

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio. The state of high performance.

Dave: The 2019 Sixth Annual Biohacking Conference featured some really amazing industry professionals and people who have used biohacking on themselves to do things that made them all game changers, renowned thinkers, leaders, experts, people like that. And today's episode of Bulletproof Radio is one of those keynote presentations from the conference.

Dave: I had the pleasure of interviewing Arianna Huffington on stage in front of the audience of more than a thousand people. She's a remarkable human being, a business leader, author, and she's also the founder and CEO of Thrive Global, which is an organization that's on a "mission to unlock human potential". In our fireside chat, we talk about sleep, biohacking, prioritizing, performance, and a lot more, and she answered questions from the audience as well. So I'm excited today that you'll be hearing what she had to say about her journey to being where she is now, where she's happier and higher performing than she used to be. With no further ado, here's Ariana.

Dave: Ariana, welcome. Now, Ariana, you were so kind. I reached out a few years ago and I said, "I would like to interview you for Bulletproof Radio." And instead of saying, "Okay, yeah, sure". Or saying, "No!" You actually said, "Why don't you come to my studios at Huffington Post and we'll just do it there. It'll be easy." I was, "Wow, how generous and kind." So I just wanted to publicly thank you for that.

Arianna: Thank you. I had such a good time and I've loved everything you've been launching since including my Bulletproof Coffee, my daily habit.

Dave: Now let's talk about sleep. You are in game changers and your story's in there, but what happened to you when you didn't sleep?

Arianna: I bought into the delusion that in order to succeed and build The Huffington Post, which I started in 2005 and be a good mom to my two teenaged daughters at the time, I had to be always on. Sleep was for losers. You know the whole thing in the culture, like you snooze, you lose. I'll sleep when I'm dead. That whole thing. And so, two years into Huff Post, I literally collapsed. I got up from my desk because I was feeling cold, I went to get a sweater and I fell and hit my head on my desk and broke my cheekbone. And that was my wake up call. And in a way, I'm really grateful for that wake up call, both because I think otherwise I might either be dead by now or have had a stroke or something a lot worse than a broken cheekbone.

Arianna: But also because this now has become my mission to help wake up the world to the importance of sleep, of recovery, of recharging and realizing that actually if we want peak performance, these are tools in the tool box that we need. And we see it from athletes.

Dave: Yeah.

Arianna: It's kind of amazing to see that the reason why Tom Brady can still win Super Bowls and he'll say that is because he does prioritize his sleep. He does prioritize unplugging and recharging. So why is something good for athletes where every ounce of additional performance makes a difference and not good for the rest of us?

Dave: It's a very fair question and I want to ask you about mission because you've done very well with The Huffington Post. I mean you could retire on an island tomorrow and many people have done that, but here you are. You're starting up Thrive and really focusing on the mission of improving sleep. What is that important?

Arianna: Well, I think it's just one of eight journeys we have. Well, I decided to leave The Huffington Post in 2016 and launched Thrive Global, my new company because I wanted to devote myself to these issues of basically ending the stress and burnout epidemic. That's our mission at Thrive Global. The stress and burnout epidemic is actually at the moment leading to horrific outcomes. We have chronic diseases skyrocketing and as you know, 75% of these diseases are stress related and preventable. We have mental health problems skyrocketing, depression, anxiety, and if you add those root causes, you get up to 90% of all diseases being stress related and preventable. There is absolutely no way that medicine, surgery, traditional health care provisions will be able to address these problems all around the world without us changing the way we work and live. I think that's the ultimate disruption, changing the way we work and live.

Arianna: And what I love, Dave is finding unexpected ways to work with people. Obviously, going into corporations which we are doing and working on the cultures and helping employers understand that if you want to engagement and peak performers from your employees, you need to help them prioritize their own recovery, recharging and wellbeing. Obviously through our media platform that goes directly to consumers and brings them all that information and new role models and builds community, which you are so great at doing here.

Arianna: And also though with a behavior-change product that can accelerate all these shifts because you can't scale just with workshops. You can't scale just through the media platform. You need to give people the tools to change behavior and that's hard. Changing behavior is hard.

Dave: It is one of the hardest things of all.

Dave: It seems like one of the first ingredients for behavior change is hope. People have to believe that it's possible. And at Bulletproof we did a bunch of research and we figured out there's this group we call, funny enough, the Thrivers.

Arianna: I know it's a great name.

Dave: Isn't it? And these are the people in the room. You guys have figured out some of this stuff. You know it's possible and you're actively doing it. But then we have this world of Strivers. I think it maybe, maybe sort of, and the behavior change for them is getting them to lock in on that no, not sort of, this is the path.

Dave: And then you have this other group of Strugglers and these are the people who really don't really even think it's possible and it feels like their behavior change is different depending on here. It's fine tuning for our friends in the room.

Dave: How do you get to the outer ridge? The Strugglers people "I don't even think this is possible". Do you have a recipe for that?

Arianna: Absolutely. So one kind of unusual recipe is to use what neuroscientists call habit stacking. And in fact that we are working with P&G that reaches through its brands, five billion consumers a day and has much more amazing compliance than any behavior change app. They have 70% to 90% compliance in the use of Crest toothpaste or Pantene or toilet paper. Okay? That's pretty good. 90%, I hope it's more than 90% compliance. But my point is that using the existing compliance rates of a powerful consumer product company to habit stack additional good healthy behaviors on top of that can be game changing for the people who are the Strugglers and the Strivers.

Arianna: There's 70% compliance of people brushing their teeth every morning and night. You don't want to be around the other 30%, so we are adding a micro step on top of that which is why you are brushing your teeth. Think of three things you are grateful for. Imagine how that changes the way you begin and the way you end your day. And we know from all the scientific data we've been collecting that if you end your day on a positive note, your sleep is going to be deeper and better. Every day is a mixture of good things and bad things happening. So you could go to bed thinking of all the bad things that happened that day and then your brain will move into rumination or will wake you up in the middle of the night and rehearse all the bad things that happened. Or you can go to bed focusing as your last thought on the good health things that happened that day.

Arianna: And so being able to do that habit stacking on top of something people are already doing, which doesn't require more time.

Dave: Yeah.

Arianna: Is just one of the game changing ways that we want to reach people where they are.

Dave: Just showing people what's possible and suggesting that habit stack can be really good.

Dave: Now I'm going to embarrass my wife, Lana now. In the morning, she read a book about habit stacking recently. So I came in a few months ago and she's blending Bulletproof in the kitchen, doing squats while the blender's on.

Arianna: I hear your muscles, your thigh muscles are amazing at the moment. Your husband was raving about them in the green room.

Dave: And, and when I asked Lana, "What are you doing?" She said, "Well I read the book and hey, you know when I do this, I'm doing the squats I probably wouldn't have done and it

didn't take any more time than before. So I'm going to let the blender run for a minute and just do my squats."

Arianna: Can you please write about it? Because honestly, I would in fact love to invite all of you to write about it on [thriveglobal.com](#) and anywhere else you want. I was telling Dave, [thriveglobal.com](#) and our social media platforms are never about exclusivity. They're about distributing great information and great content. You can post it any way you want, but also posted with us. We have 30 million users. I want to give you my email address to make it super easy to send it to me directly. We'll give you a password and you can post anytime you want. AH@[thriveglobal.com](#) and the reason why that's so important is because we have found that what moves the needle faster than anything else is people hearing from other people in the arena about what they're doing and how it's working for them. It's almost as if the Strivers and the Strugglers need permission from the Thrivers to actually integrate these things in their lives and feel secure that that doesn't mean they're going to fail or be left behind. This is not just for people chilling under the mango tree, which is what people are worried about. It's for people in the arena.

Arianna: I'll give you an example. Phillip Schindler told me at dinner, he's the chief business officer at Google. He told me about his moment of epiphany when he came back from a long trip. He has young children. He told his children "Daddy is taking you to the playground." His five year old said, "Oh no, can't the babysitter take us?" He asked why and the five year old said, "Because when you're in the playground, you are always on your phone."

Dave: Wow.

Arianna: So that was his moment of epiphany. He said, "After that, I never take my phone when I'm with my children. I travel a lot. I'm not with them all the time. That's the least I can do." Exactly.

Arianna: And then he let me know what an incredible impact that had at Google because they heard from one of their top leaders what he was doing and then they felt they could change their behavior.

Arianna: So please share with us whatever it is you are doing. Because our relationship with technology also is one of the biggest addictions at the moment that are having a terrible impact on relationships and a sense of isolation and they're particularly hard for preteens and teens.

Dave: Yeah. I don't let my kids use that tech. They can listen to audio books. They actually have iPhones with no sim cards and no Wifi.

Arianna: Wow. How old are they?

Dave: They're nine and eleven.

Arianna: That's amazing.

Dave: And so storytelling is powerful.

Arianna: I think also what that shows is that the more that parents understand the dangers, the more careful they are. When I go to Silicon Valley to stay with friends of mine who are at the center of the tech revolution, their children play with Legos and chickens. And literally at the entry, if you ever go to a party with them, there'll be a note at the front door that says, "Let's celebrate in private. No social media allowed."

Dave: Mm-hmm (affirmative) Yeah. I read an article recently in The Atlantic and they talked about how spending time in person with others was becoming something that rich people did.

Arianna: I know it's the ultimate growing inequality now.

Dave: Yeah.

Arianna: And that successful rich people recognize that disconnecting from tech is essential for connecting with our humanity. And people in lower socioeconomic brackets still think that having Wifi and being connected is a status symbol. So we need to spread that information because although technology is amazing and we all love it and we wouldn't be here without it, we need to set boundaries. Everybody talks about AI and machine learning and augmented reality. Fantastic. These are givens. They are going to happen. But for me, the big journey we all need to go on is what I call "augmented humanity." How do we tap into our humanity, into our empathy, our compassion, our ability to love and to create? These are human qualities and they can never be duplicated by machines.

Dave: Yeah. What do you think about these robots for older people at retirement homes that are attempting to do that? Have you seen these things? Have you guys seen those?

Arianna: Here's what I want to see. There are going to be millions of jobs destroyed by AI.

Dave: Yeah.

Arianna: The estimate has been as many as half our jobs.

Dave: Yup.

Arianna: The jobs that will not be destroyed are caregiving jobs. So why not train people to actually be caregivers? And what is required, first of all, is empathy. You can't be a caregiver if you're not empathetic. And one of the first things that's destroyed by our addiction to tech is empathy.

Dave: Yeah.

- Arianna: So that's really what we need to be focusing on. And then you need real human beings also in these nursing homes let alone hospices.
- Dave: Exactly. Replacing that kind of empathy stuff with tech is, I think it's kind of evil.
- Arianna: Well, it's not going to work.
- Dave: Yeah. Well some of the reports are people saying, "I feel really good that I have this robot to talk to because of profound loneliness, but I'm pretty sure if it would've been a human being, they would've felt way better."
- Arianna: Of course.
- Dave: So I feel like there's plenty of available people do that, but the platforms for connecting with others aren't there yet.
- Arianna: It really comes back to what is life about. I'm Greek as you can hear from this accent. So I was brought up on the Greek philosophers and the Greeks' definition of a good life. And I think we need to go back to them. And it's the same whether it's Chinese philosophers, Japanese philosophers, the Stoics, they all basically talk about the good life being the ability to access our own center of peace, strength and wisdom. We all have it. It's our birthright. But as Thic Nanh Han, the Buddhist monk said it's never been easier to run away from ourselves. So connecting with that part is essential for the fulfilling life.
- Arianna: And unfortunately, our culture has reduced the good life down to success and has reduced success down to two metrics, money and power. And in my book *Thrivers*, you know Dave, I introduced that third metric of wellbeing, wisdom, wonder, and giving. And without all that, our life is like trying to sit on a two-legged stool. Sooner or later we fall off. And if you've been to any friend's memorial recently, you know our eulogies have very little to do with our resumes. Have you ever heard anybody say, "You know George was amazing. He increased market share by one third." And so why not grow our eulogy virtues, not just our resume virtues throughout our lives?
- Dave: That's a power statement.
- Dave: When I interviewed all of those guests on Bulletproof Radio, including you and I asked three most important pieces of advice for performing better as a human being, not one person ever said money, fame, or power. And that's one of the things that really stood out.
- Dave: So the people who are doing big things like you've done that is not the focus. It's a byproduct of them being happy, of them figuring out their mission and going out and doing it instead of thinking about it or all of the other things. And I found that really inspiring because it could have easily been "The secret to success is crushing the competition, meditating on the blood of your enemies" and that sort of stuff. It's just

not how it works. But it seems like if you watch TV, you read YouTube comments or something, it feels like that is the message a lot of people get.

Dave: What is the best way to help millions and billions of people understand what you just said there?

Arianna: Well, what we are doing for that is building a platform. We've just opened an office in San Francisco and we have a great product and engineering team. We are hiring, if anybody knows great designers, product engineers, people email me. And what we're doing is building a behavior change product that adds a lot of elements to behavior change.

Arianna: So far, the reason why behavior change products and apps haven't really worked is because we treat human beings like Pavlovian dogs or mice. We pull a lever, we get some cheese and human beings are complex organisms. In order to change behavior, we need to touch people's hearts, people's souls. We need to capture their imagination. We need to do what the fashion industry and the entertainment industry have done so well. So that's what we are building.

Arianna: How come the industry can convince a woman making \$50,000 a year to buy a \$2,000 Prada bag? Because somehow it's essential to her wellbeing. But we can't convince people to get enough sleep, to avoid eating processed foods and sugars, to move more. We need to use the same techniques. That's what we are doing, that the fashion industry and the entertainment industry is using to change behavior around health and performance. It's not going to happen otherwise.

Arianna: And in order to do that, we need to work with behavior scientists, which is what we are doing, who understand how to move human behavior and not just how to give people little nudges. Nudges are very important, we have nudges and micro steps, but you have to go beyond nudges to capturing people's imagination. So that's what we're doing and that's how we think we can take what we're doing with workshops and the media platform and spread it to hundreds of millions of people.

Dave: Beautiful. I really support your vision there and I just admire the fact that you're pushing on doing that and really putting your power and effort and will into that. It's very noteworthy.

Dave: And I believe our audience has some questions for you. You up for a few minutes of Q&A?

Arianna: Okay. Who wants to go first?

Dave: All right. We've got a microphone over there. All right.

Gareth: My name is Gareth Herman and I own an accountability team business where we support people in setting goals and tracking habits, daily accountability, daily calls, text check-ins to help you build your best life.

Arianna: Great.

Gareth: And so I've really been focused on this question of behavior change just in my own journey and really struggle to do things. I have a vision and struggle to take action on it, which is how I started all of this. And so I'm curious to follow up on your question about what's gone so well on the entertainment and fashion industry. You said that there's some concepts there that we can really leverage and borrow and bring that over to behavior change. And I'm curious to learn and just to hear a little bit of followup to that of what are those essential ingredients in fashion and entertainment that we can borrow and bring to behavior change.

Arianna: So one of the main ingredients beyond aesthetics, aesthetics are important. Beautiful design is important that draws you in. But beyond that, it's featuring role models and people buy the product because somebody they've seen in advertising or social media is somebody they aspire to be like either a celebrity or even a beautiful happy looking model. Although I've never seen a happy looking model. They all look miserable. I don't know why, but I don't know why the thing is more attractive to look angry and miserable, but that's another story.

Arianna: So I think first of all, I love the accountability part. I mean we have accountability buddies for everything we're doing. It makes a huge difference. One of the things we do, you may want to take and do as well, is when people start a new job, we recommend to all the companies we are working with Accenture, JP Morgan, the Hilton Hotels, to start with what we call an entry interview. And the first question of the entry interview is "What is important to you outside of work?" And whatever they say is important, we team them up with an accountability buddy in their own team to make them actually achieve it.

Arianna: So we had someone at Thrive, for example, our own company who said, "What's important to me is every Tuesday at 7:00 PM to make my therapy appointment." And she had come from another big publishing company and her manager said, "Well, when was the last time you actually were there on time?" And she said, "Like six months ago." So we took somebody from her team was her accountability buddy. So at 6:00 PM, she literally takes her bag, her coat, takes them to the elevator and says, "You are leaving."

Arianna: And what is amazing about that is not just that she is actually meeting her 7:00 PM therapy appointment, but that she feels more bonding with the team. So people have all these different ways to create team spirit. Nothing is more important than supporting each other's goals, not just within your career but within your life.

Gareth: Thank you.

Dave: All right, so who's got the mic? There's another mic. All right, let's do the other mic. We'll go back and forth. That's easy. Alright.

Speaker 16: Hi. I'll do a reveal so I won't tell you who I am until I ask the question. Do you feel we can create more blue zones on this planet?

Arianna: I think we should all create our own blue zone. I think we should go beyond blue zones being geographic areas and make blue zones whatever we live.

Elias: I guess I'm next over here.

Dave: All right.

Elias: Hi, my name is Elias Sirjohn. I do a corporate training with a company called Business Brain and I do a lot of behavioral change. So I wanted to ask you with your new app and the new strategy you're doing, I agree with you, people aren't robots that you just push a button, but one of the things that I've found that I started to get into in addition to biometric testing for my biohacking was psychometric testing for behavioral change. Because different people in the same way that different things like Dave was just talking about our diet, not the same diet doesn't work for everybody. People are motivated differently. So I'm just wondering with this methodology you're designing or you going to use psychometrics to personalize the behavioral change process? Because I found that's essential, but I don't see a lot of people doing that. It's something I'm trying to bring forward myself and my work.

Arianna: Absolutely. You're absolutely right. Recommendations that we call micro steps have to be personalized because people respond to differ recommendations and not just giving people physical biometrics but mental and psychological and emotional biometrics is absolutely key because you can be doing everything right in terms of what you eat, in terms of how much you exercise. But if your brain is constantly ruminating or judging you or doubting you, you are going to end the day depleted.

Arianna: And I know that because I started life as incredibly self-judgmental and unfortunately I have found that women are more prone to what I call the obnoxious roommate living in our heads that constantly put us down, judges what do we did. Literally, I could do this conversation with Dave and have a great time and then I would leave that conversation. I would spend 48 hours ruminating over the conversation, "I don't think I answered that question well. And I think when you said that, you could have said that instead, which would have been much more effective and I really don't think people connected with you." And by the end of it you're exhausted. You feel as though you've run a marathon. And instead of being present with whatever is next, you are in the past and there is no good thing that ever happens in the past.

Arianna: So feel what you are saying is incredibly important. That's why we have all these journeys that are about gratitude and connection and all the things that actually make it possible for us to thrive on a consistent basis.

Arianna: And the other thing that I find is incredibly important is what we call thrive time. Let me explain that. When we started hiring, you know we are two and a half years old, there were a lot of people who applied to come and work with us because they thought we're a laid back organization. That we're like a nine-to-five operation. So we had to actually realize that we needed to explain to people: No, we are very ambitious. We have huge goals.

- Arianna: The point is that we know that in order to achieve this goal, we both have to work hard, but we have to work smart. What does that mean to us specifically? Let's say you pulled an all-nighter to ship a product. You may have to do that. You exerted yourself extra hard. After that, we have what we call thrive time. Take time to recharge immediately. The problem is when people over exert themselves and then they continue working, they either get sick or they make mistakes or in one or another stop thriving. So thrive time is an essential concept.
- Arianna: We're never going to have any interesting job that is nine-to-five. Can we all agree on that? But if we don't include thrive time, if we're not conscious of when we've over exerted ourselves and we need to course correct, then we are not going to be able to operate from our best and our healthiest and our most joyful part.
- Dave: Beautifully said. We've got time for one more question. Mic's up here.
- James: Hi, my name's James Brown and I'm a meditation teacher. So I have a question. In 1968 Bobby Kennedy gave a speech complaining that if everyone in the audience got cancer, it would be great for the GDP but that it would be terrible for humans. And he said that we need a metric that can be something that could be in the State of the Union every year like how are we doing. Fifty years later we still don't have that metric.
- James: So you spoke to this question and so I would ask the both of you, what are some actual things we can measure? What would be the aggregates of data that we can pull in to create a metric and could you be the one to publish it every year through your Thrive program?
- Dave: Ooh.
- Arianna: Absolutely. I would be delighted to. So we haven't done it here but Bhutan did it.
- Dave: Yep.
- Arianna: Bhutan is actually measuring human happiness and now Fiji is doing something that we are working with them on, actually. Instead of measuring billionaires, they have a phrase in Fiji that means happiness and they call it boonaires.
- Arianna: And so there are things happening even in the UK. They are measuring an aspect of that, so you're absolutely right. I think the GDP that we measure now does not really measure true happiness, true fulfillment. It measures a lot of externalities as economists would say and we need to change that. But I always believe in starting where we can. Starting at the individual level, starting at the enterprise level and meeting people where they are because I feel that's how we are going to accelerate the change. You know there's this countervailing forces now. The change is happening, people are fired, they know the way we've been living and working is not sustainable. But at the same time, there are all these other forces, especially our addiction to games, to technology, to social media that's making it harder.

- Arianna: But I want to end on an optimistic note because I believe in the end the fact that human beings have as part of our birthright, this center of wisdom, peace and strength means that the Thrivers will prevail.
- Dave: Now since you asked both of us, I think we should just measure it based on number of likes on social media.
- Arianna: But then you should all go after this and like on my Instagram. That will have the picture of Dave and me from backstage. Okay?
- Dave: There you go. More seriously, this gets to fundamental issues of democracy. So we're voting for stuff, but we aren't measuring ... a vote is ultimately a poll. It's a survey. And we're not surveying that and I guarantee you that if politicians stayed in office based on how we responded to a survey about how much we like our life, we'd have a different group of criminals in office.
- Arianna: Voting is actually unbelievably important. I hope everybody's going to turn out and vote because the reason we have who we have in the White House now is because of the lower turnout in 2016 and we can't afford to have that again in 2020.
- Dave: And it was all psychometric, to the earlier question. The psychometric differences, we have the data now to measure these things and I would encourage you with the reach you've got to do more surveying and more understanding and maybe you can be the one who can do that.
- Arianna: Well, actually, we just announced in partnership with Qualtrics that's this amazing survey company that was just bought by SAP for \$8 billion, so quite a good exit for a startup. And we just announced the Thrive Index. Together with Qualtrics and SAP, we are measuring now in companies how people thrive, what are their experiences because if you look at all the surveys that exist now, they measure benefits, for example. Benefits are very important. If you are somebody on the parenthood journey and you are looking at your benefit of how long is your maternity leave or your paternity leave is important, but what we have found in the surveys that that does not complete their experience. What really matters also is how are you treated at work when you come back. Like small things like do you have a room where you can pump milk? It may seem very simple, but there are lots of places that have six ping pong tables and no room for a new mother to pump milk. And then do you have a place to store the milk or do you have to put it together with people's sandwiches in the main refrigerator? This may seem very small things, but at many life moments of an employee's journey how a company allows them to experience that journey beyond the benefits determines how engaged, loyal and productive they are.
- Arianna: So the Thrive Index is going to measure experiences, not just operational data. And we believe that ultimately experiences are a leading indicator for business success. I mean, I'm on the board of Uber and let me tell you, if we had the Thrive Index, we would have known there is trouble ahead because we would have had all this data around burnout,

around dissatisfaction, et cetera, on a dashboard for us to see and course correct before they affected business metrics.

Dave: Ariana, thank you so much for your knowledge and your work.