



## **Transcript – Hacking Addiction with Dr. Mark - #351**



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Dave: You've seen her fly now watch her move to her brand new network. The CW has a new hero when Supergirl lands on October 10th. It's the season two premier of the show that critics call pure blissful fun and that I call really fun to watch when I'm on airplanes, I love watching this stuff. This season the Man of Steel will finally be revealed. Supergirl's Melissa Benoist teams up with Tyler Hoechlin, the newest Superman in the DC universe. It's a super human family reunion when these kryptonian cousins join forces in the fight for justice.

If you're wondering if the next president will be a woman, we have your answer because Lynda Carter, the original Wonder woman guest stars as Supergirl's commander-in-chief. Even though Supergirl has her hands full of fighting evil full time, Kara Danvers is facing changes as challenges of her own. She knows what it takes to be a hero but Kara is trying to figure out how to fit in with the human race while taking on a new job, new friends and a new love who is out of this world.

An evil corporate empire will rise that bears the name of an angel nemesis, Luthor. Supergirl and Superman come face to face with Lex Luthor's next of kin, Lillian and Lina. As you might expect the Luthor family shares a passion of power that can only be satisfied by a different kind of green, kryptonite. You guys are going to love this show, I completely enjoy watching Supergirl and October 10th, tune in and watch it. The stuff that they explore about being a super hero is really fascinating psychologically and plus it's a lot of fun. When you're taking a break this is a fun thing to do and I actually do watch this. I watched the entire last episode, I binge-watched it and I'm probably going to do it again.

Speaker 2: Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact to the day is that the word drug comes from the Dutch word droog which means dry or too dry. Which is in reference to how ancient healers and physicians would dry plants to use as medicine which is kind of cool actually. Who would have thought that the big oil companies that became the big pharmaceutical companies would have forgotten that medicine comes from plants also?

Great lives start with great sleep and improving your sleep quality is one of the most important things you can do to feel amazing and perform better. One of the easiest ways to do that is to just improve your bedding. That's right, the sheets and the covers on your bed actually change the quality of your sleep. You spend about a third of your life in bed, you might as well get the best quality bedding so you can have the best sleep environment so that you can actually dare I say get better sleep. You need less of it so you can have more time in your day, it's totally possible and your sheets matter.

Ettitude is the first company in the world to create one hundred percent organic bamboo lyocell bedding. It's a sustainable option that is designed to give you the best sleep ever with an innovated fabric that has benefits for how you look and how you feel. Ettitude's organic bamboo lyocell is one of the most sustainable textile materials of the 21st century. It's really cool



because when companies waste resources, it affects the soil and it ends up eventually affecting you. What Ettitude does is they use high, ecological and ethical standards with a close loop system that recycles and reuses water up to two hundred times to minimize waste.

They're not only using bamboo to make these amazing sheets but they're not even wasting water when they do it. That kind of system's thinking makes me really respect what they're doing. The fabric that comes out of this process is incredibly feathery soft and really silky smooth. It's made with non-toxic dye which is really important and that means it's hypoallergenic and it's free from the chemicals and allergens that are in a lot of bedding. It's gentle on sensitive skin, it works for people with acne or eczema or psoriasis or dermatitis or just people who want to look good when they wake up.

It's naturally antimicrobial, it inhibits bacterial growth because who wants that on their bed? It's breathable, it's moisture wicking. If you sweat at night you still feel cool and most importantly it's thermo regulating. No matter whether you sleep in the desert or in some arctic environment, it can keep you two degrees cooler in the summer and warmer in winter just by the nature of the fibers themselves.

I'm really happy to share these bamboo sheets with you today and to be honest I'm just happy I get to sleep on them. Be the first to experience this new kind of innovative bedding, give your body and mind the rest they deserve. Go to [ettitude.com.au/Bulletproof](http://ettitude.com.au/Bulletproof) and get ten percent off, just use discount code Dave ten at checkout, that's ettitude E-T-T-I-T-U-D-E .com.au/Bulletproof and use Dave ten at checkout. There's no minimum order and they'll ship to you anywhere you are.

Today is ONE of my favorite kinds of shows because we're answering questions sent in via [Bulletproof.com/pq](http://Bulletproof.com/pq). That's [Bulletproof.com/pq](http://Bulletproof.com/pq) which stands for podcast questions. If you go there you can ask me anything, you can actually just record your answer. It's really simple and I'll actually choose the questions you ask then we answer them on air which is kind of fun, it's like a call in radio show but we can time shift it so I don't waste your time making you sit and listen at exactly the same time I'm talking.

I'd totally appreciate it if you's take your time to go to [Bulletproof.com/pq](http://Bulletproof.com/pq) for podcast questions and just leave these questions. I am not here alone today because sitting next to me is doctor Mark Atkinson the Medical Director for Bulletproof and the head of our Bulletproof coach training program. What's our new URL for that Mark?

Mark: [Bulletprooftraininginstitute.com](http://Bulletprooftraininginstitute.com).

Dave: Awesome. Mark is a physician and knows a thing or two about biohacking, he's a functional medicine guy and a good friend. This is a chance to hear the crazy biohacker perspective and the slightly less crazy physician perspective but very open minded and we have the best conversations if you're a long time listener you already know doctor Mark because he's been on the show lots of times. Something else that's going on, if you love what we're talking about here, you care about human performance and you just care about having control of your own biology I can tell you everything in my head eventually but it's going to take a long time, Mark

can do the same thing.

We don't have a lot of time because there's a limit to the amount of time you can listen and the limit to the amount of time that we can talk. If you go to [forum.Bulletproofexec.com](http://forum.Bulletproofexec.com), we just upgraded the software and when you go to the forum, there are thousands and thousands of people who are Bulletproof and they can answer your questions more quickly than I can or anyone on Bulletproof can or Mark can. sometimes they know stuff that I don't know, there's great conversations. If you want to know the latest place where someone has successfully purchased modafinil from another country obviously with a legal prescription, all that kind of stuff.

Then I didn't get a dirty look from a physician, did you see that? You have to be on YouTube to see that but things like that people discuss really like, "Am I getting fake drugs or real drugs?" These are for legal drugs, it's not Dark Net BS, this is actually like real pharmaceuticals just from other countries where pricing is more fair. There's also people talking about all of the nutrition things like that, go to [forum.Bulletproofexec.com](http://forum.Bulletproofexec.com) and you will be able to have almost anything you can think of answered. All right shall we get started Mark?

Mark: Yeah, the first question that we have is an audio.

Audience: Hey Dave, I think you're awesome, I love all your biohacks. My biggest question is can you possibly biohack addiction? My son is a heroine addict for four years, treatment centers don't work, maybe for some, shouldn't say they don't work. I just think you must be able to come up with something, I'm positive you can, you're the man. Thank you.

Dave: Thanks for your vote of confidence. There are two big things that I can think of that might help your son: one of them is called cerebral electrical stimulation and this is something that moves a small electrical current from one side of the brain to the other. It's been used specifically with heroine addicts, the trick though is that heroin addicts you have to actually want to be done with your addiction. There's often times underlying psychological reasons for being an addict, it doesn't matter if you're a sex addict, it doesn't matter if you're a substance addict or gambling or porn or whatever, addiction is addiction. You got to deal with the psychology of it but to deal with the biochemistry of it, cerebral electrical stimulation has really good efficacy.

The other thing that can go deeper than just the electrical current although it is going all the way through your brain and that's kind of cool is you may be able to deal with some of the addictive patterns that happen as well as some of the neurochemistry with a substance called Ibogaine. Ibogaine is a compound that comes from ... Is it a plant or mushroom or a toad? I forget, the source of it, do you remember?

Mark: I don't know.

Dave: It's a psychoactive substance that makes you hallucinate and the people I know who've tried it, I'll say that it's one of the most rough experiences but it is regularly used for heroin addicts and alcohol addicts and it's got pretty good efficacy there. It's something that I've been wanting to try for like 15 years even though I don't have addictive things going on. I also believe that

sometimes I learn new things when I use plan medicines. My Ayahuasca experience 15,16 years ago in Peru with a shaman was a powerful thing. I know that can be a very rough experience and there are treatment centers in Mexico that will specifically use that plant medicine.

Just make sure that you vet your treatment facility right if you do that. Cerebral electrical stimulation is probably more accessible but you still must have an addiction counselor. You've got to get to the root of the addictive traumas and the other things that are triggering addiction because if you just deal with heroin it'll be alcohol or something else or cocaine or who knows what next. You've got to get that but if it's like, "Look, we got to detox your son so he doesn't die from withdrawal." Then yes these are the two things I know that might work. Mark you may know more about that.

Mark: I'm really pleased we got the question about addictions because anyone who's worked with addictions and I've worked a lot with people suffering from addictions know that addictions exist on the epidemic skull.

Dave: I'm putting my cup of coffee as he says that.

Mark: Cheers. It's a massive societal issue.

Dave: Huge.

Mark: It is absolutely massive and if you care about your performance, if you care about how you show up as a human being and you have untreated, unattended to addictions that will undermine your ability to do high performance in every area of your life. You can be a work addict and perform really well in work but your relationships, your health will suffer.

Dave: In fact one of the guys I respect greatly who is going to come on the show is Joe Polish from Genius Network. Joe is an advisor of Richard Branson and he helps Tim Ferriss on his book launch and runs these group of successful entrepreneurs where you have to apply and it's twenty five thousand dollars a year to come to his big meeting of 250 entrepreneurs then a couple other meetings. It's quite expensive but he's become one of the most successful marketing consultants out there, he runs Piranha Marketing and you can find him online.

Joe is super courageous and he's been talking about addiction because he has dealt with substance addiction and a bunch of other addictions including sex addiction and he goes out there and he's like, "Look, I kick ass and this is the struggle I've been through." He's working on some X-Prize things with Peter Diamandis about addiction. I'm going to have him on Bulletproof Radio to talk about this and I'm friends with Joe and you don't hear this very often but he'll be in a room full of people running companies worth tens of millions of dollars if not hundreds of millions of dollars each. He'll stand up and be like, "I used to go to escort services all the time."

First time he said that he was like, "Oh my God people are going to think I'm such a loser." At the end of his talk out of a room of fifty people he's like, "10 entrepreneurs came up to me and they're like, 'Yeah I do it all the time too.'" There's an unspoken epidemic of addiction like this, it's a problem not even counting substances like alcohol which is ginormous like, "Oh I just have



a drink or two every night." You actually have a half a bottle every night, there's a name for that it's called alcoholism and the fact that you haven't faced it, yikes.

Mark: I'm going to specifically speak about heroin addiction because there are some other.

Dave: Please do.

Mark: I also really want to speak to anyone who's listening to this, I want to explain to you what addiction looks like. I want you to take a moment to really listen very carefully and be open to the possibly that what I'm describing is relevant to you because the hardest thing in addiction recovery is to admit you have a problem. Addiction is first and foremost a disease of denial and minimization what that means is woven into addiction is the denial there's an issue. Everyone else around you can see it but you can't see it yourself.

Here's the thing if you compulsively do something or take something that at times becomes increasingly out of control and is wrapped up ... Here's the key listen very carefully ... In secrecy, denial or shame and if that is removing you from relationships, responsibilities or reality, those are the hallmarks that there's an addictive behavior underneath it i.e your center of gravity where your energy goes, where your focus goes is your addictive substance or addictive behavior rather than your life and the things you cherish.

Just take a moment to check in with that and realize that there's this underlying addictive tendency with multiple addictive outlets. Most people in my experience if they have this addictive tendency and there's definitely a genetic component to it as there is a psychological and biological, will have three or five addictive outlets of which one they suspect is a problem but often they're completely blind to this. As you said you put down heroin, alcohol goes up, you go to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, the people who go there don't drink anymore but there's sugar on the table and they're talking about sex.

What happens is like whack-a-mole, you put one down another one pops up and they kind of hang out together. Reflect on that, if there's something you do that is cloud in secrecy or shame i.e you would feel really embarrassed if someone saw you doing it, that is a little clear there's a problem here. Problem with heroin addiction, they actually estimated that something around thirty million people worldwide have a problem with opiates. Now that's including heroin, morphine and a real big problem particular in America prescription opioid pain relievers such as vicodin and oxycontin. Now if you talk to anyone who's ever been addicted to opioid pain relievers they will tell you it is miserable.

It is a terrible, terrible addiction and one of the reasons I believe you've had or your son's had the struggle going to a treatment center is not many treatment centers understand the essential need to biochemically and nutritionally rehabilitate the individual. If you do that, that is the game changer because some people just through the psychology, just through the self-help groups they'll be able to have some resemblance for recovery but if you deal with the biology and the biochemistry that is the key. Now for example intravenous nutrition, that is a game changer for people going through withdrawal, that's intravenous vitamins, minerals, amino acids. One of the things that heroin and opiates do is the deplete endorphins, in order to feel

good you need endorphins.

They deplete dopamine, we need dopamine to be focused, energized and alert. All these get depleted the amino acids which your son can take will actually naturally increase levels of dopamine and endorphins. Then you come off processed refined foods and sugar, you increase your healthy fats, start eating clean protein, start exercising, start to work with your body rhythm, so sleeping at regular times. Start connecting with meaningful work, start learning how to re-inhabit your body. The reason so many people who get into addiction recovery struggle is because they haven't been helped with dealing with the underlying trauma.

Often developmental trauma sitting in their body that feels so uncomfortable, that's what they're attempting to manage. You have to be able to do the trauma work, that is really essential and that's often on going. You need support, 12 step groups are great for a lot of people. What a 12 step group is they provide you with what I call like this psychospiritual scaffolding that you build around you to help yourself rebuild from healthier foundations. Then once you have the healthier sense of self, you've taken much better care of yourself, you're rebuilding your life you can then let go of the scaffolding, you don't need it anymore.

Dave:

There's an interesting aspect of willpower to this because there's a willpower question. The Bulletproof Diet is actually a book about willpower and in the beginning I read about the labrador brain, these three things that take up your willpower and people without these traumas ... Actually even people with it comes down to these three things: eat everything so you don't starve to death, keeps all animals alive and that's not a functional behavior but you'll keep getting these thoughts when you eat the cookie. Then you have sex with everything and do that just to make sure the species survives, these are urges, these are not what you have to do but we're wired to do that that's why we keep having children.

Then the third thing is run away from or kill things that are scary. If you are wired to have things that are scary and these are the traumas, this is the root of addiction you're going to be dealing with all three of those things. In order to resist those urges for people who are perfectly healthy it takes a certain amount of willpower. What I have found in my own life and in hearing from countless addicts who've gone onto the Bulletproof diet is that having more energy in your cells, in your mitochondria, look you were going to run out of willpower at some point everyday, that happens and it's proven, it's scientifically proven, it's a finite resource.

You're an addict, you've just got this giant pump taking out your willpower. Well what if you made lifestyle changes nutritionally? That allowed you to have more energy so that now you're putting more energy into the willpower bucket even as the addiction is pulling it out, your ability to stand up to those urges it will improve. I mean I hate to say it but something as simple as butter and grass fed steak and a quality diet versus cheese burgers it actually matters for your willpower and it matters for your addiction.

Mark:

You know and addiction treatment centers are already onto this. Once upon a time you go into an addiction treatment center, you'd be abstaining from your chosen substance but then you'd be having high cap, high sugary foods and they would feed you that. That's next on a change as so many people started to wise up to the fact that really recovery starts with taking charge of



your biology, that's the given. As your energy level starts to increase, your level of wakefulness and alertness and awareness increases then you can start making better decisions. It is really hard to make good, healthy decisions if you are depleted and tired.

We all know that if you miss a couple of night sleep you actually will revert back to your old behaviors. Your son not only does he need this nutritional biochemical rehabilitation and there on that loads of treatment centers that embraces you got to just put in biochemical nutrition rehabilitation addictions you're going to see loads of them. That's what I suggest is he needs a supportive environment, he also needs to change his environment as well which is that if he's living in the same place he's already lived, then they'll be a lot of environmental cues that trigger those urges and cravings.

He needs to know how to manage his stress and resilience. Really important thing I think for a lot of people in addiction recoveries learn how to meditate, to use neurofeedback. It's massive because ... I tell you what one of the real diseases is in humanity right now is the disease f distraction. We are distracted beings and there are so many things trying to get our attention and learning how to take charge of your attention and placing where you want it to be on the things that really matter to you that enable you to really live this fulfilling life is a prerequisite to living a healthy life.

It's not just about coming off the substance or no longer indulging with you unhealthy behavior, it's about actually actively creating this deeply fulfilling life. Your sense of aliveness comes from the life not from a substance. Also I want to just say for anyone who has a loved one, a friend, a family member who has addictions, how stressful that is to see that. I just want to acknowledge the stress that you're in there and just to put it out there how important it is you get your support. Your support in managing your own stress, your own anxiety because as a mum you account for your kids and you should be doing everything you can and passing on information. Then there's the letting go piece as well which is one of the hardest thing in the world.

There is no easy solution to this, it takes time, you take one day at a time but I think in summary learning how to improve biochemically, nutritionally, and using supplementation even simple things like a lot of people with addictions have blood sugar issues. That's why increasing the healthy fat, taking chromium, taking magnesium, Omega-3 fatty acids, the B vitamins, the vitamin D, the vitamin C, just really sound stuff, the amino acids all of that can make such a big difference. Anyone that has been in addictions for a long time, their adrenals are not function properly, adaptogens is really important as well and that should sit alongside and complement the very necessary psychological work.

Dave: ButcherBox delivers healthy one hundred percent grass fed beef, organic chicken and pork directly to your door. All their products are humanely raised and free of antibiotics and hormones. You can think of them as the neighborhood butcher from modern America. Each box comes with seven to ten pounds of meat which is enough for about twenty individual sized meals depending on how big you are and how hungry you are. You can choose from four different box types; all beef, beef and chicken, beef and pork or the mixed box.

My favorite would be the all beef. You can also customize your box with add on types like bacon,

rib eye and beef bones. I love that stuff, you get some high quality bacon, you get rib eye, which is the best steak you can get and beef bones or how you make beef broth. It's basically your meat for the month in a box, they also include step by step recipe cards and a note from the butcher describing the cuts and farms feature that month. I've seen these guys everywhere from Mark Sisson's show to the today's show and for good reason, sourcing high quality need you can trust is hard especially in some areas of the country. The fact that they deliver for free nationwide is pretty cool.

By taking out the middleman, grocery stores and purchasing direct from farms ButcherBox can help you buy meat at a lower cost then you benefit from that. It's a cool business model that make sure you get the best value instead of just passing it off on the supply chain. The price is just a hundred and twenty nine dollars a month which works out to less than six dollars and fifty cents a meal. Every box comes with enough meat for at least twenty individual size meals and shipping is free nationwide expect for Alaska and Hawaii. Sorry guys. Order now and get free 100% grass fed burgers, you get six six ounce burgers in your first box and use the code Bulletproof to get to get an extra ten dollars off. Get started by visiting [butcherbox.com/Bulletproof](http://butcherbox.com/Bulletproof).

You can cancel anytime without penalty, give it a try, visit [butcherbox.com/Bulletproof](http://butcherbox.com/Bulletproof) to get your free 100% grass fed burgers, you get six of them and \$10 off with the code Bulletproof. Get your meat now, that's [butcherbox.com/Bulletproof](http://butcherbox.com/Bulletproof).

There's something you said in there Mark about shame, that's a part of addiction. My wife Doctor Lana she does fertility consulting work around the globe now and doesn't practice addiction but when she was in Stockholm she ran a drug and alcohol addiction emergency center for five years and so she works with addicts.

We can go to any dinner party and if there's an addict in the room she knows who it is. The people who work with addiction and the people who are addicts you know each other across the room. People who do heroin like, "Oh yeah that guy has probably got some." You feel the sense of shame but you actually can't hide from it because the people who know, they know. I had no idea that people have these kind of secret powers and a Lana wouldn't just walk around judging everyone and saying, "Look over there." Nothing like that but she just knows. You probably could too.

Mark: You do know and the thing is to realize if you're listening to this and you go, "Oh okay." 90% of the time I'm a decent human being but on the evenings I go out and have sex with people I don't know. Another hallmark of addictions, please listen carefully to this is that sometimes it's not about the amount of time you spend indulging in the addictions, say drinking alcohol or eating chocolate, food addiction is a big problem, it's the amount of time you spend thinking about it. What that means is that say for example I've worked a lot with food addiction which was one of my own major challenges, you apply willpower and control to avoid eating the thing that has the hold over you but that's exhausting, it's unsustainable.

What happens is you spend a disproportion amount of time thinking about it, planning how you're going to get it and you become immensely preoccupied by it. Even if you think, "You

know, well compared to my friend, I hardly drink any alcohol." We say, "How much time do you spend about planning drinking alcohol, thinking about drinking alcohol?" When you allow yourself to admit, "You know I may have an issue here." Then when you have the courage to seek help with someone who has experience in addictions, who gets it, who understands it, who acknowledges the importance particular working with the biology and the nutrition side of it, that is the start.

I get so excited when I come across people who admit, "You know what, I have an issue. It's not working out for me." That requires such courage then it's like, "Take it one day at a time, what do I need to do today to make better decisions, take better care of myself so I become a better human being and be the person that I know in my heart I can be?"

Dave: There's a flip side to all these and frankly some people hearing this will be pissed off and this isn't necessarily relevant for the mother who asked the original question here. Addiction is a problem, it's not to say that drugs are always the problem. One of the things that blew me away that Lana told me about is that in Stockholm, the CEO of a pharmaceutical company, a small pharmaceutical company had been getting pharmaceutical grade heroin and using it in measured doses for a very wealthy socialites the top attorney in town and a government official. After 20 years of doing this, got busted and these people were doing a small dose of pharmaceutical pure heroin once or twice a week without changing their dose over the course of twenty years, this was not addictive.

Mark: Behavioral

Dave: All of them looked twenty years younger that they should have been and they were getting some of the same and probably stronger effects that you get from low dose in naltrexone for autoimmune conditions and ageing. Even there the case that says, "Look we should just burn these stuff outright." Actually no, when you separate out the things that create addiction from the substances themselves they're different things.

Mark: Absolutely

Dave: You look at all the twenty percent of soldiers in Vietnam who use heroin because the war is hell everyone said they were going to have all these heroin addicts but we had far fewer than we expected. This goes back to the recent rat experiments they did with heroin and they found it funny when a rat's in a sterile cage all by itself it'll do heroin over and over. When you put it in a cage full of toys and other rats suddenly it stop being an addict. What's happening here is happiness is an antidote to addiction and the drugs lose their power. That's a powerful statement.

Mark: It is. It's like when you create a fulfilling life and what that requires is first of all it's really hard to know what's good for you when your addiction is in charge. There's this saying in addiction recovery is you really can't trust your own head and stories for quite some time. Which is why when you work with a counselor, psychotherapist you're really borrowing their brain and perspective until you can get yours back on line. You have to go through this period of rehabilitation where you're starting to getting clear on yourself then you start asking the

questions, "What really matters? What do I want my life to be all about? Why is this important to me?"

Yet when you inquire into that deep enough about relationship and contribution then you start rebuilding your life around that and you start hanging out with others who are also committed to living that way. One of the very challenging thing for people in those stage of addiction recovery is moving on from your peer group. You have a whole bunch of friends that were associated with doing the same thing as you and that can be a really challenging thing to leave that behind. You know what, there's a lot and I mean a lot of people who are committed to living a clean, healthy, prosperous, productive meaningful life.

There's a lot of them out there and you got to seek them and you won't find them in those dark places, they're out there, you see them in the 12 step rooms. People are just sincerely committed to living their best life then you start to rebuild a new peer group. You start to surround yourself with good, healthy, sincere, honest, authentic kind of people then you know in a very short period of time, I'm saying very short period of time, I'm talking about years but relatively that's not short, your life can be changed but it requires great courage to admit there's an issue.

Listen I'm so pleased that you sent that question in, I know we've unpacked all to there. I hope that you can see the depth, the complexity of it here but it would be really great if you could ask your son to maybe listen to this himself so he can reflect upon what he's heard then work together to find a pathway forward for him and I wish you both well.

Dave: If you go back about six months, in the transcript and on the blog post for this I'll include a link, we actually interviewed the guys from Crossroads who are using Ibogaine. I was trying to think of their name a minute ago and there it just came to me. You could certainly look them up and I've looked at the facility, I didn't go there in person but I talked with them and it appears to be pretty darn legitimate. If I was going to go try Ibogaine I would probably do it there, the difficulty I have I that there's only so much time in the day, I travel a lot and I have little kids.

I don't think I'm going to go down to Mexico and do that because I'm not dealing with an addiction right now. Mark, I think I know the answer to this but I wanted to get your take on it, what do you think is the most common addiction right now? Amongst people listeninf to this or just the population in general, what would it be?

Mark: Probably not what people would expect it to be. I think of that has to be addiction to intensity and to drama and I want to give you just expand a little bit about that because that's a little bit off center. What I mean is that when you are not rooted in your physical body and the aliveness and well being that comes from that we seek aliveness outside of ourselves. The way a lot of people seek aliveness is through creating intensity and drama. I see that a lot in clients but other things that I see I think there's work addiction, alcohol, prescribed medications is a real big problem particularity in North America.

The amount of people who use and abuse prescription medications is incredible. There's a lot of them but definitely the intensity is a big one that I see. What's your perspective?

Dave: Intensity, I've got a question for you there then I'll answer it. There's the extreme sports way of accessing a flow state which is all intensity based. We've had the flow genome guys Jamie and Steven on, I'm friends with them and I've often wondered, you go to an extreme ski village let's say and we talked about, this is a very old episode but we talk about the hippies speed ball which is caffeine, nicotine, pot, to increase the neurotransmitters that put you in the flow state. Then you need something that is basically putting you in harms way and if you do that in the right order you pretty reliably create this flow state if you're the flow type that gets in that state from physical dangers.

There are those people, "I go in a flow state when I write or when I'm on stage giving a really good speech something that's meaningful to me." I don't want to put my life in danger in those things. Is there like an addiction to extreme sports? You just made me think of that right now.

Mark: There can be and the key is "Am I dependent upon that in order to feel alive? Am I mentally preoccupied with that and always planning to do it and that taking me out of the present moment? Is that having a negative impact on my health, my life, my relationships, my responsibilities?" It's that we're constantly looking for the next fix and remember one of the hallmarks of addiction is tolerance which means we have to go further and further extremes or higher and higher dosages to get the same kind of feeling experience. It is absolutely possible and very likely a lot of people who do extreme sports will have that addictive component to them but not necessarily so.

What that means is that some people just love the experience of it but they're not depending upon it. Which is like they have this innate sense of well being and aliveness, they take great care of themselves, their relationships, they're engaged in life. They don't need it to feel whole, they don't need it to feel alive but they choose to do it because they have a significant interest.

Dave: If it's something out of joy versus out of need it's a huge difference there

A lot of the people I know know like Jamie and Steven, it's done out of joy. I do see people soon I'm sure are pulled to do things like that from more of a dark place, that could be one thing. I tend to think that the number one thing that people are addicted to is probably porn if not food. I don't know if I can say which one is bigger because food addictions it might be you're mostly not addicted to food but every now and then you have a trigger. It may not be a meaningful addiction but you might use it for comfort but if it's a big food addiction I don't know but porn's rampant and especially among people under 25 where like you've had a browser since you were born.

I think it's a big problem, I'm going to date myself ... When I was at the university and this was back in 1990. I was the last class that didn't have ethernet in my room in the dorm. I of course had a dialer modem when I was on BBS' and this was pre-internet kind of days and even downloading an image, a good porn image was you may fit three of them on a floppy disk. I had a friend in the dorms who had this huge box of floppy disk-

He spent like a day and a half downloading some stupid, ASCII art porn image, it wasn't even

good porn but it was one of those it was already happening and I look now and you're like you can watch live video with 3D goggles of the same thing when you're six years old and unfortunately that happens. I think it's an issue for people of all ages but for younger people-

Mark: Particularly for younger people.

Dave: Porn is highly addictive.

Mark: Let's talk about that, highly addictive and wholly disruptive to relationships because the earlier you get exposed to it and yet before the age of 25, your prefrontal cortex is still developing it distorts the arousal template. Basically what that means is that what's required to physiologically arouse you in order to be physically and sexually involved with another human being gets distorted. What you have is that people who require pornography or their imaginations get aroused and in fact when they're in front of another human being that they like and they're naked together they can't get aroused without it because there's this distortion in the arousal template.

What tends to happen with pornography addiction is that people eventually outgrow it, there's this natural transition out of it however its residue is left in the kind of dysfunctional sexual practices. I'm all for two consenting adults to do what they want but often when people have sex together it's driven by trauma and the past and this distorted template which originates from exposure to pornography. If you still use pornography and it's compulsive and it stops you from doing things that you really value if it gets in the way of you being and being able to be intimate with your partner it's a real issue.

Food addiction you also mentioned, that's massive. Most people's first addiction is to food. When you're a young kid, you're feeling stressed, you don't have the ability to self-regulate and sooth yourself the way you do it, is through food. Most people will find when they stop cleaning up the addictions they'll often come back to food addiction being the main one, particularity sugar. Now sugar addiction as I'm speaking to you I'm thinking, "What really is the most common addiction?"

I may be moving towards sugar addiction because it's what I see a lot in my patients and we exist in this spectrum when it comes to sugar, there's the take or leave it side of it. Has no impact on mood or energy, it's just like relax about it. Then there is on the other side the other extreme which is that you compulsively think about sugar, consume sugar and has a profound influence on your mood and your energy when you have it.

Dave: I was like that when I weighed 300 pounds. You have a map in your head of all the places in the office where there's sugar. I remember really profoundly a client in the UK, she had such a problem, she knew she had a problem, she didn't know what to do about it, no food in her house because she used to eat everything. She had to go downstairs and go to the grocery store to buy food and when she switched to, actually the first time she had Bulletproof coffee raises ketones which turns off the sugar craving, it's a biological thing that she did, not a psychological thing. She called me and she was like, "I went all day and I didn't have one piece of candy at work. I didn't even know that was possible."

Mark: Probably didn't think about having a candy.

Dave: It was like the voice was quiet, the cravings were gone. That's a big thing because for me I don't spend energy thinking about, "Oh, what am I going to have for lunch." What happens is I look at my calender, I'm like, "Oh, I guess on my scheduled day I have lunch scheduled, I guess I could eat." I'm not even hungry.

Mark: You didn't worry about it.

Dave: The crashes don't happen, I used to end meetings early and I'm like, "I'm sorry I can't think of anything but food, I'm going to kill one of you and eat you. I just have to go now."

Mark: It's massive, when we're looking at it from biohacking perspective addictions is kryptonite. Kryptonite is anything that undermines your energy, your performance. If you think about sugar all the time and about food all the time, that is abnormal. That is really important to understand it's abnormal to be thinking about your food all the time yet people do because they're used to it. When you do switch to a diet such as the Bulletproof diet, when you do increase your healthy fats, have cleaner protein, reduce your sugar, your grains that kind of thing, it's like suddenly there's a sense of liberation and freedom which is like, "Wow, I've now gone half a day without thinking about food, without craving."

It's like that energy I now have I can then apply to activities and things that really matter to me as opposed to when you're in the grips of sugar addiction it's like a black hole and that pulls your energy and your attention into the black hole. It's very hard to progress in your life, it's very hard to be present to your life when you're in the grips of sugar addiction. If you're listening to this and you're thinking, "Okay, maybe sugar addiction is a problem fro me, there's a couple of things that you can do. The first thing is you got to change your diet to a Bulletproof diet approach or just simply increasing your healthy fats, come off sugar, take chromium which helps to stabilize the blood sugar-

Dave: It's huge.

Mark: Take alpha-lipoic acid that also helps, take magnesium, if you go to our website there's a whole bunch of information about supplements.

Dave: The top ten supplements list.

Mark: Top ten supplements list. Get solid on those, make the changes through your diet then come off the sugar, keep yourself well hydrated and you'll probably find within three four days you feel like a new person.

Dave: The voice in your head shuts up about food.

Mark: It's incredible.

Dave: I realize after hearing you say all that I change my answer about the most common addiction.

Mark: So have I but it's like I think we'll go with sugar.

Dave: Sugar is good but that wasn't the new answer, it's actually an addiction that I suffered from as an early internet pioneer I had unfettered access to the web. I went through a period in my early late teens or early twenties where instead of studying I would just get addicted to information. I remember I used to feel like I was going to die when my email server had crashed. We have Gmail and servers don't crash anymore but it was like I'm absolutely disconnected and I would probably spend 50 to 60 hours a week as a student doing ... What's the equivalent of Facebook? We called it Usenet but it was pretty much Facebook, it was with texts.

Today you look at the number of times the average person looks at their phone it's two hundred and fifty plus and we're addicted to interruption and to this, I don't want to say just social media but information.

Mark: To novelty as well, it's like when you're not rooted in the healthy sense of inner fulfillment and you're not at peace with yourself and you're not actively engaging a life you find fulfilling, we seek novelty outside of ourselves. We're constantly searching and what we have is this generation of highly destructible people surrounded by technology that is a black hole and the key is like ... Here's something I haven't mentioned that's really important, when you indulge in addictive behavior ask yourself, "How old am I right now?" What you'll probably find is that you have emotionally regressed into one of your younger selves.

It could be age 12, age 15 or even the younger child and it's first thing is that most people will find that when they indulge in addictive behavior they have emotionally regressed and they're actually acting out through a unhealthy, unintegrated part of themselves. When you start living virtually most of the time it just doesn't happen. If you engage in Facebook or ... I've worked with a few clients and what will happen is these high flying clients they'll sit down in front of me, they'll put the mobile phone on the table that's right in front of them and every ten seconds their attention will go to the mobile phone and back.

Remember the hallmark of addiction is it's a center of gravity. It literally has a gravitational pull and the energy and the tension is being pulled inside of it and it created a perpetual state of tension.

Dave: It does.

Mark: That means it's the tension all of the time. You know what a really helpful exercise is? You go throughout your day for the next forty eight hours and you watch how you are around certain things and if something you feel tense about, you fell it has a hold of you whether it's food, whether its pornography, whether it's media, that's probably where you have the issue.

Dave: It's funny, we see 40 Years of Zen, we've got people strapped in with these and Mark has helped with the program, he's done a lot of the 40 Years of Zen training, he knows what I'm talking about, we put that electrical helmet on, in fact hey Mark where our electrical helmet thing? I

think it's on the table will you grab it? I'm all wired in, I'm not going to grab it, if you're watching on YouTube you go to [Bulletproofexec.com/youtube](http://Bulletproofexec.com/youtube) then it links you one of these things.

We have one of these on a client, very sexy look here, twenty four channel, we call it the spider helmet. We're getting a signal from your head, if your phones buzzes or beeps or you got a facebook alert, you'll see every brain, we're looking at twenty four channels, all of them ...

Mark: It scrambles the brain.

Dave: Your brain is literally scrambled and I first learned about this when I got into neuro feedback 20 years ago, in 96 I started doing this. At the time in96 I had a PalmPilot actually, they didn't have wireless back then but this was like the beginning of that. There were no real interruptions like that but I was sitting during neurofeedback and the phone rang and literally all my brain was crazy because the phone ringing was back then what today is the alert coming on your phone.

A simple thing to do is go on your phone and go and do depending on what platform you're on whatever you can to turn off things that pop up on the screen, do the same thing on your computer. I don't even have what's in the text messages come up on the screen, my phone will buzz if I get a text message but I can just look at it and get instant gratification, I got to unlock it and go to the text message app and see what's new. I don't get Facebook alerts, I don't get any of that kind of crap on there and that actually de-programs you.

Mark: That can be a game changer.

Dave: It's so big.

Mark: It's another way of actually coming to understand whether you have an issue with something is go for 24 hours without looking at the internet, without checking your emails unless you have to, without going on Facebook. If it leaves you feeling tense and anxious and agitated then there's probably an issue there. Then what you do is you just set healthy boundaries around, you use intentionally which is like you have like ... An increased number of families they have like Sundays which is technology free day. If you're one of these people that wake up in the morning and the first thing you do is rather than turn to your loved one and say, "Good morning to you, how are you?" Yet you turn to the other side and you check your emails-

Dave: You got to cut that out.

Mark: Do you realize how insane that is? We get used to it and we joke around it but it's insane. What that means is that remember the hallmark of addiction is anything that takes away from relationships. If that first thing in the morning takes away from your relationship, that's a problem. There's going to come a time and ideally before you start having conversations around divorce or splitting up they say, "Enough's enough." Which is If your relationships and your health and your fulfillment then you need to look at all of these different things that grab your attention and you got to put boundaries around it which is it may be I do not check emails until you've said hi to your family, you've had your breakfast then it's seven o'clock in the morning, you turn your phone on.



Dave: When do you check emails in the morning?

Mark: Not until after breakfast.

Dave: Same here and I want you guys to hear this listening. Mark is a successful physician, we've got 500 students in the Bulletproof coach training program and he works his ass off. I know because we talk to each other all the time, you know what I do with Bulletproof Radio, probably half a million people maybe more will hear this episode. We're pushing 15 million downloads, I've got a New York Times best selling book and I'm in the middle of writing another one and Bulletproof is a growing healthy company. I'm a busy guy and I'm a father of two young kids. You know when I turn on my phone, when I take it out on airplane mode? After I drop my kids off at school, that's when I do it, I do not wake up and check messages, it is absolutely toxic for your brain.

Mark: It's toxic.

Dave: I perform like this because I do things like that because I don't have that information

Mark: "No gosh, the more busy you are so you need to be doing all that kind of stuff." No it's like you want to move your life towards healthy boundaries and simplicity and it's like you want to be clear about what most important and remember Facebook particularly is never ending. You can be on Facebook for the rest of your life and still not see everything that you need to see, same for the internet as well.

Dave: I'm laughing because there was a time ... Because I'm the first guy to do e-commerce, like the first product ever sold over the internet was a caffeine t-shirt, that I sold in my dorm room and I know I didn't get rich from that but it was just a need for note. When the worldwide web was created, there was one webpage that was pointing awe3wt like a coffee maker I think, if I remember right that updated. I knew every website in the internet and I went through this horribly stressful time in my life where I thought I could know everything on the internet. I was addicted to information, I was sleeping less and less because I was just like, "Well there's so much neat stuff, I can't get enough."

There was some form of fear of missing out and all but yeah that whole thing.

Mark: Moving out of relationships and reality and responsibilities. Now you mentioned something I thought of that's something that affects me, I'm sure affects a lot of people listening to this. This need to know more, this need for more information. Now one of the potential underbellies of someone who is into personal growth, in personal development, if you just want to lean more and more, you're excited about it, you want to do more and more and that can be a little consuming and self-help become an addiction. If you're one of these kind of people who goes from book to book, workshop to workshop that can be stressful.

It's really about slowing down, focusing on a couple of things that really matter most, taking time to reflect on that and to practice what you're learning. Please don't keep self-help and

personal development cognitive, don't keep that in your head otherwise you're going to have, I've got hundreds of books, I'm sure you probably have as well. You have hundreds and hundreds of books and you never really get to digest because you get from one thing to another. You just want to look at every part of your life and you want to think of the principles of balance and moderation and simplicity and just admit to yourself, "Maybe I'm a self-help addict." It's like-

Dave: That's so true.

Mark: I'll share this with you, I was once sitting next to my wife and I'm reading a book about emotional intimacy, I'm in the book learning how to be emotionally intimate whist my wife is there sitting next to me, wanting me to be emotionally intimate but I'm completely unavailable because I'm in this book reading about emotional intimacy. When I saw that paddling and she pointed out to me, that blew me away it's like the thing I was looking for was right there in this human relationship but it was easier for me to go into the book for it and the book was a distraction.

Dave: Thinking about feelings, actually feeling them and it's a rough situation feeling them and it's a rough situation when you get stuck on that. I'm just thinking about it, another thing that I got into for a while is the sort of life hacking thing, about ten years ago. You could spend 24 hours a day reading about ways to be more efficient and you could also spend a 100 hours automating something that only takes ten minutes to just do. There are people I know who have incredibly elaborate, "Well if this then that then this." That's actually a website that's useful, if this then that for automation. If you are addicted to automation, you're actually automating away things that don't take very much time and distraction-

Mark: It's a distraction.

Dave: You're using this weird meta-level of thinking, instead of just like get it done.

Mark: You know one of my perspective on one of the hallmarks of personal development is the ability to face reality, to live in reality. What happens is we come up with this elaborate scheme of distraction and it can look to the untrained eye as, "Wow it's great you're looking into things, it's great that you're hacking life, it's great you're doing that." To the untrained eye it all looks good but actually it's a distraction from the pink elephant in the living room is normally one thing that you're willing to be paying attention that will give you greatest insight and transformation reward if you're willing to look at it.

Normally it has to do with relationships or normally it has to do with addictions. That's where you want to put your energy, it is easier, it is much easier to be destructed by reading books, by getting into the internet than it is to face reality and it takes great courage to face reality.

Dave: It's interesting, we were going to answer a bunch of questions in this episode but just decided along the way just to make this a Dave and Mark talk addiction episode and we went from heroin to information addiction. Just really an addiction is the thinking about feelings instead of feeling feelings but all these have a single neurotransmitter which is dopamine. All of these

activities whether it's the alert on your phone or whether it's taking the next hit, they're triggering dopamine. Low dopamine or unstable dopamine or even something called dopamine resistance comes into play here.

One of the theories around porn addiction is that by masturbating frequently, at least ejaculating frequently you can develop dopamine resistance where it takes higher and higher levels of dopamine for your cells to be able to access that and this can happen with almost any kind of addiction and there's a unique ... I don't want to use the C word, cure for it but a way to affect your dopamine levels and probably dopamine sensitivity and it's not one that's talked about very much, it's sunlight.

When you go out and you expose your eyes to sunlight without sun glasses on even for just a few minutes, ultraviolet light catalyzes the creation of dopamine in the brain. Circadian rhythm, going to bed at night or using colored glasses, dimming the lights at night, waking up in the morning going outside and saying, "Hello sunshine." Actually can help addiction which is kind of cool.

Mark: You know it's really cool and that's really important that dopamine this is the reward deficiency syndrome, it's this idea that there's this genetically inherited abnormality in the dopamine receptor, dopamine is all about focus and the tension, and motivation and engagement. Someone that has this abnormality in dopamine receptor requires higher levels of dopamine to kind of feel normal, to feel alive, to be able to focus.

We have to hack this around, you can do all the psychology stuff, if you're not getting at the biological level you're only going to get so far. Improving a diet's really important, taking simple amino acids like l-tyrosine which converts into dopamine and you see this is like if you get into addiction recovery but you feel apathetic and unmotivated, recovery's not going to happen.

Dave: No personal growth whether you're-

Mark: How can you?

Dave: If you're tired and your biology doesn't work, it doesn't matter which effort you apply, you're pushing against the wall.

Mark: You have to do the core principles of self-care which is sunlight exposure, it's getting quality sleep and you know in your early stages of addiction recovery because you've been stressed for a long time and you resorted you probably need extra hours of sleep but then when you become more healthy you need less and less sleep. There's this principle called core sleep it's the minimum amount of time we need to be asleep for biological functioning and it's about five hours, it's about five hours you need consistently for your core sleep.

Some people need a bit more than that but you've got to take care of your sleep, taking amino acids l-tyrosine, 1,000 milligrams in between food, can work wonders for people with motivation, who struggle with motivation, who struggle with the focus and the attention. All of these things are the foundations upon which you then build a fulfilling life. You have to be a

vigilante because when stress happens and life situations go array that's when you're at higher risk of relapsing and reverting back to the default old addictive habits.

We have to have a system in place when you see yourself starting to think about indulging in the addiction, you know you have a problem with you must have a plan of action to tell someone you're having that thought and you need to get back into your self-care, you need to do something to bring it back in line again otherwise you get sucked back down into the black hole again. That's why in addiction recovery they talk about just taking one day at a time because particularly in the early parts addiction recovery can feel overwhelming, it's just like, we shared a whole bunch if stuff about addiction, addiction recovery, it can feel like too much, just like, "Really?"

Where do you start? You start by admitting there's a problem and speaking to someone with some experience in addictions who can support you on the journey. You can start taking charge of your biology, you can do that yourself, pick up a copy of the Bulletproof Diet, go into our website look at the top ten supplements, start taking some of the amino acids, start learning how to do meditation, neurofeedback. Start doing some heart rate variability training, just the little simple things you can do that calm your nervous system, take control and you take it from there.

Dave: It's really common when you face the core thing that's triggering your addiction, you should feel like you're going to die because that's the level that is pulling neurobiology, it's supposed to be scary and that's why having someone to help you is really useful. A therapist, an addiction specialist, even a good friend but when you address your biology it just gets easier. This is something that drives me nuts because I've seen it for many years where you're not able to do something because you're week, because you don't have willpower and it's BS. Willpower is biology, it's electrons, it's mitochondrial function as willpower.

When you try and take someone and you shame or you tell them they're weak or they shame themselves, they say, "I'm helpless in the part of my addiction because I have no willpower or because I don't have enough willpower because I'm not good enough." All the internal messaging, well there's probably more power in there that you're not tapping into then you're wasting a lot of the power during the day-

Mark: It's an energy issue.

Dave: It is an energy issue. You can take someone who doesn't quite have enough energy to overcome their addiction and you just crank up energy and all of a sudden they're like, "Oh my God I did it." Why they haven't done this for the past forty years of addiction I think it's because they didn't know.

Mark: I think they didn't know and I think we'll look back at that time and say, "Wow that was a misguided approach to addiction recovery that was ignorant of basic biology."

Dave: You know what it is? It's the same thing as telling a fat person like when I weighed 300 hundred pounds, "Eat less and work out more." If you don't it's because you didn't eat little enough or

your didn't workout enough and it's BS. It doesn't work. We're in that same paradigm around addiction.

Mark: It's a shaming approach and basically what it says, "You're are fundamentally flawed as a human being if you're not able to do this." No, it's like, "Hold on a sec, I have no energy, I have no energy, no willpower to do this." When you start increasing and expanding your capacity for energy willpower goes up, you feel much better to deal with life situations and that builds from there. The great news is you have control over that, you can control your energy, that's like one of the most empowering statements it's like, "I can control and influence my amount of energy, my attention." You need energy first then when you have energy you can start controlling your attention, you can start changing your perception and perspective.

Dave: Your awareness.

Mark: Your awareness and it snowballs from there.

Dave: We call that biohacking, biohacking can change the environment around you so you have control of your biology and the first thing everyone wants isn't abs, it's actually energy. That's what it's come down to. That's what changed my way of being was having my energy and having it stable and having it on top all the time and I believe it's achievable and if you're an addict it's even more impactful than if you're not an addict.

Mark: You know what? It's when you really get it, you realize it's the heart of everything is energy. It's like nothing happens, there can be no momentum without energy by definition and just what's required to make things happen and change. If you're ever at loss as to what to do, take charge of your energy first, increase your energy, increase your mitochondrial function, right size your diet, start taking care of yourself then take it from there but start with your energy.

Then take it from an addiction recovery find yourself an experienced counselor psychotherapist who really. more counselor psychotherapists understand the importance of the biology side. Someone who really gets you, they understand the complexity of addiction because you need someone by your side because remember in the early stages of addiction recovery you can not trust your egoic self because it will want to pull you back in to the old way again. You need to surround yourself by good people who sincerely want the best for you and when you stay close to them and develop trust and relationship then you start to rebuild yourself not from a traumatized shame based sense of self.

What happens is many of us accumulate trauma throughout our entire life, there's trauma that's surrounded by shame then we protect ourselves from that shame with destruction. As we stop destructing ourselves we get in touch with the shame and the trauma and that's where it's so easy to bounce back off again, that's why you need to do the psychology work, the trauma work. Learn how to be friends and welcome your emotions. Most addictions are unskilled strategies for sedating and avoiding controlling what you feel. As you turn towards your feelings and emotions and actually start to welcome them and work with them that actually liberates their fundamental essence which is energy.



Not only are you liberating biological energy by improving the health of your biochemistry and your mitochondria, you liberate emotional energy when you actually start to welcome the sadness, the anger, the rage, the shame. They literally transmute into emotional energy then when you have biological energy, emotional energy, it then creates the opportunity for life energy or spiritual energies and start coming through as well. As a general for me do in that order, physical energy, biological energy, emotional energy then the spiritual life energy or you can call that meaning whatever it means to you.

Dave: That is exactly the order of operation and it's not what they teach in hospitals, it's not what they teach in addiction and recovery but it's what works. Well this has been a fascinating episode. I would encourage you, in fact I don't know the name of the mother who's asked about her son because I just got the audio from that but number one thanks, I would encourage you to get your son to listen to this and if this episode was helpful for you share with someone else who you think might benefit from this if they look at their phone too much, we kind of talked about that.

More likely you know someone who has a problem with something whether it's porn or alcohol or something harder and it doesn't really matter, there's a core algorithm here around having more energy, setting you free. That's kind of the whole thing that we do here. Mark that was fascinating and this was way longer than our normal Q&A sort of thing, we just made a whole episode on addiction accidentally but things happen the way they're suppose to happen sometimes.

Mark: Yeah they do.

Dave: Fascinating and way cool.

Mark: Really cool.

Dave: If you enjoyed this episode you know what to do, head on over to iTunes and leave a five star review because that really helps people find this and just make sure you share with at least one person because this is one of the coolest episodes we've done so far. Have an awesome day.