

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio. A state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asbury. Today's cool fact of the day is that your brain activity is as unique as your fingerprint. And new research has come up that suggests your brain activity could be used like a fingerprint and scientists use functional MRI or fMRI to create connectivity profiles that allowed researchers to identify brain activities of more than a 100 people. Now scientists use individual brain connectivity to give them specific insights about your intelligence or personality and, by the way, at 40 Years of Zen, we can teach your brain to have new connections it didn't have before which is part of what we do with one of the many different forms of neurofeedback we have there.

Dave: But here they said it has implications for how scanning brains could be used to develop individualized care. But I predict, 20 years from now, it's not like you're gonna need stickers on your head or electrodes the way we do it now. You're gonna be able to pick these signals up from a distance. Which means you'll walk in front of your iPhone 20 years from now and it won't have to recognize your face 'cause it recognized your brain. How cool is that right? Or scarier than hell? One of the two. You decide.

Dave: Today's guest is a high performance psychologist who works in the trenches in high stakes environments where there's no luxury for mistakes or hesitation or failure to respond. We're talking with people from every major sport, Olympians, Fortune 100 CEOs, as well as some of the biggest names you've heard of in terms of artists and musicians. He's a revered speaker on human performance and you've probably seen him in print and TV and things like that.

Dave: He co-founded Compete to Create with Seahawks' head coach, Pete Carroll, who built a framework to enhance high performance cultures by focusing on mindset training for individual people in cultures. I'm talking about none other than Michael Gervais, who has spent many, many years unpacking and decoding how great performers use their minds to pursue just the very boundaries of what we're capable of as humans. And he runs a podcast called "Finding Mastery" where he conducts interviews on that. So you can see why'd I wanna have him on Bulletproof Radio, because I care a lot about this. The idea is look, you finally figured out what to eat, you finally figured out how to turn your brain on, you got a lot of energy, what are you gonna do with this newfound energy? Well, let's get some good ideas from Michael. Michael, welcome to the show.

Michael: Thank you for having me. And, you know, I've listened to your podcast for a long time and really enjoyed your point of view and the guests and what you've teased out of them. So thank you.

Dave: Well, thank you for listening. I'm always honored when I find that someone's listening to the podcast and I'm pretty non-denominational about that. I was sitting in an airplane and the stewardess walks up and goes, "Look what I have?" And it was a copy of the Bulletproof Diet. And she's like, "I listen to your show." I was like, "Whoa, someone listens to my show." Because I mean I see the numbers, and you see the numbers of Finding Mastery. You know how many people, but it's not personalized. So any time someone says they've heard it, I'm like, "Hey, that's kinda cool." So I appreciate that you

listened. It actually matters to me. And I always appreciate reviews to. Just it makes it real, right?

Michael: Very cool.

Dave: Do you deal with that on Finding Mastery? You're sort of like, I'm interviewing someone, I'm having a good time, but then, you don't really know that people are listening? Like you know cognitively, but you don't have a-

Michael: Yeah, I mean I think the whole idea for conversations that are working to get to the source is that you've gotta get past all of the media mind, all of thoughts of approval, and to really get into that place where you're helping other person, or in this case, me and myself is just working to get to the truth, the authentic truth of what we understand and what we don't understand. And so, yes to do that, we've gotta fade away, you know, that there are lots of people listening. And so that, yeah, it's a little bit of a challenge.

Dave: Now you call yourself a curious adventure-preneur. What the heck is that?

Michael: Yeah, well, okay, so I mean, it's not hard to put those three thoughts together but curious. Okay. So the beginner's mind and really wanting to learn and understand and do so at a progressive clip. And then adventure-preneur is a hyphenated word where I really do value the entrepreneur venture and the frontier that is required to do that well. And I've spent my life in the back country working out and not always just the back country, but I've spent my life effort working with people in the back country, living in the back country to better understand how do people operate when there's swift and harsh consequences.

Michael: And so, that adventure part of life, you know I don't see life as a journey, I see it as an adventure and I think that those three words matter to me. And so that's how I frame it up.

Dave: Okay. That makes a lot of sense and you talk about not having the luxury of second guessing things like that. One of the things that caught my attention is that you worked with, or you worked on the Stratos Mission, the guy with Red Bull who jumped out of a hot air balloon from the very edge of space and all that, which was from a 128,000 feet. Crazy stuff. What did you do as a high performance psychologist when you're working with Felix? I'm not even gonna try and say his last name, Baumgartner, but it's probably French, so I probably said it wrong.

Michael: No, that was it, yeah. So I'm classically trained as a psychologist with a specialization, if you will, in sport and performance. And then, there's no such thing really as a sub-specialty, but that sub-specialty would be consequential or high stakes environments. And so, what do we do? We meet the person where they are. We understand the framework that they're working from, so understand his framework. And, by the way Dave, this is all, anything I'll talk about is already publicly available.

Dave: Of course, yeah. I mean, as a psychologist, you're bound by certain things you're not allowed to say. If you're not allowed to say it, just tell me, that's cool.

Michael: Yeah, no, for sure. They just do a 30 for 30 on the psychology of his jump which, you know, shared much of what we're talking about here. And so what do we do? We figure out like what is the sturdy, nimble, flexible framework that he wants to create to do this thing that's never been done before. And if you're gonna do stuff that no one has ever done, let alone you yourself, that's a thin herd, tip of the arrow type of experience for people where there's not a whole lot of data points to bounce off of. So essentially what happened for him is that he had an intense, anxious response to being in the suit.

Michael: And we could call it claustrophobia, but it was just an intense, anxious response. So we just used good science, walked through systematic desensitization, walked through flooding protocols to help him extinguish fear. And just backfilled with any mental skills that would be able to, that he would need to be able to employ to be able to do something that like was incredibly dangerous.

Dave: So what was the number one thing that helped with claustrophobia response like kinda the top thing of that list?

Michael: Well, it's not lost on you probably that a systematic desensitizing to a phobic response is, the system itself, is, I think the good stuff, right?

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: So we could say that the tactic of breathing or the awareness of self talk are important skills, which they are. But it's the scientific method that you walk back by scaling up on a piece of paper from one to 100, you know, what at one, what is the smallest trigger you have thinking about the response and then all the way up to a 100. Like what is the full panic experience feel like? And just listing, you know, every 10 or so increments, what are those triggers?

Michael: And so that, in of itself, is a really strong, concrete, mechanical way to help somebody externalize this internal sensation of fear.

Dave: So the hack was really just sort of exposure therapy for lack of a better word.

Michael: Well, yeah, that's what it is. Those are the two types of exposure therapy. Flooding or systematic desensitization. And I wouldn't call it a hack, I would call it like, that's a lot of work now.

Dave: Oh yeah.

Michael: And it's an incredible investment that requires incredible vulnerability, incredible courage, and a very disciplined approach to backfilling the mental skills to be able to do the thing that you want to do. And I think that that's such an eloquent marker for so

many of us. You know those are, vulnerability, courage, and a disciplined, almost relentless approach to develop the skills necessary.

Dave: That relentlessness is really important. And I admit, I was baiting you by calling it a hack because I've heard, as some of our podcasters, like I don't like hacks. And hacks aren't real. And I look at it as like you find me the fastest path to get to the results that I want and that's the hack. And if there is a faster way to get the results, that's the new hack, right? Where it's about excellence in choosing techniques that save you time and energy, right? And so like I would have also thought, being an untrained psychologist. In other words, not a psychologist.

Michael: Right.

Dave: I would say well, "Hey, like would EMDR work for that?" Like is there a faster path to turn off the inner response. And for people listening, EMDR is Eye Movement Disassociative Response. It's way for certain traumas to [inaudible 00:10:00] to stop responding to them very quickly. But the idea here is, otherwise you're like, "Oh I'm a bad person because I have claustrophobia or whatever it is. I'm weak or it's a moral failing. Or I'm not good enough." Or whatever the voice in your head says, right? But to go from there. Like, okay, is exposure therapy gonna be the fastest path or something else, but when I'm using the word hack it's like hey, it means you have control of it and that's what hackers do, they take over control and so sometimes people respond negatively to the word but I actually wanna go deep with you on okay, like what is the issue with the term, "hack" given that context?

Michael: Yeah, cool. Well I think the principles are beautiful that you just said. Like what is the most efficient way to grow, to change? Like that is what I think about like progression and like really committing and organizing one's life for that aim is rare. It's hard. And what I've found is that the word "hack", to me, now this is just me, and I'm not suggesting that both of us are not looking for the most efficient ways to find change.

Dave: Oh yeah.

Michael: But the word "hack" conjures up a shortcut. It conjures up a path that is not willing or wanting to do the hard yards and so there's, to me there is no shortcut to self discovery. There's no shortcut to awareness and mindfulness. There is no shortcut to that deep, rich ability to authentically express yourself in any environment. Matter of fact, it's the opposite of a hack. You know the hack is to, in your words, is to have the most efficient way to grow. Got it. But the most efficient way to grow, coupled with the desire and the crave to be in difficult situations. And when you can get those two things to hang together, to coalesce, there's something really powerful that takes place for the adventure or the path of let's call it something really heavy, which is wisdom.

Dave: Yep.

Michael: There's just no hack for wisdom. Now there's effective ways to learn. You know? But anyways, so that's where I sit on that term and then, you know, so.

Dave: But it's interesting you talk about facing uncomfortable situations, and certainly growth is important. And sometimes pain is a part of that. Like I decided having weighed 300 lbs in the past and really having had some issues with just being willing to do almost anything except be alone. Like I'll just go fast in a cave with no one around for 10 miles for four days. So I'll just deal with hunger and loneliness, you know. Okay, not exactly a super comfortable situation. But a meaningful way to deal with whatever's going on and make sure that you've got a handle on it. However, I could also have gone to a psychologist, Lucy from Peanuts, and paid my nickel. And sat on a couch for 20 years talking about those things, right? And still been on the path. Still been feeling the pain. But not gotten the same results. And it's looking for that word that says, "All right. How did I do it with less work? And I'm even gonna say less pain?" Because I like to think, and I wanna get your idea on this, Michael, if someone came to you tomorrow and said, "Look, I can snap my fingers and make you fully enlightened with all the wisdom in the world, right? No cost to you. Do you want it?" What would you say?

Michael: Sure.

Dave: Right. But then you avoided all the pain, all the struggle, all the learning, all the wisdom, right?

Michael: Right. Now then it is what to do with that wisdom.

Dave: Yeah, of course.

Michael: Right, so if my answer was yes, but I've got this deep crave, this real ache to express and to authentically help people do the same, then I'm gonna do something with it that is, right?

Dave: Oh, of course.

Michael: So I've been, so let me flashback why I said yes so easily is that Buddha said something really powerful and said "Enlightenment can take lifetimes or the next moment. So keep working." So when you say, can you have it, I've been working my life for that so why would I say no?

Dave: Exactly.

Michael: Now but if somebody hasn't been working their life and they're like, "Hey I could give you whatever, a gold medal, enlightenment, call it whatever you want, and you don't have to work for it." Well that's gonna end up like in a drawer somewhere where it's like not valued at all because you didn't earn it. And it's, you're dilemma is multi-faceted which I appreciate and there's a texture to it, right? Which is I don't think, and this is now me putting on like a theoretical approach, not just like Mike's idea. But my understanding, and I can't point to rich data on it, but it's more of a culmination of insights from research is that people change because of pain. And the removal of pain is actually a problem in friendship, it's a problem in co-dependency and it can be a problem in life coaching as well as psychology.

Michael: So the best trained professionals and the most incredible friends do not take the pain away. They help you understand where the pain come from. They sit with you in the pain. They share the pain with you and then stand by your side as you're working through it for some sort of insight. And so, you know, like it's textured.

Dave: It's textured. The people that take away the pain are quite often co-dependent, right?

Michael: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. And we do funny things to ourselves to take our own pain. We'll drink. We'll flip on social media, TV, we'll talk trash about other people.

Dave: Listen to podcasts, oh wait.

Michael: Yeah, right. I mean we do things ourselves to avoid pain. Like it's hard. Like it's really frickin' hard and there's no shortcut for that. And I think that you would appreciate this insight is that the best performers, which I mean when I say performer, I'm talking about a thinker and a doer. The best thinkers and doers in the world manage stress better than anyone else.

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: So they are better at stress. They understand how to now just cope with but to use it and stress is, as you know, distress and use stress, distress is hard. Use stress is wonderful, still challenging and the best performers in the world are able to manage stress better than the rest of the us. And so I just say that because that's, for most of us, that's what pain is.

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: Stress.

Dave: Is that a learned skill? That stress management?

Michael: There's a biological component to it. You know, there's some neuro peptide Y that people are born with at different variances. There's some genetic coding that we think could be at play. And, as you well respect omni genetics and genetics and it's a wild west right now, so we don't exactly know, but I would put my stake in the ground that there's some genetic coding there, there's some environmental stuff and there's some learned behaviors, right?

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: And so, all of that does impact our psychology, right? And our psychology, what's wonderful about psychology is that we can change it. It's like software. Like we can change it.

Dave: Some of the studies are really interesting. If your mother was exceptionally stressed before and during conception and pregnancy, your stress resilience biologically,

epigenetically will be set lower than someone else. Or potentially higher in some circumstances where it's a compensatory thing. Right? But it has an effect that is outside of our immediate conscious control, but it's something that you probably can change epigenetically and certainly with the right supplements, training, mindset practice, and all that stuff. My experience is that you can take someone who is not resilient and is not able to tolerate stress and with careful conditioning, programming, changing the environment, you can make someone highly resilient. Have you had that same experience?

Dave: I mean you're a psychologist around high performance. Different path than I have, or do you think there's people that are just, they're just a delicate flower. They're always gonna be a delicate flower. That's how it is.

Michael: Yeah, I mean, yeah, there's some genetic coding like that we need to embrace.

Dave: Okay.

Michael: And I would not suggest that if I was, if you were, let's say, you had this incredible mass and you are, let's say 275 lbs., and nine percent body fat and a large amount of Type II, fast twitch fibers, I wouldn't suggest, and nor would you suggest that invest in running marathons. So this gen ... like matching, knowing your genetic coding, matching that into an intelligent environment that's gonna support and challenge you. And then this relentless uncommon investment in the internal world is like, that's, there's no secrets by the way, right? But those are three key elements to finding your very best.

Dave: It's true that focusing on your strengths, that's one of the laws that came out in Game Changers is if you're built to be a power lifter don't be a triathlete. You're not gonna like your life and, in fact, I had an Olympic medalist and CEO of a DNA testing company on the podcast recently and it was funny, 'cause I was two percent better than the Olympian in terms of the Type II muscle fibers so I'm built to like break things and pick them up but not run very far. So if there's a tiger chasing me, I'm supposed to pick up the triathlete, break them over my knee, and throw them to the tigers so I can get away, it's very clear.

Michael: It's very clear. Good to know that.

Dave: But I was a little better than the athlete who could kick my ass, but the guy who was the most ripped was the CEO of the company and he was totally 90% genetically supposed to be an endurance runner but he had bigger shoulders and biceps than the Olympic athlete or me. And like, that's weird because we do have some control there. What do you do when someone comes in and they're like, "I wanna be the world's best." And you're like, "You're not genetically set up for that." Or like "That's gonna be way more of a challenge for you than a normal person." What do you say to them?

Michael: You know, it's interesting, I don't know 'cause I don't spend time with them.

Dave: You like fire them as patients. Tell them to get out. Okay, good.

Michael: Yeah, I well, I think it's probably useful to give a little bit of a landscape. The way that I organize my life is in working laboratories and I have one or two clients a month, that's it.

Dave: Okay.

Michael: And we spend eight hours in one day and it's non-conventional. The traditional model doesn't for me which is like this 45 minute pay as you go, like it just doesn't work so it's an intense, exhausting day to get to insight with a real plan to invest in growth and so I'm fortunate at this point that the people that I'm spending time with are already tip of the arrow performers and they're saying, "Hey listen, I wanna grow. I'm still, I'm already, like the gentleman I just spent with, he announced that he's going on tour and it sold out in 22 minutes. Like across the globe. They're already exceptional at what they do and so what my experience has been is that most people are looking for peace.

Dave: Yes.

Michael: They're looking for contentment. They're looking for a better way of living in the doing that they're doing. And there's a model that I think that we're staring at right now which has been passed on I think by at least two generations. Like our grandparents, if you will. Our great grandparents is that we need to do more to be more.

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: And I need to do extraordinary to be extraordinary and I'm watching right now, right in front of my eyes, the best in the world flip that model and they're saying, "No, no, no, that's not what it is. I need to be more. I want to be more. And let the doing flow from there. I wanna be more grounded, more present, more authentic, more creative, more expressive, and let all of my doing, all of my training, if you will, flow from that orientation." And it's refreshing to hear those conversations from people that you would think are primarily externally driven to be the best. And they're saying, "No, no, no, I wanna be my best."

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: And it is, that in of itself, it's kind of begging the question that you ask like what do you say? What I'm hearing is that people want to be their best, not the best. But they're already the best.

Dave: Right. And they're committed to the personal improving, not comparing themselves to others.

Michael: Yeah. And I think there's a disavowment. There's an emptiness when you're chasing the temporary and then you achieve the temporary, like you're on the podium, national anthems, you know? Or you got the million dollar, first millions or whatever and it's like, "Okay, is that it?" "Is that?" "Oh God, what am I doing?" And there's a game changing moment for me where this young, it was early in my career about 17 years ago now and

this brilliant, little gymnast had the national anthem playing. She was top podium and she was crying and the whole world thought that she was the icon of achievement. And that, "Oh my gosh, she's really feeling it on the podium." And when she got off, she said, "Did you see I was crying?" I said, "Yeah." And she said, "I'm not different. I thought that this was gonna change me and I'm still miserable."

Dave: I love that.

Michael: And so, yeah. There's a dark road, there's a dark path. There's a dark side to performance for sure. Elite performance.

Dave: I've had two situations in my life that were like that. The first, I was 22, maybe 23 and I sold the first thing that was ever sold over the internet. It was a tshirt that said "Caffeine my drug of choice." And we didn't have the name ecommerce. No one had ever done it and I got in Entrepreneur Magazine. They're like, "Hey, this fat kid in a double extra large shirt is selling stuff over this inter something or another." No one's ever heard of the internet back then and historically like oh that's really cool. At that time, like I'm just trying to pay for my college. I got nothing so this is a cool thing. And so I'm like, I'm famous. Like I've been in Entrepreneur Magazine. I'm getting phone calls from reporters all the time and I was still anxious and miserable and didn't even know I was anxious but I was not happy at all. It didn't change anything.

Dave: So I was like fame doesn't do it. And like I don't care about fame. And then 26, I make six million bucks. And I told a friend. And this is in Game Changers, both of these, the new book. But I told a friend at the same company. We all made more money than we had any business making. Like I'll be happy when I make 10, right? Because I was no happier with the money and so when I look at the results from these, almost 500 people I interviewed in Game Changers, I asked them that question that you've heard on the show, the three most important pieces of advice.

Dave: Not one person said fame, power or money. Like it didn't even rate one blip on there, right? And man I wish someone had told me that when I was 20 because I was absolutely convinced that those things were gonna be the key to happiness and it sounds like your athlete, your Olympic athlete was saying, "I'm gonna get the gold medal and it's going to make me happy or it's gonna give me peace or give me whatever state I want." And it did nothing.

Michael: Yeah, and that's, you know, it almost feels though, saying and talking about it in this way can almost feel elitist in some ways. And I don't ever want that to be the case.

Dave: No it's not meant to be. It's when you've actually done it, it isn't what you think it is, right?

Michael: Right. Yeah. And then, but if you haven't done it, and you are struggling, and you look across the classroom. Or you look across wherever you are and you see people with nicer shoes. You see people with a nicer car. With a nicer home. A more luxurious, happy looking life, that at some level, it really is healthy to want better.

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: And so, there's a trap of always wanting better. And something happens in the thin herd of rare space for performers is that if you don't give up the search at some level, you're constantly chasing the next thing. The next, I don't know, the next gadget or thing that will help you be better and there's a healthy part to wanting to be better. And there's also a really important part to say, "Wait everything I need is already inside me." And it doesn't feel that way when you look and you're like, "But I got broken shoes and my car barely starts and fill in the blanks. And I've got a leaky roof." So life is challenging and it's hard.

Michael: I think life is really hard and there's, that's why I go back to like I don't think there's a shortcut. There is just really embracing this incredible adventure of not knowing.

Dave: Well, let's go back to the recording artist who sold out in 22 minutes, okay. Here's a man or woman who is at the top of their game, clearly making millions of dollars. If you sell a global tour like that, you don't have to worry about money, right?

Michael: Theoretically.

Dave: Fair point. Theoretically.

Michael: More money, more problems.

Dave: Well, okay, fair point. Money does bring its share of problems and there's lots of unhappy rich people 'cause they're afraid of losing, I'll give you that. But there's-

Michael: And Dave, sorry I know you're rolling here. It doesn't have to be that way. Like it could be way. You know, I just wanted to say, I don't believe more money, more problems. I believe that, you know, I'd like to hear how you think about money but I think money is an incredible amplifier, incredible tool.

Dave: Yeah. Let's talk about money. And then we'll get back to the recording guy with that question. I've been blessed, like you have I imagine, to spend time with people who have more money than they'll ever know what to do with. Like I helped to sponsor the X Prize Visioneering Conference this year. This is a room with a couple hundred people with hundreds of millions of dollars each. They're putting 10 million dollars behind solving the world's next big problem.

Michael: How radical.

Dave: And it's such an inspiring thing 'cause you know the room is full of people who have money and, to a tee, they'll tell you, "I have been blessed with this wealth." Most of them made it themselves, some of them got it from their parents. "But I've gotta do something good with it." It creates a moral obligation to do good things. And they're not Scrooge McDuck. They're not Mr. Smithers. They're absolutely out to say like, "What the heck to do with all this that's gonna have the maximum impact?" And those are people

for whom the money didn't buy the happiness. It was the impact that they're having with our without the money. And the people have realized that helping other people feels good. Altruism changes your brain. It changes your biology, your neurotransmitters. And it's actually a selfish act because we enjoy helping people. We enjoy knowing that we fed a billion people or that we sucked the carbon out of the air. Or whatever the, that was the prize that I helped to sponsor.

Dave: So there's that mindset, but you also can go to like a venture capital conference and you see a bunch of like fearful people who are just, "I don't know who to trust because I have money and people might want my money. And I might lose it and I might have a big tax bill and I don't know what to do." And they could be in a really, dark place and I think it, they both have equivalent amounts of money. Some of them are like, "Oh my God, look at this opportunity." The other one's like, "Oh, I could lose it." It's clearly psychology that's the difference. Do you agree?

Michael: Oh, a 1000%. And like what we're talking about is there's two types of psychology. It's too simple to say that. There's two parts that I'm interested in. There's psychological framework. And then there's the mental skills. So the framework is really the way that you make sense of events. How you understand how you fit in the world and how you're making sense of like how the world is going. So psychological framework is really, it's the heavy stuff. It's the big foundational pillars to build the house upon. And then the mental skills are the skills and tools to be able to manage stress. To be able to manage an internal way of living that allows you to adjust to the unfolding, unpredictable, unknown. And that, you know, the way that you think about money and the way you think about other people, the psychological framework, I don't know, there's lots of different ways to think about but it tends to boil down to, I think you might agree to, to either threat or opportunity.

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: It's a mindset of abundance or a mindset of constriction and we get really reductionist which I'm not a fan is like we could boil down to make it simple two types of thoughts. Thoughts that create constriction, psychologically and physiologically and then thoughts that create expansion. Right? Which is space if you will. And at the end of the day, one day I think we'll be able to observe thoughts. The problem with psychology or a problem with psychology is that we can't see it. We can only see the artifact. You know we can see, everything as you know, from HRV to EEG. Like we can see artifact of stuff, but we can't actually see the source. And it's a little bit like gravity. We can't see gravity yet. But we know it exists. We know it has a great impact, but we can't actually see the material of it. One day maybe, right?

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: So how do we get better? At the end of the day, are we measuring artifact or are we trying to increase awareness of our internal mechanisms, right? Like our framework and our skills. Basically our self-talk, if you will. So that's the tricky part of the invisible.

Dave: There's this Buddhist notion of the hungry ghost. Which is one of the realms of Hell. And this is when everyone walks around with distended bellies and no matter what they're eat, they're always hungry. So they can never be satisfied which is probably a common problem here in the West. Not just with food, but with no matter what it is, they're not satisfied and I certainly had some of that going on early in my life. And realized that, that's not where satisfaction comes from and that changed it. But there are an enormous number of people out there who are dealing with that right now. I'm saying, "No matter what I have in my career, in my life, I'm not satisfied, therefore I'm not happy." What is your advice? 'Cause I know this happens at the highest level too. People who like your Olympic athlete. Hungry ghost. I'm gonna eat this gold medal and it's gonna satisfy me and no, I'm still hungry, it's horrible." What's your advice for dealing with that? Whether it's the high level or low level performers?

Michael: I really appreciate the question 'cause I'm gonna give you an answer that, I'll give you an easy answer.

Dave: Tell me it's coffee. Come on, you know it's coffee.

Michael: Yeah, right. The easy answer is like I don't, I'm not in the business of advice giving and so I don't know. I mean, like each person is so complicated and different that what's right for one person is totally opposite for somebody else. It feels that way at least. And then when we get down into it, it's like the best thing I would hope for is to help that person feel that discontent. Feel that emptiness. Feel the hollowness. Feel what that's like. And then they can make a decision about how they're gonna organize their life from that point forward. And I don't know. There's probably, if we could figure out the right research, there's probably like you need to hear something seven times. And then, and feel it. And then all of a sudden you're like, right. Low level hamburger meat gives me a headache. And then, for me, maybe I need to hear it 15 times. I need to feel it 15 times. And I go, "Right, it's the hamburger meat." Or it's the people that I'm around. Whatever, whatever, fill in the thing.

Michael: That, I think that there's this crazy number or magical number where we need to feel it and some people, like addicts, God love 'em, have an incredible high threshold for pain and that's the problem, right? Is that sometimes they end up dying or they need to hit their head on the concrete a few times to say, "Wait a minute. I gotta change some stuff." Where some people are on the exact opposite side of the spectrum and, I'll use a different analogy. Let's say we're running a marathon. And some people are gonna stop at mile one and change their socks 'cause they feel like a blister might be coming on. And some people get to the end of the marathon and they're like, they look down and they're like, "Oh my God, my feet are bloody." You know, so having that right level of sensitivity, I think, is a really important part of progressive growth. 'Cause we gotta deal with some pain and then we also need to be aware.

Dave: I like that. The feeling the pain, actually feeling the pain, instead of hiding from it and avoiding the pain, it seems like universal advice so there you go. The hack is to feel the pain. You like that?

Michael: Oh my God. Look at you. Look at you. Yeah.

Dave: Had to say it. But okay what's your advice, and I know you're not in the business of giving advice but I'm putting you on the spot anyway. Okay-

Michael: I think, you know Dave, I think in some kind of way, you and I live in a very similar way, and like, but like almost like parallel universes, right? Like I think I think that in many ways, we think in the same ways. We're looking for efficiency. We're looking for authenticity. We're looking for, you know, ways to maximize the human expression. And then we have a little bit, slightly different, attuned vernacular and so I appreciate you. And so I just wanted to make sure like I'm laughing on the other side going this is funny.

Dave: Likewise. I appreciate you too. And I'm just teasing you about it. Because I know that we're totally aligned on the questions we're asking and I'm working on using the language for the biohacking community that gets, "Oh yeah. I think I could do that." And sometimes there's also the wanting, or just the allowing, to say, you know what? I wanted to do it faster. Like I didn't have to have the Puritanical suffering for multiple lifetimes or the Buddhist, the slow path to enlightenment is that you sort of do nothing and after you've been through like 10,000 lifetimes or something, maybe you'll get there. And then there's the medium path, which takes a few lifetimes but at least you're working on it. And then there's the fast path, you could do it in this life, but you might go nuts if you fail.

Dave: And I'm like, "Give me that one." Because that's just my personality type. I'm willing to take risks for great rewards as long as the rewards are worth it and not hungry ghost, oh I'll be happy when I get that and like, no, that's not the response you want either.

Dave: So we were, when I distracted you with my hack comment, we were talking about something else there.

Michael: Well, I don't know, right before this we were talking about the universal understanding of like feeling pain.

Dave: Ah, there we go, yeah.

Michael: And the value of that. Like the real value of that. But Dave, not getting stuck in the pain.

Dave: There you go. That's the flip side of that pain conversation and okay, you're dealing with the highest level of performers and I've certainly seen at least what it looks like in the media. You never know on TMZ or whatever whether it's real or not, but it seems like some of them really are stuck in their pain. I mean, they're wallowing in it. Okay.

Michael: Or they're doing everything to avoid it, right?

Dave: Which causes more pain.

Michael: Sex, drugs, and rock and roll. They're doing everything to avoid it. Which causes that cycle of the not feeling anything, just numbing ourselves.

Dave: But in your experience, you know, there is no one recommendation for truly feeling the pain and truly dealing with it. My experience with a lot of people including me is at a certain point, you sort of hit rock bottom and "All right. I don't know how to handle this anymore. I'm gonna have to go somewhere else, 'cause I really feel like I don't have another choice." There's gotta be a better way. Like I don't want everyone listening to this show to have to really like, "Oh I just went to jail. Or I was homeless for a while. Or I became an addict and I suffered for years. And eventually I figured out how much it sucked and I got out of it." And like, I've interviewed Joe Polish and he talks about that real openly. He did all that.

Dave: But like, I don't wanna do that. I don't want anyone else to do that. How do we help them shortcut that?

Michael: Okay so I don't there's a shortcut but I think the work, the most efficient work we can do is to line up our thoughts, words, and actions. Okay. And so how do we do that? It's like you've heard the thought or the phrase that the longest distance in the body is from the head to the heart. And so awareness, like investing in the awareness of the internal environment, our thoughts and our words, line those two things up and have the skills to be able to do that in any environment so that the actions have alignment.

Michael: And the most powerful people are those that have thoughts, words, and actions aligned for their, let's call it, mission in life. For their, you know, the purpose and the meaning that they're exploring in what we know to be the material life here. So that's, I don't know. I don't think there's a shortcut to it. But I think that the most efficient investment that we can make in ourselves is increasing the awareness of our internal world. And it is so frickin' hard because it's invisible. And for years we've had a stigma around looking within. Now early days in philosophy, like that's what they did. They looked within and they wrestled with problems. And then, psychology was born out of the medical model and that medical model looked at dysfunction and what was broken and I know that makes your hair stand up that that's a crazy way to study something. But there's a great value in that. Right? If you can understand why something broke or how to fix something, it leads us to the conversation we are in now. And I get to stand on the shoulders of incredible giants that have used science to investigate what's good. What works.

Michael: How did the best thinkers and doers, from a research standpoint, organize their internal life and their external world. And there is that alignment of thoughts, words, and actions that makes it really powerful. So how do you do that? Well, mindfulness certainly, is an important part of that process. Becoming aware. And then having the skills to navigate and adjust. The mental skills if you will.

Dave: Okay. Sounds pretty esoteric and not very nailed down and actionable though. And that's okay. By the way, if you could do that, I think you'd write the next massive spiritual tome on that because this is what every major religious tradition has been working on for thousands of years is that problem so it seems thought that we're reaching the point, from what you mentioned earlier, around the ability to use heart rate variability and EEG and just to get data about our state. FMRI, [inaudible 00:41:14] State Scans, that maybe we can do things differently or faster than we could before just

because we're not just sitting in a cave looking around wondering and feeling and sensing and writing it down and passing it to the next generation, but that it's faster. Is that a safe assumption? I mean, do you see that in your practice with your clients?

Michael: Oh yeah. I mean if you look at how some of the most extraordinary thinkers and doers organize their external world is they're looking for the most accurate and the most timely feedback so they have coaches that are on the field with them giving 'em real time feedback about move your hip this direction, one step back not a full step back. Adjust your elbow, like they're getting real time feedback that's highly accurate. And so they're craving feedback loops to help them know what to change and how to change it.

Michael: And so we can use artifact technology. HRV, EEG, fill in the blanks, we can use that to inform the internal. And so, but I will say that, so I invested in an EEG company probably, I don't know, eight years ago.

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: And I love it. I think it's a worthwhile investment. The business venture didn't pay dividends for me but I think that it's an important technology to pay attention to.

Dave: Yeah, I have an EEG facility in Seattle. But it's work, but it's real science. Like there's stuff there.

Michael: Yeah, we can see some stuff and make some informed thoughts around that. So yes. And my experience with technology is that it doesn't allow for wisdom.

Dave: Yep.

Michael: Right? It will help with efficiency. And so I'm looking for both, right? So I don't know what replaces internal, quiet observation, like that and writing, so people often ask, what are the most effective ways outside of technology? And I say, listen to yourself. I say have great conversations with wise men and women and write. You know? 'Cause hopefully you're not BS'ing yourself and you can't BS a wise person, very easily at least. So those are three mechanisms I think important and you should see the technology. I love technology. I think it's a really important piece for the feedback loop.

Dave: When you say hopefully you're not BS'ing yourself, I mean, doesn't Psychology, as a field, exist because people are so good at BS'ing themselves?

Michael: Oh yeah. I mean.

Dave: Come on.

Michael: Yeah. Like we've got narratives and stories yeah.

Dave: Yeah. So I have used technology to maybe help me get wisdom where okay, I didn't believe I was BS'ing myself but when you look at the EEG, you can see that you're BS'ing

yourself and it's the mirror that lets you go, you know what? I was believing my own story. Apparently, my powers of self-deception are legion. So therefore, I should be less trusting of the angry voice in my head that says bad things about myself or other people, etc, etc. It feels like that is wisdom, I just wouldn't have believed it if some guru, in a white robe, told me that. But when I saw the data, I was like, "Aww, man. All right. I'm doing this and I didn't think I was and I don't wanna admit that I was, but I am."

Michael: Yeah, and so I, you know, when I respond to that thought is that when we are sitting across from a trained psychologist or we're sitting across an enlightened man or woman, a guru if you will, or we have a technology across from us. All of those are feedback loops. Now is technology 100% accurate? Sometimes it is, sometimes it's noisy. Is the trained psychologist 100% accurate? Sometimes they're great. Sometimes they're not. So, Dave, what I would suggest to you is that you're still looking for an external loop for feedback whether it's another human, which it sounds like you have low regard for the industry of Psychology.

Dave: Not at all. I've-

Michael: Which is fine. I'm not mad about it by any means, right.

Dave: If I'm coming across that way, that's a mistake. I routinely tell people, you need to go see a therapist or a psychologist or a psychiatrist sometimes.

Michael: Sometimes, yeah.

Dave: And, you know, all of those are valid fields and so I was just sort of joking, I'm saying I'm an unlicensed or untrained psychiatrist. Like my wife's an ER doctor and she likes to, "I'm a trained physician." And I go, "Yeah, I'm an untrained physician. 'Cause that means I'm not one." So that was just my internal joke there.

Michael: Yeah, but I think, no and I think that, and there's lots of people that are like psychobabble bullshit, like what is it?

Dave: I'm not one of those. There's great value in what you do.

Michael: Well, but that it's the loop that we're looking for.

Dave: Yeah.

Michael: And so what are those effective loops to help people be more attune to what? The truth. And like you said, we've got these crazy, invisible defense mechanisms that keep up stuck in the same loop until somebody across from us goes or technology goes, "Oh you think you're calm, but actually your heartrate variability is 14." Like, "What do you mean?" Like your normal age population is let's call it 75. Or maybe a licensed, trained professional guru says, "So what I hear is the words, but I don't feel anything. Like what's that like for you?"

Dave: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael: And I go, "Oh God, yeah, I'm kinda emotionally dead." So I think that feedback loops are the end game for growth. And loving the feedback loops. Loving the challenge of figuring out iteration is the hard part of wanting to find your very best and be your very best on a regular basis.

Dave: It's funny because the feedback loops, whether it's from a intuitive friend, a trained professional, or your aura ring.

Michael: Right.

Dave: They're all useful and I find that people listen to this show. People end up by like, they're always seeking data. And what's really frustrating in the field of medicine, psychology and all that is you can have two different doctors or trained professionals who are in the feedback loop and you get different feedback. So then you have to go through this trusting cycles, right? Which of these professionals is the trustworthy one? And all of them will tell you they're trustworthy. And all of them believe they're trustworthy and here's the weird thing, they all might actually be trustworthy and still not agree. And you're like, "Good God. At least when I got my ring, either I had HIV or I didn't." Right?

Michael: I know. There's a freedom with that objective data, isn't there? There's like. And you know it's like, I think it's a little bit like, 'cause we're dealing with the invisible in many ways like how do, what's an elephant look like to a blind person? Like one person grabs a tail like "Oh, it's skinny." One person grabs the trunk like "Oh, it's flexible." You know someone grabs a belly and they're like, "Wow, it's really massive." And it's, I don't know the discipline of internal medicine. It feels complicated to me. I don't know the discipline of ER. It's like ER medicine, emergency medicine. It feels complicated. And I think that we're not at a place right now where there's a string theory for human development.

Dave: Right.

Michael: We're so far from that. And really, I think when we zoom out, and we've got this opportunity maybe to see where we are now and where it's gonna be in let's say 500 years, it's like, "What are we doing? Really, what are we doing?" And it's great. You know, it's just kind of where we are now. And I wanna just kinda close the loop on piece here which is the most powerful instrument in the world is our brain and our mind. Right? The combination of software, hardware to oversimplify. It's the most powerful instrument. We don't even know what it's doing. And if we can get more attuned to that feedback loop, holy moly, that feels like. That's what we're supposed to be doing.

Dave: That's where all the power comes from. And certainly, in my own explorations here, headstrong would have you turn more energy in the brain, I noticed that I can put someone through two and a half times more intense personal development and neurofeedback when their mitochondria work. When their brain, the hardware that you talk about is turned on all the way which allows you to do more with the software. You

can do more external software, you can do more inner work. But it seems like, you know, if you're eating a diet that's not compatible with your biology, you might not get very far on the personal development, fear and anxiety of becoming high performer, all that stuff.

Michael: Yeah and if your environment that you're encompassed within doesn't value growth and speaks in ways that are, I don't know, debilitating, negative, hostile in the growth arc. And really, it can be very sneaky or it can be very obvious. That that too plays factor in this accelerated growth.

Dave: I think you just covered four more laws in the book in that statement. In Game Changers, there's a couple laws about what your community does to you and how to use it. And certainly, one of my favorite laws is about weasel words. The words that you use on yourself or that others use to kind of take away your ability and power. Do you have a set of words you tell the people you coach? Like don't you be saying that? I can't or things like that? What's your list?

Michael: Yeah. I don't have like a list. And I'll tell you why. But I do know, I have, I wanna help people understand what is right for them. What words work better for them. And so, there is a recent research that just came out where there's at least two different types of self talk. Motivational self talk and instructional self talk. And we know that self talk, instructional self talk is like walking yourself through the mechanical part of doing something. And that's better for fine motor skills stuff than gross motor. And so motivational self talk, which is like vibe words to your point, right? Which is like fire, let's go, bring it, can't fade me, whatever kind of that juicy stuff is for a person, that that's better for gross motor movements. And eventually, we want to turn all of the self talk off. Right? We want to get ourselves nodding in a way that like we know that we have what it takes to adjust to the unfolding, unpredictable, unknown, and in some cases, the highest stakes. We just want that nod.

Michael: That feeling behind our eyes. But self talk matters. And it can modulate. This is something that is exciting about the research. It can modulate power output. It can modulate experience of heat and so in hot temperatures, people tend to shut down earlier. It's agitating. Right? At distance types events and so with motivational self talk, which is that vibe words that you're talking about. Now I would say, you gotta know yours. I know mine. And when I say mine out loud, you might say, "That sound cheesy." Okay, you gotta know your words. So what are the words that you use that help you bring the right vibe to be you. And that, you gotta go upstream a little bit. What does it look like and sound like and feel like when you're at your best. And then what are the words that support that?

Michael: So what we, back to the research, motivational self talk is really crisp that it helps people modulate power output, meaning increase it, it helps them with oxygen consumption. It helps them with rate of perceived exertion. And it helps them stay in a heat longer. You know, and I can't remember the exact percentages, but it was a significant difference on those variables, which is pretty cool. Just by what you say to yourself.

Dave: That is remarkably cool. All right. Tell me about the six stages of performance. The way you've dialed this in.

Michael: Okay so at the lowest form of expression is choking. And we've heard that work choking, okay. Most people don't choke. That's something that is actually relatively rare. And I just wanna be almost concrete. It doesn't mean that we're literally choking, it means that we're choking off access to our craft. So our mind creates constriction, both in thought and then in physiological terms. Constriction to eloquent movement, eloquent expression if you will. And then really at the highest form of performance, that's what we're working on. Like mastery is this eloquent, effortless flow of expression. You know?

Michael: And so choking is the lowest. Then micro choking. It's just kind of this tension. And then there is performing. Then there's performing under pressure. And then there is dissolving pressure. So those are like the phases if you will and so anything from choking to dissolving pressure and it's substandard is the thought of thriving or performing under pressure. That there is another layer that we can get to.

Dave: Where you don't really feel the pressure. Like you kinda took the pressure off and used to it.

Michael: Yeah, you've dissolved it. Yep.

Dave: So you're, not to pick on this one, this one client, we'll say the archetype of the high performing musician who travels globally. I mean, are most of these people in the dissolving pressure? Of like, "Yeah I'm gonna go on stage and I'm just, I'm not feeling the pressure. I'm just, I'm joyful and I'm here." I know a couple people like that who went in front of millions and they feel nothing. Like nothing bad when they go out there. There's no, and I know others that say, "Every time I go out on stage. 10,000 times. Every time I'm backstage hyperventilating." What's the ratio of these you see?

Michael: Yeah, that's a, I think that's a, I don't know. I think that that would be a great research.

Dave: Wouldn't it?

Michael: Yeah, like what is the pre event experience for, let's say we could get a sample of, a large sample of like a 100 elite performers. That would be a ridiculously large sample. Maybe, maybe that's, I mean that's a really good idea that we could possibly do. Maybe we could do it together but that thought.

Dave: I'd be up for it.

Michael: Yeah, that thought is really cool. And I think, I would guess right now, like an odd priority thought about this would be that most are, they vacillate between this tension, kind of survival mode and then they get on stage. You'll hear people say often. I just need that first note or that first hit in the ring or that first tackle on the field and then I settle into it.

Dave: And then they're in a flow state after that and it's a done deal.

Michael: Like a low flow. Right like it's good. It's not the most eloquent, but it's like a low flow state.

Dave: I think you nailed it. I would guess it's 80 plus percent of those high performers still have a little bit of that, "Okay, I feel the pressure, I'm gonna go do it." And then there somewhere, they just walk out there, and they're dialed in. And I think there's some subtle thing the audience feels. But is rare, right? And the really good ones who perform well under pressure, you probably don't know that the pressure's there because they're good at performing. Like that's part of what performing is. But I think that the amount of energy that they get from it is also different.

Dave: So it can be a little bit of that adrenaline. Like okay. I've got this now. And the other's like, I'm showing up and I'm not gonna, yeah, well I guess I have a picture with him on my Instagram so I can say I've chatted with him. I got a chance to talk to Stevie Wonder. And it was an in depth conversation which was profound and he said, "I just wanna be here to do God's work for as long and as best I can" sort of thing. And I just get this feeling that when he goes on stage, it's not about him. It's about doing the work and it's about service to others. And I just don't think he has that kind of a stage fright thing. I think any of that vibe or not even stage fright, just that pressure, but just more like, "I'm doing this because of love." And there are people like that out there. And why is Stevie so revered? I think 'cause we feel the love. But that's just, you know.

Michael: I'm nodding my head going that's what a strong, psychological framework allows. You know for, if you can love people and not be consumed with what they think of you, there's an incredible on the other side of that. And most people when they go on stage, and I remember like this first international moment I had. And it was again 17, 20 years ago and I was backstage and everything was cool and I was feeling it. And it was great. And it was my first international presentation. I was like, "Yeah, this is rad." And I'm there with a buddy. And I was just graduating so it was about probably 20 years ago now. My program and the President of the school was there as well. And it was a conference.

Michael: And so, I'm feeling great. And she's giving me this look like, "Yeah, this is like, look it, this is gonna be awesome." I can hear the buzz in the background of the room filling up. And my buddy, we're kinda like look through the curtain if you will and I was gonna challenge a theory in the field. Like who am I to do that? And I didn't quite understand what that meant and my buddy nudges me and he goes, "Look who's in the front." And I said, "Oh my God, that's him." And I look again. And I'm like now I feel my heart pa pum. And instant sweat. And he looked like he was eight feet tall, 450 lbs., you know like this massive human being. Much smarter, much bigger, much more dangerous than I ever thought of. Like I was just wet behind the ears kid if you will.

Michael: And I just feel entire fight or flight response get on. And you know what happened for me is I just circled and spiraled. What am I doing? I'm gonna be exposed. Like I don't really know. I'm pretending like I know. Oh my God. So it's this full impostor thing that's going on for me. And it was really incredible. And so, I reached into my pocket and

'cause I thought like, "Man, I just gotta make sure I have my business cards. God, people are gonna blast me. And oh my God." And so I reach, and I grabbed my, and I looked down and I don't even have my email address on there. That's how long ago it was. And I was like, "What a rookie." Like I can't even get my frickin', I just printed my cards for the first time.

Michael: And so, and I look, and I said, "Well me at least put my email on the back." And I flipped my card over and I don't know if you, I'm sure you know this that visual, spatial processing is compromise under duress. And so, you know when you do like your name or something and you have to turn it down the side of the page because right yes, so it was on my business card and I threw a couple away 'cause I couldn't get it right. My hands were shaking. And then I locked all of my, this was a game changing moment for me. I locked all of my attention into just having neat penmanship. And I probably got through about eight cards. Something like that. And I was just engaged in that. And my body goes, "Hey, you're up."

Michael: And I looked and my heart had changed. My focus was no longer on the threat. It was on something mundane and non important. And that's when I realized like there's these stages from choking, micro choking, and it happens so fast. Our ancient brain in modern times is exceptional. It happens that fast and that's when I realized like, "Oh my God. I gotta really invest. Like I need help."

Dave: That is so cool. And I think most people who get to where they are and you see them, and you say, "Oh, like that was easy." They don't talk about what you just talked about. They don't talk about the 20 years of work that it took to get there. So I think sometimes, it creates like feelings of maybe I'm not good enough from other people, 'cause we don't see the struggle, you see the performance, and if it was done right, it looked easy, but that doesn't mean that getting there was easy and so you're talking about that. I think more people have those moments you just talked about than not.

Michael: Yeah, hopefully. And I would bet Stevie had plenty of them too until he finally figured out that, man love is so much easier.

Dave: He must have. It was, it definitely blew my mind. He's a rare human. I've got one more question for you in the time we have left. Tell me about this Compete to Create thing you did with Seattle Seahawks' coach Pete Carroll, what is it? Why did you decide to do this?

Michael: It was going into our first Super Bowl. And, so he's extraordinary at the know how and the structure to switch on a culture where people can explore and find their best. And then my skillset is around helping people that want to be their best invest in the mental part of the game, right? The mental skills part of it. So heading into that first Super Bowl, it was like one and one equaled something that's like not two but 11.

Dave: Right.

Michael: And so we're in the hallway at the training center and he goes, "Can you feel?" It was like, I don't know, three or four games left in the season. He goes, "Mike can you feel this?" And I was like, "Yeah, it is rad. It is like unbelievable to be in the building." Like people are just bouncing around, flying around, feeling really strong and sturdy both physically and emotionally. And he goes, "Do you think anyone outside of sport would be interested in what we're doing?" Now he's got 60 year history of being like masterful. And my eyes kinda got big and I didn't know what to say and he goes, "Let's just write it down." And I go, "Yeah." And so, we kinda, "Ready, break." And the next day, I had on the back of a napkin all the things that I have been doing with him and separately that I thought were important. He did the same. We put it together.

Michael: We had this, call it a curriculum if you will, like the things that we have been doing. We're just trying to artifact or archive what we did. And, you know, so he calls and calls Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft and he says, "Hey, congratulations." He was four weeks into the job. And he says, "Just wanted to meet you and say hi and whatever."

Michael: And I had done a little bit of work at Microsoft with a small sales group and so Satya is informed on some of the stuff we're doing through Pete. And he says, "I'd love to introduce you to Mike and give you a sense of what we're doing. Both in your company. But really what we've done as a body of work." And so that turned into just this beautiful relationship with Microsoft. 180,000 employees. And Satya Nadella saying, in this meeting, he's got this beautiful office overlooking, you know, Seattle proper. And he says, "What I wanna create is a meaningful place for the 180,000 people while they're here with us at Microsoft. And we have bold ambitions to do amazing things in the world and basically we wanna empower every person in our organization in the world to do more, to achieve more." And it was the beginnings of his mission and the beginnings of something that was coming from a very deep, rich place for them.

Michael: And so, we got an opportunity. And the opportunity was to work with a group of 12 and that turned into a group of 200, and that turned into a group, over time, of 30,000 people at Microsoft. And we worked with 30,000 at eight hours a person and that was 240,000 human hours of mindset training to helping people find and become the very best.

Michael: And we said, "Oh my God, we can't meet the demand." So we built on the back of a learning management system, an eight week online course. And so, that is the beginning story, arc, exciting, wonderful opportunity that we've got on this company called Compete to Create. And Compete is Pete's central word for his philosophy. And competing is like not trying to be better than somebody, but working and striving to become your very best.

Michael: And then, the central word of my philosophy is to create a living masterpiece. And so the creating is the expression of a living masterpiece. So compete, strive and strain to become your best so you can create a living masterpiece and that's the origins of our company. And it's basically, we got two products. An eight week online course and an eight hour in day experience that we've hired Olympians and sports psychologists to deliver what we think is an incredible investment of eight hours in the interior.

Dave: Very cool. And it's an elegant name when you understand how it all links together. It's been a pleasure and an honor to have you on Bulletproof Radio today. And because, I just read Game Changers, and I've asked hundreds and hundreds of people those three questions, I'm not gonna ask them for you. 'Cause I'm working on this other thing. I was in Men's Health along with Peter Teel and a couple other people. I am actually planning to live to at least a 180 years old. So question for you. How long are you gonna live and how long do you want to live?

Michael: It's cool. I've thought about it. I want to live in a way that has purpose and meaning and is like helping this planet to thrive. And so, the duration, shit I don't know. I mean if you think about Jesus, he lives 33 years old and changed the frickin' globe. Buddha didn't live that long. Like I don't know. I mean James Dean changed music. You know like, so I don't know. I wish I was as potent as some of those names that I just mentioned. I'm not sure James Dean and the Buddha were as potent but you know what I mean.

Dave: You got a white variance there.

Michael: Yeah, so I don't know. And I love that you've got this target number of 180. Have you talked to Tom Bellew?

Dave: I have, yeah.

Michael: Yeah, so I had a conversation with him on the Finding Mastery podcast and he's got, you guys would vibe I think, because he's got that same desire and want. I don't have a good answer for you though.

Dave: It's all right. I mean it's partly about, a lot of people haven't thought about it and so if you have goal for how you wanna perform, how much you money you wanna have and all this stuff, but you haven't thought about what I want it to look like when I'm old and to tell you, when I'm 180, I want to be highly functioning, walking around in my own power, feeling good, looking good, and still actively giving back. And that's a very different picture of being "old", 'cause most people, they think of it and immediately they go to diapers, walkers, and putting your car keys in the fridge. And that's their picture. And like, no way man, I'm not going out like that. No one has to. And so I'm just asking, because when you get a chance to talk to someone like you, you know you've done a lot of introspection. You've talked to a lot of interesting people. Like how much have you thought about it? Like are you planning for it? So it's always informative. Thank you for sharing.

Michael: No thanks for the question. I'm gonna wrestle with that a bit. And Dave, before jump, I just wanna say thank you. Thank you for having me on. I think there's challenges in our conversation that I loved. I loved the sparring. I loved the joking. I loved the intensity. I really loved that we can have that conversation because I know you've got a learned mind and a disciplined approach to growth and so I'm stoked to have the conversation with you. And I just want to say thank you.

Dave: You got it, man. And likewise. Hope you don't mind me giving you a hard time about stuff because it's all in good fun and learning.

Michael: Yeah, for sure.

Dave: Well, Michael Gervais, you're home website I would say was [findingmastery.net](http://findingmastery.net). Is that sort of the best place or for people to go if they wanna learn more?

Michael: Yeah that is, yeah that's like a funnel, if you will, of this capture of extraordinary thinkers and doers and it's the podcast that we fired up to celebrate people.

Dave: But that URL [findingmastery.net](http://findingmastery.net) that has your podcast, it also has links to Create to Compete on it?

Michael: Yeah, Compete to Create.

Dave: Oh sorry. There you go. I said it backwards. So Compete to Create. So basically if you're interested in the type of coursework in coaching that Michael has done for some of the world's very biggest names, you can find it there and you can also hear about his podcast, Finding Mastery on that same URL [findingmastery.net](http://findingmastery.net). Michael, thanks again, man.

Michael: Appreciate you.