



Transcript of “Vishen Lakhiani”

Bulletproof Radio podcast with Vishen Lakhiani

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Speaker 1: Bulletproof Radio, a station of high performance.

Dave: I'm Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Radio. Today's cool fact of the day. Well actually, it is going to happen, but first, I want to give you a quote from today's guest of the day because this is a cool quote, and then, I'll give you the fact of the day. Here's a quote and this one I really like. I'm not asking you to dedicate your life to changing the world. "I'm asking you to not launch businesses that sell crap, pillage the environment and take advantage of developing nations, or like Coke, market junk that leads to childhood obesity and other health disasters."

That is a powerful quote and actually cooler than the cool fact of the day. Here is today's cool fact of day but here's today's Cool fact of the day is that the American Meteorological Society found that happiness is maximized at 57 degrees Fahrenheit. That's 13.9 centigrade for you people who use digital temperature things like that. You're rotating. I live in a country where they do that and I never know how warm it is. All right. I'm going to relax now.

If you've been listening for a while, you know that I'm ... I do not want to waste time. One of the things that makes you feel really good is to look good. There's a bunch of research that says that when you look good, you feel good, and people treat you differently. You actually make more money. You'll be more motivated. You can actually have more energy when you look good.

One of the things that I've never particularly been a fan of is going out and shopping. I don't think I'm alone as a guy. The Five Four Club provides a simple affordable way to expand your wardrobe. It's a personalized member experience. It's got dependable how-to-wear self-suggestions, a curate collection selected by a personal stylist for you, free size exchanges, free delivery and easy style profile edits. And there's exclusivity.

The clothing you get through the Five Four Club is only available there. It's independent design, production and delivery. When you get it in your regular delivery, it provides an authentic connection between you and the Five Four Club. It makes you look good. It makes you feel good. That actually does make you perform better. Don't forget. Go to FiveFourClub.com and use the promo code Bulletproof and sign up to get 50% off your first package. That's promo code Bulletproof for 50% off your first package.

Today's plug of the day, we never really do a plug of the day, but I actually wanted to mention because, if you're watching right now on the YouTube channel, go to BulletproofExec.com/YouTube, and we'll plug in this dark beverage I'm drinking is actually not wine. I'm recording this at 8 o'clock at night. Why is it not wine? Because it's coffee. It's just decaf coffee because I would stay up all night if it was not decaf, but yes, I'm drinking a nice black decaf coffee for dessert.

It's also coffee because I'm not drinking Bulletproof cacao tea which is the other thing that I might consider. We actually have a tea made from the outer layer of cacao beans that is totally epic and totally different, and something that you've probably never tried before. If you haven't had a chance, head over to Bulletproof.com and check out the Bulletproof cacao tea. It's made

from the heirloom variety of cacao. It's something amazing. It's good with Brain Octane butter or without. It's something I don't talk about enough because it's epic and cool and interesting.

Speaking of epic and cool and interesting, today's guest of the day and today's like a today day is Vishen Lakhiani. Vishen is a good friend and a very well-known speaker on the entrepreneurial mindset and on company culture; a well-known entrepreneur, investor, philanthropist, technologist, working for social good and CEO of Mindvalley, and the guy behind Awesomeness Fest which is a bio-hacking and personal development event for entrepreneurs and creatives and innovators.

In fact, I'm speaking at Awesomeness Fest in Greek ... On the Greek island of Mykonos later this year. I'm pretty excited about that. Vishen has been out here to the Bulletproof labs. I'm really happy to call him a friend, and he's a bio-hacker of change. Vishen, welcome to the show. I'm happy to talk with you again.

Vishen: Dave, I am so honored to be a part of the show. Firstly, I love the setup. I love that freaking swivel futuristic chair from Jules Verne's books that you're sitting on.

Dave: Now we were just talking before we went live. You actually have the same chair. You're not sitting in it right now, but the fact that sitting in Malaysia ... Oh, you are sitting in it right now? No?

Vishen: I had it in my office.

Dave: In your office. Okay. Cool. I don't see wings behind you, but it's really kind of funny that we both, across the world, ended up with exactly the same chair. I tell you, if you haven't taken the trouble to go to the YouTube channel and listen one time, you have to see this chair because it's like, I don't know, Jules Verne meets like, I don't know, Captain Kirk's steam punk. It's just like hammered metal. When I saw this chair, I'm like, "I must have that chair," because it's the coolest thing for the set ever. Apparently, you thought the same thing, because bio-hackers unite, right?

Vishen: It is the single-most, one of the single-most expensive pieces of furniture I've ever purchased. I can tell you it is worth every dollar.

Dave: Nice. I found mine at 80% off at a discounted place, so I was actually pretty stoked.

Vishen: Oh, F.U.

Dave: It's actually true.

Vishen: That's incredible. You've just ...

Dave: I just want to make this historic moment known. Vishen who's one of the world's most established meditation teachers just used the F word on me about my chair. Just, Vishen, you just wanted to just honor the moment? Which is funny because what we're talking about on the

show today is your book called the Code of the Extraordinary Mind, ten unconventional laws to redefine your life and succeed on your own terms.

In the book, you also used an amazing F bomb word, and one that I'm happy to repeat on Bulletproof radio, and I don't normally do that sort of thing, because you used the term "unfuckwitable" which is probably the coolest way I've heard someone describe that state of non-reactivity that comes from advanced meditation. I just thought it was funny that you're willing to absolutely just go there. You did it in a book about extraordinary minds, so I thought that was really cool.

Vishen: It cause problems right? because we have to take that off the back cover of the book because, otherwise, Wal-Mart wouldn't carry it. The back cover of the book was going to list in the beautiful piece of Ah, the ten laws. The book talks about ten laws to get to a state of being extraordinary, in living in life and happiness in terms of your mission. We have the ten laws. Law number 9 is Be unfuckwitable. We have to change the entire back cover because many conservative bookstores would not carry it.

Dave: Wow. The thing is if you add other letters to a word, it's actually not that bad because, for instance, the word "institution" has the word "tit", right, in the middle of it, and they'll allow you to put that. I'm like, how is that okay? Right?

Vishen: You're right.

Dave: I learned that in sixth grade, by the way, and it stuck with me ever since then, at the time I was quite titillated by that thought of being ... Anyway. You could tell. I don't know when I do podcast at 8 o'clock. I'm just in like a great I'm drinking decaf late at night sort of mood. Really, I have a good number of New York Times' best-selling authors on the show, Vishen. This book, I believe, is absolutely destined to go on the list. It's actually a really good book. There's a lot of personal growth stuff like people crank out books like this.

I could tell when I read it, and I've got like a pre-release version that you've really put a lot of heart into it and a lot of personal stories, including some stuff that I would say a lot of people wouldn't have the courage to put in there. I want to talk more about Mindvalley. I have some things I definitely want to cover with you. One of the stories in the book that stood out to me was what happened very early in your career when you were working in telesales.

Vishen: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave: Right. You described how you basically ... I think you tripled your productivity? Just by changing one thing, like walking in through that story the way you say it in the book, it's so powerful and it's so non-intuitive, like it's not the western side of science here, but it was cool that you called it out. Just tell me about it.

Vishen: First, a preface in that, right, for your listeners. One of the things I like about you, Dave, and one of the things why, in my company, people are such Bulletproof fans, is because you and I both come with a science background. We both started out in Silicon Valley. My training is electrical

engineering and computer science from the University of Michigan, one of the top five engineering schools. I worked in Silicon Valley. I worked as a developer. My first job ever was Microsoft.

I look at things from a logical point of view. If there isn't logical science for it, to me, I question it. In this entire book called the Extraordinary Mind, it's about questioning everything we've taken on from the world. We take a science and evolutionary biology approach, and get people to question their ideas of spirituality; their ideas of love, of marriage, of religion, of parenting, of schooling, of education, of meaning of happiness and so on.

One of the things that I started questioning at a very early age was career. I worked really hard as an engineer and got good grades. I was one of the top 1% of graduates to make it to Microsoft in 1998. After 11 weeks at Microsoft, I decided I hated programming, so I quit. I quit a cold turkey. I decided to quit, actually, at Bill Gates' home. I was at Bill Gates' home, at a barbecue hosted by Gates, and I couldn't shake his hand because I felt like I had ... I felt it was so wrong for me to be there. When I quit, I balanced through life for several years, trying to find something that actually gave me fulfillment and meaning.

I started a few companies in the Valley, and I failed, and failed, and failed. In 2002, I found myself having lost two startups; having been fired twice. I had no money. I was sleeping on a couch, a couch that I rented from a Berkeley college student. It wasn't even like a three-seat a couch. It was a two-seat a couch. My legs dangled off the ends.

The only job I could find, because it was April 2001, the dotcom bubble had just burst, right? The only job I could find was a dialing-for-dollars job. I was working for a technology company that sold technology to law firms. I had to call up lawyers and pitch them on this tech. If I didn't close a sale, there was no base salary. We have people in the office who were making zero dollars a month. My mentor who got me into the company was fired because the boss found out that he couldn't close a sale, and he had resorted to living under his desk in the office. I at least made one ...

Dave: It was bad times back then. I remember that crash.

Vishen: You have to make at least one sale a week to be able to eat and survive and pay a rent, right? In desperation, I got in Google, to Google for hope. I can't remember what I put in. Maybe it was "how to succeed." Maybe it was "how to start a business." Maybe it was, "Why does life suck so bad?"

I don't remember what I found, but I found a class for meditation. It was happening in LA. The teacher was a pharmaceutical sales representative who said that learning these techniques have boosted her sales. I thought, "Okay. I could use that. I could use it to be a little bit less stressed out and I could boost my sales."

I flew to LA. I was the only person in that class. Meditation just wasn't necessarily cool back then. I took the techniques I learned. I went back to my job. Here's where the story gets weird. Again, I ask you to listen to this with an open mind. Now, back then, we would go to the San

Francisco Library, check out the yellow pages, and I would have to call every attorney from A to Z, in order, in my territory, which was San Antonio. Instead, I learned the technique from this call.

I went into a deep state of meditation. Now you and I have studied meditation together, so that's basically the alpha state. They would teach you to consciously go to the alpha state which is a measurable brainwave frequency. You would go to the alpha state. What they said is that, at the alpha state, intuition is turned on. I used the technique I learned.

I would open up the yellow pages, and rather than call the lawyers at random, I would run my finger down the yellow pages. I would close my eyes, and in that state, get an impulse. Then I'd open my eyes, look at the name my finger was on and call that name. Weird, right? I don't know what caused the impulse. It almost felt like I was guessing.

Here's what I know. In one week, I doubled my sales. It was as if I was magically calling lawyers more likely to buy. I tried a different technique. I continued learning; reading; going for additional classes; trying to figure out what the fuck was going on in my head. How did I gain these abilities?

Now the next technique I learned was a simple technique on intention and empathy. Before calling an attorney, I would set an intention that the sale would go well only if it was in the best interest of everyone concerned. Then I would use a visualization and connect my heart to the attorney's heart, and imagine a friendly conversation, that I was receptive to their needs, that I was empathetic to them, all hokey stuff, right? Once again, I doubled my sales.

Long story short, in 4 months, I got promoted three times. The company was a startup. When I joined, it was like 20 people. By the time I left, it was over 100. They were promoting very heavily. I got promoted 4 times in ... 3 times in 4 months. They made me director of sales; set me out to New York where I hate it, and opened up the company to a New York office. I was 26 years old. I have only been in sales for 9 months. I now led the company's entire New York division. All of that came from these abilities that I was unlocking, but it gets better Dave, and I want to stress this.

As I started unlocking these abilities, not only could I be one of the top salespeople, but I got bored, because I could pull off so much more sales in less time. What could I do with my other 4 hours? I asked my boss to give me an additional job. He needed a business development manager because Google AdWords had just launched.

AdWords was a new system. Back then, you have to put down half a million dollars to get on the AdWords system. That company didn't have that money. My boss had been haggling with Google, Google was a smaller company back then, to try to give us a break, so we can get on AdWords. I told my boss, "Let me try."

He said, "Yeah. Fine. Okay. You don't have the negotiation skills. I have." My boss was a Berkeley-trained attorney, but I said, "Let me try." I got on again, and I did those same techniques. I got Google to go down from 500K to 100K. I told him that was the news, he's like,

“Holy shit! That’s amazing! 100? We can afford that. Vishen, look, if you can get that down to 100K, can you get them down lower?”

Dave: New Yorkers I tell ya.

Vishen: I got them down to 60K.

Dave: Whoa!

Vishen: Our company, from 500 to 60K, our company could advertise on Google. They made me business development manager and I was leading their New York office. I was doing two jobs at once. My boss was so impressed, he asked me, “How are you doing this? How do you do this?” I said, “Look, I don’t know what’s going on, but I think, in science, they call it ESP.” He goes, “ESP? That’s bullshit! Whatever you do, keep doing it.”

I stayed with that company for another 18 months. After a while, I just felt like I needed to move on. I wanted to start something that matter. I wanted to start something that could make a contribution to the world. My quote that you quoted in the book actually ends with this line. If you buy the audio book version, it ends with this line. “I’m not asking you to save the world. All I’m saying is don’t fuck it up for the next generation.”

I decided that whatever I start as a company, it must be something that isn’t going to fuck up the world. It’s not going to be something that is going to be producing waste plastic, or destroying the environment, or teaching outdated models of learning. I wanted something that could make a dent on this planet in a positive way. I thought meditation is what helped me. Let’s start a meditation company. That’s how Mindvalley was born in 2003-2004.

Dave: That’s a heck of story. Here you are. You’re a computer science guy like me. I realized I wouldn’t want ... I wouldn’t be happy programming for a living, after 4 years of studying computer science, so I changed my major. I was like near graduation, like I can’t do this for a living. I’d rather dig ditches. Programming is complex, but I just couldn’t see doing that for like the rest of my career. Technology I love but coding I didn’t.

We’re both pretty are on science-based, but part of the scientific method is observation, right, like you observe what’s happening. In your case, you trust something that isn’t supposed to work. We have similar stories that way. You’re like, “Okay. I don’t know for sure what’s going on, but something is going on here.” One interpretation is luck. You just had a string of luck. It was entirely random, right? What do you say when someone says that to you.

Vishen: I put this way, right? In my book, I teach people a codified form of learning and human development. I call it consciousness engineering. If you want to upgrade your computer or, say, your smart phone which is essentially a computer, all you do is you upgrade the hardware. You might go from the iPhone 5 to the iPhone 6 or you download new apps. You download new apps to give you full new abilities.

Now, in the human consciousness, think of your hardware as your beliefs. Your beliefs are

installed in you. That's why I compare it to hardware because hardware is something you install in a computer. Now the thing is most of your beliefs that were installed in you come not from rational choice. They were indoctrinated in you from authority figures, from the media, from parents, from education, from observations you made as an innocent little child.

You decide how important you are; that you decide whether people love you. You decide your capabilities. You decide your money threshold. You decide your role as a man or a woman. You decide what's masculine or feminine; how you're going to age; what your body is; your feelings about yourself. They're all installed beliefs.

Now the first thing about consciousness engineering is to recognize that these beliefs are not you. They are simply hardware. Just like hardware, you can swap out of a bad belief and swap in a good belief. Often, when people transform their beliefs, when they have awakening moments, their life changes because your beliefs determine what you're going to experience in the world. That's one part of it, right?

The second aspect of consciousness engineering is the apps of the software. While upgrading beliefs is one way to grow, the second way to grow, to hack your mind, is to download new software. Software are your systems; your systems for living. Bulletproof coffee is a system. Certain diets are a system. Tabata exercise or minimum effective pills exercise is a system. You've made ... You've built an incredible business teaching people upgraded systems for living; from how to eat; to how to think; to how to increase your longevity.

Really, if you want to grow as a human being, you want to get from Human 1.0 to Human 2.0, you've got to do two things. Recognize models of reality; understand what are your models of reality. Swap in the good ones; swap out the bad ones. You learn this through studying the greats; reading autobiographies through modalities like hypnotherapy or meditation where you have awakening moments that shift your beliefs.

Secondly, study, learn and adopt new systems; constantly, learning and studying. That's my bookshelf. It's filled. I have about a thousand books in my home filled with books and all my books are non-fiction books. They teach new systems; new systems for everything from eating to dieting. I'm constantly reinventing myself with these new systems. Back to your question, right, once you understand this framework.

Now, when you understand this framework, everything you absorbed in the non-fiction world, in the personal growth world, you can absorb it faster, because you instantly spotting. Okay. That's a model. You can read a biography like A Life Decoded by J. Craig Venter and go, "Oh wow. Okay. That's how Craig Venter views the world." He's the guy who decoded the human genome. Then you can adopt that same model in your head. You can read books like The Bulletproof Diet and adopt systems directly and inject them into your life.

What they really teach people is to accelerate growth by turning themselves into an upgradable piece of hardware; beliefs in systems. Back to your question, I don't know how intuition works, or the fact is it doesn't matter. Intuition is complete bullshit. It doesn't matter. It's a belief. The belief changes your view of the world.

Maybe it is all luck, but by believing that I have that luck, by believing that when I'm about to call an attorney, right, because there's something in my being that's guiding me on who to call, I am better on the call. In fact, science has proven this in Shawn Acher's book, *The Happiness Advantage*. She talks about a study with salespeople that shows that optimistic salespeople are 55% more effective than negative salespeople.

Even if intuition is complete bullshit, by having me believe that I have intuition, that my finger is guiding me towards the attorney to call, I made myself more optimistic. I created that 55% boost. You see it's all empirical. Your beliefs don't have to be true. You choose your beliefs and act in accordance with them, and they become true for you.

Dave:

The language in your book is really clear and precise about how to see these things and how to breakthrough. What I wish I would have known when I was 20 or back when I was 12, and certainly, by the time I was 30, was what you just said about where your beliefs, the beliefs that you think are you, where they come from, I thought you did a really elegant job of explaining that.

In my own case, I figured this out when I ... I first started really digging in on why things were the way they were in my life. I've made millions of dollars and I lost it all. I've been in a really toxic relationship and just all kinds of stuff like that. I sat down with a woman who ran the American Pre- and Perinatal Psychology Association. She was a founder of it. She asked me this weird question. She said, "Tell me about your birth." I'm like, "Okay. I'm an engineer from Silicon Valley. Like why do you are? I'm pretty sure there were like vaginas and hospitals."

I said, "Oh," and I had the cord wrapped around my neck, but it didn't cut off oxygen, so no harm done." She was, "Yeah, that's what I thought." Then she like presented a PowerPoint slide completely dissecting my personality, like a SWOT analysis, for people listening who have been into business schools; strengths; weaknesses; opportunities; strengths. This woman just like opened me up like a taxidermy animal on a PowerPoint slide. I'm like, "That's incredible."

She ended up doing this thing called the birth regression with me. She said, "Without guiding that much, just sort of like feel what you felt when you were born." What I have done is just to have like, would they mess with you when you're coming out if the cord is around your neck, and they use tools and all this?

I've got a program that had been running constantly. It was after I was born, they put me in some little chamber. When a baby is traumatized, you actually want to be on your mother. It's just kind of like an instinctive thing. They've shown this in monkeys. They've shown this in pretty much all warm-blooded animals. I didn't get that.

The program that I have running was basically like, if I'm going to be alone, then I'll be alone, right? I'm like I'll always be alone. That was a core belief that happened before I could speak, before I could think, before I even knew what the planet I was on was. Like literally, you come out of your mom and you're like, "What the hell just happened?" Like something tried to squish my head and it's like *The Matrix*.

To be able to know that, and so, that was my programming for me, to be able to rewrite that program, completely changed my life, but the program was entirely invisible to me. You have no idea it's running there, because all of these go in. We're talking about hardware and all that. These are like firmware, like they'd go in there, below your operating system, and they're invisible, and you don't know about them.

When you find a technique like the ones in *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, you really laid out very clearly how to tell if you've got these things going on. Here's the deal. If you're more than 7 years old and you're alive, you've got these going on, like that's the human condition. I thought you did a great job pointing that out. For me, I had to spend 10 days at a personal growth retreat like doing regression work and strange breathing exercises but it works.

I just ... Like kudos for explaining it so clearly in your book because, if I hadn't come across that, I wouldn't be able to do the things that I do now, like that matters a lot. It's not taught in Silicon Valley. It's not taught at Wharton. It's not taught at ... What's that little school you went to? University of Michigan? I'm just kidding. By the way, I went to California State University for my actual degree, so I'm totally giving you crap.

What's going on there? This isn't in our education system. It's not taught to parents for the most part. Everyone must sing to this; have these programs running. I think your book is worth reading because you have really approachable tools for just seeing that. I don't think that all the tools you need to get rid of them are presented in the book.

You talked about many different ways of doing it. Just to know it's there, and to be able to see it, and feel it, and go, "Wait, maybe that's not me." That is a precious gift. I just wished someone had explained that to me when I was way younger because I would have avoided a lot of suffering and poor decisions, right?

Vishen: Thank you. There's ... What you said is true. Most of our beliefs we take on below the age of 9. There's ... One of the best books out there ... In my opinion, one of the best books out there in 2015 is Yuval Harari's book, *Sapiens*. It's about the history of the human race. Yuval Harari is a historian-anthropologist. He says something really interesting.

He says that human beings, as we learn to walk erect, right, it became harder and harder for mothers to give birth. All human babies basically are born premature. We are actually born before we are fully developed. To quote Yuval Harari, most animals, if you think about a kitten or a baby gazelle, most animals are like earthenware. When they are born, within a few months, they can hunt. They can walk. They can stand up. Like earthenware, any attempt to mold them or influence them is just like making a tiny scratch.

Human ... Animals, human beings are born like molten glass; and thus, they can be molded. They can be shaped. Like molten glass, they can be turned into whatever you want them to turn into. This is why you can raise a child to be, in the words of Yuval Harari, Buddhist or Christian; socialist or capitalist; warmonger or peacemaker.

All our beliefs can be indoctrinated in us before the age of 7. It doesn't just come from the people around us. It comes from our own meaning-making machine. Within our minds, we have a meaning-making machine; a pattern recognition system that tries to make sense of the world; but because it's still ... It doesn't have all the data it needs, data has nothing more than maturity, we create false meanings, like in your case, you created that meaning that you were meant to be alone.

I created the meaning that, because I grew up in a culture in Asia where I look different. I'm not Asian "Asian". I'm South Asian, Indian, I look different from everyone else. I went to school and I was a different color. I had Caucasian features like a larger nose and hair on my arms and legs because I'm northern Indian. The boys make fun of me. I was called Gorilla Legs because I had hair on my legs. I was called Hook Nose because my nose was bigger than most people of East Asian descent. I grew up and created the meaning that I was ugly.

My entire life, until the age of 22, I've never actually been with a girl or even been on a date, because I grew up thinking I was ugly. That's how powerful these meaning-making machines can be on our life. When you learn to swap this out, and when you learn that your beliefs are not you, instant shifts happen. That's really what I'm trying to do with this book. It's one of many things. That's why this is so important.

Now, just as a segue, right, one of the key things that excites me most is how this influences parents. You've got kids. I've got kids. One of the people I interviewed in the book, alongside you, and Elon Musk, and Richard Branson, is a parenting psychologist called Shelly Lefkoe. Shelly's theories are really interesting.

One of the things she says is that your greatest job as a parent is to let your kids be who they want to be. What you've got to constantly ask yourself in every interaction with your child is, "What meaning are they going to take away from this?"

You may have a kid, right, who's eating food and he drops his food, and you go, "Billy, don't do that." A few minutes later, Billy drops his fork, and you're like, "Billy, I told you not to do that! Go sit in the corner!" Now you think that's correct. That's the traditional North American parenting style, but it's harmful.

It's dangerous because you've got to ask yourself, "What meaning is Billy taking away from this?" Perhaps, Billy dropped his first food by accident. He was surprised that his mom yelled at him. He wanted to test his mom's love for him by dropping his fork. He's just an innocent child. He's just experimenting. Mom now gets angry and sends him to a corner. Now, in his head, his meaning-making machine goes in overdrive. "Mama doesn't trust me. I'm not important. What I say doesn't matter. I'm clumsy."

All of these meanings stack on each other. He grows up with meanings such as, "I'm not important, therefore, I'm not lovable. Therefore, I'm not good enough. Therefore, I'm not as good as other kids." They build up, and they build up, and they build up. All of us go into adulthood with these holes within ourselves; these things which we're waiting for other people to fill in for us; love; importance; attention.

We start craving them because, as children, they were ... These holes were put into us through innocent parenting mistakes and our own dysfunctional and limited meaning-making machine. That's what excites me. Being able to help the world create kids who aren't whole; who aren't confident; who don't feel like ... They have these holes to fill.

Dave: It's one of those things. Our kids are pretty similar ages. The advice in the book there is really important. If people don't understand that that programming happens and that it's invisible to you, you then have a set of assumptions about how to parent. If you accept what I would call a fact, but you say accept a theory, that stuff gets put in before you're 7, and it's not visible to you. You will not be able to see this unless you're in an altered state; you're in some form of therapy, or deep meditation, or neuro-feedback, or whatever. If you don't use some technology to help you see that, it will never be visible. It will just be a part of you.

If that theory is right, or I think you even might be right, it radically changes how you treat kids. And if that theory is completely wrong and it can't be right. You're an island. Everything in there is you. Number one, you're fucked. Okay. I just have to say that. You will not be happy to the level you're capable of because you haven't separated out your programming from you.

The language to help someone see that is really hard because it's one of the scariest things you can show to someone like, "Oh, the things you thought were you, actually, some of them are; some of them aren't. I hope you don't feel too unsettled by that." This is big personal growth scary stuff.

Vishen: I love what you just said, the language, because that's one of the things I talk about in my book. What language teaches us to see, we can see, right? There are studies that show, for example, because Russians have different colors for blue, Russians are able to see different shades of blue and differentiate amongst them better than most Americans. What language can delineate, we can see. Language is one of our most effective pattern recognition systems.

What I do in the book is I give people new words. The book coins some 20 new words in the English language. The most popular of which is the word "brule" or bullshit rule. By teaching you words such as brule, we give you the ability to question your understandings of the world; question what it is that you are doing.

Is your idea that you need to check in at work at 9 and check out at 5 a brule? Is your idea that you need to get married and have 2.5 kids a brule, a bullshit rule, or you're just following these societal expectations that were installed on you? Language is a really important thing. Thank you for bringing that up.

What I tried to do in the book is give people new language terms, new words, to help them unlock new beliefs and new systems; words such as "unfuckwitable", which is a state of being where nothing can touch you; words such as "bending reality", which is putting you in a state where it almost seems as if the universe bends in your favor; words such as "brule" or bullshit rule.

Dave: I think that the book does an admirable job of doing that. You also touched on a bunch of different areas and some that I think the listeners would really appreciate. You talked about common misconceptions about money and productivity. What's your take on that from the book?

Vishen: It seems at this point that the book covers a lot of things, right? Everything really fits into ten rules ...

Dave: It's a great framework. Yeah.

Vishen: What we've been talking about thus far is really to start. When you start to see how you live in what is called the culturescape. The culturescape is that tangled web of human beliefs, habits, ideas, philosophies, religions that govern how you live life. The culturescape installs you with beliefs.

Part 2 of the book is the model of consciousness engineering that teaches you how to create your own world within the culturescape; how to go from Human 1.0 to Human 2.0. Once you do that, you start developing a longing inside you. That longing is, "Holy shit! I am so much more powerful than I think I am. I want to do more." You start seeing opportunities, seeing things that other people miss because they are stuck in the safety net of the culturescape.

When that happens, what happens is that you start thinking like some of the world's most extraordinary people. You start becoming, and you automatically become what they call an entrepreneur, or a creative, or a maverick, because you see patterns that other people fail to see.

Then we go onto Part 3 of the book, and that's where I talk about what to do when you start getting this longing. How do you make sure that you are in a career, or in a business, or in a role that is truly right for you? Here, we question some of the normal standards of role setting.

You spoke of ... You asked me about happiness and productivity. What I talk about in Part 3 of the book is an idea of a state of living that I call bending reality that I observe in many of the most astonishing people out there, from you, who are featured ... You're featured prominently in the book, to Richard Branson, to Arianna Huffington, to Peter Diamandis.

The state is basically this. It's a situation where, yes, you have big visions pulling you forward. Think of this as your vision, right? You have these visions pulling you forward. Your happiness is not tied to these visions. You're happy in the now. You have vision and you have happiness. Most people mix up the two. They are like, "I will be happy when I hit my vision; when I get that new job; when I get that promotion; when she says, yes, that she's going to move into the apartment with me; when I get laid."

Truly extraordinary people actually have it in a different way. They are happy before they attained their vision. Science is showing that happiness is fuel. It basically fuels you and gets you to your vision faster, that only a tiny percentage of entrepreneurs are actually here. Most entrepreneurs are stressed out. They are facing anxiety. I would say 95% of entrepreneurs are

miserable because they have not decoupled their happiness from their vision. They're waiting for a destination. When you realize that happiness is a journey, everything changes.

The book talks about how to put yourself in a state. Firstly, it talks about how to set the right vision, so you don't end up going in the wrong direction and ending up in a job or career that just kills your soul with so many people you end up in. Then it talks about a process called "bliscipline"; and there's another new word. Bliscipline is the discipline of bliss. It talks about a daily methodology to hack your happiness levels and turn happiness into rocket fuel to get you to your vision. The misconception is "I will be happy when." Wrong. Rather, "I will be happy because happiness will be rocket fuel to get me to my vision."

Dave: That is so profound. One of the reasons I wished I've had this, folk, a long time ago, is that when I was 16, I did the Think and Grow Rich thing. I wrote down my goal on a mirror. My goal was I was going to make a million dollars by the time I was 23. The unstated goal there, so you would have called out, full frontal in the book, is like, "Oh, you'll be happy when you have a million dollars. Will you?" I would be like, "Of course, because then I can do whatever I want," right, which is bad logic. I didn't say I was going to keep it.

Here's the thing that I'm still marveling at, okay, if you're listening to this, and you have the opportunity to take \$6 million off the table and you don't have any money, take your money, right? \$6 million is more money than you know what to do with, unless you're just like, "I have to have my own jet," and something like that, but you can live for the rest of your life on \$6 million comfortably and happily, right, without doing anything? Or you can do whatever you want, but like you're basically done.

Instead of taking that off the table, what I told myself was, "I'll be happy when I have \$10 million," which is why I left it all on the table and why I lost all of my money, right? I went from set-for life to, a year and a half later, I'll basically going to be working for the next 20 years, because of that bad programming; the stuff that you described in The Code of the Extraordinary Mind. That's why I think this is really a valuable book because like, man, if somebody just called me out on that.

Vishen: There's a way around that. There's a way around that and that is recognizing the difference between a means goal and an end goal. This is where western goal setting has it wrong. I walked into these classes. I spoke recently at my old alma mater, the University of Michigan, and I walk into this class where they were teaching these kids, this stupid, stupid, stupid system called SMART goal setting, S-M-A-R-T.

Dave: Oh yeah.

Vishen: It's one of the dumbest ...

Dave: Specific, measurable, attainable, redundant, something.

Vishen: Absolutely stupid. Right. I invented a new goal setting system called The Three Most Important Questions, right? We don't have to go into it, but the key differentiator is this. When you ...

There's a difference between end goals and means goals. Most people aim for means goals when what they are really hoping to get are end goals.

For example, if you are looking to get a college degree, get a job, get married, get a million dollars in your bank account, those are really means goals. Those goals don't really speak to your happiness because, if you really look further, you're looking to get a college degree, so that you can do something else. You're looking to get a million dollars, so that you can do something else.

Ask yourself, what is that "so that"? What is that "so"? That guides you to the end goal. The end goals are always things such as, "I want to travel the world. I want to wake up every day next to the love of my life. I want to experience raising a 2-year-old. I want to build a company for the sake of learning how to function as a team and develop my leadership skills and have that thrill of building something unique. You see, end goals are typically feeling-oriented.

Now the thing is, when you get rid of the means goals, and you toss away all that crap that the culturescape, another new word I coined, tells you that you need to do to be safe, from the college degree, to the GPA, to the law degree, to getting accepted at that firm, you go straight to the end goals, and that's where you truly have human happiness.

All end goals fall into three different buckets. It's all about experiences. What are the amazing human experiences that you want to have in the world? The second bucket is growth. How do you want to grow? All of us are aiming for the tip of Maslow's Pyramid which is self-actualization. Growth gives us great fulfillment. No matter where you are, you are happy when you're growing. You're learning something new.

The third one is contribution. How can you leave a mark on the world? What I teach people is to discard SMART goal setting; discard everything that keeps you enmeshed in the bullshit of the culturescape, and instead, go within. Speak to yourself and understand what are those things that really make you happy and fulfilled. They are always experiences, growth and contribution.

Now when you do that, you're no longer aiming for the million dollars, but it will likely come to you, because to get that dream house, to meet that dream woman, to travel around the world, to have that freedom, to have that creative output, you're going to have to be rich and successful anyway, but you get there without falling into the trap that so many millionaires fall into, where they have the money in the bank, but they hate their lives. They have their careers; they have their businesses; but their relationships with their kids or their spouses suck; or their health is going down the drain; or they may make money and they repeatedly lose it. It's about the end goals and not the means goals.

Dave: That might be one of the most powerful chapters in the book. I love the way you just crap all over the SMART goals and the specific-measurable. It is. These are stair-step, like treadmill goals, like what's next? What's next? What's next? I haven't seen that written anywhere else; the way you've described that. Is that sort of like your own take on this? It just evolved from another body of work?

Vishen:

No. It came because, in 2009-2010, I had two businesses. One business got funded. We had investors. We got funded by Intel. Mindvalley was going strong, but I was miserable. I was depressed. I had scratched off everything on my list. I had media attention. I had money. I had businesses. I had an office that won Best-looking Office in the City. I had smart people around me, but I was depressed, and I hated my life. I felt like a failure. I was putting on this false mask every time I walk into the office.

I realized, “Holy fuck, Vishen. What is it that you really want? You attained all your goals 10 years in advance.” I realized that what I really wanted was completely different. I wanted freedom. I wanted the ability to be able to travel around the world. I was lonely. I wanted close friendships. I wanted to meet insightful, interesting people. I wanted to be able to take my son with me who was 3 or 4 years old back then to all these beautiful things, locations, and experiences, and seminars where I could learn, and take him with me. I wanted travel and adventure. I wanted to be in paradise locations.

When I re-factored my goal list, something interesting happened. Firstly, I decided to completely give up one of my companies, Cold Turkey. That company was making me miserable. I sold all my shares, took a loss and escaped. As soon as I escaped, I became so happy.

Secondly, I decided to stop my own festival. That became Awesomeness Fest. It’s now called A-Fest. When I started my own festival, that almost came to me as an insight. I woke up one day and I’m like, “Dude, I’ve got to do this. It makes absolutely no business sense but I’ve got to do this.” Today, A-Fest has been one of my biggest legacies on the planet. Every year, thousands of people apply. They come and join me in a paradise location with amazing teachers. You’re going to be speaking in a bio-hacking event. It’s some of the most epic parties you can imagine.

A-Fest has no ... The business model makes no sense but it’s one of the singularly most successful things I do. We raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. 80% of my friends in the world today are in A-Fest. I get to travel with my kids to exotic locations, connect with amazing people like you, but it wasn’t something. It was something that just emerged out of my brain when I created a list of end goals. Somehow, my subconscious created a path for me to get there, that never existed in the world before.

How many people go out there and start a festival, right? That was when I realized that there’s a new way we need to be thinking about life, that our subconscious minds are far more powerful at problem-solving than we ever imagined. Screw the culturescape. Stop believing that you have to take the tried and true path. Figure out what really drives you. Write it down. You may not immediately see the steps. As long as you are happy, and joyful, and operating in that state of positive expectancy, you start moving towards that vision.

You quote the book thinking ... One of the greatest things in that book is the idea of baby steps. Napoleon Hill says, “You don’t have to know how you’re going to get to that end vision.” Take a step. Take any baby step. What happens is, with every baby step, you auto-correct; and you auto-correct; and you auto-correct. Eventually, you hit that end vision.

When I came up with this insight to start a festival, really, all I did was I was speaking on stage in

an event in DC. I've got a standing ovation and I'm like, "Guys, I'm so grateful. If you loved me for an hour, I'm thinking about doing this thing where I'm going to invite maybe 200 people to come and join me in a paradise location in Costa Rica, and we'll spend 3 days together just learning." It was spontaneous, but it was a baby step.

Thirty people in the audience paid \$2000 to buy a ticket. I had 60 grand in seed funding in one hour. I used that to launch what is now A-Fest. My subconscious guided me that, within 2 years, every single thing I put down in my three most important questions list came true.

Dave: That's some powerful observations there. I would invite people listening to pay attention to that because I find, as an engineer, as a computer scientist guy, I think I have truth tables built into the way I think. People who write code or do logic math understand truth operators and we tend to be hyper-logical beings.

Along with that comes usually like a relatively negative outlook on life, like profound skepticism and just a really negative mindset. How do you work with people who have that kind of like just rigorous mindset, who are just unwilling to accept, "Oh yeah, there might be such a thing as intuition?" What's your approach to them?

Vishen: You don't even have to because I don't try to convince anyone of intuition. I spend a lot of time with science. I am a member of the X Prize Innovation Board. I just got back, for example, from San Francisco. I was at the UCSF, University of California, San Francisco, where I got to actually talk to some of the world's greatest neuroscientists. I got to hold a human brain.

Dave: I missed that trip. I was going to go on it.

Vishen: Yeah, it was amazing. One of the things about the brain is this thing called the reticular activation system. Our brains are incredibly sophisticated pattern recognition machines, right? They recognize patterns. If you look, it's only now that neuro-artificial intelligence is being developed, where you can teach a computer to recognize patterns.

I know the scientist who wrote the code where you could upload a picture onto Google's algorithm and it tells you this picture has teenagers playing Frisbee in a park, but it took years to get there. Even then, those pictures can ... Those algorithms can be confused. My 1-year-old daughter can pick up my face in a crowd of 100 people. From the back, she knows what the back of my head looks like. That's pattern recognition.

Think about what you do into your brain when you write down the things that you want your life to evolve into. Your brain automatically starts seeking out the patterns. It's the same phenomenon where if you decide you want to buy a white Tesla Model S, you start noticing more white Tesla Model S's on the road, right? That's the brain's reticular activation system.

Again, we kind of explained how it works. My theory is don't believe in intuition. That's fine. Call it hogwash, but you're doing something to your brain's pattern recognition system that stirs you towards your goal, but you've got to have the right goals.

- Dave: In the book, you also write about the Six-Phase Meditation which was a really condense, very elegant way of refreshing meditation. I don't know if we've got time on the show today to go into an enough detail to offer value for people. I'm just going to say, instead of asking you to describe that now, I'm going to ask the people listening, go out and get a copy of The Code of the Extraordinary Mind. I'm giving it my full-on recommendation. This is a unique and noteworthy book. The meditation stuff that's in there is really meaningful. I think you have a URL as well. I'm sure you'd be happy to give to people.
- Vishen: Yes, And, You can get it from TheCodeXMind.com; TheCodeXMind.com; or just go to Amazon and type in The Code of the Extraordinary Mind. Just one thing about the book which is really interesting, this is the most technologically, perhaps the most technologically hooked-up book in human history, because when I wrote this book, just like the book encourages you to question everything, I wanted to question the idea of the book.
- We're releasing a couple of interesting things soon that this is one of the world's first book that actually connects to amazing software that allows the readers to come together and to connect with me, that integrates with artificial intelligence, that integrates with apps that change human behavior.
- We have a team of 30 developers and designers and US experts working on the technology that plugs into this book. One of the reasons is because I'm looking to launch a new tech company that takes regular books and turns them into whole new experiences. This is the first book that's actually going on this new technological platform. It's a really, really, really interesting experiment in how human beings learn and transform.
- Dave: Vishen, it sounds like your whole life has been an interesting experiment in how humans learn and transform. There's a question that ... You know ... There's a question you know I'm going to ask you and it's ... If someone came to you tomorrow and said, "Vishen, I wanted to kick more ass in life. I want to be better at everything. What are the three most important things I need to know?" What would you say?
- Vishen: Sure. The first thing that you've got to know. Again, actually, if I had a minute to give them advice, I'd say, "Look, everything I've learned in the last 10 years, building up some of the world's best personal growth companies, is in this one book, The Code of the Extraordinary Mind." I was going to write four books. I condensed them into one book because I figured out most people like you are busy.
- Dave: It's very busy. Yeah.
- Vishen: If you want three things, the first thing is understand the difference between an end goal and a means goal, right, and go straight for the end goal. You can get on Google and Google The Three Most Important Questions in the account list. They wanted to really see videos of me explaining the concept very well. Okay.
- First, know the difference between your end goals and your means goals. Do the exercise. Figure out your end goals. Secondly, understand the concept of consciousness engineering because it

teaches you how to hack your growth, so that you grow faster, because once you have these end goals, you need to grow into the man or woman who can attain them effortlessly. Consciousness engineering is that mechanism for growth.

The third thing; the third thing is know your quest. This is the final law in Chapter 10 of the book. Your quest is simply that mark, that dent that you're going to put in the universe. Know what it is that you want to shift in the world. Do and ask yourself, "Who do I want to be? Or what business do I want to have? Or how much million dollars do I want to have?"

Ask yourself, "What am I going to be remembered for when I die?" Okay. Now I'm simplifying the concept, of course, but when you get that, when you get that what you want to do is move the world towards the most sustainable future or transform education, or change the way prenatal care works, you get rocket fuel and everything else in your life starts lining up.

Dave: Normally, I'll say thank you after this list of three, but I've got to ask your opinion on that last one. One of the many different meditation groups I've studied with, over my life, I did a bunch of quantified analyses of meditation. Their belief, I won't call out who they are, is that somewhere around 85% of people have no mission, like they have no reason for being here. You clearly have a mission and you know it. My question for you is, "Do you believe that everyone is here with a mission or only some people?"

Vishen: I don't believe that ... I don't believe that everyone is put here and there is some metaphysical soul story that says, "You are here on planet Earth to do X." No. I believe a mission is something we find. I believe that the problem with the way we are training kids today is that we ask kids, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" "I want to be a doctor. I want to be a lawyer." I can tell you a lot of those jobs are going to disappear in the next 15 years with the rise of artificial intelligence and machines. I've seen some of the developments.

Instead, ask your kids, ask yourself, "What mark do I want to leave on the planet?" That's a huge differentiator because when you ask that question, you're opening yourself up to find numerous ways to accomplish that. You could say, for example, "I want to be a businessman or I want to be an entrepreneur."

Like I know ... Let's take my son, for example. He wants to help make the oceans cleaner. That's amazing, because now so many different business opportunities, so many paths open up to him. Everything we study at school now has meaning because he has to learn about the chemical composition of plastic. He has to learn about fishes and what they eat and how they live. He has to learn about coral reefs and water temperature, which leads to global warming, which leads to him learning about the impact of fossil fuels and the impact of electric cars.

From that one tiny mission, a 7-year-old boy has his entire world open up to him. The whole drudgery of school disappears. Everything he's learning now is because he's going to grow up to make an impact by cleaning up the oceans. It works for kids, but it also works for adults, because when you understand what your quest is, and I use the word "quest", you now have a direction on what company to join; what business to start; what type of fundraising to do; what books to read. It changes your perspective completely. It makes life so much more meaningful.

One of the things that impacts us most in terms of our happiness levels is meaning. Study after study; study; all empirical studies show that meaning makes a profound impact. People, for example, one study of men who retire after 80 showed that the majority of reason they stayed at work was because of meaning. Meaning was number 1. Happiness was number 2.

Studies on employee engagement showed that when employees feel that their work is meaningful, they are more engaged in their work. Study after study after study shows that. Then, of course, there's also the philosophies of great men like the Dalai Lama. He said, "You want to be happy. Learn to make others happy." That's what you do when you're living a life of meaning. You're here to make a contribution to the human race. Imagine what the world would look like if all of us would treat to function like that?

Dave: It would definitely be a better place. We can call it an upgraded place.

Vishen: Yeah. My book makes a plea. It says, "Stop raising our kids. Stop joining bullshit companies like Coca-Cola or Goldman Sachs. These people are not really contributing to the world. They are fucking it up for the next generation. Instead, join companies like Bulletproof; like Tesla. Join NASA. Take work. Take tasks that actually make the world better for the next generation. With every decision we make, we can create businesses or join companies which are humanity plus, which means pushing humanity forward, or humanity minus, which means holding us back. You want to make decisions that move us forward.

Dave: Very well said. I think probably said this 15 times on the interview, but if you're listening to this, we're nearing 300 episodes of Bulletproof Radio, and I read a lot of books. There are a lot of books that are hastily cranked out; a lot of books that are kind of well marketed but not that well put together. This is extraordinarily well-put-together book that Vishen did. It's got a framework for understanding it.

If you like the Bulletproof roadmap where it's all of these ideas consolidated into a framework that you can digest and absorb with you. There is a similar thought process. It's actually a programmer's thought process behind putting together The Code of the Extraordinary Mind. It's worth reading because it's got actionable tools you can use without having to like over-digest and just unpack them. They're just right there.

The Code of the Extraordinary Mind, I give my highest recommendation. It is a meaningful book. Everyone who listens to Bulletproof Radio, there's at least one thing and probably 10 things it will do that will upgrade the way you perform. I give it my full unabashed support, The Code of the Extraordinary Mind. Get it on Amazon or anywhere else you could find it. Vishen, thanks for being on Bulletproof Radio.

Vishen: Thank you, Dave. I appreciate you.

Dave: Likewise, my friend. Now, if you've enjoyed today's episode, you know what to do. Go buy Vishen's book. While you're at it, you could do something else. Head over to Bulletproof.com and subscribe to make sure that you get Brain Octane and Bulletproof Upgraded coffee beans



shipped to you on a regular basis.

Every day without Brain Octane is a day where you're probably not operating at your optimal level. You can just feel better if you have more energy, and when you have more energy, you can take it and directly apply it to personal growth. You want to do what's in The Code of the Extraordinary Mind, give yourself more energy in your mitochondria.

Get your nutrition dialed in. Get your food dialed in and all the personal growth stuff; all of that stuff that it takes to challenge conventional ideas to give up your b-rules or brules. Those are Vishen's bullshit rules. It takes energy. You get that energy right, for me, it's completely changed my ability to change myself. I think it will do the same for you. The Code of the Extraordinary Mind, go get it, and have an awesome day.