

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio, A State Of High Performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that over-the-hill cells may cause trouble in your brain as it ages. There's cells called senescence cells which accumulate as you age that are still alive, but are in a state of sort of suspended animation. They stop doing their jobs, and they stop dividing, and scientists have figured out that getting rid of those cells in your body extends the lifespan, at least it does in mice. It also improves heart and kidney health.

Dave: And new research suggests that senescence cells make mischief in your brain as you get older. At the Mayo Clinic, molecular biologists studied mice with mutations that lead nerve cells in their brains to build up levels of a toxic protein called tau, and damaging globs that protein called neurofibrillary tangles are a hallmark of Alzheimer's and lots of other bad things you've probably read about in my book, Headstrong. But in some of these mice, researchers engineered a genetic trick, a kill switch to destroy cells as soon as they became senescent, and mutated mice with that switch did not accumulate that toxic protein as quickly, and those mice were able to better recognize new smells and objects than mice that had more of these suspended animation cells in their brains.

Dave: And the troublemakers in mice are called glial cells. The support cells that help nerves in your brain do their jobs. What does this mean for us? This means that we are now engineering ways with natural compounds from plants as well as lifestyle things, and probably some genetic things over time that can help you get rid of that toxic protein, or maybe even just get rid of senescence cells entirely. I'm taking some experimental things to get rid of my own senescent cells in my relentless quest to live to at least 180 years old.

Dave: And I think you're going to find over the next five years that you have the ability to remove these hangers on, these cells that aren't doing anything and hang around, not getting out of the way. So the way I treat my mitochondria, the way I treat my cells is, if you're not doing your job right, it's time to get out of here and be replaced by something that is. In fact, I kind of believe that about myself as well.

Dave: Today's guest is a very well known author and personal development world leader. Her name is Byron Katie. You might've heard of her book called Loving What Is. She's an inspirational guide who offers people a different way to think their thoughts, to change mindsets and their lives. And in 1986, at the bottom of a 10-year spiral into depression and rage, and as she describes it, self-loathing, which is 43 years old, Byron woke up to a state of constant joy that never left her.

Dave: What she realized, and what she teaches to this day is that when she believed her stressful thoughts, she suffered, and when she questioned them, she didn't suffer. And that that is true for every human being. She named her process of inquiry The Work. She's been bringing The Work to millions of people around the world for the last 30 years in public events, workshops, intensive retreats, and something called The Turnaround House. I wanted to have her on the show today because on my own path of being a bio-hacker and after I dealt some my biological things to lose 100 pounds, I realized I had to deal with some of the stuff going on in my head.

Dave: And I learned early on that my powers of self-deception are legion. I've become aware of Byron's work. I've read her books, and I've learned you don't believe the thoughts in your head, you always question them. And when you build that into your life, you perform better as a human being in almost everything you do. And now we get to talk to the woman who created this, which is a great pleasure. Byron, welcome to the show.

Byron: Thank you, Dave. So good to be here.

Dave: You are down in Ojai and you're about to put on, twice a year, you have an event, a nine-day in-person event where you teach people The Work. I think you give one in October and one in February, was it?

Byron: I think March, I'm not sure. They can always find it on thework.com, but it's a nine day radical experience. It's a good thing.

Dave: If you're at the state, and there's millions of people here at Bulletproof Radio now, but if you're at the state where you're saying, "I want to know what's going on with the thoughts in my head, Byron's body of work is powerful, and one of the things that launched me on my path of personal development was a 10 day workshop many, many years ago, where I sat down and realized, "Wow, there's all sorts of stuff I don't know." So, there's great value to sitting down and spending about a week with other people doing the same thing. Something happens differently than if you sit down by yourself for a week doing this, especially when you're in the presence of a great teacher.

Dave: Now, Byron, I want to understand, when you talk about a 10 year spiral of rage and depression and all these things, it happened a while back for you, what got you to that state?

Byron: I was believing my thoughts, that's the first version. And the self loading, the anger, it was all an effect of the things I would say and do, so guilt really is the culprit here. And when that is running ... I'll say, as that was running in my head, I had no way out, so it really was a downward spiral. The thoughts like, "I'm not good enough. There's something wrong with me," which was true, it was my thinking, but my thoughts were aimed out at other people, it was their fault.

Byron: And then when I would say or do something, I would experience the guilt. So I had this vicious circle going of judgment-guilt, judgment-guilt, and it was debilitating. Agoraphobia, I experienced that. I couldn't even, most of the time, unable to leave my bedroom towards the end of that. Very painful. Dave, what I do with my life is, I do whatever I can to make sure that not one person has to suffer at that level or really any level because there is a way out.

Byron: If there were no way out, I'd get it. But for a lot of us there is no way out, we just don't understand how the mind works. And then in that moment, as I lay sleeping on the floor, just fast asleep, and I opened my eyes and I saw how the mind worked. And boy, oh boy, it was so radical that I was in the same body, but the shift was so radical that my

children and husband wonder who am I? The shift, it was from a very confused, lost human being to my favorite, a kinder human being.

Dave: A lot of people who've, who've had the biggest change in their own lives and in the world have gone through an experience where they hit rock bottom or they almost died, or some of them actually did die in a hospital somewhere and came back from that, some of people, especially in the fields of personal development, but even just in medicine and saying ... I realized I had to do what mattered because things were just so crappy in my own life, hitting 300 pounds and having many of the symptoms of being very old when I was in my twenties, you know, arthritis and brain fog.

Dave: And so I like, "All right, enough is enough," and I set out to consciously fix it. But I didn't have an experience where I woke up one morning and I had that level of clarity. I had lots of times where an inspiration would happen or I would see why I missed that, but it seems like you just went to sleep and you woke up with this massive knowledge. Where did it come from?

Byron: I just saw how the mind worked. It's not as easy as it sounded, there was still this ego to deal with, this personality to deal with. It was like they were two of me. There was this wisdom and understanding the cause of suffering, and I literally designed what I call The Judge Your Neighbor worksheet, I literally would sit and identify the thoughts that were running through my head, the crazy thoughts, and it's like I was unaffected by them. I saw they were crazy, but out of respect for the ego, I identified them, I put them on paper, and we began to make love seriously.

Byron: The mind making love with itself. For example, if my mind would say, something terrible is going to happen, I would write it down and I would just sit the mind with the mind just sit it down, "Is it true something terrible is going to happen? Can you absolutely know that it's true something terrible is going to happen?" And then to notice how I reacted, what happened when I believed the thought, and that's where people's blood pressure goes up. That's where the heart begins to race. That's where the physical stress and wear and tear on our bodies from emotion like that begin to happen.

Byron: And how do I react when I believe the thought? I see all these images of something terrible is going to happen, they're false images. They're images of a false future, they are not images of now. It's fake. It's like fake news. And the images of the past when everything was wonderful, images of the future, when it's falling apart. So, when we're experiencing those emotions, we're coming from that movie. That is the cause of all suffering, when we believe our thoughts.

Byron: They're not strong without the movie, so you have this movie, the thoughts or the soundtrack, we believe on to it. And then the fourth question, a simple question, who would I be without this? Who would I be without this past, future, just now? And then, here's the world. And that's how you get in touch with nature, your true nature. And out of that, comes ... our choices radically shift because we're saying, and there's no mind there to argue or talk us out of what we know is right in our life.

Byron: It's just that simple for me. And if something terrible is going to happen, something wonderful is going to happen. Well, it just did. I'm present. I'm out of the dream. I'm present. Nothing more wonderful than that.

Dave: I had an experience once years ago, and I've done a lot of my personal development work with neurofeedback where I have a computer helping me know when I'm playing a voice or playing a story in my head that isn't accurate and all. I was doing some self inquiry, and the little movie that you're describing in your head, I was pushing on asking for what I wanted. We needed to move into a bigger house and I'd had some resistance in my family from that for whatever reason, and I was frustrated by it.

Dave: But instead of admitting the frustration or at least admitting to myself how frustrated I was, I was kind of watching the video in my head with electrodes, and my consciousness presented an image of me pouring gas on myself and lighting myself on fire. This is something I would never do. I've never been suicidal, I've never thought of something like that. And that was just so absurd because I had developed the ability that you're describing to watch it like it was kind of a ... And I started laughing. I'm like, "Seriously? This is clearly not me, what's going on in here."

Dave: And it was that ability at that moment to switch into an awareness of what's really going on. I was like, "Okay, there's totally some irrational fear going on here," and being able to see that for what it was as something that would never happen. But it was my body working to distract me from doing something that it firmly believed was dangerous to do, not pour gas on myself, but to actually say, "Look, we're moving into a bigger house because I need the space so I can do the Bulletproof stuff and because it'll be happier," and all the reasons I wanted to do it, but to just be insistent on something that was a requirement.

Dave: For whatever reason, I don't know why, there were parts of me that were uncomfortable with that, and I got through it, which, when I read your books, that feels like one of those experiences where you talk about becoming aware of the video on your head.

Byron: Yeah. All self. There's the energy ... It's like if we wonder what we had for breakfast this morning, if we look back on that, you can see yourself at breakfast, that's self, you were at breakfast. And you see yourself at dinner tonight, that's your self, that's you at dinner tonight. And it shows up that vividly in your mind's eye, and we don't even realize it's going on until we begin to wake up to the mind in what's real and what's not. But you see you at breakfast, you at dinner, and then here I am sitting here now.

Byron: So it's just clear what self am I. This is the answer to who am I; not that, not that, not that of the past, not that of the future. Present. Present. Everything we need to do can only be done now. And in a sane state of mind, we're really unlimited, or I can say that I experienced that in my life.

Dave: How does your work, or The Work, as it's called, apply to people who are engineers, people who are successful in their careers and saying, "Maybe I want a little more"? Do you find that it works for them, that it's attractive for them or is it too out there?

Byron: Absolutely. If you're an engineer and you love what you do, then question anything that would slow you down, stop you, anything that would prevent you, like you, from buying a larger house. It was nothing more than what you were thinking and believing. And it could come out the other way, but you're going to come out sane and right with yourself; not to buy the house until another time, or it was time and be good with it. We do things that we don't want to do, but there's no situation we can't make peace with because now is when we need the peace, now is where this matters.

Dave: If you were to describe what you do to someone who's never come across your work, how do you describe it in a couple sentences? Is there a way to do that?

Byron: Clear the mind.

Dave: That is the shortest description of what someone does, three words, that I've ever seen. But that's actually a very powerful description.

Byron: You know, if I don't love what I think, I love what I see. Because life is what we believe it to be. So I look out, and what I believe on to the world, like we put all these Post-its on what we see. And if we believe that, if those thoughts are not, I'll say it this way, a match to the heart or our true nature, I don't like what I'm believing, I'm not going to like what I'm seeing. So the way to love the world is to, for me, was to question anything unlike that emotion. And for me, love is center.

Dave: I think you've landed on something powerful there. If you go through the four questions that are in your books, in the process of clearing your mind. What clearing my mind did for me is it frees up a huge amount of energy to do stuff that matters because if I'm putting the electrons that my body makes from food and air to work on a judgmental thoughts, negative thoughts, playing stories that aren't true in my head, all the energy that went there didn't go to somewhere useful. And then I had to acquire even more energy to then counteract and deal with the negative thoughts that I wasted the energy on.

Dave: So by building a process every day, in my case is based on gratitude and forgiveness and driving awareness, it's allowed me to do way more in my career, and as a parent, and all the different things I do. And that's why even for people who are hyper logical, you know, in engineering mindset, or someone who doesn't have a particular strong, a spiritual direction in what they do, the work that you describe in your books, it's useful simply because it removes drag on your life, and everyone has drag, right?

Byron: Absolutely. Absolutely useful in our life. If I'm an engineer, say, why can't I love my mind at the same time? Because when our mind, when we're saying our decisions, again, our decisions are simple, they're easy. We don't even have to think them through. They're just naturally logical. The food we eat, the choices we eat. I love like ... Like last night,

I'm wearing ... I fell and I'm wearing this heavy cast on my left foot and leg, and I went to bed last night as energized as I wake up because my energy isn't going to make believe world, its present. What a radical live when I compare it to the unquestioned mind.

Dave: There are a lot of spiritual traditions that talk in different words about the things you're talking about. They talk about building awareness, building consciousness, being able to see reality. I'm talking about Hindu traditions, Buddhist traditions, ancient Christian traditions. It seems like there's many different traditions that are all circling around this ability to see what's actually in the world around you without lots of filters that you don't have control of. Can you walk me through the four questions that you teach people in your books to do in order to quickly get that level of clarity about a situation or just about their life? What are the questions?

Byron: Well, the first thing is to identify the thoughts that are causing the stress in your life or in your moment and to write them down. And then, take a thought or a judgment that you're holding on someone, and then ... This work is meditation, so we're just going to meditate on, "Is it true what I'm thinking and believing about that person, is it true?" And I'm going to meditate there, and I'm going to hold an image of that situation with that person in my mind's eye. Maybe he said, "I don't like you." So he doesn't like me. Is it true?

Byron: So I'm in that situation. Let's say it was something that happened yesterday, and in my mind's eye, I can see the two of us there, he said it. He said he didn't like me, but this is about my life, what I believe, and no airy-fairy ideas, I want to go to the depth. So I'm just meditating on, "Is it true he doesn't like me?" So I'm looking at his face, his posture. I'm seeing that. Now the answer is either yes or no. It's one syllable. So we remain still in that until that yes or no comes. The immediate answer is, "Yes, he said so," but no, you get still in it.

Byron: What else do you see in there? And again, don't try to make nice in here. So the answer's yes or no. And then the second question, if it's yes, I ask myself, "Can I absolutely know that it's true that he doesn't like me?" And I sit in that, and my answer could still be yes, it's true, he doesn't like me, but I'm going to spend some time in there until I draw that conclusion for myself, until I'm shown in that image of the two of us together yesterday. And then the third question is to notice, how do I react? What happened when I believed the thought that he doesn't care about me, that he doesn't like me?

Byron: And then I meditate on that, and I get really still. And I can see myself, I can see him there, and I get in touch with my ... Did my attitude change? Did it become aggressive? Did I look hurt? And I'm not judging any of this, I'm just witnessing how I react when I believe the thought in that situation. We learned so much about why the body responds to the way it does. It is such a radical thing to get in touch with. And we cease to think that it's just happening beyond our ... that these emotions are just happening to us. We're seeing cause and effect. When I believe it, this is how I react when I believe the thought.

Byron: And how do I react when I believe the thought. I see those images of past, future. I see him where he doesn't like me, and then I see him in the future where he'll never speak to me again. I'm meditating in, how do I react? What happens mentally and physically when I believe the thought? Do I manipulate? Do I strike back? Do I get even? Am I silent? Am I giving him the cold treatment? I'm just witnessing a moment in time. We've heard the expression know thyself. So then the fourth and last question is, who would I be in that situation without the thought, he doesn't like me?

Byron: And now I'm going to meditate there, that I'm going to see him. Now, I may begin to experience some compassion. I can see at the time he was really upset, he was out of sorts. I see enough to know that I wasn't the cause of that in that particular situation. I see. I see. I see, in compassion. And what pours in there is. It sounds odd, but it's just our kindest nature shows up and we get in touch with that at the same time as well. And then I invite people to turn it around, to just flip it over and to try it on like a new pair of shoes. Just try it on. Does it fit? He doesn't care about me turned around? I don't care about him.

Byron: Okay. So where was it in that situation I wasn't caring? Where was it I attacked him? I'm just going to witness. I don't even need to take questions in there, I'm shown, I'm meditating on that moment in time without human being. And then we see how it fits. I don't care about him. This is that word you used earlier, Dave, forgiveness. This is where it starts happening automatically through this process. You can just fall on your knees to a person like that that pushes you to know yourself, to become a kinder human being.

Byron: Now, another way of turning it around. You never know how many will be there, maybe just one, but he doesn't like me [inaudible 00:26:49] I don't like me. Okay. Now I'm going to meditate in, what is it about that situation? How did I treat him? What did I say or do? How did I react that I don't like me for? I don't like me when I hurt another human being, when I say something or do something that is against my heart, it's just simply not wise. It's not airy fairy, it's just not wise in life. Aggressiveness in my world holds me back, and then it shows up here in this process.

Byron: So he doesn't like me? He likes me. There's another opposite. Now it takes a lot of stillness to go back and listen to his words, look at him. What do I see? I'm trying it on like a pair of shoes; maybe it fits, maybe it doesn't, but basically, Dave, that's the simple process. And anyone that wants to heal their life ... If I have anything of value, is always free. No charge on thework.com.

Dave: I appreciate that. When you have really precious knowledge like that and you choose not to share it as widely as you can, it feels like you're out of integrity. Obviously, I feel that way. I like to put the most important things I know out there. And in this case, I look at this, I come from Silicon Valley, I'm a former computer hacker and there's a portion of the audience of Bulletproof Radio who is totally spiritually tuned in. We're all meditating, we're doing all these things and I've seen a shift in the last 10 years where some of the very best computer programmers, developers, tech CEOs, whatever they are, they've started meditating because they felt the performance improvements.

Byron: They're hacking their brain.

Dave: They're hacking their brain, and what you've described there in those four questions, when I run it through my own filters, it's a logic problem, and you can take any situation and then you could make a little truth table and you can look at all possible solution sets to that thing, and the line of inquiry that your four questions in the work invite is to say, "All right, let's evaluate both sides of the equation or the problem we're working to solve and let's look at all possible angles from it," which is what thinking human beings do anyway, but you're providing a framework for doing that, which makes it much faster instead of eventually realizing there's some sort of murky answer in all of this by just putting it in a Q&A format and then putting it in, you always look at both sides of each thing, you end up with a very different solution to the problem than you'd end up.

Byron: And you end up with a friend and they don't have to like you back. You're connected under all circumstances. And in that, we're excellent listener. And a connection like that, oh my gosh, being with people changes our lives, it always ups our game.

Dave: It does up your game and I love the way you think about that. That's been exactly what's happened in my life. And you said something else though in your books and in some of your interviews, you said that when you discover that all happiness is inside you, the wanting and needing are over. What replaces the one's need when people do the work?

Byron: You have everything you want and you have everything you need, it's just simple. Just consider this moment now, and I ask your listeners to do the same thing, other than what you're thinking and believing, look at what you've got. Look at what you've got and that'll take you a while, you can encounter it all if you'll just sat, not still, and look around you. I'm sitting in a chair, these clothes I'm wearing, they're layers, I don't need them all. The chair is holding me, and the chair has taken care of it. It has these cushions and this color and then what's holding the chair is the ground, but that's not enough, there lies rug underneath.

Byron: And what holds the ground and what holds the balance and what holds ... You can't count it all, you can sit out along with grass on it and just look at one blade of grass and all the secrets of the universe are there, and it's for you. You begin to experience, just so close that it is for you. Everything, for you. Oh my gosh. Obviously, I fall easily into rapture. I am so grateful for the way things are. Now, if someone stands in front of me and says, "I'm going to kill you?" Why is it I don't have a problem? I'm not dead yet. Now, if I imagine what he's going to do, I have lost my life. I'm in a future that is terrifying and I am missing this given moment in time. My life is here, I've joined it.

Byron: Now, let's say he shot me, am I going to scream and yell before I even see it hurts? I don't know. I don't know. I'm saying this, it may sound a little radical to some of your listeners, but I am about the end of suffering and to the beginning of let's do what we can do where we are and change things. This is a powerful life we're given. But I'm in past future, these people say, "Be here now." But why? Well, because this is where you are. This is where it works.

Dave: You've cultivated a sense of gratitude for wherever you are, even if there might be better places you'd like to be.

Byron: Well, I just simply noticed, and there's nowhere I'd rather be. That would be crazy, where would I be? Where could I be that I wouldn't take this thinker with me?.

Dave: But wouldn't you want to be somewhere not with a guy with a gun about to shoot you?

Byron: Well, I can run, but I don't think I'll outline a bullet, but if I can outrun that bullet, I'm going to run, I'm not crazy. Peace doesn't mean crazy.

Dave: Exactly. So you could be in a state of peace even if you're in a situation like that.

Byron: Running.

Dave: Peaceful running. I like that.

Byron: And a man did put a gun, pulled a gun on me one night, I think it was about 2:00 AM, but it was the most beautiful evening and the clouds in the sky and I could smell the river that was running not far away. And it was a glorious evening. And in that, I guess I frightened him. I was on his property or something, I was just out walking as I tend to do and smelling the air. And I guess I frightened him because he came up, "What are you doing here," and I'm sure his language wasn't that polite and he put a gun in my stomach and he said, "I'm going to ... " And then they used the word, kill you. And I looked at him, oh I don't know why I tell these stories other than I do, but it must be important.

Byron: He looked into my eyes, I looked into his eyes, I saw a terror. I saw terror, and at the same time I can see the moon in the sky and the clouds and how the light from the moon hit the clouds and the sky, it was an amazing. Now, the other way is to imagine the bullet hitting me before he pulled the trigger, to imagine the pain, to imagine me not ever seeing my children again, to imagining me, all of this on such a beautiful night? No, that to me is crazy. And I wasn't in a position to run, but I was in a position to look into his eyes and experience compassion, and he put the gun down.

Dave: Why do you think he did that?

Byron: What I can tell you is I was completely connected and I think in that, there's a kind of meeting where there was no room for his fear as well.

Dave: So he just felt that what he sensed from you was not the response to his terror that he was expecting and just decided-

Byron: I think so, Dave, in the absence of fear, what is there to fear. And no one pulls a gun if they're not fearful.

Dave: That is very true. It's a powerful story and the idea that you could stay present even in a situation like that is a testament to the growth that you've done.

Byron: And also again, who wants to miss the rest of their life? That can be it.

Dave: What advice would you have for the guy who pulled the gun on you if you could talk to him now.

Byron: I had a thought when he said he was going to kill me. My thought was, "I hope he doesn't do that to him."

Dave: Yeah. Because that does come at a great personal cost.

Byron: Yes, it does.

Dave: One they don't show you in the movies.

Byron: And I wouldn't wish that on anyone, he was about to hurt himself.

Dave: Do you think that most people listening to the show can reach that level of inner peace?

Byron: I have a lot of people across the globe that are saying their lives are shifting so dramatically, they're unrecognizable, but I don't call it The Work for nothing. It does take stillness, it takes silence and it takes being courageous enough to look at the thoughts in your head without trying to change them and accept them the way they are. I spoke earlier to loving the ego. You can't fight the ego, it doesn't rest, but you can love the ego. You can identify it, question it with the other part of the mind and allow it to speak, meaning to show you like, "He doesn't care about me," is it true? If I could still ... " The ego is going to offer it all up until finally ...

Byron: That's the book I wrote was a mind at home with itself, and that's what we're talking about, the ego is like a lost child and as long as they're lost, that's frightening. It's a frightened identity. So once it finds a home in itself, that's all it's looking for. I've given the mind a home, so it's happy there.

Dave: How do you define ego?

Byron: A false identity, "He doesn't like me, there's something wrong with me, or I think, and I should, I need. I am Byron Katie's sitting here with my friend Dave and I, I, I." So what happens in inquiries, identification falls away, and I just remain like not before and after, but here I am with my friend Dave having this discussion and I hope it serves people and I'm present.

Dave: Where do you think the ego comes from? Why is it there?

Byron: Well, it's really not.

Dave: What does that mean?

Byron: Well, like you just asked a question and you'd have to go back to the past to leave the impression with yourself that you even said it. So there's before and after and now, and now, that now that I spoke of is gone.

Dave: So ego doesn't live in the present? Is what I'm getting out of that.

Byron: No. Ego, it's a well of the west.

Dave: Why is the ego there?

Byron: Well, I just spoke to it, it's not really, but the ego is, it's got to be identified because ego is mind and mind is nothing. You can't take it out, you can't touch it, you can't feel it, it's nothing. It's not even air. So it's looking for a home. It's first identification, let's say it's I, well, that's not much of a home. "I am," well now it's kind of getting settled in. "I am a woman." Well, now it's kind of settling in, or I would say, "Now I am." I, and now it's he, she them, me, I, but it's all about this false I.

Byron: I'd like to invite people to consider on who would you be without your story and to just get still in that, and to notice how quickly that story will come. But the ego's looking for a home, and because it can't have one, its mind, it is not a physical, is not an object. Mind is not object. So I am sitting here with my friend, Dave, who cares if it's true or not, I'm present. I'm at home in myself and I'm fully aware of this body, this object is not I, but where's the problem?

Dave: One of the things that's interesting about the English language is that we say, "I am hungry," but in most other languages we would say, "I have hunger." And the difference there is that we're so clearly identified with our meat, with our body. And some of it is linguistics, it's cultural. When you say that you are, at least, I'm paraphrasing, but it sounded like you said, "You are not your body."

Byron: Mind is not body, Mind is not physical.

Dave: Then what is mind if it's not physical?

Byron: Well, we spoke to it earlier, but mind is false identification and you know what, you asked me, Dave, so I'll just tell you, mind does not exist. It cannot exist unless it identifies, and that is false identification. Mind isn't body.

Dave: Isn't that similar though to saying love doesn't exist?

Byron: Well, the nature of everything, I'm speaking out of my own experience, it's like I loath myself and now I don't. And what is that self? I don't really care, I'm at home. To me that's love. Love is balanced, it's connection. I used to tell my children, they'd say, "I want, I need," and I'd say, "Oh, sweetheart, make friends with mediocrity, stay in the center and I understand why you wouldn't." And at the balance, center, it's the closest thing to what no name, no self and no handicap, this power and presence.

Dave: Absolutely. I'd like to get your take on a technique that I use. I recognize that as I mentioned earlier, my powers of self-deception are strong, I think all humans are. And so if I get to choose the story I'm going to believe about something, then I might as well choose the story that's the least amount of work and the most amount of joy and

happiness. The example, I used to have a very overactive middle finger when people would cut me off in traffic. I had lots of [crosstalk 00:44:44] muscles on just that one finger. It was always the story was, they're cutting me off because there are more important, that they don't respect me, blah, blah, blah.

Dave: And in one of the personal development workshops, I just realized, "Well, okay, I can also say they're cutting me off in traffic because they're on the way to the hospital to see their mom on her deathbed." I have no idea, both stories are complete BS, but I just choose to believe that story without any facts because neither story has facts backing it, all I know is they cut in front of me. And I found that by doing that, it reduces the amount of stress and friction in my life dramatically. Is there a value to choosing a story that may not be true just because it's more pleasurable than one that is false and unpleasurable?

Byron: Well, the reason that work to my mind is that it was just as logical, and so you balanced out. One is just as insane as the other, you don't know, but you balanced. It could be just as true, and so you got that center play.

Dave: Is that a technique that you would recommend for listeners? We recognize that whatever story you have might not be true, which is built into your questions in the work, but then to intentionally select the story that is as equally likely to be true as the first story, but rather than saying, "I don't have a story," just making up the story that, "Hey, the universe is conspiring in my favor." You know it's not true, but you can still choose the story and say, "Since I'm going to choose the story that I don't know to be true, I might as well choose the one that makes me feel the best," or is that still self deception and it's going to be harmful in the long run?

Byron: Here's what I would say for your listeners, is try this one on: The universe is friendly and anything that doesn't match that, then I would just open my eyes and see where it's true. And then that balances and it's doesn't have to be such an individual thing, we can just take one and keep it. And I'm for the end of suffering, and what you described, beautiful and the universe is friendly. Like when I fell and did that thing with my foot and my knees about a week and a half ago, my gosh, it's a friendly universe. I knew that falling, I knew that when I hit the ground, I knew that as they were putting the cast on, I knew that as I sit here. And so it shows up for me all the time.

Dave: So maintaining that mindset is a part of what brings you happiness and presence all the time?

Byron: One of the great, I think it was maybe Einstein, I don't know, anyone could look it up, but he said the universe is friendly, just that. And so I would say the universe is friendly and I invite everyone to test it.

Dave: I feel like, I can't proof right now with what I know that the universe is friendly. So I'm going to assume that it is and tell myself that story because life is a lot easier and better with that mindset than without it, while at the same time holding the knowledge that I don't have proof that that's the case. Some would argue though, that that is an

unhealthy self-deception or an unhealthy state of mind versus being completely neutral. I just find it doesn't work very well to be completely neutral. I'll choose the story that motivates me the most, that encourages me to give back more and to have more energy, but I also recognize-

Byron: See, that's very wise.

Dave: So you're in alignment with that because I do question that?

Byron: Oh, completely.

Dave: Am I deceiving myself in the right direction, even though it's not provable. And I'm sort of thinking, "I don't care if it's true, I like it better this way."

Byron: Absolutely. Optimist have more fun.

Dave: That's true. They also live longer.

Byron: Optimist lives longer.

Dave: There's a recent study around skeptics versus optimists. Skeptics, they tend to have cognitive dysfunction earlier and die earlier than people who are optimists.

Byron: The reason it feels good, it's close to what I have come to understand, the universe is friendly. It's just a step closer each time.

Dave: Your belief is that the universe is actually friendly?

Byron: Oh, actually, completely.

Dave: I got it. I like to believe that. I haven't proven it yet, but I'll continue to believe that story because it's just a lot easier to do good work that way.

Byron: I'm still the skeptic, believe me, I am a skeptic. And that's why inquiry is such a part of my life and it always comes out when I question the silly out of my mind. Yeah, the universe is friendly. Yep. Got It, got It.

Dave: How did you keep your ego in check as you went from someone who is depressed and agoraphobic to someone whose work is seen by millions of people and a leading voice in personal development? How did you avoid the spiritual ego side of, "Oh, hey, everybody, look at me, I'm so good." Other leaders have fallen off the path, I've interviewed some of them. Why did you not fall off the path? What was different about your approach?

Byron: If I had the thought, "Oh, I am so enlightened," I would have to question that. I cannot think of the thought that wouldn't end in a question mark, it just wouldn't serve me.

Dave: So you would run your four questions against, "Oh, look at me, I'm so special," and say, "What if I'm not special?"

Byron: Oh my goodness, yes. It's just, it can't hold here.

Dave: Got it. So that that's how you can stay humble and still do that. That's actually a funny answer when you think about it, "Guys, I just use my own work to not fall into my own ego," which is fantastic

Byron: And I don't know how humble it is, I've never really considered my self as humble, but I certainly do know what hurts and what doesn't.

Dave: That's beautiful. Byron, I have one more question for you. It's a question I've asked every guest on the show for more than 500 episodes and a question that I statistically analyzed for my next book called Game Changers that comes out December 4th. I'm really curious to hear your answer to it. If someone came to you tomorrow based on all the things you've experienced in your life and said, "I want to perform better at everything I do as a human being," what are your three most important pieces of advice? What would you say when you had to just boil it all down?

Byron: Oh my goodness. Do the work, do the work, do the work. Another way of saying that is just identify any thought that would stop you from living your highest dream, your highest good and anything that would stop you, question.

Dave: Beautiful. So that constant self inquiry, you're voting with all three of yours, all three of those answers is do that one thing, and it's the one that matters the most.

Byron: Ask it again.

Dave: If someone said, "I want to perform better at everything I do as a human being." And so that includes being in a relationships, your work, your giving back to your community, all of the things we do as humans, the three most important piece of advice you'd have. And you would say, all three of those is that one thing, the self inquiry one?

Byron: Yeah. So, get still, question the thought that would get in your way, and have a happy life.

Dave: For you it's all about getting in touch with the incorrect voices in your head, getting on top of them, and editing or at least becoming aware of what's happening there?

Byron: I would question anything that would keep me from having a happy life.

Dave: Byron, thank you for your stories, your questions and for your work and for The Work, and I very much appreciate what you've done for the world and appreciate you being on Bulletproof Radio. Listeners can find your work at thework.com. Your workshop in Ojai, October 23rd to November 1st. Sounds amazing to be in person and in a group with other people who are doing that radical self inquiry, is a special opportunity.

Byron: Yeah. Thank you, Dave. We work on the things we've discussed today and we work on fear and we work on relationships. We do just really some heavy work on the physical body. We do worksheets and exercises that I have for people, and communication, and it just goes on and on. If we've experience it as a human being, most ashamed are the castles I have there that we walk through, it's very transformative. I do invite people to that nine days event.

Dave: Thank you Byron. Have a wonderful day.

Byron: Thank you, Dave.

Dave: If you liked today's episode, you know what to do. Go out and ask yourself those four questions. Is it true? Can you absolutely know it's true? How do you react? What happens when you believe that thought, and who would you be without the thought? Give it a try, you'll find it works. And if you like that, why don't you pick up a copy of one of Byron Katie's works. They are definitely worth your time to read. Very, very powerful stuff around not necessarily hacking your biology, but hacking the thoughts in your head. When you look at the definition of bio-hacking and changing the environment around you and inside of you so that you have control of your own biology.

Dave: The thoughts you have control your biology and getting on top of those is as powerful as putting the right stuff on your plate. Thanks for listening.