

Speaker 1: Bulletproof Radio. A state of high performance.

Dave Asprey: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day, is that there's a strange and easy way to increase your brain function, and it comes from something as simple as putting your phone far away from you. There was a recent experiment where they had people take exams, and they found that people who kept their phones in a different room, performed way better than people who had their phones on the desk in front of them.

It's because the participant's weren't distracted because they were getting notifications on their phones. It turns out that the presence of a smartphone alone was enough to reduce their test performance, even if the phone was off. The reason for that is that your body spends some percentage of your precious mitochondrial energy looking for possible patterns that might be a threat. If the phone's there, a message could come through that might be dangerous.

Now you know that's not the case, but your body doesn't know that because your body is a pattern matching machine run by mitochondria. So, since it's dumb, change the environment around you so that you have better performance. That's biohacking. If changing the environment means tossing your phone in the other room when you're taking a test, hey, what if you've got an unfair advantage?

Today before we get going, I want to talk about one of my favorite biohacks, a product that I've had on the Bulletproof site for quite a long time. It's called Bulletproof Coconut Charcoal. This is something that literally changed my life when I was working to turn my brain back on. I was just dealing with not feeling good a lot. I would go to a restaurant, I'd eat something and then I would just feel like a zombie sometimes. I'm sure you've probably had that happen, at least occasionally and sometimes you even know you're gonna feel like a zombie because you're cheating. And hey, that happens.

What you can do with the Bulletproof Coconut Charcoal is, you can take it any time you're feeling bloated, you feel weird, just kind of puffiness, anytime you feel brain fog, or anytime you're going to eat something you ought not to eat. What it does is it binds to toxins in the gut, which means that your liver won't have to do the work of actually processing those toxins or your kidneys. What happens there is that your body eats these toxins. They're mostly protein based toxins. Mold toxins are a very common one, but many other protein based toxins, like even some lectins, which are plant based toxins, because plants don't want you to eat their babies, those things are in there. They'll have a positive charge. The charcoal that we use has a very strong negative charge, and a huge surface area. Something around a teaspoon of the charcoal has a surface area that could be as big as, say, an actual football field.

What you're doing there is you have these tiny little things that are super attractive, and they suck everything that stick to them, by the way, that includes prescription medications, or expensive supplements, so you take the charcoal away from them. I like to take the charcoal a half hour before a meal, or with a meal, but not with a supplement. What happens when you do the BulletProof Coconut Charcoal is that, it sticks to these toxins and then you feel better. If you've already had the toxins, it draws the toxins towards it. You can see a difference in muffin top relatively quickly, which is kind of funny. On top of that, when my kids get wacky after a meal at a restaurant, I love to give them a little bit of the charcoal. Suddenly it's like they return to their normal, relatively sane eight and 10 year old selves.

What we do that's different in the Bulletproof Coconut Charcoal is ... and this was a huge thing to put it on the market, was to make sure that we use the finest particle in existence, the finest one we could find anywhere. No other supplement company that I've ever been able to find uses this particle size, and there's a reason. The tinier the particle, the more the surface area and the more it works. There are studies from the US Military showing that particle size drives whether or not it sticks to things like aflatoxin, which is an important mold toxin, one that's most associated with cancer and other problems in the body. It's the most dangerous of the mold toxins, at least we think it is.

So, kind of an interesting thing that the particle size matters. The reason it's so annoying is that this stuff makes a huge black cloud when we're manufacturing it, so we have to clean the entire facility after we make it for you, but it's totally worth it. If you haven't tried this stuff, it's very affordable, it's very effective, and it ought to be in your supplement cabinet, because when you take Bulletproof Coconut Charcoal, it's just a great detoxing strategy, and it works.

Before we get into today's, frankly, amazing episode, I'd love it if you took just a second to head on over to iTunes. You might already be there right now while you're still listening and just leave some five star feedback. I look at the feedback, everyone else looks at the feedback and it's one of the ways that you can signal that this show was worth your time. The way I look at Bulletproof Radio, is that we've got more than 50 million downloads. That's 50 million hours of human lives. Now, if I'm wasting your time, I'm not providing value, if this isn't something that's useful for you, not just entertaining, but hopefully entertaining and useful, I hold myself to a pretty high standard. If you could've used that time for something better, and you didn't, that makes me a mass murderer. If this was the highest and best use of your time, even if it's while you're driving or working or whatever else, then I did a good thing. But there's no line in the middle.

I don't want to waste your time. If this show is worth your time, then I'd love it if you left a review. And if it's not worth your time, then click skip. But I promise you, this is probably the best episode I've ever recorded. It's such a cool conversation. We go into some areas you wouldn't even expect. Today's guest is Shep Gordon. Shep is known as a talent manager. He's the subject of a

documentary that just came out that was absolutely amazing. It was called, was it Supermensch or The Mensch, what's the exact name of it then?

Shep Gordon: Supermensch. Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Supermensch, okay. I was like Ubermensch? Supermensch? All right, Supermensch. You may have seen it, and I had the great pleasure of meeting Shep recently at Jayson Gagnard's Mastermind Talks, which is a networking group, and was just blown away at your story, Shep.

Shep Gordon: Yeah, thanks.

Dave Asprey: You told things that I've never seen. For people listening, you've got to see the documentary, because it will blow your mind. If you want to know how, say, Alice Cooper got to be Alice Cooper, it was Shep. That's why Shep is known in the entertainment industry for just finding talent way before anyone else does, understanding what people find interesting. We're talking Alice Cooper, Groucho Marx, Raquel Welch, Luther Vandross, Kenny Loggins, and like 50 other clients. You told us on stage Shep, that you have never had a written contract with any of your clients. Is that true?

Shep Gordon: That's true. Yeah. Well, I had one with Ann Murray, 'cause her lawyer wouldn't let me do it without a contract. I just put a clause in it at the end that anybody could end it at any time. But for me, it was sort of a road block. As a manager, you have to be able to deliver news that the artist doesn't want to hear. Anybody can tell them they're great. You also have to have the ability to fail, which is probably the most important thing, as a manager, you have to be given the ability to do. Somehow that contract makes the relationship one of winners and losers, instead of an equal playing field.

I think all of us have felt that, when you have a contractual relationship and something goes wrong, sometimes your brain goes to instead of fixing it, "Oh my God. I can't believe I got myself into this." That was an emotion I didn't have time for. And contracts, to me, mean lawsuits. I don't like lawsuits. But, I never would do anything for my artists that wasn't contractually correct. In other words, when they entered a relationship with a third party, I was a stickler on signed contracts.

Dave Asprey: Got it, so sort of, "Do as I say, not as I do."

Shep Gordon: Exactly, 'cause my relationship was different. If it ended the next day, I could walk away and I was happy. That wasn't the case usually in most business relationships that you do for an artist, or for anyone in life. When you have a disagreement, you need something to refer to. In my case, a disagreement referring was just get another manager.

Dave Asprey: There's a level of trust that you clearly established with these artists when they're young and maybe not so known, especially earlier in your career. I didn't mention this, but also, you helped Wolfgang Puck and Nobu in the world of food, you probably had as big an influence as the World of Art. I know one other guy who has the same look in his eye as you. It's Rick Rubin.

Shep Gordon: Oh yeah. A good friend, yeah. Love Rick.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, I love Rick.

Shep Gordon: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: But both of you, when you meet you in person, you both have this kind of sparkle and this twinkle in your eye that is incredibly rare. You also both have an eye for seeing talent before anyone else and helping the talent manifest itself. I want to know, were you born that way, or did you build that?

Shep Gordon: I think born that way, 'cause I never ... you know, there was no training. I never woke up and said I wanted to be a manager. I never woke up and was excited by life, or not excited by life. I sort of took the path I took. I think, you know, I love Rick very much and I think the thing that we both share is a belief, sort of, in our own ability. We both sort of do it for ourselves. He's very similar to me. If an artist doesn't want to work with him, "God bless you."

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Shep Gordon: "God bless you. I hope you find exactly what you're looking for. Love ya. If I can ever help you, great," and move onto the next thing.

Dave Asprey: There's a difference, and maybe I'm reading into this, but it's just something that I'm perceiving, self-perception always has its flaws, but when you say that, it actually goes all the way down. It's not the same thing that anyone else could say, because people will see on the show, you may be able to hear it in his voice, if you watch this on YouTube, you may be able to see it when you look at Shep right now. But, there's something that's more than integrity. It's just like an awareness thing.

I've chatted with Rick, I haven't interviewed Rick yet, but we've had many occasions to chat. I'm really curious, because I want to know, how do we teach other people, or how do I learn how to have just that level of alignment from when you can look at someone and say, "No, really. I want what's best for you," and to not have a little voice in there saying, "And what's best for me." How did you get there?

Shep Gordon: You know, I think I always sort of had it in me. I'm not a Buddhist, but I got very curious about Buddhism. I went to Chiang Mai on a vacation, my first real holiday when Alice was successful. It was the first time I could afford a vacation.

In the drawer was not a Bible, but a Buddhist ... like a book, I don't know what, a prayer book. Buddhist prayer book, I think it was called. TV in those days, was mostly in Thai. I didn't have much to do, and I started reading the book. As a kid growing up, I was raised as a Jew, proud to be a Jew, but, my attraction to Judaism was culture, not teachings. I was almost offended by the teachings.

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Shep Gordon: Things like, the price you paid for your ticket on the High Holy Days determine how close to the front you sat. I thought that was really weird. That's weird for a religion to do. When they're talking about everyone's equal, you're supposed to ... So, there were little things like that I tripped over that a Rabbi wouldn't marry a Jew and a non-Jew. I said, "Boy, that's really weird to me. How can you love everyone and make that kind of differentiation?" It didn't compute, but I wasn't anti-Jewish. It just didn't compute. It didn't relate to me, but the culture, I love.

Dave Asprey: What were the things about growing up Jewish in Jewish culture that stood out most for you?

Shep Gordon: Meals were really important. Family, really important. Charitable work, really important. Taking care of your brother, really important. A really deep connection to generations before you and the sacrifice that they went through so that I could be at that table, having that meal. Just a beautiful sense of tribe. It was my first real sense of tribe. But the other side of the tribe didn't make sense to me. It just didn't. It was so different.

When I read the Buddhist, I said, "Wow, this is the stuff I believed in. Let me investigate this a little more." I wrote a letter to a friend of mine from college, who I knew, knew everything in life. He wrote me back this beautiful 10 page letter about Buddhism, which ended with, "Now the most important thing in Buddhism: forget everything I told you. Your walks on the beach in the morning, that's the essence of Buddhism."

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Shep Gordon: Wow. So it made me really curious. Then I got lucky enough to have an encounter with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and was even more blessed, and helped to orchestrate, helped to create my own blessing. I got to cook for him.

Dave Asprey: Tell me a little bit more about that.

Shep Gordon: I got taken in Los Angeles. I already was curious about Buddhism, having read that book, had my friend send me the thing, feeling this peace inside of me that I didn't really know where it came from. I was confused on the left hand side of me, I was headed for a train wreck. Too successful, too much drugs, too much everything, but I was having a great time. There was no buyer remorse, but I was really aware of the fact that I was headed for a train wreck.

I got taken to a speech by His Holiness in LA. I was with an actress, and because of that, we gotten taken backstage. That's the Hollywood thing. When he walked in the room, I felt like I had taken the greatest shower of my life. I've never felt so clean, mentally, spiritually. I don't know if I brought that to the night, or he created it in the night. But for whatever reason it happened, it just was, "Oh my God. This is like the cleanest I have ever felt. I gotta figure out how to get near this and figure out what it is 'cause I want to feel like this every minute. I don't want it just to be when the guy walks in the room. That's how I want to feel every second. Like clean from head to toe."

When I got back to Hawaii, I saw on a bulletin board at Barnes and Noble, when we used to have bookstores, that he was coming to the big island for a teaching. In those days he wasn't the Dalai Lama. A few hundred people would show up, not a 100,000. I sent a note to the person who was the contact for Hollywood saying that I had just started this journey in the culinary world, I had started managing some chefs, and I would love to show his Holiness the bounty that makes Hawaii so special, and make sure that when he got here he didn't just get a hotel food, but that he really got to touch the people, and the farmers, and the growers. They accepted it.

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Shep Gordon: Which got me so nervous, it was unbelievable. But the way accepted it was really interesting. They didn't ask me if I cook, nothing. They wouldn't tell me what he ate. The only thing they said to me was, "You can't have any expectations. If your expectation is that you're gonna cook for him and meet him, don't do the cooking. You cannot bring expectations," which I thought was really interesting, great. I had my own kind of self-worth issues, so I was almost happy I wasn't gonna meet him 'cause like, "What do I say? What do I do?"

A funny little story that I think really reflects on who he is, I did some research on Tibetan cuisine, which is very limited. What they have is yak, Y-A-K, and it's a cross between, I think, a goat and cow. It's a very skinny animal that lives high up in the hills in the mountains, which is where they are.

Dave Asprey: Oh.

Shep Gordon: I assumed that he was a vegetarian. It was an assumption I shouldn't have made, but I assumed it. But in my culture, whenever anybody would come to my house, either here or in Hawaii or in LA I'd always have some chicken soup. I used my grandmother's recipe, always my welcoming, you know, "Here's something to warm your heart and bring you to the family." I said, "What is there Tibetan culture? Yak." The thing that they use is yak tea. You go to someone's house, you have yak tea.

Dave Asprey: Right.

Shep Gordon: It's illegal to bring yak butter into the country, but I got someone to smuggle it in. They brought it to my house. It smelled like every dirty sock in America was in my kitchen.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, it's not good when it's not fresh.

Shep Gordon: Oh my god. It was, ugh. But I made yak tea. The first morning I'd finish the meal, and his Holiness, his emissary, comes in and says, "Please bring him his breakfast." I thought, "I'm going to bring him his breakfast? Oh my god."

They covered my mouth in a little cloth so you don't breathe on his food. I can remember walking up the steps, it was probably 30 steps up to where he was staying and then spoons were rattling, I was shaking so hard. I was so nervous. But I had my yak tea. I was thinking to myself, "Oh god, he's gonna love this yak tea. I'm gonna be such a hero. I'm gonna be the coolest guy in the world."

The door opens, and he's brushing his teeth. He's got his robe halfway down and brushing his teeth. He looks over with this beautiful smile, "Oh, breakfast?" and, "Yes your Holiness." "Oh, put on table." So I go to put it on the table and he goes (sniffs) and I say, "Oh my god, he's smelling the yak tea. What a hero I am. I'm the coolest guy in the world." And he goes (sniffs) "Oo yak tea?" And I said, "Oh yes, your Holiness." He said, "Oh, that's why I leave Tibet."

I tell this story only because I've now had the privilege of being around him a number of times. Whenever he feels someone's uncomfortable, whether it's 10,000 people or one person, he makes some joke to show that he's human. He gets rid of that fear in you. We went to Trinidad. In Trinidad, one of the things about Trinidad is everybody wears their original costume. African's wear their tribal costume for ceremony. South Americans wear their Indian costume. We get to the airport, he's meeting the elders of Trinidad. He walks into the room and it was like God walked in the room. You could hear a pin drop. Everybody was just, in awe that his Holiness was there. He walks up to the podium and he looks around, there's all these beautiful people in beautiful costumes.

"Oh, so sorry. Must be in wrong room. This costume party?" Everybody doesn't know exactly what to do. You could see their like, and then he looks down at himself in his robes and he said, "Oh, no. I'm in right room. I have my costume." And that was it. From that point on he was just a human being talking to them. I see him, he does it every single time. It's really beautiful. He levels the playing field.

Dave Asprey: Wow. You have so many fascinating stories and things you've done that seem to ... say a younger person listening to this right now, it just seems almost unimaginable that you could do this, even when you didn't have the level of access in Hollywood that you might've had with the Dalai Lama. Tell me about what you did with Alice Cooper in the UK?

Shep Gordon: We had a lot of fun. Alice and I have been together 50 years. He says that we met on a lie. He told me he was a singer, I told him I was a manager. But, it's been 50 years. Part of it was trying to figure out how to be successful. How are we gonna get successful? What are our strengths? What are weaknesses? What's been the historical path to success in this field? Just like you would do, maybe, in Harvard Business School, except we weren't, we were the other side of Harvard Business School.

Dave Asprey: I'll say.

Shep Gordon: Yeah. But the things that became obvious to us was that nobody really liked the band. We had the ability to get people to hate us, really easily, which is a thing to put on your list. Then we started to say, okay, how does that translate into music? That's our biggest strength. Alice played a show, I'd open the doors, and everybody left the room, 1500 people. Maybe 20 people left, and the ones that were coming on after. If you read the earlier reviews, Rolling Stone came to his show and said it was something Walt Disney had the good sense to leave in the can.

Dave Asprey: Oh god.

Shep Gordon: People would get angry, like truly angry. The music community, really angry. We had a time when we were on the top of a truck, having just had Hell's Angels with the Grateful Dead destroy all our equipment and saying they were gonna kill us. Bill Graham threw him off the stage. Said, "Either you play rock and roll or you act, but you're not doing both on my stage." He cut their set off after 15 minutes and threw them off the stage.

What we were able to do is to get people to hate us. How does that translate into buying lunch, which is all we really cared about at the time? How do we buy lunch? What we saw was that hatred of parents was the key to every super star. Elvis Presley, Ed Sullivan couldn't show his hips on TV, because it was so disgusting. The Beatles had long hair. The Rolling Stones urinated on their bathroom. Every one of us started to realize, "Wait a second, I remember my parents took the Bob Dylan record and broke it from my stereo."

Everyone of us had a story about how our parents told us not to do something, which got us to do it even more. Our mantra was, "Okay. Let's forget about the kids. How do we get parents to hate us?" We know how to get hate. Alice Cooper's a pretty good name for a guy. There's not too many parents in the '60s that's gonna accept a guy in a dress named Alice Cooper coming to their front door.

Eye makeup. It worked. In America, it really worked, and the songs led into it. "I'm 18. I don't know if I'm a man, a boy ..." We were number one in America and we booked a show in England. I knew nothing. I still ... I knew nothing. I just assumed England's sort of the same as America. We get there, I get there about

10 days early and we haven't sold a lot of tickets. Nobody really cares and nobody really knows. I get taken into a guy named Derek Taylor's office, who was called "The Fifth Beatle." He was their publicist.

In the room is George Harrison, who'd just come back from India in his white robes. Harry Nilsson, and they were all getting really drunk. I sat there for hours. Then everybody left and he turned to me and he said, "Why are you here?" I said, "Well we're on your label and the president of the company said maybe you could help me," and I explain the problem.

He said, "Tell me about Alice Cooper." I said, "The only thing you really have to know is that we want to get parents to hate him. How do we get to the parents? We don't care about the kids. I have 10 days to get the parents, over a breakfast table, to say to their kids, 'You're not going to see that Alice Cooper Saturday night, are you? If you are, you're grounded.' That would be winning." That was gigantic.

Dave Asprey: That is so brilliant.

Shep Gordon: We talked about what does every English parent ... where do they get their information? Breakfast news, BBC Breakfast News was the big item. It was sort of like the Ed Sullivan show had been in America, or one of those shows where the family, in the morning, watches. I said, "What do they do on there?" He said, "Well, they do things like grain reports, weather, traffic." He said, "Traffic's probably the biggest at the rush hour 'cause they have helicopters that go up and they show you how to get to work and do stuff."

I said, "Where's the most traffic?" It was Piccadilly Square. It's this roundabout. We had just had a photo shoot with Alice, naked with a boa constrictor wrapped around his penis. It was a very famous photographer, Richard Avedon, who was probably in those days, the number one photographer. It had some art merit besides being this great job that we loved 'cause parents hated it. Here's a naked guy with a ...

So anyhow, that worked itself into putting that on a 40 foot semi-truck, that poster of Alice with the snake. Finding a truck driver who was willing to go to jail for money. We broke that down twice in the morning during the BBC rush hour. The helicopter, twice at Piccadilly, and the billboard said, "Alice Cooper playing Wembley Stadium." We had girls in hot pants giving out flyers. The same policeman, they towed us away once. We came back in 15 minutes, broke it down at the exact same place. They towed ... we got a 20 mile backup.

Dave Asprey: Oh god.

Shep Gordon: Luckily for us, two members of Parliament, the next day, put in legislation to ban us from coming to England. That hit the front page of the British papers, that they were trying to ban Alice Cooper, with the picture of him naked on the

billboard. The show sold out in like one minute. Thank god. Interestingly enough, this November he's playing Wembley again, same stadium.

Dave Asprey: You're not going to be blocking any traffic this time?

Shep Gordon: No, no. You know, for us it doesn't sort of work anymore. He's out. He's gone past that moment. But I think he-

Dave Asprey: Of course.

Shep Gordon: I can remember for me, walking past my kids' room the first time I heard rap music. Opening the door, hearing lyrics that, to me, were offensive. I opened the door and go, "What is this crap you're listening to?" And as I said it, I said, "Oh shit. This is the next ... This is gonna be gigantic. If I'm telling them turn it off. Game. Set. Match."

Dave Asprey: It was probably Run-DMC and Rick Rubin was working with them.

Shep Gordon: Yeah. It could've been. Definitely could have been.

Dave Asprey: Oh, so you didn't quite turn into your parents breaking your Bob Dylan record, but you had the urge.

Shep Gordon: Yeah, yeah. That's-

Dave Asprey: Good thing tapes were harder to break then.

Shep Gordon: Yeah, there were no more records. There was nothing to break.

Dave Asprey: I mean when you talk about these stories, you have hundreds of them like this. It just sort of seems to happen around you. You've actually talked, in your documentary, and in your book, which is called, "They call me Supermensch." You go through some of these things, but you have this motto, which is, "Create history. Don't wait for it to happen."

Shep Gordon: Yeah. I was just going to say that.

Dave Asprey: Oh, okay. When did that become your motto?

Shep Gordon: I don't know if it was every conscious, but it started early in my life. I always felt like the first day of my life was when I left home. For a lot of-

Dave Asprey: How old were you?

Shep Gordon: I was 18.

Dave Asprey: Okay.

Shep Gordon: My first year of college, but that always felt like the first year of my life, when my personality started to take over. I still don't really plan anything out. But, we were in Buffalo. This is a two prong story. One part of it is maybe X-rated. But, I was in Buffalo. We were studying. In college, I used to take speed, stay up two days, three days to study.

Dave Asprey: I think they still do that.

Shep Gordon: Yeah, I don't know. Probably do. But these were Black Beauties, Dexedrine. I remember they were called Black Beauties. Anyway, we were getting really silly and one of the things for biology test was the sex organ of a fern was the thallus of Marchantia. We started laughing and saying, "Wow, it sounds like the ruler of a country. Thallus of Marchantia." One thing led to another and we sent a telegram from the UN, in New York, we had a friend go the UN, to the mayor of Buffalo saying the Thallus of Marchantia was coming to visit. He had relatives in Buffalo and they wanted it to be a royal visit.

We assumed nothing's gonna ever happen. We wake up and it's on the Buffalo evening news that the mayor's gonna meet him at the airport. The whole top floor of the Statler Hilton is ... so now we decide we gotta do it. So a guy named Arthur Cannor, who I think is passed away now, went to New York on a Bullhork airline, I remember it was, or Alligator Airline, with a couple of sheets and pillow cases. He comes back off the plane wearing the sheets and pillow cases. The mayor's there, but unbeknownst to him, the night before we stayed up again. We couldn't let it sit. We called the B'nai B'rith and we told him, "How could you let the Thallus of Marchantia come? He's the most anti-semitic ruler in America."

So now, 1000 people came out and picketed at the airport, Buffalo airport. Anyway, and actually, I gave a talk at a Jewish Center for my book last year. Four of the people had been holding placards at Buffalo Airport. Lived in Buffalo as kids, and actually came out from the Jewish Center, never knowing it was a hoax.

Dave Asprey: You just did this for just pure amusement.

Shep Gordon: Just for amusement. But then, two years later, I went to Mexico. I took my first psychedelic, which was-

Dave Asprey: Peyote or?

Shep Gordon: Peyote, yeah. Pure Peyote, in Mexico I had read that they used it for rheumatism. They put it in alcohol for a couple of months, and then rubbed it. So I went to an herb store and picked up a burlap bag of Peyote, and took it down to Acapulco. I never chewed it, 'cause it tasted horrible, but I would cut little pieces and take it with water. My first trip, there was a fire on the beach, and the fire went out. I said to myself, "I can make that fire come back, 'cause I

can do anything. I'm part of this ... I'm just one other piece." It came back. Whether it did or it didn't, I don't know. But I remember leaving Mexico saying, "You know, I can do anything. "It's really-

Dave Asprey: Is that still with you today?

Shep Gordon: Yeah. Yeah. You know, but what I tried to do then was use it for my business, in a practical way. So how that became practical to me was, instead of thinking about, "How am I gonna sell Alice tickets?" I thought about, "How am I gonna get ... what do I want? I want a parent to open up a newspaper at the breakfast table, or see a TV thing, that's gonna get them to talk about Al. Okay, how do I get that on TV? What's gonna get on that TV? They do traffic reports. Let me fuck up the traffic, and then I get on TV."

I always used to tell my clients, "My job is to get a head a year and figure out where you go on the highway. Let me ..." you know, with Teddy Pendergrass, I was trying to tell the world he was black Elvis. How do you tell the world someone is black Elvis without being arrogant? I got ahead and I said, "Well, if he was really Elvis Presley, what would be like the most amazing thing? If he gave a concert and only women bought tickets, the men were completely shut out and screaming and yelling when his hips go." So I went to Teddy and say, "Let's do a concert for women only. Let's be able to tell the story that you did a concert and 5000 women showed up for your concert. We can't say you're black Elvis, but we can let the journalists, when they look at the audience, I can feed them the line black Elvis."

We made it fun. We did a chocolate teddy bear lollipop. I kept thinking, here's these women that they just want to grab him and rape him. How do I manifest that for them all? That's what it was. It's all those little nuances. I started to think about the ad. I thought about someone opening up the newspaper, seeing "For women only," how arrogant that could sound. I don't want them to see that. What do I want them to see? I want them to hug him and hold him. How do I do that?

We ended up doing ... The ad was a full-page picture of a stuffed teddy bear, with a little note on its collar that said, "Come spend the night with me. Love, Teddy." So it was really soft, sweet, wasn't threatening. It wasn't this macho guy saying ... but anyway. I think that's a long answer for a short question, but that's sort of my method.

Dave Asprey: How often did you use hallucinogens when you were using drugs a lot?

Shep Gordon: I was an abuser.

Dave Asprey: In the use of hallucinogens or just on drugs in general?

Shep Gordon: I would say hallucinogens was ... when I say an abuser, I don't mean because I did a lot. But, I say it because I wasn't getting the enjoyment out of it and continued doing it. I took a trip every day for a couple of years. I would say the second year, there was no difference between taking it or not taking it. It didn't get me high.

Dave Asprey: In a lot of Shamanic, very traditional practices, they take it every day until it doesn't have an effect, because then they say they're walking with one foot in the spirit world and one foot in the real world all the time. Maybe you accidentally did that?

Shep Gordon: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: You think that's possible?

Shep Gordon: I think it's possible, yeah. I know that ... I don't want to say this in an arrogant way, but the things that I enjoyed ... what I really enjoyed about psychedelics is it was able for me to see the world in a different way. Whether it's a true way or not a true way is beyond me to judge. But I was able to see the world in a way that compassion made sense. The things that I sort of believed in made sense. Maybe it was self-serving, not self-serving, I don't know. But it worked for me. I got to a place where I felt good about myself and good about my actions and my motivations.

That sort of stayed with me. I'm almost scared now, I've been offered many times now, to do psychedelics. I tend to steer away. I almost have a fear that I've hit a balance for me in my life that I'm really comfortable with. I don't know if right or wrong, or truth or not truth, I don't know how you get to those big things, but I sort of like who I am now, and don't wanna mess with it.

Dave Asprey: I can respect that very much. I was at a dinner in New York, literally, a couple days ago. I was there to speak at the Tony Robbins event. A friend said, "I put together a dinner." I didn't know it was going to be a dinner with some really interesting, but very powerful, influential people. I just asked a question of about 25 people, "How many of you have used hallucinogens at least once?" 'Cause we were talking about, in the context of therapy. You know what? Almost every single hand went up. These are people you wouldn't necessarily expect would have used it.

Probably none of them were abusers. Some of them had done 25 Ayahuasca ceremonies. A lot of them had just been a couple times, but, for me, it was the same sort of thing. I did an Ayahuasca with a Shaman in Peru about 20 years ago, before it was cool, right? But just the ability to see the world from a different angle, I think, influenced me as well, and in a positive way.

Shep Gordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave Asprey: There are people, and I'm sure you saw them, who didn't do well when they used a lot any kind of drug, including the psychedelics.

Shep Gordon: I've had some friends who moved to a ledge that they probably wouldn't like to be on.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, and I think their experiencing a Renaissance right now. I hope it's for the good. But, do you think that's a good thing for the world?

Shep Gordon: I don't really, I don't feel qualified to make a decision. I think that I don't know enough about this micro thing that I've heard about adjacent thing really for the first time. I've now seen more and more places. I'm curious about Ayahuasca. I had, yesterday, an amazing guy at the house, Chef Alex Atala, he's got the number nine restaurant in the world in São Paulo, who offered to take me in. He forages his stuff in the Amazon. If you get a chance, he's on Chef's Table.

Dave Asprey: Okay.

Shep Gordon: It's a remarkable piece. He attributes everything in his life to his first acid trip. Made him see the circle of life, which made him wanna cook and wanna do the things that he does. Really beautiful thing. I'm gonna be there in September. He offered to take me into the jungle to his Shaman. That was my mediation this morning in the jacuzzi at my ... "Do I want to mess with who I've become? Do I even want to see if I'm not right in my comfortableness?" I'm 71, I'm sort of happy.

Dave Asprey: Oh, your nervous system knows the right answer. You seem like the kind of guy who's plugged in intuitively to know what the right thing to do is, 'cause-

Shep Gordon: Yeah, yeah. So I'm meditating on it, yeah.

Dave Asprey: Good. Good. Maybe, I'm going to be spending some time in Hawaii. I know we're planning to hook up.

Shep Gordon: Oh it'd be great.

Dave Asprey: Maybe confidentially you can share the story with me if you feel somewhat motivated. I'm certainly curious. Let's go back to what it was like when you were going, 'cause there are a lot of people listening who really weren't around in the '70s. I was born in '72. So I was around, but I don't have much solid memory of the '70s other than a few bell bottoms here and there. What's the difference between Hollywood in the '70s, and Hollywood of today?

Shep Gordon: I think the two biggest differences, probably, AIDS, consciousness of AIDS changed the social pattern of Hollywood completely. I would say the second thing is, in the '60s, there was no real awareness of consequences, and in the early '70s. Starting in the late '70s, we started to realize consequences.

Everyone around us was dying. Janis, Jimi, Morrison. We didn't think about consequences, you just got as fucked up as you could possibly get every night. Then you woke up, so there were no consequences in your sexual approach to life, there were no real consequences in your drug approach to life, that we knew, or thought about. So it was a whole different landscape, 'cause sex and drugs are what Hollywood thrives on, for the most part.

Dave Asprey: It seems like it still does, to some extent.

Shep Gordon: Yeah, it does, but with consequences, and with AIDS.

Dave Asprey: Okay.

Shep Gordon: So it's very, very different.

Dave Asprey: More caution, more fear.

Shep Gordon: It's just now the AIDS thing is sort of over, but there was a moment in the early '80s probably it was, and into the '90s where that was everything. That took over everything. I was a nightclub owner. The difference in the interactions in the nightclubs, were just amazing. Someone would go from being admired for having a conquest of many beautiful women or men, to being almost hated for it. Promiscuity went from a gold medal on your chest to a mark of someone who didn't give a shit.

Dave Asprey: Wow. I came of age right at that time where it was all about AIDS in high school and all. I remember regretting, going, "Man, if I'd have been grown up 10 years earlier, I'd be able to get a date."

Shep Gordon: Oh my god, it was so wild. Yeah, it was so wild. Free love really was free love.

Dave Asprey: Wow. I can't imagine having that, lived it.

Shep Gordon: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: One more of your stories. Why did Janis Joplin punch you in the face?

Shep Gordon: I moved to California as a probation officer. I got a job in Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall and I was ... Anthony Bourdain puts it in a very nice way. He said I was a pharmaceutical salesman. I had hair almost down to my waist. I was high on acid every day. I'd show up at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, during the Reagan era, as a probation officer, thinking that I'm going to save these kids. I sort of have an image of myself on a white horse, galloping into the prison, "Here I am guys. You're gonna be okay now." The system was much bigger than me, and my innocence was definitely much bigger than reality. It wasn't a good experience. I resigned that night.

As I remember, it was about an hour from LA. I drove into LA, I had maybe \$600 and a couple of thousand hits of acid, which took like a pinhead. It was nothing. I remember the drive. I got off the freeway, went down Highland Boulevard, got trapped in the right hand lane, so I had to make a right down Franklin Avenue. There was a motel sign, said, "Vacancy", right next to the Magic Castle. I pulled into the driveway and I think it was \$18 a night, which meant I could stay a couple of weeks and figure out what I was gonna do. Checked into room 224, up in the corner. Took some acid, which is what I did, and thinking about how fucked my life is, that I couldn't even make a probation department job work. What am I gonna do with my life?

Heard a girl screaming down at ... it was one of those Hotel California hotels, two stories, open at one end around a swimming pool. I could see, sort of, these shadows by the pool. I heard a girl scream. I'd just come from a jail. I'm pretty high, and I'm on my white horse. I take the horse down and separate the two people, thinking I'm saving the girl, and they were making love.

Dave Asprey: Oh!

Shep Gordon: She punched me.

Dave Asprey: You were really high then.

Shep Gordon: Yeah, I was really high. She punched me. When I went down to the pool in the morning, the girl was Janis Joplin. I don't believe, she was with Jimi Hendrix the night before, but that morning, she was sitting with Jimi Hendrix. I didn't see the guy, so I didn't have no idea. I didn't see her, either. It was dark.

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Shep Gordon: It turned out to be this rock and roll lunatic bin. It was The Chambers Brothers, Paul Rothchild, who produced The Doors, Jim Morrison was always there. One of the gang leaders was Arthur Lee from a group called Love. He was sort of the one they all looked to musically. Jim Hen- I mean, they were all there. My first thought was embarrassment. Then I went, "Holy shit. This is the best customer base in the world. I have walked into ..." so I became the salesman with my goods. This is like the greatest if you're an acid salesman, the guy you want to see is Jimi Hendrix in front of you.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Shep Gordon: So that started my journey. It was about two or three months into it when, in a very concerned moment, Jimi and The Chambers Brothers sat me down and said, "Do you have a real job?" I said, "No." They said, "Yeah we know. We see you at hotel all the time. What are you gonna do if the police come and ask you where did you get the money for rent? You gonna tell them you sell acid?" And I said, "No." They said, "You need a front. You need to have something you could

say." Where I came from, the police didn't ask you anything. But where they came from, if you had a new watch, you'd better be able to tell the cop on the beat ... Jimi said to me, "You Jewish?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "You should be a manager."

Dave Asprey: Oh god.

Shep Gordon: Alice was living in Lester Chambers basement. They went over to see Alice. Alice tells the story that Lester came in and said, "We found a Jew that will manage you. That's the only way to make it in Hollywood." They all came over to the hotel and we shook hands, and it's been 49 years, 50 years later.

Dave Asprey: And you've been a manager ever since?

Shep Gordon: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Wow, and you just happened to end up at that hotel through some sort of alignment of whatever. It's an amazing story.

Shep Gordon: I think for most of us, I think most of us in our lives, grabbing chance is a big part of the success.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Shep Gordon: I think we all get to go on a merry-go-round as grabbing the ring.

Dave Asprey: There's times in my life where I can see something big and it hurts to not grab it.

Shep Gordon: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: I feel like, almost a little bit of pain if I don't go do it and it tends to be something that disrupts a big industry that needed it. Maybe you felt some sort of pull, or maybe you didn't?

Shep Gordon: Yeah, no. I never really ... my work is completely disassociated from my life.

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Shep Gordon: Not the culinary side. The culinary side is my passion and very connected to my life. But the music and the films side, all that stuff that I did had ... I think it's part of what made me effective was that I was not emotionally attached to it at all. I don't listen. It's funny you say Rick Rubin, 'cause he came here about maybe a year and a half ago. We knew each other when he first started Def Jam. I counseled Russel and Lyor, so I got to meet him. Russel would come to the house a lot and I would sort of mentor them a little bit.

Lyor's an Israeli kid who stayed in my house with his parents, but I never really got to know Rick. When the documentary came out, Rick emailed me and said, "I'd really like to spend some time with ya. When are you gonna be in Hawaii?" He has a place in Kauai.

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Shep Gordon: So he came over, we had a beautiful time. I go to meet his wife who's just sensational.

Dave Asprey: Yes.

Shep Gordon: And really got a deep appreciation for him. At the end of it he said to me, "I'd like you to play in this new thing I've been working on." I said, "I'd love to hear it, but we'll have to go in my car because I don't have any stereo at the house."

Dave Asprey: Oh no.

Shep Gordon: He said, "You're kidding." I said, "No, I probably haven't had one in 25 years." He went out and bought me Sonos through all of my houses, my guesthouse, my office.

Dave Asprey: His place is all wired up with Sonos too.

Shep Gordon: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: I've got some here as well. It's a cool thing.

Shep Gordon: I love Sonos. I love it.

Dave Asprey: That's sounds a lot like Rick. A generous guy and so deeply connected to music and how it moves people. It's funny that you've worked in music for so long, but I guess in 25 years you've been more on culinary and also philanthropy. I know we've got about 10 minutes left before you've got to run to the airport, so let's spend about five minutes talking about why you went into philanthropy. What motivates you to do it, like what's important?

Shep Gordon: As a Jew, first of all, it's really an important part of our culture. As much as maybe the image of [inaudible 00:53:29]. It's always to be at ... I felt that tug very strongly. Having our people persecuted the way they were, always made me feel that philanthropy is an important part of my life and I feel so lucky to be here. The sacrifice people gave. I wouldn't say I ever sat down and said I'm going to be philanthropic. It's just opportunities came up. I think now I'm probably more focused than I've ever been, and it's on hunger. I feel in some way that I've helped to empower a generation of artists to really get economic reward, get the kind of respect they deserve.

I think I helped to make the culinary arts a real art form. I gave the graduation speech at the CIA last year. I said, you know, we all sacrificed a lot, so you guys could be stars and make the money you're making. We didn't do it just to cook dinners for people who can afford \$100 meals. That's not what this is about. That's a beautiful part of life, but when you walk out of your restaurant that got two Michelin stars, because you were able to walk over the backs of all of us, and we were happy to let you. Back to the left are starving people and to the right are starving people, they're your neighbors. Our obligation is to make sure there's nobody starving.

That's the job. Not to make \$100 dinners. That's a nice perk. I've spent the last few years of my life, and spending more and more, trying to instill that thought into the people who are feeding people. That it's just not about feeding rich people. I think it's the first time in my life that I have a credible platform to speak from. I think they listen to me. In the culinary world, I think I'm able to maybe affect them, so I want to use that little bit of power that I may have to try and stop it. Here on Maui, we fed 1.2 million meals through a new year's benefit, which basically eliminates hunger on the island. We're a great microcosm of some artists donating one half hour of their lives.

It's great artists, it's Steve Tyler, Alice Cooper, they've all done it for 10 years now. They donate, we have a great time New Year's Eve, and we actually feed an island. That's a model that is so easy to transpose in every city. It's just a matter of focus. I don't think of myself as a philanthropist, but I feel like I owe it to the planet who have given us all so much. You know, it's just crazy that people are hungry. If you're hungry, as I told all my chefs when I talked to them, I say, "The most selfish thing you can do in the world is stop hunger, 'cause those hungry people, they're going to rob your house, they're going to hurt you, they're going to hurt your kids, they're going to steal your car, so even if you don't want to help them, do it to be completely selfish for the betterment of you and your family." It's a win-win on every level. In my waning years, I hope I can have some affect.

Dave Asprey:

It sounds like you already have. Well, I have a final question for you and I'm really curious how you're going to answer it. Given you've led this amazing life across multiple disciplines and you've learned so much and experienced more than the average person probably ever will. If someone came to you, say as a young person, and said, "Look, I want to kick more ass at life. I want to be a better human being, I want to be better at everything I do. What are the three most important things I need to know?" What would you share with them?

Shep Gordon:

Well that's a tough question. I would say find a way to hear yourself. Joseph Campbell, I think, talked about it as well as anyone. I sort of picked up a lot from Joseph Campbell when he talked about find the quiet space. Go into a quiet space for 20 minutes. It may be boring for a while, but eventually you'll hear yourself. I think that's finding some way to hear yourself.

Finding some simple technique to keep you thankful. For me it's really saying thank you. There are morning I wake up when I just feel fucked, but the first thing I do is, I get out on the beach and "Thank you," put my hands together, "Wow, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you." I sort of move from fucked to thank you. It's really simple. To me it's so obvious, but it works for me. I would say hear yourself, be thankful and try and have good thoughts.

I think if you have those three things together, and you can control your thoughts. Every time you catch yourself; jealousy, greed, anger, just catch the thought and figure out some way for yourself to move it to somewhere else. I always say, "Don't get mad. Use that anger to accomplish what you want to accomplish, what you're angry about." But, I also ... the fourth one is, don't listen to anybody.

Dave Asprey: There's that Buddhist theme coming up again. Well said. On that note Shep, it's a real honor to have you on Bulletproof Radio and to be able to share your stories and your wisdom. Thanks for taking the time to do this with me.

Shep Gordon: Thank you for having me. I'm a fan, so thank you.

Dave Asprey: It's a great honor. I know you've got to go to the airport, so I'm going to let you go, make you two minutes early so you can make it. Don't rush. Have a safe trip and thanks again.

Shep Gordon: Thank you. Aloha.