

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio, a stage of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that human genes are getting a recount. It turns out that figuring out how many genes are in our human genetic instruction manual, the human genome, isn't as easy as we once thought. In fact, the definition of a gene has changed since they completed the Human Genome Project more than 15 years ago. We used to identify genes as stretches of DNA that had instructions that get copied into RNA and turned into proteins. But researchers still don't really agree on how many of those genes there are. They range from 19,901 to 21,306. In the last decade, they realized that not all genes produce proteins.

Dave: So some scientists have expanded the definition of a gene to include genes that make RNA that don't turn into proteins but turned into other things. So number of those RNA producing genes, which they call non coding genes, is even more up in the air than the protein coding genes, according to Johns Hopkins University. It turns out there's about 25,000 of those RNA genes that they didn't think about. So, when someone tells you, oh, that's written into your genetic code, well, between this fact that the genetic code is a bit blurry and the fact that we have epigenetics, which is how the environment turns genes on and off, well, the future isn't set in stone, at least not genetically, at least not most of the time. The new total of human genes that's come out from all this research is about 46,831. But not everyone agrees.

Dave: If you like cool facts of the day like that, let me know on social. Just go to Dave.asprey on Instagram or any of the other channels and say, hey, I want more cool facts of the day, I want less, or whatever else you'd like to hear about because I always come across interesting things that make me think about what it means to be human, what it means to be more than human and how much control we actually have. The more I look, the more I realize how much we don't know. And even if we don't know how or why something works, we can still determine something does work by testing and by saying, well, that's not explainable but it's repeatable, let's do it until we can explain it. And that is the path to making rapid progress.

Dave: And speaking of rapid progress, today's guest is Drew Manning, author of The New York Times bestselling book Fat to Fit, I'm going to say it backwards, it's Fit2Fat2Fit, not the other way around, The Unexpected Lessons from Gaining and Losing 75 Pounds on Purpose. And you've probably heard of him because he's been on Dr. Oz, Good Morning America, the View and actually had a TV show called Fit2Fat2Fit on A&E and Lifetime. The reason I want to have him on today is that he went through something that very few personal trainers would do, where he said, I don't get it, I'm going to become fat and I'm going to lose the fat so that I can see what my clients are going through. So, I'm super excited to pick his brain on this today, because I could tell you when I was the fat guy talking with doctors and trainers and they looked at me like I was some crazy person, I might have wanted to punch them. I didn't because I had been working on my inner peace and all that. I went to my quiet place.

Dave: But here's a guy who actually had the guts to go out and do it and learned a heck of a lot along the way and we're going to learn about that today. Drew, welcome to the show.

Drew: Dave, thank you so much for having me on. Really appreciate that.

Dave: All right. You grew up in Utah, and I think it's actually required by law in Utah you have to play football, right?

Drew: I actually grew up in California. Utah's where I've been since 09 though. So I've been here for a while. That's where I currently live, Salt Lake City, Utah. In Utah, let's see, it probably is, most people play football or some type of sport out here wrestling as a young teenager boy. So I grew up playing football and wrestling though.

Dave: There you go. Okay. So those are the quintessential, I have a bunch of friends in Utah, quintessential Utah sports. So you were kind of a jock. Then you became a personal trainer. All right. And you started judging your clients. What was that? You're this guy like, I've always kicked ass. And here you are, you know, you're kind of fat slug. Walk me through your mindset as a trainer like what you thought?

Drew: Yeah, that's a great question. My mindset was very black and white, right? So for me, it was super simple to get in shape. All you do is eat healthy, you exercise, you do what I did and you look like this. It's not that hard. I would give clients meal plans and workouts and be like, all right, just do it. And they'd be like, Drew, this week was really stressful, I didn't get to the gym. I cheated, I had soda and cakes and cookies or whatever it was. And then we get frustrated. Like, why is it so hard for you just to do, like follow it perfectly. It's not that hard. You just do it. They would tell me, you know, Drew, you don't understand because for you, it's always been easy and you've always been in shape. And I'm like, you know what, you're right.

Drew: So I kind of took that to heart and I was thinking of ways to better understand where they were coming from. And for whatever reason, this idea of getting found on purpose, as crazy and ridiculous as that sounds, it made sense in my mind. It was one of those ideas where it was like, you're going to do this and this is like your calling, and I felt like this was something that I needed to do. And so here we are, seven years later, gained 75 pounds in six months and then lost it in six more months. And I never would have guessed it would become what it is today.

Dave: When you were still the always successful physically fit guy and someone obese would come in, was it a judgment that, okay, this person is lazy or that they're weak or were you thinking other thoughts like that?

Drew: No, I was judgmental. I'll be totally honest and open with everybody. I tell people about this all the time because I looked at as a lack of willpower. Being a wrestler and football player you kind of willpower your way through tough situations, you know, right? You kind of tough it out. I looked at people who couldn't do this as yeah, lazy or lack of willpower. And so, I'll be the first one to admit that. But I'll be the first one also to admit that I was wrong. This Fit2Fat2Fit experience changed that.

Dave: What I absolutely love about your work is that when I was 300 pounds, I had exactly that same judgmental voice in my head. It's like, it must be because I'm weak, it must be

because I lack willpower. Through the course of losing the weight and working with obese people and just understanding it, I realized that fat people are actually willpower athletes in that they know they're fat, they have mirrors, they don't even need scales, right? And I say this they, I'm saying we, I'm speaking from my own experience. And so, every time there's a cookie in front of you, you have this little conversation, it's like, I'm not going to eat that cookie. But eventually, you run out of willpower. [inaudible 00:07:19] you feel like a failure when you do it but also, there's a biological imperative that you're just not going to ignore it a certain point no matter how good of a person you are.

Dave: I struggled a lot with the psychological side of this, of just look, because I'm fat and because I keep doing things that I don't want to do, it must be a moral defect, a character flaw, right? And certainly, I know that that was how my doctors judged me. This last six months, I actually did, I measured, I ate less than 2000 calories a day and I'm still really fat. And they just look at me, like you're eating Snickers bars, we know it. Sometimes you know your clients will lie. Oh, no, I did everything right. But there's Snickers wrappers in your car. The evidence is clear. How do you know to even to this day, if you're dealing with a client, how do you know when they actually are lazy versus a biological thing?

Drew: That's a good question because I had a similar experience where I was trying to lose the weight right after I gained the weight and I had weeks where I did everything I was supposed to do as a trainer with all the knowledge that I had of how to lose weight and yet I gained a pound that week, and I had no explanation to my followers of how this happened. Because weight loss is not black and white, it's not linear. And so I wish it was, like, hey, just do this and boom, you'll look like this and your weight will go down every single week like clockwork. I wish it was that simple. So, how do you know if someone's being lazy, that's a great question. I don't really feel like you can.

Drew: And that's one thing you have to let go of as a coach, as a trainer is realizing that you can't control that person's life. You can give them all the tools, all the motivation that you have to give them. But ultimately, it has to be from within, it has to be their decision. They have to see themselves as more than they currently are. They have to know that they're worthy to make a change. I feel like if they're going to lie about it, then that's their issue. You can't fix that. So you just have to do the best you can with trusting them that they're going to do their part, you're going to do your part. And if they're not doing their part, they're the ones that suffer at the end of the day and you can't take on that responsibility because it's out of your control. I wish you could, I wish you could control other people but it's the world we live in, we can't control other people and it's their journey.

Dave: I went from being concerned about being lazy, which is kind of ridiculous. I've had a fantastic career. I made \$6 million when I was 26, lost it when I was 28. When I look back on it, you couldn't call me lazy, but I still would have called myself that. I went from that mindset of maybe being worried about it to saying, yeah, I'm lazy, I want to do the minimum possible amount of work to get the results I want. That's actually a human condition that is a beneficial one because it drives us to do things that are more effective. And so, I sort of honor my laziness now and it's made me a better human

being. But you can be lazy and still make the right decisions. In fact, the lazier you are, the more you must make the right decisions because otherwise it's more work.

Drew: Yeah, exactly.

Dave: So the whole mindset towards laziness in me shifted which resulted in, and it just a lot of other personal design work. I don't deal with like the guilt and shame, those voices in my head are dead as far as I can tell which is cool. Walk me through, how did you gain 75 pounds in six months?

Drew: Great question. So, we've all seen Super Size Me where Morgan Spurlock almost diet eating McDonald's every day. We all know that fast food is unhealthy for us, even though we still eat it today. What I want to do is a different approach where I focus on everyday American foods that we grew up on in the 70s and 80s that we didn't think was that unhealthy for us. So a lot of highly processed foods that are convenient, they taste really good at which I'll totally admit, I still love Cinnamon Toast Crunch, even though I don't eat it. If that was the last food on Earth, I'd be okay. And then it's affordable, like these foods are very affordable.

Drew: So I would have your typical American diet, things like white bread, white pasta, juices, granola bars, chips, cookies, crackers, sugary cereals, sugary sodas, hot pockets, Top Ramen, SpaghettiOs, mac and cheese.

Dave: Foods of childhood.

Drew: Exactly, because we grew up on that in the 70s and 80s. I remember seeing commercials for a complete American breakfast was cereal, toast and juice. That's what we were told as kids as a complete American breakfast look like. So I focused on those foods and as I started gaining weight, I had hundreds of emails coming in from people watching my journey as I was gaining the weight saying Drew, you eat exactly the foods that I eat. And sometimes some of these foods are marketed to as healthy foods. They'll say all natural or organic or gluten free or fortified with vitamin A and vitamin D or whole grains. So some people think that hey, this food's healthy for us, it says so right here, it's healthy for me.

Drew: So I put on 75 pounds eating highly processed American foods which all tasted really, really good, but eventually made me feel like crap. Those are the types of foods that I ate.

Dave: When you say made you feel like crap, walk me through what six months of that diet did besides what you saw in the mirror?

Drew: The first month or so I didn't notice a lot of health effects right away. I felt kind of still somewhat healthy. So it was fun. That was the fun phase. I would skip the produce section and go down the cereal aisle and we have hundreds of options of cereal here in America. It wasn't till about month one, I started snoring which affected my sleep, which affected my mood, which affected my hormones, which affected my energy levels

throughout the day. And then I remember the cardio was the first thing to go. So walking up the stairs, I was out of breath. I remember by month two bending over and trying to clip my toenails, I was literally having to hold my breath as I was down there clipping and then come back up for air and then go back down. These little things that I had always taken for granted, I had no idea would become a hardship on my body.

Drew: The other thing that was really surprising was how much of this food, physically I knew I was going to get fat. I knew the man boobs and the big butt and big gut were going to happen, was how this food was going to affect me on the mental and emotional level. That's where the biggest lessons were learned. It was way harder than I thought it would be. Even though the food tasted good, it became my stress reliever. Exercise before was my stress reliever but now that I couldn't exercise for six months, I had to find something else and I found that in food and that's what a lot of people turn to is food as this temporary stress reliever, but that's what's causing the stress and that's what's adding more stress to people's lives and that's what I soon realized. I was like, I'm trapped. I'm two months in. How am I going to finish this for the next four months?

Dave: So you definitely had, you exhibited some willpower there because you continued to eat food that made you feel like crap for a good cause. Did you find your emotional regularity went down?

Drew: Not at first. It wasn't till I would say month three or four that my emotions kind of kicked in where I felt, here's the thing, my identity was based on my body my whole life, right? My identity was the six pack, the muscles. Once that was gone, I freaked out. I didn't know who I was. I wanted to go up to complete strangers and tell them, hey, I'm not really overweight you guys. Go to this website, it's just an experiment. I normally look like this. But, you know, it was really hard for me to fathom that I was this overweight person now. I didn't know how to handle it at first. Like I said, I freaked out about it. And so I would say by month three when I my body really transformed to where I was 30, 40 pounds heavier, it really messed with my emotions, and dealing with that internal conflict of who am I. I felt like my identity was my body but now that my body wasn't that who am I now.

Dave: Did people treat you differently walking down the street as a fat person versus a fit person?

Drew: I get asked that a lot. But I will say this, that in society, I think men being overweight they're judged less than women being overweight. So no one was ever rude to me, I just looked like a husky guy. No one was ever mean to me. I will say I did feel judged. I remember one time at a grocery store I was in line and my shopping cart was full of soda, and cereal, and cookies. And there were these three attractive ladies behind me in line and I was like, I could tell they were looking at my stomach and I wanted to be that fit guy again that was confident because I liked that attention. And now that I wasn't, I wanted to say something to them hey ladies, I usually eat spinach and kale. I don't normally eat these foods. This is just an experiment. But it didn't say anything.

Drew: That was the first time I started realize that that my clients have to go through this and worse on a daily basis because of the way they look. Our society, you know, does judge

people who are overweight and it's sad, but luckily, no one was ever mean or said anything rude to me as a man. But had I been a woman who was overweight, I think society is a lot harsher on women being overweight.

Dave: You've got a point there. And just having spent enough time as a fat guy, it's rough and it's hard to sort out the voice in your head and the judgmental stuff from other people. When I first lost my first 50 pounds, this was years ago, the second 50 was a lot harder. I remember I was okay, I'm going to do keto way before keto was a known thing. And so, I'd go to the Steakhouse and order a steak and I was doing keto wrong, way too much protein and things like that. But at least I got halfway there. Even then it was like there's the fat guy ordering a steak. Your steaks make you fat. I'm like putting butter on my steak and I'm losing a pound or two a week here, like this kind of cool. But even then you're getting judged and it's like you can't win.

Dave: What made you decide six months as the right period of time? Did you set a weight goal? Why these numbers?

Drew: I don't tell people this, but originally, the idea was to do it for a whole year. Luckily, my ex wife was smarter than me and talked me out of it and said do it for just six months. That's long enough to give you enough time to put on weight but not too long to where it can become really dangerous because if you look at my blood work back when I did this journey, it got really bad really quick. Even though for 31 years of my life, I was healthy, I was fit, I was strong, it didn't matter how long I was in shape for. In just six months time of letting myself go, it was scary how quickly your health can plummet if you treat it bad consistently like I was doing for six months.

Drew: And so I'm grateful that was only for six months because had a bit longer, I don't know if I could have really done it. I was really, really hard even just for the six months. But the idea was six months was long enough time to put on the weight. And that's kind of what we did on the TV show to was we did it for four months. You have to give people long enough time to actually put on some size so you can have some empathy and a better understanding. Because if you gain just 10 pounds, it's not the same as gaining 50 pounds. Even if I did do this for a year and put on 100 pounds or 200 pounds, it's still not the same as me growing up overweight. And I totally am honest about that and upfront with people. I don't even pretend to know what it's like to be hundred or 200, 300 pounds overweight or growing up overweight is totally different. This was just a small little experiment to kind of give me a better understanding and it definitely humbled me.

Dave: What did you hypothesize about gaining weight and losing weight before you did this that was completely not true?

Drew: My thoughts going into it were this is just going to be a physical transformation. I'll get fat really quick, maybe I'll learn some lesson, I don't know. But it will just be a physical transformation. I'll get fat, get fit, and say I did it and hopefully I'll learn something. The biggest thing that I learned or took away from this was how much of this transformation or how much of a transformation in general is mental and emotional.

Drew: Before as a trainer, I used to focus so much on the physical because that's all I could relate with, that's all I could connect to was, hey, you're struggling, okay, change up your macros, change up your calories, change up your workouts because that's all I knew how to do because that's all I focused on was the physical. It wasn't until I did this and I realized I had these aha moments during my journey that made me realize that people don't struggle on the physical side. They know they need to eat healthy and exercise. It's the mental and emotional battles that have to deal with day in and day out that stem from things that sometimes aren't easy to overcome from childhood trauma or whatever it is that causes an emotional attachment to food. It's not as simple as saying eat less and work out. That's kind of where I realized how wrong I was with how I was trying to help people, and then now having been through this, changing my focus to the mental and emotional side, that's where people need the most help.

Dave: So if someone comes into you as a personal trainer now and says I'm fat and I want to get in shape. How do you say, actually, this is all mental and emotional. What does that conversation sound like?

Drew: I think it surprises people at first because they're like, wait a second, I thought you were just going to give me meal plans and workouts and calories and that's all I do. I people's perception of health and fitness is still that, is eat less and workout and diet down and restrict myself and make myself suffer to get to a certain weight so that people will like me so that I'll like myself. It's our perception of health and fitness that needs to change. So yes, I do focus on the mental and emotional side, helping people overcome their emotional attachment to food. But there's still a physical approach, they still still need to do the physical part of eat healthy foods, so whether that's keto or paleo or whatever approach we want to do. And same thing with exercise.

Drew: But it doesn't have to be this perception of suffer, suffer, suffer, lose weight so that you'll like yourself and other people will like you. It's learn to love yourself now with where you're at while you're working on a better version of yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Dave: Do you face skepticism and pushback from new clients who come in the door when you tell them that versus get on the rowing machine?

Drew: So here's the thing, I don't really work with clients one on one anymore. Ever since I did this journey, all my content's become digital. But I think when people know who I am now, they know that I'm not just about meal plans and workouts. They know that my message-

Dave: [inaudible 00:21:43]

Drew: Yeah, people know that my message is so much more than that. And I think my goal is to bring empathy to the health and fitness industry. And that for me, I believe a missing component in health and fitness because we've been focusing so much on the physical side. Bringing empathy and understanding I think can really help people listen to the

experts out there because no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care first. That's kind of something I try and live by ever since I did Fit2Fat2Fit.

Dave: I love it that you can say the word empathy as a guy who's been physically fit like that because I used to, as a fat person, I know politically correct, you're supposed to say obese. But actually, guys, I was a fat person, that was how I self identified anyway. I would judge other fat people really, really poorly, which was, it's ironic looking back on it like that. That was really my own self judgment as well. You hate looking that way and feeling like you don't have control over it. I've shifted also to just the same mindset where empathy, because you realize, the person didn't choose to be fat, they didn't want to be fat. They're not saying, I don't care about being fat, I'm going to eat the junk food today. It's that they ran out of willpower or they're dealing with the trauma. It seems like those are always the two things that hit it.

Dave: Do you find other things besides dealing with an emotional pain and just running out of willpower, just like I can't pick up a foot till I eat something, I'm going to eat this? Is there something else going on in there?

Drew: Yeah, I think there's a few things. We've become a product of our environment. As humans, I think we adapt to our environments really quickly, really good. But the problem is our environment and our society nowadays is set up to be convenience, food on demand, whenever you want to and it's just more convenience. Like you said, as humans, it's kind of helped us evolve to become more efficient at certain things.

Drew: But also, there's a downside to that where we become less efficient at things that we're meant to do and that's to move our bodies and be healthy, right? We don't have a built in mechanism to tell us to stop eating these delicious foods because the food taste really good. There's all these dopamine hits from social media and there's all these dopamine hits from like having access to food whenever you want to. It's amazing. You can push a button and have pizza delivered to your door because it tastes really good and it's convenient. It's like, you know what, this pizza's this much, that salad's that much. This fills me up more. I know it's unhealthy for me, but I feel okay, I don't feel like I'm going to die.

Drew: And that's the problem is like, people don't see food as something more than just how's this going to affect my physical appearance. We look at pizza or burgers and fries and think, oh, this is going to make me gain weight. This salad over here is going to make me lose weight. When in reality, food is so much more than just how it affects our weight or not. And so, I'm sure you agree with that. But I think that's what people struggle with as well.

Dave: When you got fat did it, I asked about how other people perceived you at the grocery store and all. But what about your own family? You have kids, your ex wife, I'm sure she was your ex wife at the time. But how did all that shift?

Drew: That's a great question. So I was married at the time. And she, my wife at the time supported me through this process, and she was pregnant even during my journey,

which she loved all the junk food in the house for the first time because she was craving those foods anyways. My daughter was really young, the oldest was two at the time. So, she didn't really understand. She loved me unconditionally no matter what.

Drew: I do remember something that was submitted in my brain when I was at my heaviest and I came home from work. I was working in the medical field at the time, actually stopped training clients for a period of time because I didn't want to be judged. So, I was working full time in the medical field and I came home from work one day and my two year old daughter wanted me to run around the house, chase her, something we did. I remember being exhausted, chafing became an issue, which was something I wasn't prepared for. After about a minute of being out of breath, like chasing her, I had to sit down on the couch and say, hey, Daddy needs to take a break. And she didn't understand, she just wanted me to play. I saw the tears coming out of her eyes like pleading with me to come play with her. And in that moment, I realized how bad it must suck for people who can't play with their kids or their own grandkids, not so much because of their weight, but because of their health.

Dave: Because of their energy, right.

Drew: Exactly. And that's when I started to realize, this is so much more of a mental emotional journey. Even though I was doing this to myself on purpose, even though this was an experiment, the lessons were very profound in those moments where I started to realize that it's so much more mental emotional than ever imagined and I realized how wrong I was.

Drew: What also happened was with my ex wife is, I was super self conscious being overweight. I didn't want her to see me naked. I didn't want to see myself naked because I've never been overweight before and I didn't recognize myself in the mirror. And so, it really affected our relationship in that I wasn't as helpful around the house because of the lack of energy. I would always be complaining, like, oh, I feel so overweight, I feel so fat and I feel so uncomfortable. I don't want to go out. Once you go up by yourself. And even though this was an experiment, it really took a toll on our marriage and she even has a chapter in my book Fit2Fat2Fit, chapter four, where she's very brutally honest about what she had to go through during this experience too.

Dave: Were you ever afraid that you might get stuck that way?

Drew: Absolutely 100%. Because I didn't expect to gain the 76 pounds. I thought maybe 50 or 60. So I totally overshot that goal. At my heaviest, I'm like, you know, this is after going on Dr. Oz and Good Morning America, I'm like, what if I can't lose the weight? Like, all these people are watching me. What if I can't do it? I definitely had my doubts. I have never been this overweight before. I've had to cut weight for wrestling. This is totally different. I had those doubts and those fears but I just had to trust in the process and hope for the best. And fortunately, I did get back to fit. I mean, obviously, if I didn't, I would have to change the name of my brand to like Fit2Fat and Stuck or Fit2Fat and Happy Now or something like that, I don't know. But luckily, I did get back to fit.

Dave: Along the way, what was the biggest roadblock to losing the weight?

Drew: That's a great question. The first two weeks were literally hell, and this is something that I tell people all the time because here I was eating 5000 calories of Cinnamon Toast Crunch and mac and cheese and Mountain Dew to the next day, I had six months to lose it. So I was in a hurry to eating 2000 calories a day of real whole food. Those first two weeks were probably some of the hardest times I've ever experienced in my entire life because my body, even though I was eating vegetables and healthy proteins, my body was fighting back. I was going through these withdrawal symptoms that were super powerful, where I was grumpy, I was moody, I had headaches. My body was craving the high from those foods that I had for the past six months.

Drew: And it clicked for me, this is what my clients have been telling me when I give them a meal plan and they've been eating these processed foods for 30, 40 years, and now it's like, all right, I got to eat these foods that Drew's telling me, they feel awful right away for most people because it doesn't taste good. It doesn't make them feel good. Their body's like hey, forget this, let's go back to this stuff because it feels comfortable. I realized how powerful the emotional attachment to food really is and how addictive food can be. And had I not done this, I never would have realized that. So I can definitely empathize with people that struggle with that transition. It did get better after two weeks but that really opened up my eyes.

Dave: It's one of the reasons that, well, earlier in my weight loss path, I went through a period where I said, all right, one day a week, I'm going to cheat, and I'd have bread and dessert and cheesecake and all that stuff. There's actually a book, the first guy that to talk about this was in the mid 90s, his name is [Rob Fagin 00:29:35]. I said, all right, this is kind of cool. I get to go out and eat all these amazing things. After a couple years of playing out that stuff, I'm like, you know what, the amount of suffering this creates in my life for the next four or five days, because it's like, [inaudible 00:29:52] every Friday night, I'm just going to have just a touch of heroin. It's like, you never lose the craving and it's finally gone by Thursday. And then Friday night, yeah, give me the pizza.

Dave: And so, that two week period, for me, I don't want to ever go through that again. So for me, I never go to the really crappy junk food. But there're odd days when I have more carbs, I might even God forbid, have sugar every now and then. But I don't have 100 grams of sugar and I do it in such a way that I'm not going to feel like crap the next day. That's the thing that they don't teach you when you're heavy, that, oh, I'm just going to reduce my consumption of processed foods. Like actually, you might want to just cut those out altogether because when you eat them, you're going to have to take three times more willpower later to not want even more of them. Did you feel that same way? When you said you were going to go lose the weight, did you just never touch mac and cheese again or did you cheat a little bit?

Drew: So during the journey, I did not cheat, other than I did schedule cheat meals like you were talking about where it was in the plan. Okay, after month one, I'll allow myself to have one cheat meal and I documented it. But what helped me was staying accountable to my audience because people were watching me as this was happening and I didn't want to be, that fear of being in the grocery store with Cinnamon Toast Crunch in my

shopping cart and someone saying, hey, you're the Fit2Fat2Fit guy. Wait a second, aren't you losing weight? Why do you have Cinnamon Toast Crunch in your shopping cart? I was like, I can't let that happen. So I did not cheat other than the scheduled cheat meals that I had.

Drew: But that was my mentality too of like, hey, I don't want to be too restrictive. I need a day to like relax and just eat whatever. But where I'm at now versus back in 2012 when I did this journey is of that same mentality. I'll have healthier versions of these unhealthy foods as much as possible versus, I've never had a box of Cinnamon Toast Crunch since this journey just FYI. Even though every time I pass it in the grocery store it still calls my name, it's still there. I'm like, I see you. I know what you taste like, I know you make me feel good but I can't do it because I'll eat a whole box.

Drew: So I think for some people, it's similar to alcohol, right? You realize you have like one weekend in Vegas and you're 35, 36 and you're like, I'm definitely not 20 anymore, why do I do that to myself. So why not just cut it out altogether or just like try and limit as much as possible or healthier versions of alcohol, those kinds of things.

Dave: When you had your first cheat meal after you started losing weight, what did you do? How did you feel after you had that? Did the brain fog come back or did you just get like high and happy?

Drew: It was during the holidays. I picked the worst time to do this journey. It was during Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years that I was trying to lose the weight. Here's the thing. What I did control was my portion sizes of these cheat meals. So, I didn't like go into a food coma of overdoing it. I did allow myself to have a piece of pumpkin pie but it was half of a slice of pie. So I felt like it was okay. If I had had like the rock size epic cheat meals like he does, there's no way, I would have been like blacked out that night and just like felt miserable for days afterwards. But, I allowed myself to have like small pieces of these like cheat meals.

Dave: That makes sense and it didn't ruin you because you weren't just going crazy. I wish I had learned that earlier. For me, it was, what I did on Friday or Saturday night wouldn't affect me on Sunday but Monday and Tuesday, I was just dragging. It was like, wow, the lag there was a big thing.

Dave: Because you're on a personal development path, in the same way I am, at some point I realized, okay, it's not, for me it wasn't just losing weight. I just wanted to understand why I made really bad decisions in other parts of my life. Bad relationships and lose, how do you lose \$6 million when you're 26. You have to be kind of a jerk to do that. All that kind of stuff, and just understanding what's up in there. I had to do a lot of introspection. You got on that same path. And in your hundred podcast episode in August of, a year before, last 2017, you talked about like here's what's really going on in my life. It takes huge amounts of balls to do that. We'll talk about what you said, but what made you decide like, I'm going to tell you guys what's really going on?

Drew: For me, I felt like I was being called to it after the years of going through this personal development of growing, being more self aware of who I was and who I was meant to be in this life other than the Fit2Fat2Fit guy. There's more to me than just that, and that's why I released the episode was because I did it for myself, I did it for me, because the old me never would have had the courage or balls to talk about these things. I did it to show myself that I can do these hard things, even though it's scary as hell, which it was scary as hell to release that episode 100 to the public. For me, I felt like I was called to do it for myself but also in hopes to help other people that were going through something similar because I suffered so much from this experience and I knew that there was other people in the religion I grew up in, the culture that I grew up in, that feel the same way.

Drew: I remember one of the things that gave me courage, other than reading Brene Brown's books Daring Greatly and Rising Strong which helped me eventually get to that point, was I remember Terry Crews opened up and talked on the Facebook Live video where he, the big Terry Crews, big musly guy, just a good dude, he opened up and talked about pornography addiction. I'm like, if that guy can open up and talk about something that I've struggled with, why can't I eventually do the same thing.

Drew: So eventually, I had the courage and it felt like the timing was right for me to open up and talk about my story and own my story. I really feel like vulnerability is a strength even though my entire life I believed it was a weakness.

Dave: You just kind of put it all out there. One episode, life after porn addiction, affairs and lies, it does get better. It's actually an act of service to do something like that. A lot of my own work has been doing neurofeedback or other personal development things in small groups. There's something really magic about hearing someone else talk about their own shit. You realize, wow, I'm so happy I'm not that guy or much more likely, I have that same stuff or have that same level of stuff. When one person is willing to talk about it, it makes it safe for other people to talk about it. Then once you talk about a problem, you can start to solve the problem and it actually happens much more on a societal level. So it takes great leadership to be able to go and do that.

Drew: Thank you, I appreciate that.

Dave: What was going on? You've gained and lost the weight, you're growing your business, you're becoming more successful. What was going on behind the scenes?

Drew: A lot of people just saw me as the Fit2Fat2Fit guy on TV and they had no idea what was going on behind the scenes. So all that stems from and I'll condense this because you could go listen to the episode 100 if you want to but-

Dave: Sure, we'll put a link to it.

Drew: Awesome. In a nutshell, basically, my perception was that I was never good enough and I was a failure. The guilt and shame of if I messed up, if I had a weakness like pornography, for example, I was taught was evil, if I had that as an addiction, I felt like a

failure. And so, rather than people know about that, and I felt like if my parents or my church leaders found out about it, there would be some type of a punishment, right? At least my perception as a kid was I'm going to get punished in some way.

Drew: So I developed this habit from a very young age to just not talk about those weaknesses and pretend like they didn't exist and just internalize it, which was very unhealthy, especially as a young teenage kid growing up in the 90s who had access to pornography whenever you wanted to. But the guilt and shame was always there because that was my perception of the religion I grew up in.

Drew: So I grew up hating who I was because of those weaknesses. And so I hid them even from my wife at the time. And because I saw myself as a failure, I felt like I did failure like things where I eventually had an affair, because I'm like, well, you're already failure, you already messed up, why not do these other things that will sabotage yourself because inside, you hate who you are. But on the outside, I could fake it. If you watched me on Jay Leno or Dr. Oz, you could see me as a pretty confident guy but on the inside by myself, it was kind of dark and I didn't like who I was because of that fact that I just couldn't be perfect.

Drew: This all led to my ex wife finding out about this. Obviously, her heart was broken. I was disgusted with myself. It wasn't until I met a life coach who totally changed the game for me. She was the only person that I met up until that point to help me learn how to love myself. And once I learned how to love myself, everything else shifted. That relationship with myself started to develop. I kind of reconnected with who I truly was. I had to let go of defining myself by my past. That's one of the lessons I learned was, I don't need to define myself by this past. The story that I was making up in my head didn't need to become my reality. I learned that we have the power to change our perception and change our story and that's how you change your life. You realize that the stories you tell yourself aren't true and if you believe that, you can start to believe that, you can make up your own story and that new story can become your truth.

Drew: And so, I learned how to, like I said, love myself. This life coach definitely helped me get to a place where I was finally good with my past and I didn't have anything to hide anymore. Then reading Brene Brown's books like about vulnerability really helped me get to a place where I had the courage to share all of this.

Dave: It's funny, you said something about believing the voice is in your head. One of the things I learned on my own path is that I have amazing powers of self deception. We have a feeling and then we make up a story about it and we totally think it's true. You've talked on your site about some of the books you like. It's funny, Byron Katie's work, Loving What is, I'm actually interviewing Byron Katie I think tomorrow.

Drew: Really? Wow, that is so cool.

Dave: Which is super cool. But her whole thing is just whatever stories in your head, whether it's a positive or negative one, flip it around and see if that might also be true. And pretty soon you realize, you know, to have full awareness of what's going on, you might

want to tune down that level of belief in your own stories so that you can be a little bit more objective about things.

Dave: So you went down that path. And by the way, your influential list of books, you also have The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz, which is another fantastic book about language. Not language, but one of the four ... How did that book affect your ability or willingness to come out and say, hey, this is what I'm working on?

Drew: The two agreements that stuck out to me the most were don't make assumptions and don't take anything personally. I couldn't stand it if someone didn't like me and I wanted to show them on the outside that I was likable and that I could be this perfect person. So whether it was for my parents, my coaches and sports or my church leaders, or whoever it was, I wanted to do whatever I could to be liked because on the inside, here I was like a hurt kid who hated who he was. So he was looking for other outside sources of being accepted by other people.

Drew: And so, once I learned how to not take things personally, for me, that helped save me and changed my life because when I come out with a story, if someone's going to say something negative about me which totally could have happened, I had to be ready for that. And I felt like it was in a place where, you know what, if someone comes out and attacks me because of this story and talking about my truth, I can't do anything about it. I can't change their perception of me. That's their perception of how they see themselves. Everything is a reflection, everything is a mirror. And so I learned that hurt people hurt people. And I didn't want to be a hurt person anymore. And so that helped me to have the courage to eventually talk about this. Those two are the ones that stick out the most. Definitely, the other two are important as well, but for me, those ones really resonated on, don't make assumptions about people and don't take anything personally.

Dave: I think you followed the other, one of the agreements, probably the one that is my favorite, the one about having integrity in your word because you're like, hey, I'm saying all this stuff but if I don't say what's actually happening, it's out of integrity. You also performed that one of the Four Agreements, if it wasn't as high as your list, which is really admirable. You talk about something and I got to ask you this.

Drew: Yeah.

Dave: You're standing here, you've got nice traps, you're super fit now. You're basically a jock, not to put jocks down and put you down. You meet the physical archetype of like a super fit, healthy guy. And you're saying, I had to learn to love myself.

Drew: Yeah.

Dave: Now, there's a substantial portion of people in the country hear guys saying that and they're like, what a total loser. Like, oh my God, what's up with this guy. When you stand there on the air right now and you say, I had to learn to love myself, do you feel that little twinge of oh my God, I'm going to be judged for saying that?

Drew: No. I used to when I first started to say it. I think when I first started to say it I was little bit insecure because we're domesticated from a very young age when it comes to how we're supposed to be, who we're supposed to be from our parents, our friends, our teachers, our coaches, TV shows, movies, whatever it is, we're shaped to, hey, you're supposed to be like this, don't be like that. And for me, I had to break free from that. I felt like I had to realize that I am who I am and I'm proud of who I am. I actually like who I am for the first time in my life. You could go through your life hating yourself but if you fall in line with everyone else, that's cool if that's who you want to be. But for me, life's too short to live an inauthentic life. And so for me, I feel like living authentically is a way to be fulfilled in this life.

Drew: A lot of people chase after success but no fulfillment because they're empty inside and they're not living an authentic life to who they really are. That's my perception, at least and that's what has helped me, maybe it'll help other people, I don't know, I can't control that. But my hope is that, whether it's through self love as a man and embracing vulnerability as a man, that's okay. Follow what feels true to you. If it doesn't feel true to you or right to you, then that's okay. For me, that's just who I am.

Dave: It's awesome that you've gotten to the point where you can say that and just be good with it. I'm guessing that you probably know Lewis Howes, from the Mask of Masculinity. And Lewis is a friend as well. I really appreciate men who are in powerful positions of influence who are able to say, you know, I had some serious doubts, the voice in my head was mean and I actually didn't like myself, I didn't love myself. And just to admit that because I think it's an epidemic, not just among man, just among humans.

Dave: I don't know if it's worse than it was 100 years ago because we weren't alive then but there's definitely some weird stuff going on there and just saying, hey, I'm going to take on that, learn new skill, just like learning a new language or learning how to deadlift or whatever else. And it's a practice. I think it's fantastic that you went from, hey, I want to see what's going on with my fat lazy clients and that ended up with you on this path of oh man, I'm going to have to love myself because it's an emotional problem as much as a physical problem.

Dave: It's an incredible thing to achieve and you did this in about, what, eight years?

Drew: Yeah.

Dave: eight, nine years?

Drew: Yeah.

Dave: Why were you able to do this so quickly because for a lot of people, this is a 30 year journey?

Drew: Yeah, that's a great question. I think, for me, it had to be totally, almost hit rock bottom, like being broken down completely. Like when the affair happened and the shame and the guilt and the divorce was inevitable, I felt like at that point your back's up against

the wall and you get to decide. And so for me, I had to decide which path do I take. And as soon as I had that first session with the life coach where I learned how to love myself, it was like 100 pounds was taken off me. And I felt like, okay, I'm open to these new outside sources of things that I never knew existed because the religion I grew up in, it was all your answers are here in this little space. You don't need to go outside of this little space to get answers. But once I realized, this right here saved my life outside of here, what else is out here? What else feels true to me.

Drew: And so I was on this like discovery of what felt true to me. And that was where I started to read books. Like you said, I was a jock. I didn't read books growing up. Here I am, I got here reading Brene Brown and like crying. From there, I was open to new experiences, new things that I never would have been open to before but it took me having to be broken down first and foremost and be really honest with myself, like, okay, I really need to change. And so, I think sometimes, like when you get punched in the face, those are the best lessons. Everything happens for a greater good, even if it's something bad like an affair or cheating or lying.

Drew: At the end of the day, it's for a greater good. And I realized that life happens for us, not to us. If I could look at these experiences like that, then I can see it for okay, what am I supposed to learn here, how am I going to grow? And yes, sometimes you're going to get punched in the face by life or God or the universe and how are you going to react. Are you just going to sit there and play the victim or are you going to try and make a change and learn something from that and grow and progress and move forward. That's kind of I think what helps me.

Dave: How did you use this new sort of public perception and just the awareness that you grew to go back and repair your relationship with your ex wife and you're both still parents, you still work together. What was that like?

Drew: Luckily, she was going through the same similar journey, like on her own and I was going through my journey by myself. And I think as we came together as co-parents of our two daughters, we had these new tools to interact with each other, where we let go of our ego, we didn't take things personally, we weren't out to hurt the other person. We were both in this to, I want my kids to be happy, you know, we both want our kids to be happy and the way to do that is let go of our ego. I think that's ultimately what we had to do. So luckily, she was on the same page. If she wasn't on the same page, this would have been 100 times harder. But I'm very fortunate, very blessed that we still maintain that good relationship where we're still good friends, I'm friends with her boyfriend, he's good to my girls. My girls are in a happy place where they see both of us. We can go to birthday parties together and there's no drama. I wouldn't have any other way.

Drew: And so, definitely feel very fortunate, very blessed. I know that's not everyone's situation. But it's something that we both have to consistently put an effort to maintain.

Dave: That's beautiful. Fortunately, you both are willing to do the work. I've seen cases where only one parent starts working on themselves and the other one doesn't and it can be really painful. Part of your trick there was you did the work but you're fortunate.

Drew: Yeah.

Dave: What else have you changed in the past year since you just opened up your inner life? What's different now?

Drew: Yeah, that's a great question. So the way I see health and fitness now and helping people transform, because I'm a huge advocate of the keto diet, it's changed my life. I've been able to change a lot of other people's lives, is being able to tie that type of physical transformation to the mental and emotional and spiritual lessons that I learned from Fit2Fat2Fit and going through divorce and the affair and porn addiction. And tying that all together to really show people what true transformation is. Just because you lose weight and just because you get skinny or get a six pack doesn't equate to happiness, right? Tony Robbins said it best, success without fulfillment is the ultimate failure.

Drew: So my goal being in the health and fitness industry is to bring all these tools to the game. Yes, the physical tools, which everyone wants, right, that's the sexy thing of like, what's the newest diet and keto is so popular. That's cool. But unless you understand how to transform yourself mentally, emotionally and spiritually, that doesn't mean you're gonna be fulfilled by having the body that you want. Yes, it'll make you happier a certain degree, but if you're empty inside, I think life's too short to chase after these outside sources of happiness without finding a way to be fulfilled. And I think that's where the complete transformation comes into play. And that's kind of what I'm trying to do by bringing empathy to the game of health and fitness with the physical tools but also the mental, emotional, spiritual, tying it all together.

Dave: One of the things that was actually a big thesis in Headstrong, my last book was that when you do stuff to have more energy, keto diet is definitely a big one there, it frees up a lot of extra energy for willpower and that you can use that energy for personal development. But then if you're not making enough energy because you're storing a lot of it as fat, it is really hard to do the grueling personal development work when you're on junk food because your brain just doesn't have what it takes. And you're kind of stuck. Is that your experience as well?

Drew: 100% and that's why I feel like it all ties together. It's hard to just transform yourself spiritually without transforming yourself physically and vice versa. But I see it all the time. People who are really religious will not focus on their bodies and say they're really spiritual. And I see people in the fitness industry that are like, oh, I look ripped and shredded and that's cool but there's nothing else there on the mental, emotional and spiritual side that's helping them progress forward and be fulfilled.

Dave: Yeah. You can be hungry animal consciousness because you're working out all the time and you're at 2% body fat or whatever. You're probably pushing some survival buttons biologically. You can flip that over and just be the I lay on a couch all the time and think about meditation and meditate and all but you can't do it very long because your brain fails.

Dave: When I do the 40 Years of Zen program, the neurofeedback programs, five day intensive thing, if we don't get people ketones and mitochondrial stuff, they just can't do enough personal development per day to get through that five days. It's a requirement. It's like you can't run a marathon, can't maybe isn't fully accurate. It's exceptionally difficult to run a marathon on Pop Tarts although some people probably do that.

Drew: Some people, yeah.

Dave: But it's much more work, we'll put it that way. If you're doing a marathon, which is what it is to do a massive personal development breakthrough as a marathon in your brain, it might make sense to eat right, to get that done, because it's that level of effort. But it's not recognized societally as much effort as it really is, which is kind of cool.

Dave: All right, what else do you do now besides diet and exercise? Do you have affirmations, do you meditate, gratitude lists? Kind of walk me through your personal development top tools there.

Drew: So I'm a huge believer in morning routine and sticking to that as much as possible because I feel like that's, those work like the exercises you need to do for the mental, emotional, and spiritual side. Just like you need to go to the gym and exercise or you need to eat healthy. For me, waking up at a certain time. Meditating first, positive affirmations next, gratitude list next, gratitude list next, I feel like sticking to that has transformed my life in so many ways than what I used to think helps me before which was focusing on health and nutrition. Coming from a religious background, I did that but that didn't give me what meditation, positive affirmations and gratitude list can give me nowadays.

Drew: And so for me, sticking with that, staying consistent has definitely transformed my life in so many other ways. And that's what helps me to have that fulfillment while I'm working on a better version of myself, learning to love myself where I'm at while I'm trying to better myself and progress forward.

Dave: Drew, this is really a powerful story. You go from what's going on inside the mind of a fat person all the way to what's going on now with you. And I've got one more question for you.

Drew: Sure.

Dave: Based on this whole life's path, all the things you've learned, if someone came to you tomorrow and said, I want to perform better at everything I do as a human being, what are the three most important piece of advice you'd have for me? What would you offer them, just three?

Drew: Just three. Just in general, for me, it includes something that has to do with being out in nature on a weekly basis at the very minimum. Being out in nature as much as possible, whether it's the ocean, the mountains, hiking, whatever it is. Getting out of this

environment we live in and reconnecting with who we're supposed to be and being out in nature.

Drew: The second thing would be reading books, listening to audiobooks, listen to podcasts, downloading this information that we have at the tip of our fingers. It's revolutionary what podcasts and audiobooks and books can do for you in changing your perception of yourself or your situation you're in.

Drew: And then the third thing I would say is, hold on a second, let me think about this. Because those are the first two good ones. The third thing honestly is developing real relationships with the people you love. And I think no matter how much of a bio hacker or fitness nerd you are, all that is good. But if you can't have real meaningful relationships in life, I think that's where people struggle with and especially in our society. So developing real meaningful relationships and that requires having good relationship with yourself first and foremost and opening up and being vulnerable so you have real authentic relationships and that's what leads to a meaningful relationship.

Drew: So, getting out in nature, reading books and having real authentic relationships in life will do wonders for your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Dave: Beautiful list. Drew thanks for being on Bulletproof Radio. Your website is fit2fat2fit.com. Your book is by the same title. Appreciate you.

Drew: Thanks Dave, really appreciate that.

Dave: If you liked today's episode, you know what to do. Head on over and check out Drew's work. He's got a really unusual mindset here because you get the physical and you get the mental, emotional, spiritual side of things. You can't do one without the other or at least if you try, it's a lot more work and you won't get as much return on the energy you put into it. And if you like his work, or you like my work, practice gratitude by going over to Amazon or going to iTunes and leaving a review that says that it was worth your time. So he and I put countless thousands of hours into writing a book and podcasts and creating stuff. If it does something good for you, give us 10 seconds to say thanks. We count on you. Thanks.