

Your Morning Makes Your Day: 6 Practices To Get You Going – Hal Elrod with Dave Asprey – #765

Announcer:

Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today is going to be an awesome interview because hey, have I ever done an interview that wasn't awesome? Actually, I did a couple, but I didn't put those episodes up because I really do my best for you guys to make sure that you get more out of the next hour than you put into it. You invest an hour time, you better get something worth more than that, or find a better podcast. But so far we've stood the test of time with Bulletproof Radio, a couple hundred million downloads, top 100 on iTunes and continuing strong.

Dave:

So thank you for your support. And this is a second time I've had today's guest on the podcast. The last time was somewhere in the 500s and we're pushing 900 right now in terms of number of episodes, as many episodes as you'd find in about two years of college lectures. So it's okay if you didn't hear all of the episodes, although there are quite a few people who have. Our guest today has survived multiple near death experiences, like real serious ones, and he's impacted millions of people in 37 languages worldwide. His name is Hal Elrod. And you've probably heard of the Miracle Morning, he's the guy behind it. Hal, welcome back to Bulletproof Radio.

Hal Elrod:

Dave, it's always good to see you, man.

Dave:

Now, you just came up with a documentary and I want to just say how cool that is. I've realized that as a fellow author, it's one thing to spend thousands of hours writing a book and you're putting something worth people's time together. And I feel like I've kind of let people down because I keep writing these books, but my core function, one of the things I've done most is actually as a teacher and a mentor. And I taught for five years at the University of California, but I'm like, "Okay guys, the info is there. Just go get it." So part of changing millions of people's lives is actually putting the information that is so worth your time that you spend thousands of hours doing it into multiple accessible forms. That's why I'm committing this year to more video and more courses and more, okay, let's study the materials and let's do it together and let's do it in community.

Dave:

And then I look at what you're doing, you're like, of course I have a community of Miracle Morning with millions of people and then you went to the trouble of making a documentary so that people could understand what's behind it and get the motivation to wake up and do it. And so just first, thanks for putting the money and time into doing it because people are sitting and they go, "Oh, we got all these authors and influencers, whatever," but it's actually hard to do a documentary, isn't it?

Hal:

It's really hard. Especially not being a filmmaker, it was six years. This took us six years. I previously got hit by a bus in those six years, I got cancer and almost died in those six.

Dave:

It's like you almost died in the middle of it.

Hal:

And that became actually the last third of the film is my journey of you're intimately there with me as I'm fighting cancer alongside my family and my lowest points. But the reason I made the film, it's kind of what you alluded to, which is, it was over six years ago, my buddy, Nick Conedera, who is a filmmaker, was at my house for dinner and he said, "Hal, I'm in the Miracle Morning Facebook group and the stories in there are unbelievable. People, they're transforming their lives whether they're losing weight or starting a business or writing a book or curing depression or whatever." He said, "Why don't we do a documentary where we film people's journeys and then your story and all these things?" And I go, "Yeah. Wow. But what a fun idea, that'd be great. I'm so busy. Call me next year." And Nick is pleasantly persistent. So he kept pinging me and texting me. I mean, literally he went, "Hey, when's the movie? When are we going to start at the movie? When's filming begin?"

Hal:

And he called me one day out a few months after he presented the idea and he said, "Hal, what's your mission in life?" And I think for any influencer listening, this is something to consider. And he knew it. I said, "It's to elevate the consciousness of humanity one morning at a time." And I said, "Why are you asking?" He said, "What percentage of humanity read self-help books?"

Dave:

There you go.

Hal:

Yeah. And I already kind of got where he was going and I go, "Like one or two, maybe five. I mean, a few percentage." And he said, "What percentage watch moving pictures, watch movie movies?" And I go yelling, "The other 98%." And I go, "I guess we're making a movie." His point was if you want to reach the masses, if you want to impact humanity, you have to put your value, your teaching or training, your processes, your whatever in media or mediums that the people are going to digest. And so it's a lot easier for somebody to watch a 90-minute film than it is to read a book if they don't read those types of books, which studies show most people don't.

Dave:

There's something else that you might've missed in there. There's a percentage of people who buy self-help books and there's the percentage of people who actually read them. And I know that a good portion of people listening have Miracle Morning on their shelf, maybe from the last interview and probably only half of them have read it. And there's also a bunch of people listening who have bought superhuman like, "Hey, I want to live a long time, but I'll read the book next year because I'm still pretty young." So there's actually a Japanese word that I would mispronounce if I tried for the art of buying books you don't read.

Dave:

So I salute you for that. I've done one documentary myself in Moldy Movie, moldymovie.com if you guys don't know about it, but it kicked my ass to do that. And I didn't come down with cancer in the middle of it. And I remember how about two weeks before you were diagnosed with cancer, we were at probably Genius Network with Joe Polish who's in the movie, but I'm in the movie as well and Joe's dear friend has been a guest on the show. And I remember we're sitting in the back of a car riding to the airport, a suburban, and you were like dim for lack of a better word. Like this isn't the normal Hal and maybe you didn't sleep well, maybe you're tired.

Dave:

But I kind of had a sense something was going on. I'm like, this isn't the most vibrant person I've ever met. And literally there was two weeks before the fit hit the Shan and you had like some real serious health stuff and you went in and got the diagnosis. And I was like, "Man, I hope he makes it." And you had so many friends. I don't know if you really felt the impact of this, but like hundreds of people who were rooting for you we were at different events and people were just actively sending you good vibes. So you had a lot of support, even if you didn't see it.

Hal:

I appreciate that man. And it was felt, and it worked.

Dave:

And so that's one of the many miracles you've had in your life. There are some people listening though who aren't familiar with Miracle Morning. What is a Miracle Morning?

Hal:

So the Miracle Morning, it's based on two premises. Number one, it was actually a quote from Jim Rowan that kind of gave birth to the idea of creating a Miracle Morning for myself. It wasn't a book idea. This was a personal attempt to turn my life around in 2008 when the economy had crashed and I crashed with it and I heard Jim Rowan, I was on a run, he said, "Your level of success in every area of life will seldom exceed your level of personal development." And the light bulb went off and I went, "Wait a minute, on a scale of one to 10, we all want level 10 success in our lives in every area. We all want level 10 health, level 10 finances, level 10 happiness, level 10 relationships." And then I assessed, honestly, what's my level of personal development? And I threw it in at like a two or three.

Hal:

At that time the economy crashed, I was in like desperation mode. And so the epiphany was first and foremost, I have to create the most effective proven personal development ritual. In all of humanity, the best I can do to become the person that I need to be to create everything I want for my life as quickly as I possibly can become that person. That was the first premise. Okay. All right. I got to figure out what the best practices I can do for personal development to accelerate it. And then the second premise was how you start your day is arguably the single most determining factor in the day that you live. How you start your day sets the tone, the context, the direction for who you are that shows up in the rest of your day.

Hal:

If you have a reactive morning where you wake up at the last minute and you check your phone and you're immediately spiking your cortisol levels and you're stressed out, and you're thinking of all the

things on your to-do list, you're not in an optimal, physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual state to optimize your day.

Hal:

If on the other hand, you've got a buffer, you've got a morning ritual, a 30 minutes, 60 minutes, whatever fits your schedule morning routine, where you do some meditation and some affirmations and some visualization and you exercise and you read and you journal, those happened to be the six practices of the Miracle Morning, you put yourself in a peak physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual state, you develop yourself into a better version of the person that went to bed the night before and now you bring the best version of yourself into your relationships, into your work, into your general mental and emotional wellbeing. And so that's what a Miracle Morning is, it starting your day with these six specific practices and becoming the person that you need to be to create everything that you want for your life.

Dave:

That's a pretty big premise. And one of the things that I've made a practice of over the past 20 years is try everything to see what works and then use science and data and curate experts. That's one of the big functions of Bulletproof Radio is to let me have a chance to talk to experts, to find out what's worked best for them, so that I can shortcut the idea of trying every single thing myself. I'd rather try things that have been vetted and recommended by people out there. And you've made a particular study of what are the most effective things to do in the morning. Now of those things you recommend, the six practices that make up the Miracle Morning, rank them in order of most important to least important.

Hal:

That's a great question. And the answer, I'll answer like a politician, no. But in all honesty, it's really subjective because I'm going to tell you my favorite of the practices. Now, for anybody listening, let me give you a visual if you're taking notes, these six practices are organized into an acronym, so you can remember them, follow them. And this is my wife's idea. I was writing the book one day and I'm like, "Sweetie, these six practices are all random and I didn't invent any of them and how do I make them cohesive?" And she goes, "Why don't you get a thesaurus and see if you can swap some of the words to create an acronym." And it was brilliant because this has really made, I think, the Miracle Morning really sticky for people because it's so easy for them to run through it.

Hal:

So the acronym is SAVERS, S-A-V-E-R-S. And the first S... And by the way, I think it's appropriate because in my experience, these are the six practices that can save us from missing out on the level of fulfillment, joy, success that we want. And so the first S in SAVERS is for silence. And that is your prayer time, your meditation time, your deep breathing time, your contemplation time. It's the idea where in moments of silence, that's where we access our deepest truth. We access the universe's highest wisdom.

Dave:

How much of that do we need?

Hal:

Well, the whole Miracle Morning is very scalable and you can do the SAVERS in any order. Most people do a 60-minute Miracle Morning. My first Miracle Morning ever before I called it Miracle Morning, I just

woke up and did these six practices, it was 10 minutes each and then I just adjusted from there. So I usually meditate for 10 minutes in the morning. So I still stick with that. And I combine prayer into that as well and contemplation. I usually use contemplation before I start meditating to set an intention, or actually let me teach you my new favorite form of meditation that I think I invented it. Every time you think-

Dave:

There's a lot of personal development so people are like, "You stole that." And like, this is a thousands of year old practice that's been evolving in sharing cross-culturally, so you may have invented it, or we discovered it. It's all good, man.

Hal:

That's it. Every time I think that I came up with a brilliant idea, I read it in a book that was published earlier and I'm like, "Dang it. I thought that was mine."

Dave:

It was published like in 1920 like, "God, nothing's new."

Hal:

Yeah. No new idea.

Dave:

Okay. So what is it?

Hal:

So I call it emotional optimization meditation. And the idea is that most meditations you're taught to kind of clear your mind, just focus on your breath or focus on a mantra, right? For me, the whole Miracle Morning, I've kind of... For me, I'm a very results oriented person, I'm sure you are too. So I don't like the practices that are often woo woo. I like to take them, how can I make this woo woo practice actually transform into a measurable outcome or improvement in my life? So with emotional optimization meditation, it's where you simply start, you ask yourself, what's the optimal emotional state that I want or need to be in and then the timeframe might be in this moment, it might be today, it might be in general in my life right now. Like I need to be happier, or I need to be calmer, right?

Hal:

Or I've got a big appointment today, I've got a big speech, I've got a big interview, I've got to be confident today, right? Or I've got to be focused. Or I just... For me generally, I just want to be happy, grateful, blissed out. So I'll ask myself, what's the emotion that I want to experience? Then I'll think of a stimulus to stimulate that emotion, which is usually a memory or a subject. So for example, if I want to feel grateful, I'll just think of my kids and I'll smile. And immediately I'm flooded with emotions of gratitude. Then I set my timer for five or 10 minutes to do the meditation and the entire time is spent embodying that emotion, that state of being so that I'm anchoring it. So that I'm acclimating to it and embodying it so it becomes more of my norm.

Hal:

And I have access to that state throughout the day, or at any time that I want. And after I've done this for a while, eventually I don't even need the stimulus anymore. Like I just have been in gratitude so often that I just go gratitude, snap my fingers, and I get into it. And I go as deep as I possibly can. And same thing with every emotional state out there. So that's the form meditation I've been doing lately and I find it's really beneficial versus just kind of making me calm. It actually is creating these states that I have access to at any given time, any given moment.

Dave:

So you're practicing the states you want during your silent period.

Hal:

Yeah, exactly.

Dave:

Okay. Bringing them on. That's something that at 40 Years of Zen, we teach with neurofeedback where you also go in and you feel your most intensely scary states, the ones that are affecting you more than you want and then immediately you switch over into those elated states so that they ended up sort of canceling each other out. And when you do it in exactly the right states, you end up being much less reactive to things that would normally push your buttons. But just that core ability to bring on a feeling is such a cool thing and it's really valuable to sit there instead of just saying I want this or praying saying, "When did I feel that way?" And recreating like the physical sensation is really cool. I love that you're recommending that now.

Hal:

Yeah. To me, it's the key that unlocks the door to inner freedom and that for me has been the big focus since COVID hit, which is like, look, let's focus on the one thing we all have control over, which is ourselves, how we think, how we feel, how we show up. And to me, the most important development is that inner freedom where... And the way I define inner freedom is it's our ability to choose how we experience any aspect and or every moment of our life. So how you experience your spouse.

Dave:

How did you experience cancer?

Hal:

With gratitude. And you're going to see this in the film. This is why I feel like this movie, like we had 250 theaters planned in May and then COVID hit. And now we're doing an online world premier and the end, which is actually in a lot of ways better because we have people in 100 countries that do the Miracle Morning and now they can all watch it.

Dave:

It's really inspiring. The movie, I may have obviously had the early view pre-release stuff. You did a really good job of motivating people in the movie to actually say, "I'm going to try this and see what happens." And my prediction there is that your gratitude perspective is dead on. We just held the Biohacking Conference. I've done it in-person every year for seven years. We had more than 5,000 people show up from all over the planet, way more than we have before. And we didn't have the in-person stuff. I'm

looking forward to going back to in-person, but I'm going to continue the online, integrating people who just can't either afford or take the time, or have some legal issues and traveling to a city to do it. So this will result in more people seeing your movie, Hal, and it'll result in more good as a result. I'm fully on board with you on that.

Hal:

Yeah, beautiful. So the A in SAVERS is for affirmations. And I want to dive into this one for a second, because I think affirmation is the most misunderstood and mistaught practice in the personal development world. And we're taught usually one of two problematic ways to approach affirmations. Number one is lie to yourself until you believe it, right? So if you want to be thin and you're overweight, just say, "I am thin, I am thin, I am thin," over and over again. The truth will always prevail, right? So if you're saying something that's not rooted in truth, it's not going to be altered. It's not optimum or effective. If you're broke and you say, "I am wealthy, I'm a millionaire," that's going to be a challenge. So lying to yourself is never the optimum strategy. And the second problem is we're taught to use this flowery passive language that promises a magical result despite any effort on our part. And the example of that is this very popular money affirmation that says, "I am a money magnet, money flows to me effortlessly in abundance."

Dave:

I've listened to so many tapes like that when I was in my teenager.

Hal:

Yeah. And the reason I think people like that is if you're struggling in an area and you're affirming some magical result that's going to show up somehow in your life without you doing anything to make it happen, in that moment you feel good. You're like, "I was stressed about money five minutes ago but now that I know it's on its way, I feel better." So it's kind of like a short term. It's like taking a pill but not curing the underlying issue. So for me, my affirmations and I use different forms, but the basis of all of them is every area of my life I've got an affirmation for health, for my relationships, for as a dad, all of these areas and they follow three really simple steps. Number one is, what am I committed to in that area? What's the outcome that I am committed to? And I always add, no matter what, there's no other option to the end.

Hal:

When I had cancer, it was I'm committed to beating cancer and living to be 100 plus years old alongside Ursula and the kids, no matter what, there's no other option. So I was affirming the outcome that I was committed to. And when you affirm the outcome you're committed to, you start to develop faith that overrides your fear that that outcome won't happen. On day one, I was like, what if I die? What if all the positivity in the world, the doctors say I have a 20 to 30% chance of surviving, which if you're looking at the other side of that, that's a 70 to 80% chance that I was going to die. And they literally were saying it was between a week and maybe a couple of months that I was going to make it if I was going to make it.

Hal:

And so every morning or any time I had that fear, I pulled out my phone, I put up that affirmation and I affirmed again, what you're committed to and without any other options. So second step is why is that deeply meaningful to you? And so I affirmed I'm committed to beating cancer. And in the movie actually, one of my favorite scenes is I read my affirmations. I'm reading my affirmations about why I'm

committed to beating cancer for my daughter, because she needs her daddy's love and affection and for my son, because he needs my leadership and guidance and for my wife, because I promised spending the rest of my life with her and for my dad, because he gave up everything to come live with me and save me while I was battling cancer. My mom, because she already lost a child and doesn't deserve to lose another one, right?

Hal:

So I was fueling like, I am committed no matter what to beating this cancer, there is no other option. And then the third step is what specifically will you do and when. What are the actions that you're going to take? And for me, I committed that since I had to do chemo, I was kind of my hand was forced, I didn't want to, but it was like I was on death's doorway. My heart was failing. My lungs were failing. My kidneys were failing. And so I did chemo out of it was kind of like do or die. However, I did every holistic practice that I could possibly do and I was committed to putting forth extraordinary effort. I read book after book, after book on natural ways of beating cancer.

Hal:

I did coffee enemas. I did ozone sauna. I did acupuncture. I did lymphatic massage. I took 70 supplements a day. I juiced on and on, I did everything in my power. And so I just want to recap that three steps to creating affirmations that produce tangible, measurable results. Step one, affirm what you're committed to. Step two, affirm why it is deeply meaningful to you to the point of being crucial that you do whatever it takes to make that outcome happen. And then step three, affirming which specific actions you will take and when you will take those actions. And you can apply that formula to writing a book or making a million dollars or finding the love of your life, right? Any area of your life that that formula applies.

Dave:

There's something in there and I don't know if this is something that's in there consciously, but something that really stands out when you talk about your why, every one of the things you listed was something that was of service to others. It wasn't about you. And we know that service to others is the easiest way to put yourself in a flow state. And I believe that we're wired to do that. It's actually in our cellular or even our sub cellular architecture. And that just by focusing on that, if you are going to do something that is of service to other people, your body wants to do that because we function in tribes. In fact, all life forms function in their own herds, tribes, forests, biofilms, whatever.

Dave:

So I think there might be something for listeners and for people who see the Miracle Morning movie to think about your why. And if you're saying, I am committed to making a million dollars so I can buy a Ferrari, you might get a different outcome than if you say I'm committed to making a million dollars so I can and figure out what's in it for someone else so that anyway... It seems to matter. Do you think that that was a part of your success?

Hal:

100%. One of my mentors taught me when I was young, get off self and get on purpose. And I find that when we have a purpose that's about serving other people, we're willing to get out of our own way and overcome our lazy tendencies or our limiting beliefs or excuses or whatever it is because it's like, this isn't even about me. I don't care if I'm tired. I don't care if I'm scared. I don't care if I don't feel like it,

those people or that person is counting on me and I will do whatever it takes because I'm committed. So I think that... I appreciate you pointing that out. I didn't really make that distinction, but I think it's really important.

Dave:

It's just easier to do stuff for other people.

Hal:

Yeah.

Dave:

I don't know why, but it is.

Hal:

Yeah. I don't know why either, but you're right.

Dave:

Now, when you were going through it six years making your documentary, that's a long time. I mean, mine took about 18 months when I did it. And it was huge amount of time and energy and thought and all kinds of stuff, was the idea that the movie was going to help millions of people, your primary motivator?

Hal:

Yeah, absolutely. When the book came out, my mission was changed one million lives, one morning at a time. And then once we sold over a million copies, I went, all right, what's the next thing? I go, "Well, how about millions of lives one morning at a time?" And eventually it evolved to elevating the consciousness of humanity one morning at a time. And the reason for that is seeing the results from, I mean, my own life that's why I wrote the book, but once the book got out there, I mean, that's part of... Let me break down real quick what the movie became. So the original intention for the movie was the book is spreading virally via word of mouth because this Miracle Morning is changing people's lives. So let's not-

Dave:

That works, right?

Hal:

Yeah. It's not broken, let's not stray too far. So what we were going to do was kind of recreate the book in movie form, but the way we were going to go beyond the book was what if we were... I said, "What if I were to reach out to some of the world's most prolific entrepreneurs and visionaries and leaders, and we were to go to their house and interview and film them doing their morning ritual?" I go, "How cool it would be." Anybody would love to see the morning routines of Dave Asprey and Laila Ali and Brendon Burchard, and Mel Robbins and Lewis Howes, and Robert Kiyosaki and all these folks that are in the film. And so that was the original vision. And that was the path we were on for the first two years and then I was diagnosed with cancer.

Hal:

And I called our filmmaker and I said, "Nick, buddy, you'll never believe this. I have cancer. I'm in the hospital right now. They just stuck a needle in my heart and drained fluid. My lung has collapsed. My kidneys are failing. It's bad. And they're giving me pretty grim odds of surviving." I said, "So I just want to tell you, the movie is on hold indefinitely." Like I could care less at that point about the movie. I got kids, I got a seven year old daughter and a four-year-old son and a wife, I got to live. And he called me back and he said, "Hal look, I don't want this to come across the wrong way, I want to start by saying, I believe you're going to beat this. No doubt in my mind you're going to beat cancer." I'm like, "Me too. That's great. What else?"

Hal:

He said, "I think we should film this." "What?" He said, "I'd love to come to the hospital and just as much as possible... Whenever you're feeling up to it, I'd love to come film this journey because I think..." He goes, "I was filming a movie, but you were the central character. You're on this journey trying to change a million lives around the world." He said, "This is a part of the story that we have to capture." And I was really resistant, but just felt, I was like, "I don't want a camera in my face."

Dave:

Little bit of vulnerability too. You're like, "I'm laying here. I don't have hair." I mean, you were not doing well.

Hal:

No, I lost. I mean, I was six foot tall, 165 pounds when I got cancer and I was still six feet tall, of course, but I was 125 pounds. I lost 40 pounds, a fourth of my body weight. And it was painful but I'm so glad that Nick pushed. Once again, just as he pushed to film the movie in general to be there because when you're watching the movie, the first 60 minutes deliver the original promise and it's an amazing film. It's like, wow, this Miracle Morning thing is changing lives and not only is it changing lives like we show. For example, I posted this on all my social media channels the other day, it's one of my favorite scenes from the movie, Mike, he discovered the Miracle Morning. He had been obese and bullied his entire life and he had been an angry person.

Dave:

I've kind of been there. I resonate with that.

Hal:

I can't believe though. The Miracle Morning though, after he started it, he read the book and within eight months he lost over 90 pounds and kept it off. And it transformed his mindset. He became positive and a giver and just all these things. And so we feature all these stories in the movie, but at the one-hour mark, all of a sudden I'm doing a selfie video in the hospital. And I didn't know this would be in a movie. I just thought this was me updating my friends and family, "Guys, I'm in the hospital." They can't figure out what's wrong with me. My lung is collapsed. My kidneys are failing. Like, please, any thoughts or prayers would be great. And the final 30 minutes of the movie, the final third, or I guess 40 minutes of the movie is really this like, you're right, they're watching me. Like, if you don't know, if you didn't hear this interview, you'd be like, "Dude, is this guy going to make it?" It doesn't look very good.

Hal:

And you see, even in the midst of the most challenging time in my life that I still chose all of my values of, I was grateful. I was optimistic. I was doing my Miracle Morning every day. I was serving other people in every way that I could. And I think that with what's going on in the world right now, the world has cancer in a lot of ways you could say metaphorically speaking. And in this film, you see like, wow, it doesn't matter. It does not matter what's going on outside of me, I can take control of my inner world. I can take control of my life. I can be the happiest and most grateful I've ever been, even in the midst of the most difficult time in my life. And I think it's going to empower people in ways that the original film never would have.

Dave:

And there's a side effect of that. If things hadn't have gone the way that they did go, where you survived and came back thriving, you would have died a good death, right? And we had a family friend couple of years ago who had an aggressive form of brain cancer. And when it became clear that he wasn't going to make it, he would come over and he would use the hyperbaric chamber that I have, because he's like, if I use this every day, the rest of the day for at least several hours, my brain works and I can be with my family. And so he's like, this is awesome. I get to go in there, I get to meditate for an hour or read something inspiring and all that, then he'd go out and he'd get that quality time.

Dave:

And when he decided to pass, he was surrounded by friends and family and loved ones, but the entire time he was of service to others, right? And the difference that made for his family and for him, he was at peace. And so it sounds like you used your process partly to create peace with yourself because in the movie you say I'm lying to myself and my family, you became aware of that. And it's pretty raw to be able to put that in the film, talk to me about the lies you were telling yourself and how you overcame those as part of this process.

Hal:

Yeah. In the film my time with my family and I realized that I was a workaholic and I was not aware of it. And I think this is true for a lot of entrepreneurs, especially that if you would have asked me, what's your number... If I were to ask you and listening, what's your number one priority? If you have a family but it's like, "Oh, it's my family." And then I would say, "Hey, show me your schedule." Right? Because that was the thing for me. If you would have said, "What's number one?" I said, "My wife and kids, of course, hands down in my heart, my mind, everything." "Can I see your schedule?" And you would've seen a different story. You'd have seen that, well, your schedule doesn't seem to be in alignment with what you're saying is your number one priority because you sure as hell are working a lot of weekends, you sure as hell are traveling a lot away from these people that you say are the most important in your life.

Hal:

And so that was one of the big wake-up calls for me of cancer was that not just to think and even believe and say my family's number one, right? Because you can think it, you could believe it, you could say it, but if they don't feel it, if they're not experiencing that in their reality, then it's absolutely not true. And so now I used to just do the Miracle Morning and I would be in the room and then I would go straight into work and I would kiss my kids goodbye to school. No now I come out at 7:00 AM, I wake the kids up. I'm there making lunches. Like it's family man now and I really only work well for the most part, there's occasional of course exceptions, but for the most part, I only work while the kids are in school.

Hal:

And so that's been the biggest breakthrough is to really realize that. And by the way, part of my challenge and maybe influencers and entrepreneurs have this, because I was so mission-driven, like I've got to elevate consciousness, I have to change millions and millions and millions of lives. It's like I had tricked myself without being even aware of it that quantity is more important than quality. That the amount of people I'm here to impact will, of course... I've got to go change the world, sweetheart, kids, daddy will be home. I got to go change the world. I'm on a mission. And it's like, no, my mission is at home and any time leftover go change the world. Great. But the quality and the depth of impact that I can have on those two souls on my two babies, on my two kids and my wife and even my friends and my family, now my energy is concentrated in that small space and then the leftover energy goes out in the rest of the world. And before that, it was the other way around.

Dave:

How much of that ego?

Hal:

It's honestly... Well, my answer to that would be, it's not very much. The way that I looked at this when I was in my 20s... And I think people don't believe this, but I'm telling you the truth. When I was in my 20s, I did a lot of... I had my car accident, I had died and come back and so I went down this path of spirituality and I read a lot of books on enlightenment. I read Living Enlightenment by Andrew Cohen, which I just put on the shelf, reading it again, a lot of Ken Wilber's work and I did a lot of active work to transcend my ego and be aware of, well, wait, I've been up until this point in my life. Everything I do is to be important and to be recognized, and I was in sales. So it was to be number one and beat other people and be the best and get attention. And I went, that's empty. That doesn't matter to me anymore.

Hal:

And so I'd actually done all this work to transcend ego, and here's the way that I looked at it. Actually, once I did that work, I defined my mission in life as to selflessly add value to the lives of every person I possibly could. That was my mission for the rest of my life and it still is, to selflessly add value for the lives of every person I could. And I specifically put the word selflessly in there to remind me that it wasn't about me. That was actually the mantra. It's not about me. It's not about me. I'm literally here to serve. I am here as a tool of God, I am here to serve. And then the way that I looked at ego was it was an aftereffect. Like I will pull my ego out only to enjoy things, the fruits of my labor but never to drive my intentions or my behavior.

Dave:

I really like it that you had that opportunity to do the early work there. I have some amount of concern. I have heard actually a good number of friends like, "My goal is to change the lives of a billion people." Or, I mean, Tony Robins is well-known for I'm going to feed a billion people and all that. And I've always had in the back of my mind this thing, well, okay, if you put a number on it, you're keeping score and there's some ego in there and my approach is a little bit different where I started the Bulletproof blog just saying, if I can keep one person from going through all the shit that I went through, losing all the weight and making my brain work again and toxic mold and just all the different things, it would be worth the time that I put in there, like the ROI on that alone, just to not have someone spend a hundred thousand dollars in years of feeling like garbage and acting like a jerk because your brain doesn't work, right?

Dave:

And I was pleasantly surprised when it took off more than that, but I hadn't really built it to be a business. It was just pure like I already have a job. And now I'm like, okay, my new Fasting book, I'm literally like, can I teach a million people how to fast? But then I'm modifying that at least in my mind to, how do I teach everyone how to painlessly fast? Who wants to learn or who would benefit from the knowledge? Rather than putting a number on it. Do you ever feel like what if I don't hit a million people?

Hal:

Yeah. So I love that you brought this up because when I wrote the Miracle Morning, it was self-published and my intention was exactly the same as yours. If I can empower one person and I knew it'd be more than one, but I'd be like a few hundred, like I had-

Dave:

Five is a win.

Hal:

No one knew who I was. I didn't have anything. I didn't have a podcast. Nobody knew who I was. And so I didn't come with these grand ideas that I was going to do it but what happened is once I started getting feedback on the book, that's where I felt the sense of responsibility. I said, I will not stop until I've reached... And it was a million people, just part of it is, and this is the other half of the answer to your question is choosing a number for fun to give you a target without any attachment to the result.

Dave:

There you go. That's the healthy approach. So you're not going to feel like a failure if you don't do it, and you're not going to sacrifice your family and all of that.

Hal:

Yeah. And Jim Rowan in my recent book, the Miracle Equation, I quote his approach for goals is that the purpose of a goal is not to hit the goal, the purpose of a goal and I'm paraphrasing here, but it's to give you a target to move toward that enables you to become the type of person that you need to be qualified to achieve goals. And so it's more about who you become than whether or not you hit the target because only the growth lasts forever. You hit a goal, you spend the money or whatever, only the growth lasts forever.

Hal:

So I'm glad you brought that up because again, it's the idea of you can either go with, I'm just going to reach as many people as I can, which was kind of my original mission, which is selflessly add value to the life of every person I can and then eventually putting a number on it just kind of give you something to shoot for. And now that number, if I have a number, it is a billion. Now I'm shooting for a billion. If I die and I've impacted a million again, there's no attachment to it. It's just, given you something-

Dave:

Let's say you're satisfied with what you do, but you're aiming high.

Hal:

Exactly. Yeah. And for me it's always that simultaneous.

Dave:

That's clean. Talk to me about some people who aren't Jim Rowan or your known people who've done the Miracle Morning practice. What are the changes you see, I know there's in the documentary, but just kind of walk listeners through some radical changes from people that you might not expect to have done this.

Hal:

Yeah. So the one I mentioned Mike Eaton who lost 90 pounds in eight months. So that was a pretty tangible, measurable outcome. One that we get a lot of and it's funny, I don't think along the terms of like what I'm legally allowed to say. So recently I've talked about how a lot of people have overcome their depression from Miracle Morning and people are like, "Oh, wait, you have to be careful, you can't. That's a very touchy subject." So there's two stories in the movie of people that overcame their depression. And one of them, Keith Minick, who is, I believe, the Former Director of Business Development at Turner Broadcasting, his son died at three hours old, wasn't expecting.

Dave:

That's sad.

Hal:

Died at three hours old. And Keith went into a deep, deep depression and he was a very religious person. So everybody was like, "God, how could you do this?" And just really questioning his faith and questioning everything. And I met him, he approached me at an event. I was speaking at an event and the person that was putting on the events said, "You have to meet this guy, Keith, you've changed his life." And Keith came up and he said, "I had read all sort of books on grief and specifically losing a child." He said, "I had read all these books and someone recommended the Miracle Morning. And I had been in..." I forgot how many years of depression he had been in and this is in the movie, I mean, it's really amazing to see, but his first Miracle Morning, it opened his eyes to wait a minute, I've been allowing myself to be depressed over the loss of my child. And I'm paraphrasing what he said, but I'm in control.

Hal:

And he said his depression went away the first day he did the Miracle Morning. And I've seen so many, that's very popular, I think it's the idea that when you start your day this way you are optimizing your inner world, you're optimizing your mental, emotional, and spiritual faculties and capacities. Most people, you go to bed stressed out, you wake up stressed out, you turn on your phone, you check email, you turn on the news and it's just this vicious cycle of repeating day after day after day. If you don't have time in the morning or whatever part of the day, if you don't have that break, that 30 or 60 minute time where you get to pour out your affirmations and read what you've written when you're in a peak state and you go, "Oh yeah, that's who I actually am. That's who I'm committed to being. That's what I'm capable of."

Hal:

Just that act alone. Just the affirmations alone that refocuses you to what matters, just the meditation. Just that silence. Just being in that state. I mean, just reading a few pages out of a book that reminds you of a higher way of thinking. I mean, any one of the SAVERS let alone all six of them, that allows you to

tap into the true you, not the you that's being reactive to the outer world, but the limitless you, that exists always within you in the world.

Dave:

Well, the idea of a limitless you scares the crap out of a lot of people. Do you know why the idea like if you really are limitless?

Hal:

I could guess, but I'd love to hear your take.

Dave:

Well, I'm curious, I want to get your take on it. I have theories, but I'm looking to learn here, my friend.

Hal:

Okay. So I think it scares us because the possibility is rooted with fear of it not being true and a fear of failure, right? It's like, well, I might be limitless but what if I try to be limitless? What if I go after a dream or a goal, then I fail and then I'm embarrassed. Or I feel like a failure or some of my childhood trauma or insecurities where I wasn't good enough when I was a kid, that's still deep inside of my psyche and I'm afraid of that resurfacing. And so I think that it goes back to that Jim Rowan philosophy of, if you just realize that you're limitless and there's really, you can't fail. The only way you fail is if you think that the purpose of the goals and the dreams that you have is to reach them.

Hal:

And it's kind of counterintuitive to think, well, it's not to reach them. It's just to keep growing and becoming more, because what often happens is you're pursuing one goal and you're all in on that goal and you think that's going to make you satisfied or fulfilled or whatever, but maybe you miss that goal. And depending on how attached you are to it, that might devastate you for a period of time. But if you gave it everything you had, then you became a better version of who you were when you began on the pursuit of the goal and now you get to take that version of you toward the next goal or the next dream, maybe you hit that one, maybe you don't, but if you give it everything you have, you become a better version of who pursued that next goal and on and on and on. And so that was a long answer but yeah, I think that the reason is that it's fear that prevents us from trying to accept that. Because if we don't try, we don't have to fear failure.

Dave:

That fear of failure is such a big thing. And the cognitive loop that I've learned from all the personal development stuff I've done and all the talking to people with neurofeedback and all is that if you fail, no one's going to love you. If no one loves you, well, you'll be alone and if you're alone, animals will eat you. No one will feed you. It's really visceral. And it's rational on one level, but it's not true in the world in which we live, but the body believes it. And there's a bigger thing that I see as well.

Dave:

And it's the Peter Parker thing with great power comes great responsibility. So if you really are limitless, it means you have more power than you think, but that means you have to have more responsibility and having responsibility is actually scary, right? Because what if you do the wrong thing and it causes more

damage because you have more power than you thought you did. And it's another form of fear, but fear is so nuanced. But I believe a lot of that's possible. When people say, "All right, I'm going to sit down, I'm going to practice this set of behaviors in the morning for an hour, " What does it do to fear?

Hal:

Well, for me specifically, it goes back to the use of affirmations where fear tends to dominate our lives. And for me, or for all of us, fear is simply a perception or an emotion. I mean, there's different ways you could define it but it's based on, I perceive this thing to be a certain way and I have a fear of that thing. Not either me not being able to achieve that thing or me not being able to be worthy of that thing or that thing harming me either mentally, emotionally, physically in some way but it's all fear is it's created in our mind, which is why two people could be facing the same thing, one is terrified of it and one sees it as an opportunity to learn and grow and evolve, right? Same thing, same risk, one's afraid one's not. So again, it's important to understand that fear is created.

Hal:

And to me, the opposite of fear is faith. And in the same way that fear is created in our mind, faith is created and can be created in our mind. And again, it goes back that to me, I want to make things as simple as possible, not just for anyone listening, like for me, I don't consider myself the smartest person. I like to keep it really, really simple and make things easy for myself. And so it's been shown that what you vividly imagine, your brain can't tell the difference between reality and something vividly imagined. And for me, a nightmare is the best example that everybody can relate to of that, right? If you had a nightmare, you wake up from a nightmare and you think it's real. You really think you were being chased by a guy with a knife and not only do you think it in your head, but you're sweating, you're breathing heavy, your body is trembling. Well, that was all in your head though, right? It wasn't actually happening.

Hal:

And so for me, an affirmation is an opportunity to write out something when I'm in a good state, when I'm not in a fearful state, when I've just meditated and I'm in a calm state and I've read some other affirmations and I'm like, "All right, I'm feeling good. I'm feeling confident." And if I'm not, I'll fake it until I make it, so to speak. But the point is having an affirmation that affirms the opposite of your fear, Robin Sharma calls that opposition thinking very simple. That whenever you find yourself thinking a thought that is destructive, that is causing you fear or pain, or some sort of destructive or counterproductive emotion or state that you just think the opposite thought, right? So for me, when I was afraid of dying of cancer, I had that affirmation. I am committed to beating cancer and living to be 100 years old with my wife and kids, no matter what, there's another option.

Hal:

So for me, that's how I combat fear is I combat it in writing because if you just rely on your thinking, your thoughts are like a pinball just bounces around from one to another, to another, to another. And when you have it in writing, you've got... For me, my affirmations represent my highest truth. And so when my highest truth is in writing, when my emotions are taking control of my mind, where I'm reactive to some outer stimuli, I'm able to pull out my phone so I keep the affirmation. So they're always with me and I'm able to read it and go, "Oh yeah." And I'll tell you, I'll give you one example, and this isn't specific to fear but just about how dramatic an affirmation that redirects your focus can be. It was, I

don't know, a few weeks ago, my wife and I were having a disagreement and ever had one of those with your spouse?

Dave:

Oh no, never. I just started this practice, Hal, it's called mouth taping and improved sleep. And I just do that during the day and we never have any arguments anymore. It's amazing.

Hal:

That's amazing. And so I had these emotions of like, just frustration.

Dave:

Of course.

Hal:

And I put out affirmations. I have affirmations for again, as a dad, as a husband, everything, and I read all of the truths around how I was committed to experiencing my spouse, which has nothing to do with how she behaves or what she said or what she does or doesn't do.

Dave:

Wow, that's deep.

Hal:

And by the way again, that's that inner freedom. It's choosing how you experience every aspect of your life, but on the daily, I forget, right? I forget, I get distracted, I get stressed, I get stimulated, I get whatever, but I pull those affirmations out and I'm reminded, oh yeah, that my wife loves me unconditionally and I love her unconditionally. And how she shows up is just she's dealing with her own stuff and there's nothing for me to take personally, right? And I'm not reading them, I'm just going off the top of my head.

Hal:

But that's just an example of how you can completely realign your state. And therefore how you're experiencing your spouse, your life, your work, your own fears in writing and having that that reflects your highest truth so that you can re-engage and revisit, and reembody your highest truth and attain that inner freedom.

Dave:

That's beautiful stuff. And the idea that you can take that morning affirmation and use it to improve your relationship just by reminding yourself of what's true versus what kind of your body will sneak in there during the day. And there's great value. And at this point we're pushing 900 ish episodes. And I studied at about episode 500 what do people generally agree on this idea that you don't have to study just one person, but let's do the math and figure it out. And that was the subject of Game Changers, my book. And without any doubt, the vast majority of people who've done big things in the world have some form of the practice you're describing. So it's one of those best practices that we can all do. It's not expensive. In fact, it's generally free or it's whatever 20 bucks to see your documentary now, but you could do it without that.

Dave:

And the idea that, all right, if we all know that it works, some portion of people are going to say, "All right, I'm going to decide to do it." But then in order to do it, you could just figure it all out the way you did by studying a bunch of stuff, or you could summon and follow a recipe for it. And that's actually the hardest part is figuring out how to explain thousands of hours of study into something that's just actionable if you don't want to do this study. And Biohacking is the same kind of a thing where like how do we remove all of the stuff you don't need just to get the results and maybe I'll learn more. And I do salute you for choosing to do it in a documentary form because I think it's actually more work than it is to write a book to be perfectly honest.

Dave:

But I do think you struck the right tone of inspiration and motivation, which is what's lacking for a lot of people. I know I should do some stuff in the morning, but I just couldn't be bothered. And so I believe that this documentary has the ability to help a bunch of people who were probably on the cusp, just say, I'll just try it for a week. And then did I get results? And if you didn't get results, hey, go back to checking social media in the morning. But those results probably closely align the incredible shit show that is 2020. So I think you can do better than that. And following the Miracle Morning is a good idea. And I know before we finish up the interview, does it have to be super early in the morning?

Hal:

Well, it doesn't. A couple of thoughts on that is number one is people have said, could I do the SAVERS these six practices, right? Silence, affirmations, visualization, exercise, reading, and scribing, could I do those in the afternoon and get the same effect or in the evening? The answer to that is yes and no. Are those six practices going to benefit you any time of day? Absolutely, they're transformative. The difference is that they have immediate and lasting effects. So for example, when you meditate, you lower your cortisol levels, you feel calmer, you feel clearer, you think better, you can have more discipline. When you exercise in the morning, Robin Sharma says this in the Miracle Morning documentary that the benefits of exercise in the morning can last up to 13 hours. Why would you wait to do that till after work, right?

Hal:

And by the way, when I say exercise in the morning, I don't mean that you have to go to the gym in the morning. But the whole point is doing this in the morning, it puts you in that peak, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual state to be a better version of yourself, the best version of yourself to then execute everything that you need to execute throughout the day. And that even includes like my affirmations on the weekends. My Miracle Morning on the weekends is dedicated to putting myself in a peak state for my wife and kids, to be playful and fun and empathetic and all of those and energetic, right? So that's the weekend, I'm really focused on just being the best dad and husband that I can be.

Hal:

And not that I don't make that part of during the week, but that's my whole Miracle Morning on Saturday and Sunday is really focused on the family. So anyway, the whole point is that most people wake up 30 to 60 minutes earlier, and that means that maybe you're bingeing on Netflix for 30 minutes less at night. But you don't have to wake up super early, if you're waking up at 6:00, get up at 5:30. If you're waking up at whatever...

Dave:

Okay. So the idea of waking up a half hour early to make time for this, I totally buy that. There was a time where I was like, you got to be up at 5:00 in the mornings. I did that for two years, a long time ago. By the way, circadian biology says I really ought not to do that. I'm wired to be a later night person. So I can do a morning practice at 7:00 AM instead of at 6:00 AM, and I'm going to get the same results if that's when I normally wake up. So you don't have to break your sleep cycles in order to do it. But you're just saying, do it first whenever your morning is.

Hal:

Exactly. Like I said, the second premise of this whole ritual was how you start your day, sets the tone, the context and the direction or how you live your day. And if you win the morning essentially in simple terms, then you put yourself in the best position to win the day and then you create a winning life.

Dave:

Very well said. Hal, thanks for sticking around with us. I'm really happy that you pulled through your cancer.

Hal:

Thank you.

Dave:

Your second major death defying feat of your life and your dedication to just helping a lot of people. It's legit. I know, because I know you personally, and it kind of shows through just as your interview here and it certainly shows through in the documentary. And for people listening, if you were inspired by Hal and you feel like there's some knowledge here, go to miraclemorningmovie.com, he's doing a screening, like you'd see it at a theater. But there's a bunch of other stuff that comes like a live Q&A and a there's a 30-day challenge where it teaches you how to do a Miracle Morning 30 day challenge that's kind of built in and all that stuff. So I would encourage you if this resonates, go check it out.

Dave:

At a minimum, watch the movie when you get a chance because it will make it easier for you to pick up a morning practice. And honestly, if you just did the SAERS and you forgot the V or something, it'll still work okay, right? I think you have distilled this down into like, these are the seven most important things, but perfection is not required, but motivation is required. And I think that you achieved your goal with the movie, which is why I want to have you back on. Thank you, Hal.

Hal:

Thank you, Dave. I appreciate you, brother.

Dave:

If you liked today's episode, you know what to do. Do something every day to make yourself a better person. Maybe you'll take on the SAVERS practices, maybe you'll just start your morning with a 10 seconds of gratitude, whatever it is, even if there's all sorts of people wearing masks and freaking out about all kinds of stuff and there's an election and well, I think we're past the forest fires right now,

whatever else it is, you can still do one thing every day to make yourself a better person and maybe to make someone else a better person, of course, with their permission. Have a beautiful day.