

Speaker 1: Bulletproof Radio; a state of high performance.

Dave Asprey: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that there is nose hair in your brain nerve cells. No, seriously. Well, sort of, anyway. Nerve cells in your brain make elaborate connections and exchange these very quick messages with each other, but those cells also have simpler, hair-like protrusions called cilia. Scientists who were looking at the brain overlooked what those little things actually do, until now. They're figuring out that nerve cell cilia have roles in a variety of your brain functions, and in the part of your brain linked to appetite, they help to prevent obesity. These little, tiny, little things like nose hairs, but smaller, on your nerve cells, also contribute to brain development, how your nerves communicate with each other, and possibly even learning and memory.

When someone tells you, "Oh, your brain can't do that. That's not possible," they don't know what the hell they're talking about. We still don't know how the subcellular mechanisms in the brain work. We're discovering new things every single day about what's happening at the lowest levels of our hardware, and we still don't have it all figured out. We think we get mitochondria, but there's probably some quantum stuff going on in there we still don't quite understand all the way. We're in an era of just epic discovery, and the fact that your cilia do something, and they probably called them junk cilia five years ago, should tell you something. Nothing is impossible until we figure out exactly how it works in a model that's 100% mapping reality, and we simply are nowhere near having that for the brain, but we know more than we ever have before, which makes this the coolest time ever to be alive. That study came from Nature Genetics, by the way, if you're a super geek and you want to go Google it.

Before we get into today's interview, if you have not had a chance to try the new mint chocolate chip and chocolate chip cookie dough Bulletproof collagen bars, I just have to tell you, these are epic achievements on par with building Versailles, maybe even more than that. Maybe not, but these are the most amazing bars ever, and I'm having a problem right now because it's time for me to have a real meal, but I just want to eat these for dessert, and then I'm too full for the meal. If you have not had a chance to try them, go to bulletproof.com. You will have an epic experience. All of our bars are awesome. The chocolate fudge and the vanilla cookie and lemon cookie. These new ones, they're just another level up, which I didn't think was possible, so you got to try those. Mint chocolate chip, chocolate chip cookie dough, bulletproof.com.

Today's interview is going to be a lot of fun because we're talking with an entrepreneur, who has become the chief creative officer of her company, called Ban.do. This is a company that makes lifestyle apparel, accessories, and things like that. That's not why we're doing the interview. It's because this is also someone who is very vocal on Instagram about mental health and just open about what it's like to be an entrepreneur, to grow something from basically the bedroom into a multi-million dollar company, and the struggles that come along

with it, and just being very willing to talk about that. Her name is Jen Gotch. Jen, welcome to the show.

Jen Gotch: Thank you.

Dave Asprey: You have a fascinating story in that you started your company with a friend in 2008. You had no business experience whatsoever, you're a photographer, creative kind of person, right?

Jen Gotch: Yep.

Dave Asprey: Now you've got this huge online presence, and you're in specialty stores in 50 countries and things like that. What happened to turn you from being a bouncy, creative person into hard nosed, entrepreneur woman?

Jen Gotch: I will say, I'm still a bouncy, creative person.

Dave Asprey: Obviously.

Jen Gotch: Supported very thoughtfully by a bunch of hard nosed business people, but honestly, every day was a learning experience even before we were really calling ourselves a business, and I pride myself on being an experiential learner, so it's like I've been in some form of business school for the last 10 years, specifically the last six since we sold our company, and I was actually introduced to what a real business looks like, which was much different than what we were doing prior to that. Prior to that, we were actually laying the groundwork for our brand, and that, in the end, is really what we're known for, and we make a lot of great products, and we sell a lot of other people's great products, but I think the main connector for people is our brand voice, and our brand aesthetic.

We were unknowingly doing that, which, as it turns out, is the harder thing to do. We did the hard thing, and then another hard thing, but I think it's just a little bit more like lightning in a bottle for the brand voice, but the business part, when someone came in with that structure, it really empowered our ideas.

Dave Asprey: This is something that I think a lot of people miss. They don't teach this in business school and they don't really talk about it in most places, but the typical entrepreneur, and there's tons of entrepreneurs who listen to the show, and tons of people who work for entrepreneurs listen to the show.

Jen Gotch: Sure.

Dave Asprey: In fact, that's the majority of people. Either you're in an entrepreneurial company, or you are at one. It's that building a brand is one thing, and running a company is another thing. They overlap by like 20%, would you say?

Jen Gotch: Yeah, on some days maybe a little bit more, but yes.

Dave Asprey: Some days more, right, and Bulletproof obviously has managed to do both of those things. You actually got to the point that you were like, "Okay, I believe in this so much," that you put your house on the line for it. What happened there?

Jen Gotch: Outside of the part that I'm horrible with money, I essentially gave up working. When we first started the company, as many people do with startups, they keep their job. I was still working as a photographer and stylist, and then around year two, it was obviously, again, startup mentality, you just never want to stop. You're just working for as long as you can keep your eyes open, and so it didn't really feel okay for me to go out and go to work, which was not a great decision, but it also meant no income, because we really weren't taking a salary at that point because we really weren't making that much money, but still, strangely so tied to the idea that I found myself in many situations like that where I was just making these huge sacrifices for Ban.do and not even ... Not even flinching, really. Essentially, I just ran out of money. I went from having a really great paying job to doing something that I loved, but not making any money. That was that.

Dave Asprey: This is a common problem for startups, like I'm doing something really cool, and I'm totally losing money and you probably quit your job too soon, it sounds like.

Jen Gotch: For sure. It could have been avoided, on several levels, but still.

Dave Asprey: How does all this link to your vocal interests in mental health and happiness and all that? You followed your passion and you lost your house, and [inaudible 00:07:22] went bankrupt. How did that work out for you?

Jen Gotch: It's working out pretty well now, actually. I don't have another house because I have PTSD, but I think as someone who struggled with really, what they were going to do when they grow up, I was pre-law in college. After taking the LSAT, decided I don't actually want to be a lawyer, and then went through a string of probably 20 different creative jobs. I definitely found a passion with design and photography, but with Ban.do and creating this brand, it just locked me in and then the mental health struggle has been a piece for me. I can remember having a bipolar episode when I was seven.

That's been a through line in my life, and it really wasn't until recently, actually, going through a divorce and then going back to living alone after 12 years, I really was able to pay attention to what was going on in my own mind, and I could focus all my energy on working on that. I just realized that I wanted to put some context to this ultra happy, optimistic company that I've created and say that that's an aspiration, but the reality is, we live on all ends of the spectrum all of the time, and so I wanted to build context for that so people didn't feel alienated if they were like, "I can't feel happy today."

Dave Asprey: For you, it was an act of service, to just share what's going on inside your head?

Jen Gotch: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: This is also something that they don't talk about in entrepreneur school, and when you see [inaudible 00:09:03] be an entrepreneur, work really hard. A huge number of entrepreneurs are ADD-

Jen Gotch: Me too, me too.

Dave Asprey: Not all of them, and a huge number of entrepreneurs are anxious, they have anxiety.

Jen Gotch: Me, too.

Dave Asprey: It happens, I used to. When you look at what's going on, a lot of times, it's that you're succeeding as an entrepreneur, because you're running away from failure or something that you're subtly afraid of. Is that something you were doing, like I have to be an entrepreneur, or was it just like, "I am so passionate about the sparkly thing, I just want to go do it." Sometimes, it's run for your passion, for a lot of people, it's run away from something scary or avoid something. Tell me about what was going on with you when you started that.

Jen Gotch: I was definitely running towards something, and then I actually attribute a lot of my anxiety to what helped propel the business, because that was what made me double, triple check things, that made me make sure there wasn't anything more I could do to make something better, and even now as we've grown, and there's about 40 employees in our LA office, if I see someone not getting anxious, I'm like, "I'm glad that you don't have an anxiety disorder, but can you try and plug into a low level of worry? Because that's what our business is built on, is just a group anxiety." I think it was all positive. I'm definitely avoidant when it comes to certain, specific things, but I'm not necessarily a run from problems type person, but I would definitely run towards something positive.

Dave Asprey: You're a worrier.

Jen Gotch: I'm a chronic worrier.

Dave Asprey: I've worked with a lot of entrepreneurs over the years, including with neurofeedback and things, and it's very common for either young entrepreneurs or just first time entrepreneurs, to get to, let's say, a million dollars in revenue. If you're listening to this, you're not an entrepreneur, you're like, "That's so much money." Here's the deal, you're probably making like seven cents if you're doing a million dollars in revenue, because you have to keep paying all these attorneys and warehouses, and God knows what. That happened to you, it sounds like.

Jen Gotch: Yes.

Dave Asprey: You're like, "On one hand, look at this, I'm finally succeeding," but then, the worry and the double and triple checking translates to micromanaging, and then you stop growing. Did that happen to you?

Jen Gotch: No.

Dave Asprey: You just kept going.

Jen Gotch: Kept going. Like I said, once we sold the business, the group of us that's working to grow it is just ... We really compliment each other. When one side feels a little low, the other side feels really strong, and we're really good at compromise and so it's really just been a growth trajectory. It hasn't been a sky rocket, which sometimes, when I see that happen with other companies, I get really jealous, but it's been this very steady, sustainable growth that has a very solid foundation, which is not like a lot of modern companies don't grow that way. No, it doesn't feel like what you described. The part where I had to learn the difference between your sales numbers and what you're actually netting at the end was intriguing, but now I understand that and so numbers are numbers.

Dave Asprey: You have a really cool Instagram presence. It's very happy, but you're extremely honest, which is why I wanted you on the show because you're like ... You posted this picture of a file called divorce, and you just aired your laundry there. What was driving the decision to talk about something? Most of the time people are getting divorced, they'll post on Facebook for their friends, but it's like a dirty secret. By the way, congratulations on getting divorced. I offer congratulations to everyone who gets divorced. It wasn't working, do something different. Amazing. Given that you're dealing with a brand, it's around happiness, and you're talking about things that aren't happy. Why do you do that?

Jen Gotch: Again, like I was saying, generally, and divorce isn't the only somewhat unhappy thing that I'm known to talk about, but it's reality, and like I said earlier, it's hard for a brand to be realistic. Brands are usually aspirational, especially the type of brand that we have, because we're a women's lifestyle company based on fun. I'm a person that has all of those things, but then also I have a lot of pain, and I have a real life with responsibility, and bad things happen, and good things happen, and I think it was a few years ago, I really just started to feel, for lack of a better word, grossed out by what I was seeing just with people's presence. I have a lot of friends who have huge Instagram presences that are either bloggers or content creators, and I would see their feed, which was beautiful, and then I would know their life, and there was such a huge discrepancy.

I felt like one of my strengths has always been to just say what I'm feeling. People are always like, "You're so brave for sharing that." I'm like, "Oh, I didn't actually give it a second thought." It usually has not served me well in relationships, but on this particular platform, it's been very positive. I've shared lots about my divorce, because I've been going through the process for a year and a half, two years, and I've shared about my mental health and struggles at work, and how hard it is to grow a company and the feedback I get is so ... It's

like 99% positive. At this point, it just feels like a responsibility more than anything else.

Dave Asprey: 85% of Ban.do's customers are between 18 and 35. For marketing people, it's like, "Oh my God, they've got the best demographic ever." You've got more than half a million followers, which is pretty amazing, that's on Instagram. Do you think that this radical honesty is extra attractive to younger people?

Jen Gotch: For sure.

Dave Asprey: Because they're dealing with it too, or ... Why are they attracted to this?

Jen Gotch: I think more than just honesty, they love authenticity. It's interesting, because I'm 46, so I'm not a millennial, I'm a Gen X'er. There's a lot of things about me, I took a test and I was 99% millennial, and I was like, "That's so weird." I think in forming the brand, which I was basing on a lot of my own likes and dislikes, we created something that was really authentic. Now, don't get me wrong, if you go on Ban.do's Instagram versus mine, the content is different, because again, I'm trying to give people a lens to look through this really cheery world, to be like, "Okay, we get it."

That's something else, but we do try and be ... I've always said I really value connection over transaction. That's why I wasn't making any money before the business people came along because I was like, "It's okay if you don't buy anything, I just want to feel like we're connecting." Now, I feel like we've found a way to do both but really prioritize that, and if you want to connect with someone, you have to be real and you have to be honest, or else that's a false connection.

Dave Asprey: I have the same dynamic. I have Dave.Asprey on Instagram, and I post different stuff there and my Facebook page is different than the Bulletproof page. There's people, some follow both, some follow just the entrepreneur story side of things. Do you think this is something that's more attractive to younger people, because they want the behind the scenes, the reality TV version of this?

Jen Gotch: For sure. That whole transparency, like I feel like they just crave information. Even working in our workplace is I don't know, probably 90% millennial, and they just want to know. They just want to know. They want all sorts of information, they want to be communicated with and so yeah. I think the other thing, just like founder led businesses are really popular now too, and I think it's a great way for us to help humanize something that really hasn't been humanized in the past. You knew businesses for businesses, and maybe if it was a fashion brand that you knew the designer, but now we know lots of people that started and are running companies, and so I think it's just also just like a modern business trend.

Dave Asprey: I think there's also something where I look at the incredibly stupid marketing of my childhood. I'm in my mid-40's as well, and we always knew that brands would say dumb things and have little jingles and dancers on TV, and it was so lame. Since then, companies have become really good at manipulating you and using PR and all these things. That means that if you're under 35, you grew up in a different world where you're used to people ... Not even people, companies trying to manipulate you. You're like, "I want to know what's going on behind the scenes," because we all have a quest to understand reality the way it actually is.

What you're doing is you're saying, "Well, here's my company, and here's the reality of me and the fact that I can create this thing that's around happiness and whimsy, and I feel those some of the time, but other times, I just feel like crap," I think is educational for people who are looking for a dose of not a negative reality, but just an actual reality, where hey, we're not all happy all the time, and if you only follow those happy Instagrams, you'll be like, "Why am I such a bad person because I'm not happy all the time?" You're like, "Hey, I'm not happy all the time either."

Jen Gotch: I think the thing is, is being clear about actual reality and what, because in between when we were growing up and experiencing that and now, there was reality television, and then at some point, you found out that's semi-scripted and produced and edited, and what we thought was real wasn't real, and it was the same thing with Instagram when you're like, "I'm in people's lives," and then you found out they have this whole other life. I think now there is an opportunity to be like, "Well, here's what's actually happening."

It's a little bit harder to watch and it could be very triggering for some people, but if you want to see actual reality, which, that's I think the biggest challenge for business, and the question I get asked a lot is do you feel like what you're doing is negatively effecting your business, because I'm basically come out as someone who has bipolar disorder, anxiety, ADD, I talk about divorce, I curse, I do weird dancing. For me, I'm like, "I don't think so. If they've gone, they've gone quietly, and I'm not going to stop." I think it's going to be interesting to see how everyone handles that, because I do think the craving for actual, honest reality isn't going to go away.

Dave Asprey: We've gone through this big shift, it's only been about 15 years, but when I started my career in Silicon Valley, no one who had a mental health issue, and by the way, there's a lot of people on antidepressants and Adderall and things like that, but no one would talk about it.

Jen Gotch: No.

Dave Asprey: Even meditation was like, "Oh my God, you're one of those wacky people. Why aren't you wearing tie dye with your sport coat?" I used to put meditation yoga and [inaudible 00:20:30] LinkedIn profile just to tell people, "Hey, I'm weird, but I'm in cloud computing, who cares?" There was a time when John Chambers, the

CEO of Cisco Systems, which was one of those, I don't know, 40 billion dollar companies. I'm making that up.

Jen Gotch: Right, it's huge.

Dave Asprey: It's a ginormous networking company, and I used to be in that business. He was at some sort of corporate, feel good event, and a teenager of some sort came up and just completely made some kind of big mistake in this presentation, was just beside herself, and he stood up, John Chambers the CEO, just couldn't stand seeing that. He goes, "Hey," he goes, "I guess I should tell you, I've had problems with reading my whole life. I have ADD." He basically just unloaded it, and the whole press was like, "Oh my God. This guy is chairman of a multi, is he fit?" There was this big thing. He helped to start this trend of you know what? Some of the world's most successful people have very odd brains. I mean, if you were to look at Elon Musk's brain, it's probably not normal. I would argue normal is average, and we don't want that. You have an abnormal brain, Jen.

Jen Gotch: I know.

Dave Asprey: That's not a bad thing, but it comes with ups and downs, right? You've continued on that trend of just talking about it, but you talk about something called the long haulers. What's a long hauler and why does it matter to you?

Jen Gotch: A long hauler is actually, I don't know if you'll find this that relevant, but I spend a lot of my time on Instagram stories because I have found that that's actually the easiest way to really connect with an audience, because you don't have to find a picture that's going to draw people in and write a caption that's going to appeal to them, you can actually just go. Oftentimes, I will go for so many, for so long, that the dots are so tiny on the Instagram story, and you can just see people dropping off, because I like to watch the numbers. The long haulers are the people that are just in it to win it, and will just stick with the whole story and they're the hyper committed people.

I also have something called ignored. I have a series of videos called ignored, where they're not staged, even though I had to stage one the other day because I wasn't recording in time. It's just watching people ignoring me at work, in life. It's two ends of the spectrum, one that makes me feel really good, and one that's very grounding.

Dave Asprey: You share all this, and what do you think the attraction is for people? They're going to do something with their day, and they're like, "You know what? I'm going to log in and I'm going to watch Jen [crosstalk 00:23:14]." What does it do for someone who watches it?

Jen Gotch: I think it's relatable. I really think at its core, it's relatable. The amount of people that are like, "You are me," for me, it's been interesting because I've always felt like I was special and these things were only happening to me, and then I'll put

something up and then it's just a massive, thousands and thousands of people, being like, "That's me. That's me." I think, really, at the end, I think it's a combination of it's entertaining. Also, people are addicted to their phones, so they'll watch a lot of different things on there, and it's also just like they feel like they can see themselves and me, and I may be at a place that they would aspire to be, and so it's motivating.

Dave Asprey: In that you're still ignored.

Jen Gotch: That I am still ignored on a very regular basis. Daily, in fact.

Dave Asprey: It's kind of funny, I work with lots of health entrepreneurs who are working to build their brands, and so many people just need that stuff. I'm really happy to be able to help when I can, and a lot of people are dealing with critics, these online trolls. That can't happen, therefore it didn't, even if you're like, "Actually, it did happen." Some of the online haters, the 4% of people with either sociopath tendencies or psychopathic tendencies who are allowed to post still-

Jen Gotch: So crazy.

Dave Asprey: You must deal with those as well. The reason I'm bringing this up is that what I learned over the course of having some of those people come after my work, and I'm like, "I think my work stands for itself, whatever," but to get to that mindset, you go through, "Oh my God, what are people thinking about me?" In reality, and this is something I shared with my 10 year old the other day. She was just worried that ... There was some meeting at school, and that somehow it had something to do with her, and she was really wiggling out about it.

I'm like, "Look, most people spend most of their time thinking about themselves, not thinking about you." In our head, we're like, "Everyone's thinking about me," but the truth of the matter is that no one's thinking about you, because they're all worried about whether everyone's ignoring them. Do you think that's some of the attraction of why when you post that, you're like, "Hey, people ignore me. They ignore everyone."

Jen Gotch: I think for me, I'm just very self deprecating, so my motivation for posting wasn't to resonate with people, but I do think that's why. I think people are ... Even though a lot of people are like, "If I was there, I wouldn't ignore you," and I'm like, "You absolutely would." It just is a thing that people do. Everyone feels ignored at one point or another, whether it's every day. I'm just annoying. Sometimes, my energy level is not what people want it to be, so I think they're just in self preservation mode. Also, just as far as what you were saying about online trolls, I'm actually quite lucky. I feel like, hopefully because what I'm putting out is positive and true, I don't get a lot, but I definitely get some.

I try and approach it with sympathy because I feel like what could be going wrong in your life that you want to attack me? That's just crazy. I'm not even

doing anything controversial, I'm just being silly. Normally, those are the people that I reach out to because I'm just like, "Are you okay? This seems serious." Almost always, one message in, they're telling me what's going on with them. It really wasn't about me, it was about them, and so I do think it's good that you're teaching your 10 year old that. I wish I would have known that. I'm still undoing a lot of damage from the things that implanted in my mind when I was 10.

Dave Asprey:

My experience with neurofeedback is that almost all of our insecurities were implanted when we were kids, and they weren't consciously implanted. No one did anything bad, it was just like your body was trying to figure out how to stay alive in the world, and being ignored might be bad, so therefore let's be afraid of it. That's how you show up in a board meeting or that's how you show up online, but you don't know that's how you show up. You talk about self care, and how important it is, as an entrepreneur and just as a human being. Honestly, what is self care?

Jen Gotch:

Especially if you're a woman right now, there's a huge trend towards self care. A lot of what surface level that's being promoted has more to do with have a spa night or do a face mask, take a bath, which I think is very important, but for me it's whatever it is that you need to be okay in that moment. Sometimes, it's taking a nap. Sometimes it's eating a cheeseburger. Sorry, but sometimes it is. Sometimes it's asking for help, it's going to a doctor, it's stopping work, it's having better boundaries, having a work life balance, getting a massage, going to acupuncture.

For me, it's not just, "Here are the five things that mean self care." I think it's being aware that what you need from moment to moment can be different, but paying attention to that and letting yourself know that that's ... You deserve that, to be okay, whatever that means. That was a hard thing for me to figure out. I was very resistant to help from others and help from myself, and then I realized it's almost self preservation more than self care. There's things I want to do. There's things I want to do, so I have to be okay in order to do them.

Dave Asprey:

What made you resistant to receiving help from others?

Jen Gotch:

You know what? I probably should go back to therapy to figure that out. I don't know. Maybe if I was going to guess, I received a lot of help growing up. My parents were ... I would say I was spoiled. They supported me financially, late into my 20's. I think at some point, that help ... Not in a malicious way, but was sort of used against me, like help equals control. I had this ... I was in therapy on and off for about 20 years, and I became very independent during that time, and very self sufficient, and I liked how ... I prefer that. As told by my divorce, it can be very alienating for people, but not needing ... That's also just a narrative that's crazy, everybody needs help, but feeling like I could do it all made me feel very safe, and then I broke down and then realized you're going to have to find a middle ground. That's where I am now.

Dave Asprey: It's funny, that was a message I had [inaudible 00:30:05] I'm like, "I just believed that no one wants to help you, no one's going to help you. You have to do it alone." I just remember this sense of incredible wonder when I was sometime in my mid-20's, I finally, for some reason or another, actually I worked with a really helping boss who didn't have any-

Jen Gotch: Ulterior motive.

Dave Asprey: Reason, to help me the way he was. He was just like, "I like to help." This dawning realization, just over a few months, I'm like, "Wait a minute. People help you because it makes them feel good." No one had ever taught me that, and I like to help people because it makes me feel good.

Jen Gotch: Me, too.

Dave Asprey: I think we're all wired this way as people, but we also have this fear that if someone helps, then you'll owe them something. Was that something that you were worried about when you were starting your company and all this? If I ask for help, I'm going to be beholden to someone?

Jen Gotch: I think when it was contractual help, where I actually was beholden to someone, that worried me. When Ban.do was starting, we really got in with a great group of other entrepreneurs, and it was very Oregon Trail-esque. Everyone helped each other, and there was the only thing that you knew you were indebted to them was if they called on you for help, a favor, that you would do that, too. I think I have what you're saying, but I don't think it's at the surface. My first thing with getting help isn't that that will be used against me, even though I think that's in there somewhere.

I know what it feels like, but I don't know how to put it in words. What's crazy is, if you surveyed 100 people that I've encountered, they'd be like, "She's the most willing to help person I've ever met." Me, I'm like five, number five in line. I'm like, "What can I do for you, what can I do, do you need help? Are you okay?" It's weird, I don't know what that is actually. I guess I need to work on that.

Dave Asprey: Some of the most helping people can be resistant to receiving help and certainly, over just your course of just developing as a human being, I certainly have been on that. It's not really a rollercoaster, it's just a cycle. Now, it's like same thing. How can I help? Most of the successful entrepreneurs that I know build a community, a community of other entrepreneurs. You can share your story on Instagram, and you can read other people's, but there's weird stuff that happens when you're creating a company that other people who aren't also doing it just ... You're not going to talk about it over the dinner table, because it doesn't make sense. It's not the universe of normal people, right? You found that community, and that community helped you. Did it help your mental health, in addition to your business success?

Jen Gotch: For sure. I also was someone that for probably most of the stretch of Ban.do did not think I needed any mental health help. I was on medication for the first part of that, then I went off my meds for four or five years, and I didn't think I needed help with that. I think it made me feel good and feel supported and feel happy, which I think contributes to that, to positive mental health, but I wasn't really talking ... I wasn't really talking to people about my actual issues. That's really come later. That's really only been in the last three or four years. I was definitely talking to my doctor and my therapist and my parents and my husband, but I wasn't introducing it into business stuff. Not because I was afraid of that, but I just ... We were busy talking about how do you make more money, how do you get more followers? Where are your products being made? We were just so in the trenches on the logistical stuff that it just didn't come up that much.

Dave Asprey: You talk about your one to 10 daily rating system. What is it and where did you get it and how do you use it?

Jen Gotch: This is something that my mom came up with a long time ago. It's an emotional rating system, and I can't remember how old I was when she would start to use it, but she would say to me because with parents, and I don't know if this was your relationship, but definitely, I think, with women, because we're asked so much more about our emotions, my mom would want to know, "How are you feeling?" She was obviously very worried about me, because I was struggling throughout my 20's with my mental health. I would be like, "Mom, I don't want to talk about it." It was like I was essentially like a hormonal teenager until I was 31.

Dave Asprey: As opposed to all the other teenagers.

Jen Gotch: I think she wisely created this shorthand that was like, "Just give me a number." Where are you from one to 10? That could satisfy her need to just know I was okay. As I got further into mental health and understood my own, and especially having bipolar and understanding the difference between that and depression, I adjusted the rating system so that it's not one is bad, 10 is great, it's like one is still bad, that's awful, but there's five is more of a middle place, and I always say 7.8 is where I want to be. I'm not manic, but I'm content and happy and so I've got it down to decimal points.

I'll talk about it on Instagram and stuff, and I feel like a lot of people have implemented it just as a way to check in, even just to ask yourself how you're doing, because it's kind of good to start the day and be like, "Where am I today?" Especially if you have something that you might wake up at a two, you went to bed at an eight, and you woke up at a two and you need to know that before you go into work.

Dave Asprey: That's one of the reasons I wanted to interview you. No one taught me that, but I was running this experiment on [inaudible 00:36:09] principles. In fact, I was testing whether their equation for frequency of male ejaculation was accurate.

Jen Gotch: Oh, my God.

Dave Asprey: Of course, this was on Huffington Post and all this stuff. It was a few years ago. I gave this big talk, I'm like, "Here's my frequency of that sort of thing on a daily basis for a year."

Jen Gotch: Oh, my God.

Dave Asprey: Plotted against my daily score from one to 10, on happiness. It was like for me, how satisfied am I with the sum of how am I feeling, how are my relationships, am I happy with my relationships at home? With my career, with my community, just sort of all of it in one number. It's not provable, because this is a measure of how you're feeling, and no one can really prove how you're feeling. We can get some brain waves and heart rate, and whatever, but it's like what's my perception of that? That's actually what matters.

You can be like, "You know, I'm not doing that well, but I'm feeling really good about it right now," and your number is going to be up because you're feeling good about it, even if you have a cold or whatever. I find that to be a really powerful practice and here it is. I never posted on Instagram until I had a year worth of data. By the way, there is an ejaculation hangover. After you ejaculate, for the next couple days, as a male you're likely to like your life less, which is totally funny, but you might sleep better at night. Who would have thought? Talk about laying it all out there.

Jen Gotch: I love it.

Dave Asprey: Your daily number, what kind of response do you get from that? That's really baring a lot. Today's a crappy day for me. What do people say when you post a number that's either high or low?

Jen Gotch: They feel either happy for me or sad for me, depending on the number. They, a lot of times, will reply with what their number is. I think, again, it's just they feel connected to me so they have all of the responses that a friend or my mom or whomever I would be sharing that with on a personal level, it's the same. Some people don't understand this, the rating system, so when I say I'm at a 9.1, they're like, "Yay." I'm like, "No, this is dangerous. It's too high." Mostly, it's great.

Dave Asprey: Isn't that limiting, though? Why wouldn't you want to be at a 10 out of 10 every day? Because you're afraid of falling?

Jen Gotch: No, because for me, I don't want to be manic even though it feels great. I'm bipolar spectrum, so I'm mostly worried about depression, but mania, the pendulum swings on that. To get that high usually means that there's going to be a fallout, and I don't want that even though it's very enjoyable when it's

happening. Great things don't usually come of it. To me, the 7.8 is the 10. That's the ultimate.

Dave Asprey: I hear you, because it's sustainable, and the 10 isn't sustainable.

Jen Gotch: The 10 is dangerous and the 7.8 is awesome.

Dave Asprey: When I'm working on a new book, I go into this weird, flow state mode, where I'll stay up until 5:00 in the morning, and I use red circadian compliant lighting. I'm not damaging my biology, and I'm wired in as it's called a wolf, but I'm one of the 15% of the population whose circadian biology says stay up late. My job in a cave would have been ... I'm the night shift. I'm the guard, while everyone else sleeps.

Jen Gotch: I'm the opposite.

Dave Asprey: That's called a lion. You're the morning shift. You're like, "Okay, I'll wake up early and make sure that no lions eat us in the morning while everyone else brushes their teeth, or whatever cavemen do." We have these things that are just deep in our biology, but I talked with one of the leaders of some field of psychology. I don't remember exactly what it was, or I'd tell you, in one of these 500 interviews. He was like, "Dave, it sounds like you go into mania when you're writing a book." I'm like, "I never thought of that." I do go into this really altered state, but there isn't a crash other than when I'm done with that final edit window. By the way, I just finished the manuscript for my last book about 10 days ago, as we're recording this, my last book, for my next book, whatever it is. I went through that, but for me it's really enjoyable, and I don't have a crash, but there is a little bit of just recovery that comes-

Jen Gotch: For sure.

Dave Asprey: If I was plotting my daily numbers, maybe I'll have to do that again. It probably comes down because I'm not working on this really fun project, but then I always know as an entrepreneur, I have like five other projects-

Jen Gotch: For sure.

Dave Asprey: Which one am I going to do, and do I get enough recovery in there?

Jen Gotch: That's important.

Dave Asprey: Do you, when you're looking at your 7.8, you're like, "Okay, I'm doing really well. I created this new product or this new thing or this new brand identity," the sort of things that you do as a chief creative officer, do you then have a recovery period and go do extra self care and then jump into another project all in, or are you consistent?

Jen Gotch: I'm consistent, because it doesn't ... The way it works for us and the way my work flow is, it's there are these big things, but then there is this long term, sustained thing that I need to think about, too. There's actually no down time. There's no down time unless I create it, so there's not a place to earmark it. That's done, let me take a break. I'm doing both at the same time, so I'm always hyper aware of am I taking care of myself? Also, we're still a new enough business that the big opportunity can come from an external source.

We know what our plans are, but then we did a big collaboration with Starbucks. It's like we didn't have that on the calendar, and I couldn't be like, "Oh, I'm on a down period right now, I can't really work on that." It was like when Starbucks comes knocking, you're like, "All right, let's go." I think I'm more constantly, again, just constantly checking in and taking the time, and that's probably also why I am so precious with my physical and emotional state, because I don't necessarily have time for the recovery, even though that's a horrible thing to say, because you make time for it. As I say it-

Dave Asprey: That whole self care thing we talked about earlier.

Jen Gotch: I just flush it down the toilet. If I need it, I will make time for it, but ultimately, I'd like to just be grinding every day and deriving enjoyment from that, and then resting. I do a lot of my resting at night. I go to bed early and I unwind. This weekend, Friday I felt like I wasn't feeling good. There's some evil cold/flu that's been going around our office for a couple months, and I have a bunch of travel coming up, and I was just like, "I'm literally just going to lay here and just do everything good for myself this weekend," and I had other things I needed to do. I understand the concept, I'm not always good at it.

Dave Asprey: I think that's why so many people follow you as well as your company, just because you're willing to say stuff like that. What advice would you have for someone who's listening who maybe doesn't know that they're dealing with some of these mental health things you've dealt with? It sounds like you knew it as a younger child, that you were dealing with something. There's so many adults who have stuff going on that they just are unaware of. What advice do you have for them?

Jen Gotch: I will say when I was younger and that was happening, I had no idea what was happening. I just knew because again, it's like it feels ... This is all you know, whatever is happening inside of you is all you know. For me, it wasn't until I started talking about it to a therapist that they could take notes and go, "This is something you would want to address, versus these are normal thoughts and feelings." The thing that has helped me the most, outside of finding someone to talk to, which is not easy for everyone. Like I said, for me, I come with that imprinted on me. I just want to tell you everything, so that's not for everyone, but I think really introspecting, which I'm also equally as good at, and working on your emotional intelligence, so many of the answers just lie within ourselves, and within our own brains, and that intuition and that hunch.

There's been hunches that I've sat on for 10 years that I'm like, "I knew I was right." About myself, or why I had a pain in my knee, or whatever it is. I think it's really taking the time to figure out how you're going to actually get to know yourself and get in touch with what you're feeling, and then learn about that. I have done a ton ... I've done a lot of work to get to the place that I am, but that's where I started and that's what helped; talking with someone, and then really spending some time in my own mind, trying to understand what's going on.

Dave Asprey: The way I came across you is you actually mentioned Bulletproof on Instagram, and I was like, "Oh wow, that's so cool." What have you found in terms of what food does for your mental state, or mental, just, wellness?

Jen Gotch: It's so insane. The therapist that I went to for many years was very into mind, body connection, how food affects mental health, gut brain stuff, and so I've always been aware of it, but I also am equally as passionate of using food as a drug, so it's been a complex relationship because when I'm feeling bad, the things I want are the things that actually make it worse for you. For me, I have to hit rock bottom before I change, and I've gone through phases in my life where I take care of myself and I avoid the things that I know are going to be bad, but I was feeling really desperate after Thanksgiving, and I had just re-approached my doctor to go back on medication for my bipolar, which I had been reluctant to do, and he wanted to be very cautious about how I went back on, so the dosing was going to be very minimal for a while.

I started to get really nervous about how long it was going to take, and I also had been taking Adderall because my ADD was so crazy and I just felt like it was becoming a work issue because the demands of the job just keep growing, and I'm responsible for a lot, and I need my brain to work, and I'm smart so it's frustrating when I can't get it to work. All of that came together, and I had tried Bulletproof a couple times. My therapist actually mentioned it to me years ago, and I was like, "I'm not putting butter in coffee." She was very early on on a lot of things, and I was just like, "I'm not going to do that, that sounds crazy." I was actually in Hawaii this time last year, and there's a little shack on the North Shore, Sunrise Shack, that sells Bulletproof. The owner is a male model, a very handsome male model.

Dave Asprey: You kept going back for the [inaudible 00:47:19].

Jen Gotch: No, I only found out, I was just in Hawaii, and I only found out who the owner is. I was like, "Oh, my God." I was like, "Oh my God, this actually works." My brain was like ... It was very similar to Adderall, but without the come down. What I hadn't read was anything about how it actually worked, so I was eating chocolate croissants along with it, so that wasn't great.

Dave Asprey: It still works then, but it's not ideal.

Jen Gotch: It still totally worked. No, I was doing it every day, and people were like, "Oh my God, your brain." Literally, within two weeks I gained six pounds. I was like, "No." One of my friends was like you're not doing it right. I just went on this deep dive one Saturday, and I was reading a bunch of articles on the site, and reading about all the foods, and I just was like, "I'm just going to go all in and see." I just wanted to feel good immediately. I was like, "I don't have two months, I need it today." I felt great. I still feel great. It's amazing. That's the reason I wanted to talk to you. It's not one sided.

Dave Asprey: There's a huge body of evidence that says food affects our mental health, and it drives me nuts that in the mental health profession, there are so few therapists like the one you worked with. It's not that your therapist said, "Try Bulletproof," or whatever. It's that so many therapists like to try the drugs instead of you're eating french fries and MSG every day, and drinking two glasses of allegedly healthy wine. That's not how it works, and if you're not addressing that, that just irritates me because I had the same problem. I didn't know that I had Asperger's tendencies, and the whole ADD thing, as a young person, at all. I figured out I'm really fat and my joints hurt all the time, and I have cognitive dysfunction and my brain's not working and I'm scared and I bought disability insurance.

That was actually what led me to become a bio-hacker. Why didn't the doctors say that? Why don't mental health professionals focus on that first? I think there's a shift happening in that world, where you see more and more doctors saying, "Address mitochondrial function. Stop eating foods that are associated with a crash and depression," because you already have a weakness there, don't accentuate the weakness. In your overall path, it sounds like that was relatively recent that you really looked at how food was affecting your mental state, or is that a dawning evolution over-

Jen Gotch: Yeah, I think it's something that I've known for quite some time, for at least 10 or 15 years, but I wasn't willing to really commit to it because I liked the feeling that I got from the food, was ... I chose that.

Dave Asprey: If someone had taught you this when you were a teenager, how would your life have been different?

Jen Gotch: Although I don't like to indulge in that kind of thinking because I'm happy where I am, I can only imagine. I just feel like people get really scared when my brain is firing on all cylinders, they're like, "Oh, no." They run for cover. I imagine if I had 46 years of that, I maybe would be doing something slightly more impactful than creating really cute notebooks and having an entertaining Instagram profile. I still feel like I'm very far ahead of the curve of the human race, as far as what they're doing.

Dave Asprey: You're doing noteworthy stuff, which is why I wanted you to tell your story on this show. The reason I started the Bulletproof blog, a lot of people don't know this, I was a VP at a big company. I was making a quarter of a million dollars a

year, I had stock options, and I had two young kids. My job was to fly around the world to five star hotels and give a keynote address to a bunch of mostly dudes in sport coats talking about computer security. It was not a bad gig, but it wasn't exactly like, "Oh my gosh, I'm making a difference. Wow, I'm changing the world."

In the early days of the internet, building cloud, building infrastructure, that actually was world changing. At a certain point, I'm like, "Do I really care about antivirus software? Actually, I don't." I started the blog knowing that I had the ability to take care of my family, and a successful career that wasn't going away. I'm like, "If someone had told me the stuff that I've learned over the past 15 years and spent all this money and time and just thousands of hours of energy, if anybody had just told me, my life would have been so much easier." I wrote the blog for myself when I was 20, and I figured like five people would read this.

Jen Gotch: That's crazy.

Dave Asprey: I had no idea what it was going to do.

Jen Gotch: Wow.

Dave Asprey: It's like all these lessons learned, and what I spend a lot of time now doing, Jen, is I want to learn from you. What are your tweaks? Some of my dear friends are in their 70's. I'm like, "They know so much more than I do." I interview some of these people who, in fact, Stan [inaudible 00:52:29] I think is the oldest guy I've interviewed. He's 90 or 94 or something, and a founder or transpersonal psychology, but anytime I can learn from someone who's done it for 20 plus years more than me, I'm still going to do it, or someone who's walked a different path than me like you have. You're more of a creative than I am. I want to learn and amazingly, hundreds of thousands of people want to hear our conversation, which is why there's a radio show. Thank you for taking your time to educate me-

Jen Gotch: Of course.

Dave Asprey: And share your story. I have one more question for you, and you're probably able to predict it, if you've listened to Bulletproof radio before, but if someone came to you tomorrow and said, "I want to perform better at everything I do as a human being, I want to be a better human being." What are three most important piece of advice you'd have for me? What would you offer them?

Jen Gotch: I'm an optimist. I'm an annoying optimist, so I feel outside of that small percentage of psychopaths that you mentioned earlier, I feel like the answer to that lies within each person. I don't think it's the same for everybody, but for me, it really goes back to a lot of what we were talking about earlier. Doing some self excavation and finding that, and getting in touch with that voice in your head, is certainly one big step. The other thing is practice that. Actually put

that in motion and see what it feels like, because at least in my experience, being good feels a lot better than being bad, and so there's some positive reinforcement there when you actually see what it feels like to affect positive change. That's two.

The third one is that mint chocolate chip bar, because that thing is crazy. When you were just talking about it earlier, I don't know if you could see me, but I was nodding my head so hard because I'm like, how many could I really have in one day? No, but obviously taking care of yourself. I like that. Sorry, I know that you don't want me to say this, but I just like it because it does satisfy the emotional need as well, and I'm just like, "There's no way that this could have positive health benefits, at all. This is too good."

Dave Asprey: I'm not putting that in my official notes on this call, but thank you.

Jen Gotch: That's fine, but it really is, and I don't say stuff like that without meaning it, but putting good in, putting good in, in whatever that means, often means getting good out. Whether that's ... You got to think about what that really means. That has helped me a lot. I'm a much better person when I'm putting in good, whether that means listening to something positive, eating something that I know is good for me, getting sun in my eyes, whatever that does, I think it's just building a stronger you.

Dave Asprey: That's an interesting answer, the third one, and I'm actually keeping track of how often I hear these different answers because you said something at the beginning that I just love, you're like, "Look, it's different for different people." It's a problem, you're like here's what a successful person does. I'm going to just take this tool and I'm going to run with it, and you're like, it totally doesn't work. It doesn't mean it's bad advice, it just means it didn't work for you.

When you talk to 500 people and you're like well, 80% of them said this mattered. You're like, it might matter and your implementation might be different, but at least this is what matters. Your last one there is put good stuff in and you didn't say eat good food, which is a real common answer, you actually said put good stuff in, whether it's good advice, positive things. That's actually not an answer I've heard before and it's a really nuanced, interesting answer, so thank you, Jen. I actually really appreciate that.

Jen Gotch: Of course.

Dave Asprey: It's so simple the way you put it, but it encompasses a lot of good practices, so thank you.

Jen Gotch: You're welcome.

Dave Asprey: There you go. I've got my good in for the day because I just got a new piece of advice and you don't hear that many new answers after 500 of these, but I think

it's really affirming for people listening to just realize, "All right, here's a successful entrepreneur who has struggled with some things and overcome some things, and is still working on it," which is the human condition for all of us, but you're just laying it out there, so hey. You taught me a good way to talk about that, so thanks.

Jen Gotch: Good. No problem.

Dave Asprey: Where can people find out more about both you and your company?

Jen Gotch: I would say the internet is a great place to start, so bando.com, B-A-N-D-O.com, is a great place to find Ban.do, or shop Ban.do on Instagram. Outside of me giving out my home address, which I've been known to do, I would say-

Dave Asprey: Don't do it.

Jen Gotch: Jen Gotch on Instagram is probably the easiest way to get to know me.

Dave Asprey: Beautiful. Jen, thanks for being on Bulletproof Radio.

Jen Gotch: Of course, thank you so much for having me.

Dave Asprey: If you liked today's episode, you know what to do. Today would be put more good in so you can get more good out. That's our new piece of advice today. The other thing you could do that would be awesome is if you would leave a review for Bulletproof Radio that says that this kind of an interview is worth your time, and maybe worth other people's time. Go to bulletproof.com/iTunes and that will take you, conveniently, to the right page on Apple, and you can just leave a review. We're past 2500 four or five star reviews, and I actually look at the comments. I look at the reviews and I track that, to know whether I'm doing a good job for you.

If you take a second to just give me the feedback, I would be so profoundly grateful and happy about it, and if you don't like this kind of an interview where I'm talking with someone who's led a different path and you just want to hear from people who create new nutritional philosophies, let me know, too, but I'm really getting a lot out of this kind of an interview, and I'm hoping you are, too.