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Dave Asprey: Next up is your chance to be part of a live studio audience for an episode of Bulletproof Radio. Now, from an audio engineering perspective, I have to say this because I have this microphone. You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey.

And today's cool fact of the day is that this episode doesn't have a cool fact of the day. Normally when I record, it's one-on-one in a quiet studio and quite often they're somewhere else or we're doing it over Skype, and you wouldn't imagine this but I'm staring at a camera. Behind the camera is a big screen TV and they're face is right behind the camera, so when I try to make eye contact, and I'm guessing most of you listen but don't watch. How many of you watch the videos? You guys are real fans, and the rest of you listen. It's because you drive and things like.

The problem is I don't get to interact with an audience when I do that and when I speak like I am now, I am actually paying a lot of attention to what's going on with you guys. There's visual cues, except I don't really get many of them because there's a really bright light in my eyes, because see that back there? So, I might just actually pick up the energy in the room, and this is something that you can do if you practice heart rate variability, meditation, the way I've recommended for a lot of people and it's actually something that if you do the neurofeedback stuff, you can tell what's going on.

What I haven't yet mastered is the art of humor. So your job, as part of the live studio audience is to laugh at my bad jokes, even if they're bad, just give me some love, all right? With no further ado, I believe we've got Neil Strauss back here. Neil are you back here? Come on up.

Neil Strauss : [inaudible 00:02:24].

Dave Asprey: I'm really happy that you could make it because I'm a fan. I don't know if it was your first book, but one of your first books, "Emergency," inspired me to know Santa Monica in a way that I didn't know.

Neil Strauss : That's awesome. I know where you're going with this.

Dave Asprey: I read "Emergency," and was like this guy has gone through this odyssey of just learning about things that frankly made you afraid.

Neil Strauss : Yes.

Dave Asprey: Which was really cool, and one of the things you did is you said, "Well I decided that I would do urban escape and survival training where they handcuff you and teach you to pick locks and escape from trunks and get kidnapped." What sane person wouldn't want to do that right?

Neil Strauss : That's not what my friends told me.

Dave Asprey: So I said, "I have to go do this," and I signed up for the training and it was in Santa Monica, so I spent a day, or actually it was three days. I spent one day having been hooded, handcuffed, escaping from a van and-

Neil Strauss : Did they waterboard and tase you? Was that part of it? That's part of it. It's not a joke actually. They really do that.

Dave Asprey: It was an option I declined.

Neil Strauss : Oh really? I'm so disappointed.

Dave Asprey: I was like, "I'm not going to take the upgrade here."

Neil Strauss : Because you respond differently under stress, the idea is.

Dave Asprey: I thought it was stressful enough without the waterboarding.

Neil Strauss : True.

Dave Asprey: And I didn't have problem with being handcuffed and hooded. That's actually part ... nevermind.

Neil Strauss : That's for another interview.

Dave Asprey: I found it really stressful to be like hunted by bounty hunters, even though I'm like in Santa Monica and one of the highlights of this experience was I'd hidden a little costume, so I put on like this red beanie and a fake ponytail and like dorky glasses, and I carried a cigarette and I walked down the outdoor mall in Santa Monica where no one would ever do that like I'm jonesing. I'm like, "Ah," and people would make this wide circle around me because, "That guy seriously needs a needle in his arm." This little girl walks up to me and goes, "Hi." I'm like, "Dammit, she can see right through me. She's not judging me." Then I walked past three of the bounty hunters and they totally can't see me. I'm like, "I'm invisible."

Neil Strauss : That's awesome. This course, by the way, it's amazing because you learn so much. There's other layers to the world we're living in, and it's the idea of being the invisible man or woman, which is if you walk around maybe with a ... we would go around in say a construction helmet, clipboard, look like you're working, people just ignore you ... or looking like a junkie. And there's all these different strata of the world.

When Dave was talking about how he hid his costume, what that means is the night before you go and create a "cache," which is you hide your stuff somewhere out in the world where no one will take it but in a public area.

When you go to hide your "cache," you find other caches of homeless people and addicts and other people who have hidden their stuff within the city, so there are all these layers of reality that we're walking past and not seeing. It's fascinating.

The reason why we did this was not just because it's fun. It is fun. I think that's why you did it, but I also did it because it's also facing your fears, but also we're living in a very scary political time. Is that safe to say? Fuck yeah, right? My dad's lived through World War II, the Cold War, all that. He's like, "Now is the scariest time in history." You got two choices which is like you can be a victim and be in fear or you can say, "Well I can be as self-sufficient as I can and learn everything I can," and feel a little bit like you have some options and control. You can seek to understand and build a skillset so that ... unless you're at ground zero, you can take care of yourself and take care of your family and take care of your loved ones.

Dave Asprey: That wasn't why I went. I just thought it would be fun.

Neil Strauss : Exactly. It's fun. Because there's two different kinds of survival, and I know this is probably not the main point of the talk-

Dave Asprey: We talk about a lot.

Neil Strauss : There's like survivals out of fear, which is going to live off the grid and build a bunker and stock up, but then you've missed living out in the world. There's another kind and I always ask myself, "Can it still add to my life?" Learning to do these things that are additive and not retreating.

Dave Asprey: Pushing your boundaries like that is really important. It felt really odd, a bit of like loneliness, like, "They're out to get me," sort of stuff. It reminded me sort of like high school. Aww. It triggered a lot of stuff, which was cool, because that's what I wanted it to do. And I've done other things like fast in a cave all by myself in the desert for four days. Hunger and loneliness. Let's like pair those up and double down, things like that, to see what you're made of.

Neil Strauss : Let me ask you a question. What's your biggest fear right now that you don't want to face? What's something that would really take you outside your comfort zone? And you guys can think of this for yourselves too.

Dave Asprey: This is going to sound really egotistical.

Neil Strauss : Insignificance, no.

Dave Asprey: I hacked that shit. If I find a fear, I go in with neurofeedback and I erase it. It's a core part of what I do. If I dig really deep, like core fears, I'm like-

Neil Strauss : You're cool. You'll like live off Doritos and soda for like a month?

Dave Asprey: I used to have a serious fear about that.

Neil Strauss : Would you do that now?

Dave Asprey: I had to spend two days removing that fear because one of my biggest fears was actually like going back to being unable to control my energy and now I'm like, "If it happens, it happens. I'm not going to die, or maybe I'll die, whatever." But like even that-

Neil Strauss : I don't buy the no fear thing.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Neil Strauss : So would you shoot up heroin?

Dave Asprey: Actually, if it was pharmaceutical-grade-

Neil Strauss : What if it wasn't?

Dave Asprey: I would use it three times a week for anti-aging-

Neil Strauss : What if it was a used needle from somebody outside?

Dave Asprey: I would choose not to do it, but would I choose out of fear or would I have like a visceral thing? I literally seek them out, create the worst case possible and then change my mental state to associate the positive state with that until I'm at a level thing. Being non-reactive there has allowed me to be grounded and present at times when I would have been like frankly beating the crap out of someone earlier in my life.

Neil Strauss : Or would you drive on the freeway, like the 101, blindfolded and just trust your intuition? The thing is, there's no absolutes when you say we're not afraid or we're always happy. You know what I mean?

Dave Asprey: But fear is an emotion and then just doing stupid shit is not an emotion.

Neil Strauss : There's some people who could do that.

Dave Asprey: I would love to learn how to do that, but I probably won't. Like I said, it will sound a little crazy or egotistical or like I'm just denying fear, and what it is, I sought it out and I used technology to make sure that it wasn't part of the voice in my head, because I found the voice in my head was really annoying.

Neil Strauss : That's true.

Dave Asprey: Now, are you listening in too?

Neil Strauss :           What's that?

Dave Asprey:            To the voice in my head?

Neil Strauss :           Yeah, it's annoying as shit man. The voice in your head is telling you right now, "Dude, you got a lot of shit to face." Would you really go to war right now and fight for? You know, there's a lot of things. Again, I'll let go of it.

Dave Asprey:            Sure.

Neil Strauss :            But I just don't buy that there's ... you know what I mean? I just don't buy it.

Dave Asprey:            I would like to find anything that you could measure as triggering like the visceral response fear, because you can measure fear. You can do it with EEG. If I find any of those things, I'm like, I play Whac-A-Mole with that crap, and it's not suppressing it. It's erasing it. I'm not proposing that this is what normal people do at all. I'm just saying that identifying the fears that I found from this, which was five, six years ago, that I've gone through and actually worked them out.

Neil Strauss :            Here's what I'm going to say, and then I'll let it go. By the way, this is what I do. This is what I do in all my books and everything. I just drill in and you find out what's there, but the question is what are you afraid, or maybe fear is the wrong word, right? What do you not want to do that other people are doing just fine? And you can look at that in life and say, "Where is that interesting?"

Dave Asprey:            I can tell you that there are areas where I would fail miserable. If I was my executive admin, I would fire me in like five seconds. One of the things that I will not do and I choose very carefully not to, is I don't want to waste energy. I want the energy that I put into the world to provide the maximum return, but it's a choice, and I still do dishes sometimes, which isn't the maximum return. It just makes me mad.

Neil Strauss :            So you get mad, so wasting your time, doing something that would be just a total waste of time would be challenging for you?

Dave Asprey:            Absolutely, and it's not that there are things I dislike or that I don't dislike or whatever, it's just that I used to have a very visceral response that took energy that put me in a sympathetic dominant sort of thing, and now I find that the things that put me in a sympathetic dominant, like fight or flight mode, that they're usually physical things, but it's not like a story that I told myself, because I think I've unwound the vast majority of the stories. The ones that are there are small, and I haven't found them yet, whatever they might be.

Neil Strauss :            Cool. I'll let it go. I could do this for the whole hour, but I think we have so much shit to talk about.

Dave Asprey: This would be fine.

Neil Strauss : I'm just going to dig into Dave.

Dave Asprey: So one of my fears is being naked. Oh, just kidding.

Neil Strauss : Time to get over that right now. It's a few people's fear here is maybe seeing you naked.

Dave Asprey: You should have seen me 20 years ago. Now, then comes your next book, "The Game," and this was the book where pretty much like everyone said that you were a bad man. Did I say that approximately right?

Neil Strauss : Sure.

Dave Asprey: Then, recently you came out with ... and "The Game" was about basically the pickup artist community and this idea that you can sort of programmatically test what works to pick up women and I actually have a friend who really got into this about 10 plus years ago, a guy who's not particularly attractive, and holy crap, how could he do that? He could walk into any bar and like snap his fingers and there's like 5 hot women like feeding him cocktail nuts. I'm like, "This guy's a magician," but I'm sure he was using some of the stuff that you wrote about. Then you came out with your next book. This is your most recent one right?

Neil Strauss : Right.

Dave Asprey: And that one was actually one where you dug really deep-

Neil Strauss : The toughest thing was to actually look at myself.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Neil Strauss : It was easy to get thrown in a trunk, tased and waterboarded, but to actually look at what's going on in here and in here and what's wrong with them. "The Emergency," the book you talked about was like a year. "The Game" was two years. This was maybe like five years. This is the hardest shit.

Dave Asprey: I just got to say hats off because that was an admirable work, and if you guys haven't read it, and you've written seven New York Times bestsellers, and I always confuse their names. This is ... what's the name of your most recent book?

Neil Strauss : "The Truth"?

Dave Asprey: Is it "The Truth." Thank you. I was like, "No, it's not 'The Game.' It's the other one, 'The Truth.'" So if you guys haven't read "The Truth," it's absolutely worth reading because you said something in there that I want to talk with you about

in our interview today where learning how to start a relationship, maybe under false pretenses in "The Game," was something that you learned, but you learned that you really didn't have the skills to be in a relationship, and you just kind of laid it all bare. It was A, an act of courage to write the book and to do the work that would lead to being able to write it, but also just to share that so publicly. So kudos for that.

Neil Strauss : It really is true. Like relationships are the most transformational space, whether it's with your children, with your parents, with your loved ones because you can't control the other person. It's the only place where we're there, we're like, "Shit. I actually have to deal with this person as they are." It's terrifying for most people, and that's where the rub comes in. If you want to know, we can even do this with someone in the audience which is like if you want to know what's really going on with someone psychologically, get them and their partner together and see where the rub is. Is anyone here brave enough to say like what's the biggest issue with their partner? It's such a fun area.

Dave Asprey: We have a supplement for that. It's called [Stepford 00:14:35] Spouse, and it just works.

Neil Strauss : That's what people's dream is, but then you're just ... you might as well ... it's crazy that people would want that. That's where the fun is. That's where the growth is is working that stuff together. Relationships, there's these phases in relationships that are so helpful to learn once you understand them. There's the "projection phase," which is like I meet you and I have this space in my heart and I think you're going to fill it. I put all these imaginary qualities on you, and I'm not even dating you. I'm just dating this fantasy.

Then what happens down the line is the disillusionment phase where you're like, "Oh wait. You're not what I thought you were. You're actually doing things maybe I don't like or I don't approve of or I can't control," and then people go around and say, "I'm disillusioned. They're not who I thought they were." Like dude, this is the day you met them. This is the day the relationship actually starts, and then what happens is there's a power struggle phase where you try to get them to be who you wanted them to be and they try to get you who they wanted you to be. Some couples never get out of that. My parents are still in that.

Then, either it can result in a way where you both actually get to have a real relationship, where you can be like in a, what I call, parallel relationships. I don't call it. I've read it somewhere, but it's two people in a relationship in the same roof but like living their own lives. They just sort of aren't together anymore or a conflict relationship. I just find it's so fascinating and every day with my wife, I love when we have conflict because that's where the growth is.

When we're getting along, we're getting along, but if there's conflict, the success of a relationship is in how quickly you can resolve your conflict, and

really truly resolve it. So if we're in conflict, it's like, "All right. Let's see what's going on with us," and we get to resolve it, and sometimes like in five minutes we'll be laughing hysterically and it's great. The success is how shortening the time with which you recover fully from a conflict. That's where the success is. It's not it ... if you never have conflict, I'd be worried about you.

Dave Asprey: Do you ever find yourself like poking at her to create conflict just for the joy of it?

Neil Strauss : No, but I find myself resisting the false thought that she is poking at me. Right?

Dave Asprey: What do you mean by "resisting the false thought"?

Neil Strauss : So, let me think of a good example. Let's see. Let me think of an example. Okay, here's an example. She calls now, while we're here in the back just a minute ago and she's like, "Oh can you stay home with the baby because I have to go do this thing." I'm like, "Oh, I'm about to go on stage and do a talk with Dave Asprey."

Dave Asprey: That's not what I heard you say. You said, "Yes ma'am, yes ma'am."

Neil Strauss : Exactly, exactly. Then, my first thought was like, "Do you not even know that I'm speaking? I don't have some support from my own wife?" Then I'm like, "Who the fuck cares?" Right? So you can get in this belief like you can just choose your thoughts and your beliefs, and maybe that's an example of me thinking, "Oh I could get in the lie that she doesn't support me. She's not there for me. She doesn't care that I'm speaking." Or I can be like, "Oh, who really cares?" She's not working for me. She doesn't have to like know my itinerary. Did I even tell her? I don't know if I did.

So my question is, so how many people are here in relationships out of curiosity? So about, what does that look like? About a third of the room? How many people are like not sure if they're in a relationship? They're kind of like ... a few people. Right? It's that weird that. How many of you are sitting with someone but you're not sure if you're in a relationship so you didn't know whether to raise your hand? Over there. You two. [inaudible 00:18:03]. That's a telling moment.

I think people who are like one person in the couple raised their hand and the other one didn't and you're like .... By the way, this is why it's all so fun. Is anyone here who's like never been in a relationship for more than a year? Put your hand up. Yeah, so interesting right? And so-

Dave Asprey: Those people should couple off.

Neil Strauss : They can be in a great parallel relationship. Because that's like ... so much programming is around the relationship stuff, all that great attachment theory stuff so that you guys would obviously be like super avoidant, avoidant of

attachment. It's fascinating. I recommend, for the people that raised their hand, go get in one and see who you are. See where your fears are.

Dave Asprey: I have a question for you guys. How many of you wish that your significant other was here with you tonight and they wouldn't come?

Neil Strauss : Oh, good question. So about like 10, 12 hands up.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Neil Strauss : Yeah.

Dave Asprey: One of the things that I've noticed, and I want to get your take on this Neil, in couples sometimes when one person starts on a path of self-improvement, spiritual growth, meditation, yoga, heroin. Okay, maybe not that. But whatever. Like, "I'm going to do something," and the other person resists and won't come along. It can drive a wedge.

Neil Strauss : It's funny because I have a friend who's super into your stuff, and he was going down this path and his wife doesn't go down this path, and then he's always trying to get her, like, "Why are eating that stuff? Why are you letting the kid around those toxic toys? You're poisoning our kid." The problem is in that he is doing something she is not. The problem is he think he's somehow doing something better than her and she has to get with the program and it ends up being both judgemental and belittling. So the problem isn't that you're doing different things. The problem is just because you got into whatever you got into, you expect your partner to get on board with it and then start to look down on them and judge them if they don't, which makes them want to do it less because they're not doing it for them. They're doing it for you.

Dave Asprey: There's a concept of the spiritual ego, which is actually the hardest ego to crack. This is the one that says, "Oh, because I meditate I'm better than you. Because I'm so ego-aware, I'm better than you." I used this to sell a Prius once. I wrote an ad for Craigslist and I wrote, "I have this Prius and my psychic told me," this is all true by the way. It was nominated for Best of Craigslist.

I was like, "My psychic told me that walking is better for the environment than driving a Prius, so because I love Mother Nature more than you, I'm selling my Prius whose name is Sunshine." That would be a crass example of the spiritual ego.

Neil Strauss : Yeah. No, it's amazing some people can do something and not get the message. That's one of the traps of self improvement and this stuff is you think, "Oh because I'm doing this, thus, I'm working on myself." The reason why I asked you that question about fears, the area where you're not comfortable, is a lot of people only dig in one area where they feel safe. I know some people who are in

a bubble and they really work hard on this one area when over there is where the real growth lies, outside their comfort zone.

Dave Asprey: It's a good question that you asked me, and I'm still kind of going through there. I would say anyone who knows me really well, if you know one of those things that I don't see, you got to tell me, because I do these like "worst case" meditations that are truly awful to explore. Like, "What would it be like if I had no food forever and I only ate Doritos?" I've done those with electrodes, so I seek that out.

Neil Strauss : It's wasting your time. I already kind of called it out.

Dave Asprey: The whole worry thing though. It's the stories you tell yourself.

Neil Strauss : So true.

Dave Asprey: What I realized is that I have like this amazing power of self deception and you tell yourself these stories, not based on reality, like the one you told your wife, or not that you told your wife but you told yourself about your wife. Like, "Oh she's calling me right now because she doesn't respect my time," or whatever the story was. But then my wife clearly doesn't respect my time either, so it's all right.

Neil Strauss : They're together not respecting us.

Dave Asprey: Sorry Lana, if you're listening. Of course you do.

Neil Strauss : It's amazing. I really think there's a goal to get couples and people together and make them realize that all your shit is you. It's not the other person, and same with everything.

Dave Asprey: The reason I asked about people who are here and wish their spouse was here ... just because you're bulletproof, it doesn't actually make you better than anyone else. Actually, it does. Just kidding, but the thing that happened to me when I first, even long before Bulletproof became a thing, in the mid to late 90s, when I lost a substantial amount of weight. I was like the biggest jerk ever because I hadn't done a lot of my emotional work and all that. I was like, "How dare you eat that? Don't you know it's about steak?" And all the sort of Atkins diet sort of things, and you end up just pissing everyone off because the bottom line is telling people that stuff doesn't really do much unless they're interested. All you are is annoying.

Neil Strauss : If you want to get what you want with someone, judging them is the worst way to get a positive response from someone, even if you're right.

Dave Asprey: You said it. What I eventually arrived at is I'm just going to lead by example, and even in my relationship, I'm like, "I've been using nootropics for 20 years." You

know how hard it was to get my wife to use nootropics? Good God. She finally did. But it wasn't because I shamed her into it or judged her into it. She was like, "You know? Maybe I should try this." I'm like, "Wow, only took you 9 years. Awesome sauce."

Neil Strauss : Here's what you do if you want your partner to change. First of all you let go of wanting them to change, accept them as they are.

Dave Asprey: Exactly.

Neil Strauss : Number one. If you don't accept them as they are, dude break up now. Real. Secondly, is you just be awesome. Just be awesome. With me in my relationship and I was doing all this work on myself and the truth and dealing with my family issues and my trauma and all that stuff, at some point she was like, "Well what's going on with you? You used to get mad about this. You're not even upset." I'm like, "No, it's cool." "What's going on?"

As you start to just be awesome, look better, feel better, do better, behave better, feel/think/breathe better, people want that. They'll come to you. You'll attract it, but all you have to do is just be awesome and people will want whatever you have. Once you force it on them, then it's totalitarianism right?

Dave Asprey: If you don't answer this, you don't have to, but did you come across times in your relationship where your wife is expecting a response from you that was typical and you overcame a trauma or you reached a new level of awesome and the non-reactivity either pissed her off or scared her?

Neil Strauss : Yeah, yeah. For sure. There's a thing, by the way, which is really true, especially if you're in a super dysfunctional relationship, is some people want that response to feel wanted. They want you to feel jealous, to get upset, whatever it is, because that's their own issues. That makes them feel wanted, but by not responding, but still staying connected, it's the most powerful thing. So absolutely, there were times when it was like-

Dave Asprey: So how did you handle that?

Neil Strauss : It's so interesting. I love this stuff. I love this stuff, and by the way, no one here has called out their partner yet, so I haven't forgotten that question. You're not off the hook. She would say the thing, and I would sort of logically just say, "Hey. Wait, so you're mad at me for doing this, but this just happened and that just happened, so I'm not sure if that makes sense." And then she'd still get more upset. I'd be like, "You know what? You're saying this and this but we discussed this and that earlier. I don't know." Then she was mad. She stormed out. Ten minutes later, comes back, and this happened all the ... is like, "You know what? I'm sorry. I was really wrong there."

By the way, everyone has their own way ... there's that saying, "Where there's reactivity, there's a wound." So something you can think about in your own life is where do you react? And react isn't always getting angry. React could be shutting down. React can be going into a place of shame where you just feel less than others and like you're a piece of shit. It could be getting depressed. It could be getting just fervently attacking someone. Wherever you react, that's where your wound is, so by me being non-reactive in that way, she eventually ... my point was this.

I know as soon as I react, I become wrong. Even if I'm right, when I react, I become wrong. If I just let that go, it works out. Here's another thing. Is this interesting? The relationship stuff? Because ... it's helpful? Okay. All right. Because I didn't know what we were going to talk about when we were out here. We started with tasing and waterboarding and now we're talking about love.

Dave Asprey: They go together.

Neil Strauss : What's this? There was this idea that when a wound of yours gets poked where you haven't grown to a state of emotional adulthood, you regress to an adolescent or childish state. Right? You guys understand? Right? That makes sense. There's definitely some big nods here. Some people recognize it. Those who don't know who I'm talking about, as your partner. If you're single, you're doing that so you don't get poked ... I mean for the five, ten people who have never been in a relationship.

Anyway, well you know you can't reason with a child, so when your partner is reactive, you're not going to get a rational discussion of it. You have to wait until they step away and they come back to you as an adult, or you come back to them as both being adults. Then you can have a discussion about it. Otherwise just know you're trying to reason with a child because that's where their wounds were from mom or dad or whatever happened growing up.

Dave Asprey: There's a hack for that. You ready for it?

Neil Strauss : Let's do it.

Dave Asprey: Your partner goes into the reactive mode and they're stuck there. It's just a couple words. You say, "I have to go to the bathroom."

Neil Strauss : That's true. That's true.

Dave Asprey: Walk out of the room, check Facebook for awhile and then come back in because no one can deny that you have to go to the bathroom. If they did, that would be a problem. I shouldn't say this. If Lana is listening I'm in trouble.

Neil Strauss : "How dare you go to the bathroom in the middle of [inaudible 00:28:25]?"

Dave Asprey: Like, "Sorry. Nature calls," right? So there's nothing bad about having to do that. Then that gives them a chance to be like ... and then their brain can actually reset itself. I stole that hack directly from Daniel Amen. His very first book, "Change Your Brain, Change Your Life," he talks about how there's certain states that you can see on a brain scanner, and it just needs a chance to reset.

That has actually been a really beneficial thing, although I think last year, after like ten years, Lana finally figured out that I do that, and now I when I say that, she gets pissed, but it's okay.

Neil Strauss : After awhile they start to catch on. Right? The other thing too is when someone is ... like someone comes to you with their problem and they're really kind of heated about it, and then you say the wrong answer and they get more upset and all that anger at that other thing gets taken out on you. Anyone ever experience that?

One thing I realized is not everybody wants to be communicated with in the way you want to be. This is not like a 5 love language thing. This is separate, which is I sort of understand now. I'll somebody what they want. I'll say, "Do you want," because there's one of four ways they want to be responded to. One is, "You want advice?" Not everyone wants advice. They just want to talk about their fucking problem. They don't always want your great advice, even if it's great. So I'm like, "Do you want advice? Do you want me just to listen? Do you want me to go away? Or do you want some physical affection?" Some people have a problem, they just want to be like hugged and patted and told it's okay.

Dave Asprey: The advice versus just listen thing seems to fall down some gender barriers most of the time, right?

Neil Strauss : You know, sometimes. I know that's kind a kind of John Gray thing, but I also feel like we start to see a pattern and look for it. I'm the opposite. I really want to talk it through and we're the opposite in like my relationship.

Dave Asprey: You've been working on your feminine side. I can see that.

Neil Strauss : Exactly.

Dave Asprey: That's it. Like you said, it's [crosstalk 00:30:17]-

Neil Strauss : But I also feel like we have so many false dualities in the culture like the idea of men are like this and women are like that. I just don't think a lot of that stuff is true, and if it is, a lot of it's just cultural.

Dave Asprey: Absolutely. When you look and say, "Men are always this way. Women are always this way," that is clearly false. If you say there's a 60 or 70% skew on average, at least from talking with a bunch of guys, it feels like that's a

learned skill that I think every guy here should have, which is to say, "Mm-hmm (affirmative)." That's the listening skill, right?

Neil Strauss : It's also selective attention. For example ... what's a limiting belief someone has about themselves? Just shout it out. We're all friends here.

Audience : Not good enough.

Neil Strauss : Not good enough. Great. And what's the last time you felt not good enough? Right now. She's speaking in front of 300, 500 people. When was the last time?

Audience : [inaudible 00:31:21].

Neil Strauss : [inaudible 00:31:21] When was the last time you felt not good enough? This morning?

Audience : Yeah, probably sometimes.

Neil Strauss : Huh? Okay. An example is let's say I have the belief, "I'm not good enough," and how do people like share that belief at times? Come on. Right? So we're all not good enough guys. All right. Not good enough is just good enough, so we believe we're not good enough and then what happens in a day? We wake up, alarm goes off, we look, we have our home, we have our pets who love us, maybe we have a partner who loves us, and we have this awesome day and then one thing happens where somebody ignores you are they take too long to return your text or you get a piece of criticism, which is probably totally valid, right? From someone you're working for? And all of a sudden, you're like, "See? I'm not good enough. Fuck them. Fuck everything," and we ignore the thousand things that happen and you pay attention to that one thing that proves your point about yourself.

That's sometimes what we do when we have an idea about what feminine is or what masculine is or who I am. We really selectively filter evidence and just look for stuff that shows us to be right, even when us being right hurts ourselves.

Dave Asprey: That is very true. I'd like to talk with you about my problems.

Neil Strauss : Okay. Bring it on.

Dave Asprey: It's interesting too though. A lot of us aren't aware of which of those 4 things is natural. You said it wasn't like the 5 love languages, but what do you think of the 5 love languages?

Neil Strauss : Listen. Here's every self-help book in the world, which is ... all self-help books are about the same thing and people just have different terminology for them. Right? It's a great way to break things down. If we look at the myriad existence

where there really is no separation and we create these arbitrary categories that are useful, it's great. Those are some arbitrary useful categories.

Dave Asprey: Whether you're looking at the 4 things you talked about, the 5 love languages. That was a book that actually I found enlightening, maybe because I have a history of having Asperger's Syndrome or something. How many of you have read the 5 love languages?

Neil Strauss : Yeah.

Dave Asprey: And just knowing what your partner's love language is is really legitimate, and I went so far as I had all of the Bulletproof employees take the test and we have this little HR web application thing, and we know your Colby score, which tells us-

Neil Strauss : Good test.

Dave Asprey: Basic things about what your natural instincts to do things are, like how quickly, to get started, how much information you need to feel safe in making a decision, whether you're good at building stuff or just thinking about stuff and things like that and we put their love language in there. If you have an employee who really just wants a hug, and you're like, "Good job," and they don't give a rat's ass about being told they're doing a good job, well if you know that, it's kind of useful to be supportive and friendly. In a relationship, that's particularly important.

Neil Strauss : It's great to know that, and again, I'm doing a project right now. It's kind of crazy, but we're trying to solve a missing persons case of somebody who disappeared like a month ago. As we're looking at people's behavior, we're finding that we think, "Well, if that was me, I would have done X, Y, and Z, and they didn't do that, so thus, they're suspicious. We're like, "They're not you."

We assume that, "Oh, I would have loved a gift or I would love quality time, and they're not accepting it from me. What's wrong?" We really make this horrible assumption of assuming that everyone thinks like us and responds like us and they don't.

Dave Asprey: That was definitely a big learning for me. It seems like there's some generational changes here, and we're about the same age. I'm 44. You're like?

Neil Strauss : I was born in ... like 48.

Dave Asprey: 48? Yeah. You were born in '48?

Neil Strauss : Yeah I was born in '48.

Dave Asprey: So, we're similar. It seems like some of the stuff that you wrote about in "The Truth," there are fundamental relationship tenets there, but it seems like there are some changes for people who are dating with Tinder.

Neil Strauss : Right.

Dave Asprey: And able to basically do things that would have been really hard when we were 20 because there wasn't any tech for that. They still had 900 numbers when we were 20. I have no idea. I never used one. I actually registered 1(900)HOTDAVE, no joke.

Neil Strauss : Did you really?

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Neil Strauss : No way. That's awesome. How'd that work out?

Dave Asprey: It was a long time ago, but it was funny and I never used it.

Neil Strauss : That's hilarious.

Dave Asprey: And I owned-

Neil Strauss : We're all going to go call it now and see if there's still a message of like teenage Dave.

Dave Asprey: If you go to HotDave.Com, it still re-routes to some of my domains, which is ridiculous.

Neil Strauss : No way.

Dave Asprey: The benefits of being early on the internet.

Neil Strauss : That's awesome.

Dave Asprey: How did I get there? I know what we were talking about. One of the things that I see come up over and over, especially in people under 30 now, is like, "Monogamy is dead. I want to have 6 girlfriends and 2 boyfriends all at the same time." What's your take on that?

Neil Strauss : Yeah, two things. One is, that's another, monogamy/non-monogamy, false duality. There's no such thing. There's no such thing as monogamy or non-monogamy. The idea of monogamy is something the Catholic church made up in the 9th century and has kind of been enforced, but the truth is, my belief is, you get into a relationship. You decide with that person what kind of relationship is healthiest for both of you and the relationship, and then you get into that relationship and if it changes, it changes. It's just crazy how we had this idea

that we got to choose this or that and be that way for the rest of our life, or identify ourselves as that way.

One person agrees. Thank you for that one clap. I did struggle with it because in "The Truth" I really I thought I looked at science and evolution and we're not supposed to be monogamous. Then I thought, "Wait, can't I just make my own choice? I don't have to let whatever evolutionary science says decide my behavior." Most people look to, and I hope I'm not offending anyone here, but look to evolutionary stuff to justify something they already believe anyway.

Dave Asprey: Well, there's "Sex At Dawn," Chris Ryan was on the show a long time ago, and then there's "Sex At Dusk," which is looking at the same data and saying the exact opposite.

Neil Strauss : Then "Sex At Dawn," by Chris Ryan is an argument. It's an argument because he's tired of the other narrative. He's like, "Check out this other narrative." The truth is when we're definitely in this like post-fact era, but what we're starting to realize is that most thoughts and most facts are already there to justify people's preexisting beliefs and emotions.

Dave Asprey: What I've found is that people who explore non-monogamy generally have to face their relationship issues much earlier in their lives.

Neil Strauss : It's true. It is a big growing ... like what it takes to have a healthy polyamorous relationship, and I've seen a lot of unhealthy ones as well, but to have an unhealthy one is where like one person is just entirely controlling. Everybody else is submissive with mommy or daddy issues, and they just live in their trauma bubble. That's the unhealthy one, but the healthy version is people who are really communicating and articulating. Really stuff comes up. There's something called the "birding period," which is if you want to open up your relationship.

Because we're not trained to have an open relationship in our culture and because it's just a new change, it takes about a year to two years just to work through all the emotional stuff. It really takes a lot of emotional maturity to do it.

Dave Asprey: I had a chance to chat with Aubrey De Grey about this.

Neil Strauss : Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave Asprey: Do you know Aubrey?

Neil Strauss : Yeah.

Dave Asprey: So Aubrey is one of the leading bio gerontologists who-

Neil Strauss : We're going to stop aging like it's a disease. It's a genius model.

Dave Asprey: And he's pretty hardcore. He's like, "Oh yeah, we'll find the bacteria that eat cadavers and we'll genetically engineer them so they'll eat only the bad parts and then we'll stick them in your blood." He's very into this anti-aging thing. He has the most ... what's the word?

Neil Strauss : He lives the rest of his life completely unhealthy because he thinks he's going to fix aging so he can just eat all the junk food, never exercise, and do what he wants.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, so fix aging. So beard. There's a correlation there. He has like the most psychedelic beard out of anyone I've ever met. He's a friend, and he was quite polyamorous for quite a while, but he's lived long enough to just be down with it. I was driving him somewhere once, and I'm like, "How do you do this? Tell me about this?" He was like, "I just love everyone." And it was okay, and you could tell there was no emotional stress about that. Then I found out a few weeks ago that now he's monogamous again, so I have to ask him about that.

Neil Strauss : Right. It's funny. I tried living with three girlfriends when I was trying to see what relationship style was right with me, and we spent the entire half a day processing all the shit that went on. This is why I do the books I do, because you don't know what it's like until you experience it. I never realized that one of the biggest challenges of polyamory was who gets the front seat of the car.

We'd wake up, they'd all line up outside the front, because it's like somebody will ... the crazy shit comes up. That's why I love-

Dave Asprey: Same thing as parenting right?

Neil Strauss : Yeah, exactly. Sometimes it felt like that. But I also think you were saying about this generational thing, I think that's another ... it seems to me that we just have this arbitrary cutoff and call someone generation X, or Y, or Z, or this.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, they're arbitrary.

Neil Strauss : If you look at it, a lot of the attributes are the same. The older generation always feels the younger generation is lazy, not working, having too much sex. It's the same shit, whether it's the lost generation or the slackers or ... what's the generation now? Generation Z. Whatever it is. But the truth is, millennials ... Z is the one beneath them. Anyway the point is, the tools might change but we have these ideas that are just false. In fact people are losing their virginity at later ages now. We have this crazy idea. It's just people fucking getting old and forgetting what it's like to be young and being afraid of being replaced.

Dave Asprey: There we go. Fear again. Now, I want to ask you the question in the context. I've already asked you the question on the show, the Bulletproof Radio, "3 Minutes

To Important Things People Want to Perform Better," so I'm going to tweak it a little bit here.

Neil Strauss : Okay.

Dave Asprey: Which means you won't be part of the statistical analysis that I'm actually doing for all these answers, at least on this answer. If someone wanted to love better every day for the rest of their life, what are the three most important pieces of advice you have for them?

Neil Strauss : You all know what the number one thing is, right? Guess it out loud on three. One, two, three. Oh, come on. I'm so disappointed. I thought this was a headstrong crowd. No, it's like you've got to love yourself.

Dave Asprey: There you go.

Neil Strauss : It's not just a cliché. Your capacity to love is limited ... someone's walking out on that line. "You know what? I got homework to do." Your capacity to love someone else is limited by the degree to which you love yourself. Number one. Number two is to accept that person as they are, or accept whatever you want to love as it is, because that is love. Then, number three ... love yourself, accept them, and

Audience : Communication?

Neil Strauss : Communication is great. What's that? Communication, sex, change? You know what? Just to be present with that person. To be present, as hard as that is, to be still and present with that person.

Dave Asprey: Awesome. Well, Neil Strauss. It's been a pleasure having you on Bulletproof Radio. Thank you.

Neil Strauss : Oh, by the way. I want to point out something, which is this. When I was struggling to think of a thought and everyone who yelled out that idea to help me, your issue is that you care-take. Your issue is that you want to help others so badly that you deprive them the ability to learn and help themselves. Goodnight guys. Thank you.

Dave Asprey: Thank you.