the idea that ... humanity's an engineering project. It's an engineering project that we need to put all of our labor and creative efforts into. We are the canvas. We are the work of art, and rage against dying of the light, as Dylan Thomas said. I'm a 100% pro-immortalism, radical life extension, bio-tech interventions to augment ourselves all the way, yeah.

Dave Asprey: You and I are cut from the safe cloth there.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

- Dave Asprey: What I've learned, back in the early days of Cyber Punk, I was reading this stuff, and like, "I can't wait to get robot arms."
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: But actually, maybe I'm older and wiser, it doesn't make sense to upgrade your hardware until you've made full use of it. I would love to see even more research go into how do I make my mitochondria work better? How do I have full control over my hormonal systems? We have all these knobs and levers inside our bodies, these biological control systems, delicate feedback loops, and most of them we're unaware of.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: The ones we know about, we usually smash them on the head with chemicals that don't actually fit right into the locks.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: But, they're very profitable, so we do that.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: We ignore the effect of lights, and timing of food, and type of exercise, and all these things that are huge variables.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: Since everyone does them all the time, we think they're non-variables.
- Jason Silva: Well I agree.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: I think biology is a technology, and the knobs and levers approach to biology, to optimizing our self systems, as Jamie Wheal says in his great TEDx doc. We turn our leaky bucket, our colander, into a

chalice. Why not optimize all the way? Yeah, the external interventions can come when they come, but I agree. In the meantime, radical optimization from within is hugely important. Ironically, it's not immediately accessible. Other than shopping at Whole Foods, I wouldn't really know where to start, you know what I mean?

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: I try to eat healthy. I eat brown rice. I eat lean protein, but still, I see what you're doing and I'm like, "Well, maybe if I had a sort of virtual you with me all the time telling me when to sleep and how to act, it'd be easier." But, I travel a lot. I'm on the road, I mean it's hard.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, me too.

Jason Silva: Sometimes I'm just like, "I wish I had the nanobots," you know?

Dave Asprey: I'm competing with Ray Kurzweil for the number of vitamins a day, and I have been for a decade. More than a decade.

Jason Silva: Amazing.

Dave Asprey: My standard number, 180. I think I can make it to 180, and that's only because I have a really crappy start to my biology.

Jason Silva: Wow.

Dave Asprey: I probably would be capable of more, and I'm not joking.

Jason Silva: You cured yourself of all those illnesses you mentioned?

Dave Asprey: The vast majority of them. There's still some autoimmune stuff, it's genetic, that I don't like, and I'm actively working on it. I am incredibly strong and resilient. I sleep 6 hours a night, it's all I need. I've slept 6 hours a night for more than 1,000 nights, not because it was the only amount I could sleep. It's because I've optimized my sleep.

- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: My biology works so well that that's all the cleaning my brain needs at night.
- Jason Silva: Sure.
- Dave Asprey: I wake up, and I'm like "All right! I'm good!"
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: Stuff like that, yeah I feel like I've never been stronger. My blood markers are good, and when they're not good, I know how to control them and put them back.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: I still react to a few foods I don't want to react to, but way less than ever before. The trajectory of the arrow is good, but I'll tell you in another 20 years.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: My goal is to look younger than I do today in 20 years.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: I'm not saying that because I want to sound like a psycho.
- Jason Silva: No.
- Dave Asprey: I actually believe that, and I have a half a million dollar laboratory downstairs where I do stuff that no one on earth does.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: In order to make myself live longer. I'm dead serious about this.
- Jason Silva: Amazing.

Dave Asprey: It's not because I'm afraid of dying. I'm totally happy to die. I just want to die of circumstances I choose, when I choose. That's it. Like, "death? Fine. Whatever."

Jason Silva: Well, but then you go. Indefinite life span.

Dave Asprey: Yes.

Jason Silva: It's up to you, not imposed by entropy.

Dave Asprey: Yes.

Jason Silva: I don't know if you've ever read a book by Alan Harrington, 1968, called 'The Immortalist.'

Dave Asprey: Yes, I have read that.

Jason Silva: That's a magnificent book. I'll never forget, one of the best lines is "We must never forget we are cosmic revolutionaries, not Stooges conscripted to advance the natural order that kills everyone." I always thought that that's just beautifully said.

Dave Asprey: Yup.

Jason Silva: He sort of just rages against the ridiculousness of the ennobling mortality. He says, "Any philosophy that accepts death must itself be considered dead, it's questions meaningless, it's constellations worn out." For me, this comes less from a place of vanity and more from a place of deep attachment to the things and people that I love.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: My love of music, of instruments, of art, of family, of friendship, of lovemaking, of all these things that make life sunny, and lusty, and beautiful. My love of aesthetic arrest. My love of learning. I just feel like, how could you go from that to being food for worms? It doesn't make sense.

Dave Asprey: It only makes sense if you believe in something that I pretty much never talk about on Bulletproof Radio. At least, maybe with a couple shamans, about like reincarnation. I know that you have an episode coming up that I really want to see that, the God brain, where you go to Israel.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: You talk about the God brain. There's research that says believing in God may be hardwired in our brains. There's another set of research though that says reincarnation might be a Darwinian evolved survival thing for our species. There's actually a really strong case. There's a hard scientific book ... The guy's name is Todd, and he's actually a friend, and I'm blanking on his last name, because he's one of those friends where you know his first name, and it's kicking my butt right now. I'll put his name in the show notes. I could probably find him on my phone.

Anyway, there's a full book with scientific credentials talking about ... Okay, here's all the things that don't make sense if you believe that there's no reincarnation. Here's the scientific case for why this species would be stronger if there was. Here's where these things line up. It's a good hypothesis. We haven't proven it yet, but it's not unreasonable. Then, death becomes something different, if you believe that.

Jason Silva: Sure. If you believe in anything, then it becomes something different. Let me ask you, during your Ayahuasca trip, did you see the self transforming machine elves that McKenna talks about? Did you come out of that experience feeling like, "Well, I'm an infinite being after all," or not?

Dave Asprey: I have not seen the machine elves, all though ... Yeah, I've actually never seen machine elves. I've certain read the descriptions. During some neuro-feedback, and during some holotropic breathing with Stan Grof ... For people listening, Stan Grof is-

Jason Silva: Yeah, he wrote LSD Psychotherapy!

Dave Asprey: Yeah, with 10,000 patients for years, legally with LSD. When it became banned, he invented a kind of breathing that makes you trip. I've breathed with him personally. He was 84 years old at the time, I think. You see things. I saw more there than I did on Ayahuasca to be honest.

Jason Silva: Wow! Wow.

Dave Asprey: Very profound stuff that does make you realize that your place in the universe is probably bigger, and smaller than you thought it was.

Jason Silva: Yeah. You remember the movie Contact?

Dave Asprey: Yeah!

Jason Silva: Jodie Foster. That was based on a Carl Sagan novel.

Dave Asprey: Right.

Jason Silva: I thought that film was magnificent, and beautiful.

Dave Asprey: It is.

Jason Silva: I relate to her. She's the wonder junkie, and she's totally secular. However, the end of the film presents a wonderful philosophical dilemma for the ever-secular astronomer that she was. The end of the film, they build the thing, it spins around supposedly creating a warp drive. Then, they drop her capsule through it. Then, as soon as the drop happens, we're within her POV. Within her POV, she sling-shots across the galaxy for I don't know how many hours. She's wearing a little mounted camera on her forehead. She freaking goes to the other edge of the galaxy.

She says, "I had no idea. They should have sent a poet." She meets the aliens in the form of her father's ghost, so that they can communicate with her in that virtual reality. Has the ontological awakening, sees the light, so to speak. Then, (snaps) comes back, falls through the warp drive and is right back on earth. Then, what

happened? She says, "oh my God! I went across the universe! I saw the-"

They're like, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Look at the camera first, the external camera." The external camera shows that her capsule goes right through instantly. It was out of sight for more than a millisecond. That's the external camera. Then she's faced with a crisis of faith. What's the difference between her experience and somebody who thinks they see God? Or somebody who took Ayahuasca and saw these self transforming machine elves? Then we're like, "Wow!" Okay, so finally she's having a taste of her own medicine because now she's forced into the corner of those religious nuts that she was criticizing before, right? Because that's the external camera.

Dave Asprey: Yes!

Jason Silva: Then they say, "Well what about the camera that she wearing on her forehead?"

They're like, "Oh, that just recorded static. So that doesn't count."

Then, the last line in the movie says, "What troubles me is not that that camera recorded static, but that it recorded 13 hours of it."

Dave Asprey: Yes!

Jason Silva: Then you're like, "Oh! So she did go!" I guess my question to those people who have near-death experiences, religious experiences, people who take Ayahuasca and see God, and say that space and time collapse. If there was a way of measuring subjective time, if we had the equivalent of that head mounted camera for the tripper who says that the LSD opens a portal to another dimension, and we could say, "Okay. Well, we filmed them from the outside and they were only tripping for 6 hours," but the camera inside their subjective world recorded a thousand days. Then, it's like the movie Inception. Then it's like dream within a dream.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: Five minutes in the real world, to 10 hours in dream; but there is no way to measure phenomenology.

Dave Asprey: There is.

Jason Silva: It's easier ... There is?

Dave Asprey: Well, just the way you're talking about.

Jason Silva: Quantive?

Dave Asprey: When I do some of the advanced neuro-feedback stuff, you trip. I've dissolved into the universe. I've seen past lives. Like, crazy stuff that shouldn't happen. There is no drugs involved. All you're doing is you're basically ... Every time your brain does something you don't want it to do, you tell it to shut up and eventually it gets out of it's own way. You're like, "Okay. Hold on. Like, stuff's happening. I don't have arms right now." Okay, no drugs involved. Just advanced meditation kind of stuff; but meditation with rubber bumpers. When you do it wrong, it gets quiet, so it's easier. It's cheating. When I've done that sort of thing, I do at the end of it, I say, "How much time was it?"

What you find is that when people have profound experiences, they will report, "Jeez, it felt like that was a 4 or a 6 hour thing."

Jason Silva: Right.

Dave Asprey: When people are slogging through, it's like "Aw God, it felt like it was maybe a half hour but it was just boring," right? We can say there's a correlation between "I had an amazing thing" and "I felt like I had this huge time." There's hints of this happening at least.

If you do that 10,000 times with a whole bunch of people. You're like, "Wait. Why is it that time dialates when people are having a spiritual experience, versus they don't?" It doesn't mean they are

having one, it just means that when they report one, they think time is longer. There's something to that.

Jason Silva: Right, but I guess my question ... I'm always obsessed with "What really happened?"

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: Like if Jodie Foster didn't have the head mounted camera, and we only had the external camera which shows that she went right through, then her subjective account of going cross the galaxy. There are some people who say aliens already have visited us. They're called psychedelics. Psychedelics are the warp drives that open the portal to another dimension. That a more advanced alien civilization doesn't need rockets or star ships, they have these magical chemicals that open inter-dimensional portals.

Dave Asprey: Sure.

Jason Silva: That's the whole essence of other dimensions. So my point is, it's like Jodie Foster saying she went but without the camera that recorded 13 hours. My whole problem is, "Well, did it really happen?" I'm like, "Did she really go?" Well, subjectively she did. Objectively? I don't know!

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: Does it matter? At the end of the day, only subjectivity matters but then what are you going to do when somebody's paranoid schizophrenic who's being distressed. We're like, "Those visions aren't really," you know what I mean?

Dave Asprey: What?

Jason Silva: Like if we tell you that subjectivity is real, then all of a sudden anything becomes possible. I don't know if that's good either.

Dave Asprey: Well, maybe brain waves really matter. What if we find that every time someone has this combination of brain waves, they have this

in the front of the brain, this in back. These are in phase, these are out of phase. Whatever it is, when they self-report a mystical experience and the mystical experience has these characteristics, say machine elves, and the brain waves do this. Is having the fact that the brain actually did what makes multiple people see the same thing, is that a valuable piece of info?

I think it's one of the most precious pieces of information that we have for human beings to say, "Okay, these altered states," by the way, high performance is an altered state, right? "These altered states are quantifiable, and they're reproducible, because you can take someone who has this mystical experience with this set of brain waves and you can train this brain ... Which might be very difficult, and it might be debilitating, but you can train this brain to have the same brain waves and they'll likely have the same experience."

At that point, you've taken some of the subjectivity out. We can show brain wave equivalents, or approximate brain wave equivalents, and we can say both people subjectively report "I met a fairy," or an angel, or whatever we're trying to reproduce, right?

If the same brain state produces the same subjective reality, I think that's a very big scientific step than saying "Ah, people just see random shit," right?

Jason Silva: Fair enough, yeah. I'd buy that.

Dave Asprey: I don't want to steal your thunder on your February 21st episode, but what did you learn in Israel with the God brain? I'm interested.

Jason Silva: Yeah, it was fun. We went to a place that would provide a good wallpaper for that notion, the neuro science of religious experience. It's not like we went to trash religion or anything like that, but we wanted to show the ways in which religious belief affects our neuro biology.

I remember we went to see this guy in a crazy cathedral, and we were talking about how architecture ... How cathedrals are designed ... Architecture has a contentuality behind it. Architecture can script our inner world, that's a powerful thing. Not just when people are tripping, but sometimes when people are praying to God, you know? People experience Stendhal syndrome when they see some of this religious architecture. They see the Sistine Chapel paintings, people will collapse. Music, organs that they play in these churches, these things also like arrest the body, mind; control the tension.

Dave Asprey: They do.

Jason Silva: Point it to these ecstatic places. These are altered states of consciousness, and so we looked at the way religion does that. We also did these funny games where we would offer people a 100 bucks to say they don't believe in God. We give them \$100 and be like, "For a \$100, would you say that you are a nasty person?" "For a \$100, would you say that you are dishonest?" "For a \$100, would you do this?" We just ask them to ... People are happy to say whatever you want for the money. Then, when you're like, "Well, for \$100 would you say you don't believe in God?" Then they got weird.

Dave Asprey: Really?

Jason Silva: Yeah, yeah. Even like non-religious people. They just didn't feel like cursing belief in God for money. They just ... All of a sudden it's like karma or something, I don't know.

Dave Asprey: It's probably a bad bet.

Jason Silva: Right.

Dave Asprey: If you ascribe even a small percentage of likelihood to any of that being possible.

Jason Silva: Exactly.

- Dave Asprey: Then you're like, "you know, this is kind of like playing with fire," right?
- Jason Silva: It's a bad bet. Right, right.
- Dave Asprey: So would you do it?
- Jason Silva: Would I do it? It's an interesting question. I'm agnostic, right?
- Dave Asprey: Okay, so am I.
- Jason Silva: I'm one of those people, I'm slightly jealous of those that have so much faith that they have no fear, kind of thing. I'm also not ready to resign all possibility to be surprised, because I've been surprised before; but yeah. We also went and visited a lab where they're doing brain machine interfaces.
- Dave Asprey: That's so cool.
- Jason Silva: That make us more like Gods. So what happens when we can sort of think objects to move, and all of a sudden we're having God-like powers. That was also part of the show. It's going to be a cool one.
- Dave Asprey: I cannot wait to see that one.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: One of the things that I believe is that when you feel hate and just negative emotions towards another person, it takes something from you. I see that with neuro feedback. It actually does cost me something to spend time on hate. It's like carrying someone else's baggage for them. I'm not going to do that.
- Jason Silva: Sure.
- Dave Asprey: I also think that it actually harms them on some weird hard to define level. Like, if you make yourself more like God because you have a brain machine interface, you better have damn good control of your emotions. If you're like, "I control the death laser,"

and like, "Oh, damn! I just, I thought a hateful thought about that guy over there, now he's smoking rubble."

Jason Silva: That's a very good point. It's like the movie "Minority Report," where they could predict somebody's likelihood of making a crime.

Dave Asprey: Well, I don't know if we want people monitoring our every thoughts.

Jason Silva: That would be not good, I think.

Dave Asprey: One of the great dangers of neuro science right now is something that is happening even in the field of neuro feedback where you take a thousand people and you get their brain waves. You go, "Look this is what a healthy brain looks like," you just average this out.

All right, so you take that brain state and you say, "you know, I'm going to take someone who's in jail and I'm going to train them to that brain state." It changes their life, their non-recidivism goes down. They stop the violent impulses. Life is better. You've fundamentally helped someone.

So like, "Great! I've unlocked the code. I'm just going to do that for everyone!"

What you're actually doing is you're taking F students and making them C students. Great. You're also taking the A students and making them C students. You can actually take away your unique advantages, your unique benefits. What we could end up with, if you go down the Minority Report side of things, is where we actually have ... Have you ever hear that song where they take like the average song that everyone would like?

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: It's like the most banal, just horrible music you'd ever want to hear.

- Jason Silva: Sure.
- Dave Asprey: It's got a little bit of sax, a little bit of that.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: But, it's junk.
- Jason Silva: Yeah, yeah. It would kill the richness of our diversity that makes us so special, right?
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: There's a whole thing there about neuro diversity and how important that is to have different kinds of brains.
- Dave Asprey: Having an artist and a hard core scientist in the same room is important, in the same society is critically important.
- Jason Silva: Yes.
- Dave Asprey: They're just different, and neither is better than the other. I come from this science side of things, but I tell you, I respect the hell out of the guy who wrote "raging against the dying of the light," one of my favorite lines from a poem, right?
- Jason Silva: Yes. Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: I didn't write that, and I don't know that my brain would have.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: But it sure is good.
- Jason Silva: Right, right. I couldn't agree more.
- Dave Asprey: Well, what do you do for your brain? You've had a chance to talk to all these neuro scientists, what do you do to keep your brain happy and healthy? What are your big things?

- Jason Silva: My big things are sleep, you know? I'm not really into staying up until 4 in the morning.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: I really need my sleep to be able to regulate emotions, just vital for me. In my morning routine, I do like coffee in the morning. I need to start having your Bulletproof coffee.
- Dave Asprey: It's awesome.
- Jason Silva: I'm usually like a double or triple iced espresso in the morning. Then, like a workout. I'll wake up, I'll do some push ups, I'll do some push ups. Just spend like 30 minutes or something just doing something. If I'm in West coast or something, I love hiking, so I'll go for a hike. I'll do whatever, something like that. My mornings are usually left brain productivity, task orientated. Then my afternoons, in an ideal day, are decompress, free association or creative. That's kind of how I do it. It's like the morning is coffee, the afternoon is divergent thinking. Yeah, yeah.
- Dave Asprey: That is a cool set up.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: In terms of food, have you seen any research, stuff that makes the brain work better? Not work as well? Obviously coffee makes your brain work better, at least in the short term in studies.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: Other than that, do you have stuff?
- Jason Silva: I've been doing the ... I mean, I grew up eating beans and legumes in Venezuela. I'm a big ... I'm a sucker for the protein rich vegetables like lentils. I'm like a brown rice and lentil kind of guy. If there's quinoa, even better.
- Dave Asprey: Cool.

- Jason Silva: With like lean chicken breast, or salmon. There's a bunch of places in New York that are like fast food places of ultra healthy kind of brown rice-y type of places.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: I could eat that every single day. I could have brown rice and lentils for lunch and dinner every day. I really could. That kind of food has always served me well. I've been the same weight for a long time. My energy level has always been good. Digestive system has always been good with that kind of a diet.
- Dave Asprey: You're fortunate.
- Jason Silva: Yeah?
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: I don't know, I don't really have a lot of bread. Sometimes if I'm in a hotel and I'm having eggs for breakfast because they don't have brown rice and lentils, I'll have some wheat toast. But all the stuff now is saying that bread is actually not good.
- Dave Asprey: It seems like there's some pretty good evidence for it, but bread is a bigger problem for some people than others. In my research, anyway, it's never something that is going to make you as strong as a better choice. Like, brown rice versus bread, I'd say "Always eat the brown rice."
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: Of course, I'd also eat the white rice instead of the brown, too, so.
- Jason Silva: You would?
- Dave Asprey: It's a spectrum. I would, yeah.
- Jason Silva: How come?

- Dave Asprey: 80 times more arsenic in the brown rice than the white rice.
- Jason Silva: I've heard of this! Even like the organic farm brown rice has that stuff?
- Dave Asprey: Yup. Also, the amount of quote, vitamins, you get in there, it's trivial. There's also some anti-nutrients.
- Jason Silva: Really?
- Dave Asprey: Like the seed protects itself from predation by covering itself in things that keep you from absorbing the vitamins. I look at rice as a source of energy, all right, but the nutrients come from plants, not seeds. Especially not like rice kind of grains. I'm like, yeah, put some rice on there, eat your broccoli, eat your kale, preferably cooked, and all of your other things, egg yolks, stuff like that. To counter the brown rice, to give you a little bit of B vitamin ... Come on, there's not a B vitamin in there to matter but there's enough arsenic to matter. It's one of those like...
- Jason Silva: Got it. So you would actually say like, "Don't have the brown rice at all. Just have white rice."
- Dave Asprey: I'd say-
- Jason Silva: What about beans and lentils?
- Dave Asprey: If you have a choice, go for the white rice; but if you don't have a choice, go for the brown rice. Unless it causes massive digestive distress, then you shouldn't.
- Jason Silva: No.
- Dave Asprey: Because it's not good for you, right?
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: Lentils, for me, are on the suspect foods list. There's a group of people who kick ass on lentils and they're perfectly fine. They're

relatively high in starch, like even a higher starch diet than I do, which is also okay.

Jason Silva: Okay.

Dave Asprey: There's also a big group of people who think lentils are supposed to be healthy, and whenever they eat them, and they eat them every day, it makes them weak. It messes with their digestion. They're not genetically set up to digest them.

Jason Silva: Wow.

Dave Asprey: It causes an immune problem in those people. I'm like, "If it works for you, and it does, then cool! It's all right. We're all different people." But, having that road map that says it's okay to not like lentils, and it's okay to eat lentils, but you better measure your results, and honor the results because those are your subjective reality.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Versus evidence-based medicine says.

Jason Silva: Sure.

Dave Asprey: Which is actually pharmaceutical evidence based medicine, for the most part. It didn't even pay attention to food very well.

Jason Silva: Wow, so what is your ... What is like an ideal meal for you, then?

Dave Asprey: For me, the Bulletproof diet was like my New York Times sort of manifesto about "Here's what you can do" and there's a set of foods that are ... I call them 'Bulletproof,' and these are foods that are full of nutrients but more importantly, full of energy without a lot of down side. Then, there's a group of foods, the suspect foods, they have down sides for big numbers of people, but none for others. You just need to eliminate suspects. Either they're innocent or guilty, just sort them, and then you're good. Then, there's kryponite foods like MSG, and margarine, and food

additives. I put gluten on there, too. You don't need to eat that stuff ever to be high performing.

For me, I eat a plate covered in vegetables, like literally a full plate of vegetables. Then I cover that in guacamole, or grass-fed butter; like a lot of fat, 70% of my calories. Then the rest is grass-fed beef, or wild caught fish, like a moderate amount of it. The fats are specific healthy fats. No corn oil, none of that. Pretty much, that's it. It's a plant-based diet. So a big plate of plants with a little bit of very healthy animal protein, no industrial meat whatsoever. When I eat that way, I need less sleep. I maintain my body weight. I have energy all day, like more now than I did when I was 20.

Jason Silva: Wow.

Dave Asprey: That's my recipe, and the principles behind it are ... There's an algorithm to figure out your best thing. But, if you went on my diet, you might experience better emotional regularity. You might also be like, "I feel like crap all the time, and I can't sleep," right? If you follow the rules of 'get rid of the things that make you weak, and do more of what makes you strong,' you will always win. That's what I'm trying to teach people with that body of work.

Jason Silva: Got it. Wow. I got to try to start paying attention to that, because so much of it, in my mind, has always been psychosomatic. I assume the brown rice and the lentils, the macro-biotic diet.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Jason Silva: Is something my uncle has been doing for a long time, and so that's kind of spilled over into our family. It's a macro-biotic, but then add some lean animal protein.

Dave Asprey: We can tell if it works. It's pretty easy. We get some blood tests, and if your inflammation markers are all low, and your hormone levels are where you want them, then it's working. I'll tell you, and how old are you now?

Jason Silva: 34.

- Dave Asprey: You're 34, okay. Between 30 and 40, your testosterone levels do this, your stomach acid levels do this, and all sorts of things change. If you're not getting enough of saturated fat in your diet, for instance, your testosterone levels will start to plummet and then you get that middle bulge; but it may not happen. I know 65 year olds who have been on macro-biotic vegetarian diets forever and they're strong.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: I just find that for a lot of people, they want to be strong, but they're not actually strong. I was a raw vegan for a while. I've been a vegetarian, I've done all these, and so this was kind of the careful process of elimination. I also do the one-page info-graphic, it's a free thing I just let people download that's like the guts of the Bulletproof Diet.
- Jason Silva: Right.
- Dave Asprey: It's like, find where the food is, it's pretty easy, then figure out, "All right. Am I feeling good on it or not?"
- Jason Silva: Then there's my dad who will have just lentil soup and Serrano ham, and pieces of cheese. He's 69.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: He does spinning class every day, and he has a body of a 30 year old, you know?
- Dave Asprey: Wow. You have fortunate genes there.
- Jason Silva: Okay.
- Dave Asprey: A lot of the studies now say it's what your grandmother ate that has the biggest thing. My first book about pregnancy and fertility, I really went into that.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.

- Dave Asprey: It's like, look ... This is another thing that is so effects people, if your grandmother was in a famine, your chances of diabetes are much higher. Some of the World War 2 comes out of that as well, some of the research you talked about earlier with concentration camps.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: You go through all that, but it's less-so for the father, because it's the grandmother's nutrition affected which genes went into the egg that became your mom.
- Jason Silva: Wow.
- Dave Asprey: Then your mom selected the egg for you based on the environmental conditions at that time of conception.
- Jason Silva: Wow.
- Dave Asprey: Man, its complex, and we barely know anything about it. That stuff just fascinates me all day long.
- Jason Silva: Yeah. I'd love to have a meal with you sometime, dude.
- Dave Asprey: Where are you based? Are you in LA or a New York guy?
- Jason Silva: I'm in New York, I'm in New York. I'm actually ... I'm going to Vancouver for TED. Will you be there?
- Dave Asprey: I think so. I don't have my ticket yet.
- Jason Silva: Okay.
- Dave Asprey: But I expect to be there.
- Jason Silva: Okay.
- Dave Asprey: Maybe we can meet there. If not, when you're in Vancouver, let's hook up and I will have you come over. It's just a float plane ride

about 15 minutes to the labs here and we can play, and I'll put you on all sorts of equipment that will blow your mind.

Jason Silva: That would be awesome.

Dave Asprey: Sweet. Well I have one more question for you before we finish our interview.

Jason Silva: Sure. Yeah.

Dave Asprey: The final question is, if someone came to you tomorrow and said, "I want to perform better at every single thing in life. So based on everything you've experienced, everything you know, what are the 3 most important things you have to offer me? Like, what do I need to know?"

Jason Silva: If you want to perform better-

Dave Asprey: At everything you do, whether I want to be a better athlete or I want to be a better sleeper.

Jason Silva: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: I want to be better at washing dishes, whatever it is you do.

Jason Silva: Yeah, yeah. Well look, I happen to be very supportive of the decriminalization of cannabis that we've seen in Colorado and increasingly move towards making that happen in California. Numerous people that have inspired me, like Carl Sagan.

Dave Asprey: Yeah,

Jason Silva: And many others were very vocal proponents of its spiritual cognitive benefits. I would think a lot of the inspiration ... I would credit a lot of the inspiration in my life to my past relationship with that plant, you know?

Dave Asprey: With plant medicine, we'll call it, all right.

- Jason Silva: Well look, I think the un-examined life is not worth living. I think it's very important for people to challenge their preconceived notions of the world. I don't care if it's by taking up a different hobby. I would say live abroad for a year, I think it will make you a better person to be around a different culture and different people.
- Dave Asprey: Yeah.
- Jason Silva: I would say learn a new language. It will make you more empathetic. It will make you more creative. It will make you privy to different POVs, different world views. I would encourage people to experiment in altered states of consciousness responsibly, and in a curated fashion, because I think that again, there is a humbling quality to realizing that there are other ways of seeing things. I think that that ... Just, I don't know. You come out of those experiences a kinder, gentler, more compassionate human being. Aside from that, the practical things are get enough rest, get enough sleep, do exercise, eat well. The basics. Be kind. Extend yourself to other people, and also chase aesthetic arrest, experiences that move you to the point of tears, I think are key. I always feel better when I allow myself to be moved by something profoundly. I feel like that's a wonderful therapy for me.
- Dave Asprey: That is an awesome list, thank you.
- Jason Silva: Cool, awesome.
- Dave Asprey: All right. We are going to hook up in person. I'm hopefully going to see you at TED, if I get a ticket for this year.
- Jason Silva: Great.
- Dave Asprey: If it's not too late.
- Jason Silva: Yeah.
- Dave Asprey: I'm really looking forward to it. Thanks for being on Bulletproof Radio. Thanks for Brain Games. I think it's a fantastic show. For



people listening, if you enjoyed this interview, we went all over the place. I had a great time, and I think if you watch Brain Games, you'll find more really good stuff like this. Thanks for tuning in on this episode, I'm going to bring you more amazing guys like Jason, if I can find them. Jason, peace.

Jason Silva: Thanks guys! Thank you so much!

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