

Gerard: I got fixed. And from that knowledge, everything else followed suit, right. I mean, you found that scientifically, right?

Dave: That is true, but you made me think of something here. Now is it true that when you're an ultra-successful guy you have to have Richard Branson hair?

Gerard: Well, I heard that.

Dave: I mean, you've kind of got it going on there. You've just got this thick wavy hair, I don't know. I think there might be something to it. I'm going to grow my hair out.

Gerard: That's great.

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio. A state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that sleep probably triggers what I'm going to call rhythmic power washing in your brain. And when you're asleep every 20 seconds counts, because that's when a wave of fresh cerebral spinal fluid rolls into your brain when you're asleep, and those slow rhythmic blasts probably explain at least part of why sleep is so important for brain health. And we didn't understand how rhythmic, and how pulsing these were until Science Magazine published an article from a new study out of Boston University. Previous studies, on animals at least, showed that this fluid, I'm going to call it CSF for cerebral spinal fluid, that it washes harmful proteins including beta-amyloids, which are part of Alzheimer's disease, out of your brain. And in the Bulletproof Diet and in Headstrong I went into great detail, in fact I found studies that showed the glymphatic system that powers this is powered by mitochondria, thus if you were to do something to make sure that you have stable energy in your mitochondria, your sleep efficiency can go up. But in this study they looked at fast FMRI and found that every 20 seconds there was a wave of fresh cerebral spinal fluid, and the pattern is really obvious and really big, and when we're awake we have small gentle waves of this that are linked to how you breathe. And if you look at those as normal waves, when you sleep you have tsunamis, and this is the first time they've really tied together different areas of neuroscience. And this is what happening in medicine and in bio hacking that's phenomenal. They're looking at sleep quality. Oh, you're a sleep specialist? That's one kind of doctor. They're looking at brainwaves. Oh, EEG stuff? I'm kind of into brainwaves, I have an EEG clinic that I started. And then they look at cerebral spinal fluid. Oh, you're a spine surgeon? Okay. And maybe and anesthesiologist. And they looked at blood flow, which a vascular specialist or a cardiovascular specialist, and they're saying, "Oh my God, all of these are connected. What are we going to do?" You're going to have to make systems based medicine, instead of cutting the body into these different systems that we don't think of as interacting. So here's what happens, first a slow wave of nerve cells electro activity, the kind that indicates non REM sleep sweeps the brain, then oxygen levels in the blood and the brain fall, which means that blood has left the brain and finally, probably to take place of that blood that exited, the wave of cerebral spinal fluid comes in. And what does that mean? You better learn not just to sleep however many hours a day, by the way people live longer on six and a half hours of sleep than eight hours of sleep, that's because healthy people live longer not

because you need less sleep, but however much sleep you get to wake up and feel good, you better get really good sleep for the time you're asleep. And one of the things that no one understood was you're creating these waves of pressure that come in and it's neat, because the cells in your brain are dumping their liquid, they actually shrink, and they're replacing that liquid with clean liquid. If you're not doing that for oh, the next hundred, maybe 180 years you're probably going to have brain cells full of garbage. Either that or you could just use social media, it's up to you. Now today's podcast is a podcast that I'm recording remotely, although I was planning to record it in person, because two days ago I was Costa Rica at a place called Rythmia. Rythmia is the world's first medically certified, I'm going to call it plant medicine compound. What do you call that Gerry?

Gerard: We like to think we're a life advancement center, but a medically licensed plant based-

Dave: A life advancement center? That sound very, very high tech. By the way, I'm talking with Gerry Powell who's the founder of Rythmia on the show. So I went down there and checked out the facilities, which were really beautiful, big pool. Gerry's a, I'm going to call him a consciousness, thought leader. He's an entrepreneur, a philanthropist, and an inspirational speaker. He's also a, I'm going to call him a one percenter, and he made his millions creating and selling multiple companies, and he also had multiple addictions that he's been really open about in his talks. And he mapped out a, we'll call it a psycho-spiritual path that included plant medicines that helped him overcome his addictions. And we're going to talk today about his experience as a former addict and what happened, kind of his path on being really successful. And even before we get into it, I've just got to congratulate Gerry on the amount of courage it takes to say like, I'm an ultra-successful guy and by the way, I had some serious problems, because so many people you look at them, you think they're successful and they're presenting their Instagram version of their life to you. But inside it's a total shit show. So thanks for saying, "Hey guys, I'm pretty damn successful, but I had some stuff." I think you're doing a service to the world, just meant a lot. So I appreciate you coming on the show.

Gerard: Thanks for saying that.

Dave: Gerry, walk me through your kind of rags to riches story. This is before you started Rythmia.

Gerard: Absolutely.

Dave: So just tell me about it, this is what you would share on stage when you're doing your inspirational speaking, but a lot of people listening probably haven't heard about you. So what happened [crosstalk 00:06:23].

Gerard: And I don't even consider myself a thought leader or an inspirational speaker or special.

Dave: Well, you get on stage and you talk about inspirational speaking, and all that. Doesn't that make you a thought leader?

Gerard: Yeah. I don't think so, because I'm more of a cheerleader for a plant than I am a thought, you know.

Dave: You're a cheerleader not a thought leader? All right.

Gerard: No. And my upbringing was rough, I was raised in a rough environment, and Irish Italian Catholic family. And I developed addictions very, very young, at like 13 I was drinking a lot, but I was 13. And my life, I got kicked out of school when I was 17, and dropped out at 17 and wound up in jail, and you know, a typical very bad start. And I through the grace of God, whatever God is, I didn't end up getting convicted. I was accused of doing these seven crimes that I did, but I didn't wind up getting convicted, and when I got out of jail I said, "Oh my God, I'm going to do something with my life."

Dave: How long were you in jail?

Gerard: Maybe a month.

Dave: Okay. Enough to realize that you probably didn't want to do that for longer.

Gerard: And it wasn't a place I was in charge. I noticed that. I was not in charge in jail.

Dave: And this was after you'd made all of your money?

Gerard: No, I was-

Dave: It was when you were a kid. Okay.

Gerard: I was just out of high school. But I got acquitted of all those things, and I decided I wanted to make money, because that's all I knew was if somebody made money they were good.

Dave: And they were safe, too, right?

Gerard: They were safe. So I became a millionaire in my 20's, I took a company [inaudible 00:08:19] in my 30's, and I had a real good network. And then I went, not bankrupt, but I went broke in the dot com crash.

Dave: Yeah. Me too. I made million, lost six million before I was 30. Yeah, that sucks.

Gerard: I had a negative net worth of six million dollars right then.

Dave: Wow. Wow. I never went negative, but I went from zero to six, and back to zero. Yeah, okay. I feel you. But you had like 30 cars, two airplanes.

Gerard: Yeah, but then I started a company at 38 that I sold when I was 42 for about 90 million in cash that netted down to 60-ish million my end. But my life was terrible. I was an

alcoholic, a drug addict, a sex addict, I was terminally unhappy. I tried to commit suicide a couple of times. And I was not a nice guy. You know, I was a bad guy. Yeah.

Dave: Wow. So you had sex and drugs, but you didn't have an electric guitar, so you didn't have the trifecta of rock and roll?

Gerard: I was short the guitar.

Dave: Well, at least just two out of three. So yeah, you dodged a bullet there.

Gerard: Yeah, exactly.

Dave: All my musician friends are like, Dave you're a jerk.

Gerard: I like that.

Dave: So drugs. You use plant medicine, those are drugs.

Gerard: But they're really not, are they.

Dave: I mean, heroin's a plant medicine. There's a chapter in Super Human about heroine as antiaging drug, it actually has antiaging properties. I'm not proposing people go do heroin or anything, but... And nicotine. You know, people hear me spray nicotine on the show, and I've written about nicotine for Alzheimer's disease. In fact, there's somebody called tobacconiero. These are shamans who use insane amounts of nicotine to go into altered states like Ayahuascaros, which are the people who use Ayahuasca, which is one of the plant medicines that's a part of what you do at Rythmia. So like, okay. What drugs were you addicted to?

Gerard: I was addicted to injectable Demerol, which was the, that was the real hard one for me.

Dave: Okay.

Gerard: The rest was easy. The cocaine and the Xanax, that was pretty okay, but the Demerol got me in a pretty bad space.

Dave: The reason I laugh when you said Demerol wasn't out of disrespect. I've only had Demerol once, and I was maybe 19, and I had the first of three knee surgeries I had before I was 23. So I'm this fat kid and I'm in the hospital, and afterwards, especially back 30 years ago, the knee surgeries were pretty brutal and they're very painful. They put a screw in the bone, and the nurse said, "Oh here, do you want some Demerol?" And so she gave me a shot of injectable Demerol, the only time I've had it, and within like 30 seconds I looked at my mom who was in the room, and I go oh my God, it's like two six packs of beer in a needle. And I still remember this, you just made that memory pop into my head, so I could see getting addicted to that stuff, because I felt really good.

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: The pain just went away.

Gerard: It does feel really good.

Dave: Okay. So why were you in so much pain?

Gerard: The pain was emotional pain from something that I couldn't get in touch with that happened when I was young.

Dave: Is it something you can talk about?

Gerard: Yeah. So when all this went on, and I ended up going to a rehab center, and I met Dr. Jeff who's a partner of mine in this business about 10 years ago. And I went to this rehab center, and the rehab center led me to a spiritual kind of quest, and right before I was ready to commit suicide again, and somebody said, "Hey, you better go try this plant medicine." And I went to Costa Rica, I did this medicine, and I was taken by a little boy who was me, showed me an interactive video that I was involved in of when I was a little boy, and showed me getting sexually abused by my grandfather.

Dave: Oh wow.

Gerard: And while it was happening though, I remembered it, because it happened behind a door and I didn't want to open the door, because there was the memory of something bad in that room. And then when I became involved in the experience of watching it again, it was very old hat to me, it was something I knew. And it explained why I was an alcoholic, why I was a drug addict, why I was a sex addict, why I didn't trust men, why I was weird with women. It explained everything.

Dave: Did you even remember it, was it something that you were conscious of or had I been sort of blocked out?

Gerard: Never knew about it. And then I asked my mom after I found out about it, and she goes, "You know, we always thought something like that happened, but we never..." And I'm like how can you do this. Like, how can you...

Dave: You're like, wow.

Gerard: And I'm like Jesus, you know.

Dave: But you also, it's very hard as a parent. Like, we thought there was something weird, and we didn't know and it couldn't really be, and how could anyone do that.

Gerard: Right. Exactly right.

Dave: So then of course the issues with women can come from that, because you weren't protected the way that all children should be protected.

Gerard: Right. Yup. Spot on.

Dave: It was an old trauma, and it was one that was entirely hidden. And was it your traditional kind of Western approach to addiction when you went to this rehab center that you found this?

Gerard: Yeah. I went to the big one in Malibu, and that's where I met Dr. Jeff actually there. And it was traditional, but that, so I met Dr. Jeff in 2009, I did the plant medicine in 2014, and then right after I did that I had a 180 in my life where well, I quit smoking cigarettes, which I was smoking since I was 12.

Dave: Yeah. Those are not good for you.

Gerard: You know, two packs a day, but I would really draw them really rough. So I quit that, I basically quit drinking. I could have a little bit of wine and not have it matter, and I haven't done a drug since 2014, I haven't done a pharmaceutical drug other than I took Advil and on occasion NyQuil when I got a cold.

Dave: It's kind of funny, western drugs actually work a lot of them, but they do have a downside sometimes.

Gerard: A lot of them do. Yeah, a lot of them do. I'm not a naysayer on them. For me, it wasn't right.

Dave: You should minimize your use of those, and usually it's short term, but there are a group of listeners who are saying all drugs are bad. It's like actually, they kind of can save your life, and they can take away post-surgical pain in a meaningful way, but they're not without risk.

Gerard: Correct. I know that's how I see it.

Dave: Okay. And you switched to these plant medicines.

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: I would say switched to for treating pain, but you had a breakthrough using plant medicines, and you were able to heal your trauma that way. Was there other stuff you did or was it pretty much [crosstalk 00:15:41].

Gerard: Well, what was interesting is that it actually happened all in one night, and this is what's so super hard to get your hands around. I was in counseling five days a week for five years previous that. When I went to the rehab, when I got out I didn't have a job. I had a bunch of money, and I just went to therapy all day five days a week, and that went on for five years. And then I did this plant medicine, and I had this thing where it showed me what happened to me, it showed me who I'd become as result of that. My came in and merged with me, I know this sounds crazy, it remerged with me and then I was given a new heart, I swear to God. And so then the next journey, which was two days

later, it told me to buy a place, and to do this for other people, and this is just how this happened. We bought this place, got it licensed, we've had 6,000 people through the door, 95.12% of them had the exact same thing happen to them that has happened to me, and I know that that sounds crazy, but it's true. It's electronically self-reported data. And my life changed in a day. And it changed in a day, and then it took years to make sense of that change, to understand, well, to learn how to live life. I never, I was just working like a rat on one of those wheels. I was just working and working and working, because I was afraid to feel anything, you know. Yeah.

Dave: I've had breakthroughs in my own healing from traumas. As far as I know, I didn't deal with any sexual traumas, and I think at this point I would know if that was in my background, but I definitely had a lot of anxiety and a lot of birth related trauma, things like that. I've been pretty open on the show talking about it. And I had some breakthroughs from holotropic breathing, which is a big deal. And this is what Stan Grof, who's been on the show, he's in his 90's. In Super Human, I talk about the wisdom of your elders. These people who are 20 or 40 or 50 years older than you, they know a lot. But he and his wife created a kind of breathing when LSD became illegal, because he was using prescription LSD from Sandoz Pharmaceuticals, major company, in the 60's with a license in order to develop transpersonal psychology. And a lot of plant medicine is based on the transpersonal psychology perspective. So there's breathing, and then there's LSD, and there's mushrooms, and there's MDMA, there's Ayahuasca, there's ibogaine, and a collection of other lesser known things. Like there's peyote. And all of them are illegal in most places and, I say most of those are illegal in most places.

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: But I look at that universe of things, and then I go all right, there's very clear evidence, now I'm going to go into like complete conspiracy land, except I've seen the evidence that the CIA and MK Ultra, and people like that introduced LSD and probably popularized some of these things in the 60's, because they thought it would make it easier to control people. Now one of the guys who came on my show who actually believes that because I talk about these as hey, maybe these can be helpful, he believes I'm a CIA I think stooge is what he called me. I can tell you, to the best of my knowledge, I have never interacted with the CIA, but I did sit next to a CIA guy on an airplane once who had been tortured and told me how he got over his trauma. That's the extent of my CIA connections. But I do wonder, these plant medicines make, they make your brain more malleable. They give you more control over your brain, but they can also make you more suggestible. Do you worry about that?

Gerard: I'm not really sure. The thing is it's, what I've noticed is that this place that you go to on these medicines is so deep and so wide, and no matter how many times you're there you pick up maybe what you learned you can fit on the head of a pin while you're over there. And what happens to people as they go back and forth from that side to this side? I've only seen positive things. I've seen people's lives get in order, and all of that. I don't know if they're more suggestible when they're over here. I don't know. And you know, it's so hard because so much of it is anecdotal, because the human mind remembers the last person that you spoke to, right. And without any good science on that it'd be hard to have even an opinion, right.

Dave: It's a fair point, and there's a lot we don't know. And we're seeing MAPS, and the founder of MAPS Rick Doblin's been on the show several years ago.

Gerard: Interesting.

Dave: And so I'm like there's something interesting and useful going on here. After a lot of study of this kind of stuff I would say that plant medicines are not without risk, that there are people who go, they go bonkers, right.

Gerard: True.

Dave: Like if you were already unstable, you're a schizophrenic or there's things, and same thing by the way with meditation. Just meditation, there are people who go crazy from meditating and stay crazy. And the more aggressive the meditation, the fast path Buddhism, they warn you oh, you might get enlightenment in this life or you might go nuts. It's pretty much one or the other, but if you wanted to do it, here you go, and by the way find a cave to live in. It gets pretty intense. So you're not finding that you have people have a major spiritual crisis or need long term therapy after this?

Gerard: Well, we do a pretty heavy duty medical screening upfront.

Dave: Okay.

Gerard: And then another one at the resort. And what we've found is not so much schizophrenia, but rapid cycling bipolar are predisposed to have a psychotic break. And so we try our best to make sure we don't get involved. Now what's interesting with that is that even those people that have the break, that have that split that looks horrific during the event, two and three weeks later claim to be in a much better place than they'd been for a period of time. So it's a real rough one. It looks bad while it's happening, because we've had two of them here where people have under reported a situation.

Dave: I mean, out of 6,000 people, right?

Gerard: Out of 6,000, yes.

Dave: And the states that people go into using advanced neurofeedback, which is where I put a lot of things, you can see similar visionary states. It's not the same as plant medicine, they're different, but if you looked at someone's brainwaves you'd see the Venn diagram overlaps, right.

Gerard: Yes.

Dave: And the same thing from real powerful breathing exercises. I've actually seen more crazy stuff doing holotropic breathing than I have on any substance.

Gerard: I'm going to tell you, in our breath work it's amazing, because it lines up with our findings.

Dave: Yeah.

Gerard: About 31% of the people that stay here, and our course is a seven day thing, right. So four plant medicine nights, three transformational breath work nights. They report, 31% of the people report more visions in the breath work than they did in the medicine nights.

Dave: Isn't that crazy.

Gerard: Yeah, it is crazy.

Dave: And stacking those up are really important, I think, and you're the only person I know who does it in that way or the only group. One of the things I found through one of my visionary experiences, whether it's fasting for days in the desert in a cave all by myself or various medicinal things or even just coming back from a few months in Nepal and Tibet, learning meditation, reentering normal society or heck, just coming back after burning man. Like oh, I'm walking around in a world full of normal stuff. What do you do for people to reenter society as functioning human beings who aren't walking around wearing white robes with their third eye tattooed on?

Gerard: Well first off what's interesting is of those 6,000 about 74% of the people that come here are professional people by trade. And usually they're currently employed, and have to go back into a work environment on Monday, right. So we have an aftercare package that we give people, which includes daily practice that's connected through a portal to here. We make sure that they maintain this daily practice for at least 14 days, at the least.

Dave: When you say connected to a portal, I'm assuming you mean like a web portal not like some sort of trans-dimensional, they teleport there.

Gerard: Well, that portal, too.

Dave: Teleport their kidneys to you, and you upgrade them or something.

Gerard: No.

Dave: Just checking.

Gerard: We try to just make sure that they don't drink alcohol for the first 14 days, you know, just normal, normal things. But they seem to adjust incredibly well. So 71% report an adjustment period that lasts about two and a half weeks on average. And that's kind of like where this new thought is rooting, and then as they come out of it the interesting stat here is that at six months we send another survey, and 97.55% of the 95% still say that this thing is working in their life six months later. So the change really rooted, and

continues, but it doesn't take away from that adjustment period, which is about three weeks.

Dave: Oh, it was about three weeks. Okay. Now I love that you're gathering data on just what people's experiences are. I had one experience, and this was in the early days of me doing intense breath work, and really intense altered states neurofeedback. I started a new job, I spent like seven days kind of tweaking for lack of a better word. This was actually without plant medicines, but it was intense, and I started this new job and one of the assistants at the company she walks up to me, and she goes, "Do you meditate?" And I go yeah, why? And she's like, "You have this look in your eyes that I've only seen in my guru from India."

Gerard: Is that right.

Dave: And I was like walking around this new job, and I had no idea what was going on, because I was, I think I only had one foot on this plane. And it took me like you said a couple of weeks before my brain sort of settled back down into its normal operating mode. So I'm glad that you're addressing that, and you're saying all right, you know, here's your package, here's your practice, and here's how to come back in a high functioning state versus like an I've been opened up, but now I've got to kind of pick up my pieces. Now, what do people actually do in Ayahuasca ceremony? I mean, I know how I did it in the jungle, but you have a slightly different approach.

Gerard: We do. So we do one completely traditional night, which is the last night, which is an all-night ceremony using yage which is just another type of Ayahuasca. But the first three nights are kind of a hybrid that we've developed, which is its shorter nights. The first night's an introductory night, the second night's a going deeper night, the third night is a feminine night all conducted by women, and then the last night is a traditional Columbian ceremony from the Punkamaya region of Columbia. And that wraps the sessions up. What we find happens is this thing that I talk about, this soul merger, which by the way when I did it, this is how little I knew, I thought I discovered that, and then I got closer to the medicine and I found out that I was about 10,000 years late.

Dave: Yeah.

Gerard: Party on that, you know.

Dave: There's not a lot that someone doesn't know about plant medicine in a tribe somewhere. It's just the knowledge isn't that evenly distributed.

Gerard: Right. But this thing that happens, it happens consistently, it's repeatable, it happens the same time at the same place. The number stack up Monday night, Tuesday night Wednesday night, Thursday night. So by Thursday night 90% of these people have had this experience of merging back with their soul, and their soul usually appears as them as a pre five year old person. And then that person comes back in, and they get their heart healed, and it sounds crazy. Trust me, I know how crazy this sounds. And before any of this craziness, I was a really frustrated conservative, even though my life was

crazy, I was politically conservative, religiously conservative, financially conservative, high. And I went from that to somebody that can't speak openly in the Denny's, because they'll run and get me a straitjacket, right.

Dave: So Ayahuasca changed how you vote?

Gerard: Well, actually I don't vote anymore, but yes. If it were, it would.

Dave: Why don't you vote?

Gerard: I don't vote because I see both sides of that as wings of the same bird right now.

Dave: So if voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal?

Gerard: Yeah, I would think so. I would really think so.

Dave: Okay.

Gerard: It's crazy. I mean when we were young republicans were allegedly spending less money, taxing less, there was a system going on that doesn't seem to be present right now, you know.

Dave: I understand what you're saying there, you're doing other work in the world.]

Gerard: Yes.

Dave: Now I'm going to push back a little bit on this.

Gerard: Okay.

Dave: People are merging with their soul. I've done a lot of inner child work, you know, reintegrating parts of yourself. I've worked with shamans from Siberia, shamans from South America. I've done shamanic training with Alberto Villoldo who's been on Bulletproof Radio. And I've gotten to know some very powerful people with weird hair. Some of them just look like normal people, and some of them you're like okay, you're definitely a shaman, right. But these are just people, they can do stuff that I do not have words for. I mean, shaman Durek has been on the show, and I've heard him speak languages he doesn't speak. There's some corner cases that are highly unusual where people can do some unusual stuff. So I'm just saying, I'm really open to the idea that there's stuff going on, but I also wonder, merging with your soul. How do you know it's your soul you're merging with, not like your fractured inner child. A soul, they call it their soul shattering that [inaudible 00:32:08] talk about. Like how do you know what's really going on in there.

Gerard: Who knows. Tell me. And who knows like, and this is where I get with this, I am not a Shaman Durek, I'm not a shaman. I'm a business guy that had this craziness happen to him, and it was told to me, because as crazy as it sounds the moon types and I read

what she's typing. It was told to me that that was a merging of the souls. That's as scientific as it gets. And yet people report the same thing. So let's say that it's a reconnection to the inner child, let's say that it's a shattering of the ego. You can call it an ego death. There's all different terms. The result is someone that walks away looking, I can tell you right now if I was doing before and after pictures, I could sell more than most plastic surgeries. Yeah. Because people look so different, you know.

Dave: I've seen the same thing from multiple types of, you spend a week really going deep and when people are done with that they look younger. Their eyes are glowing.

Gerard: They do look younger.

Dave: And you see a big difference from it, and there's this sparkle, for lack of a better word.

Gerard: And what is going on in there, like, how, I could tell you when I went into a float tank I got super confused. And the float tank after a couple of hours feels a lot like 30 minutes into an Ayahuasca journey. People start showing up, and where are they from? I don't know where they're from. Like, where are you. I don't know where you're at, you know.

Dave: It's really funny, because there's a huge contingent of skeptical western scientists, by the way that's most of my family. For multiple generations they've been PHD scientists, engineers, and I studied computer science and information systems, and artificial intelligence and all that. And so you're like okay, all of that is not real, right. But then the science is oh, wait a minute, if ten people do the same thing and eight of the ten see the same things it's actually real. What's been most interesting to me is that when you look at shamanic practices from around the world, you can take people from different continents who are the medicine person of their tribe, and they can sit down and compare notes, and the notes look ridiculously the same. Like oh yeah, I've been there. Yeah, I've been there, too. And you're going what the heck, I'm walking around, I just see trees. And they're seeing gnomes or whatever the heck they see, right.

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: So I'm 100% convinced, and I'm saying this for listeners like look, there's stuff out there that you probably don't know how to see that someone around you probably does, and that some of us at least are wired either to see it in brief glimpses and that it can be beneficial. What I don't know here is there's all kinds of interesting distributed intelligences, you'll get the secret life of trees, you look at the way bacterial biofilms form, you look at the way our mitochondria work together. There's these distributed systems of intelligence, and I don't know where plant medicine fits into all that. Do you have any thoughts or theories? Like are you plugging yourself into a new matrix, are you becoming one with the moon.

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: Becoming one with the vine. Like, is there a residual connection to things? This gets way out there, we don't know, but what do you think.

Gerard: My gut is yes. My gut is that this is the, you know, that you can get to the beginning of the beginning, and all of the things that you mentioned, the more that we find out the more we see an intelligence in all things that's beyond description, right. How can these things be smart, right, and yet we're finding it everywhere. And I'm no scientist, I am no, I'm not even a qualified medicine guy. Again, I'm just someone that...

Dave: You're a business guy, I got it.

Gerard: Well again, but we served more medicine than anywhere in the world in the last year and half, two years. And we have people on staff that are true medicine people, and get all of this. What I look at is what I feel, because there isn't data on what's really going on. The only barometer I have is how do I feel, am I healthy. Things that are tangible to me.

Dave: Okay.

Gerard: And those things are changed immeasurably by the medicine in almost everybody we talked to. Is that, when you get there to that place, and I don't even know what, you know what that place is. You can get there in super meditation, you can get there, there's different ways to get to that place. But when you are at that place are you there before all time, is that the beginning of the beginning, and that's this point. I don't know. It feels like that to me.

Dave: You said something really interesting. There's multiple ways to get there, and my book before Superhuman called Gamechangers, one of the 46 laws that I found from interviewing 500 people statistically looking at their answers and clustering them, and just as rigorous of an approach as I could get to figuring out what people who do big things in the world do. The law was something like get outside of your head or get outside your comfort zone. And I talk about plant medicine in that book, and I relate some of my own experiences and others who I've interviewed. And that said, I think that book has almost entirely five star reviews, it's my highest number of stars book. And the two one star reviews like Dave Asprey talked about LSD, he's a bad man. And I'm like look, I was very clear, there are paths that do not involve substances, right. There's shamanic drumming, there's breathing, there's the electrical stimulation, there's float tanks, there's neural feedback. There's all these things, so for people who are listening to this going, "I would never take a drug, just say no, Nancy Reagan is still in my head." Look, it's okay.

Gerard: Absolutely.

Dave: You can just say no, and you can still understand that there's some kind of a spiritual part to being a fully integrated high performance human being. So that's my perspective.

Gerard: Dave, don't you think there are, for people that have not gotten to that place, once you're at that place it's more real, and this is the common dialogue.

Dave: Yeah.

Gerard: So the person goes home and says, "Oh, this happened to me." And the spouse says, "Oh, no. Dude, that was just in your head." And then the person says, "You weren't there. You don't know how real it was. I was actually there at the beginning of the beginning, because it really is real." And I mean, I believe it to be, in my opinion, after talking to all of these people that what happens to you when you're in that state is real. You speak to the real deep breath work people, and they get to that place as well. There is that place, and that place is real. And that place, from that place, we can kind of re-engineer ourselves to be healthier, smarter, quicker. Like, have a better golf swing. Crazy stuff from that place.

Dave: What's the craziest thing you've seen. Like did someone come in on a wheelchair, and come out running marathons? Like what's the most extreme transformation that you've seen.

Gerard: We see a lot of people that get, I know it sounds crazy, but get rid of crutches and that kind of thing, but what I've seen in sports is, and I wish I could mention some names, but I can't, but I've seen people that were stuck in golf that came for a week and set a 15 year PGA record the next week. I saw a guy that couldn't win in NASCAR that came out the week after they were here, and win. So there's something from a performance standpoint where it can quiet the mind enough to create focus, and that's something that is kind of tangible, although you could say that's just anecdotal because it could have been just their turn to win. But to hear it from them, and especially people in athletics, especially athletic sports that require focus. This almost like a biofeedback, a permanent state of that post biofeedback feeling where you're just have attentional control. That seems to be the most amazing things that I see at the highest level from this thing.

Dave: It's the idea of turning down the voice in your head. There's something about addiction that you mentioned, people throwing away crutches, and things like that. I've had Joe Polish on the show, Joe Polish runs Genius Network, he's a dear friend and one of the guys who helped me get my business going, and he's also like you, very successful and also just says, "Look, I was a drug addict, a sex addict, an alcoholic, and just all kinds of garbage." And now he's a guiding light behind a lot of my entrepreneur friends. But his big mission in life is to help people with addiction, and his point there is addicts are always in pain.

Gerard: Always.

Dave: That pain is a part of it, and as a an addict I'm just going to ask were you in pain? Like physical pain, not just emotional pain.

Gerard: I was in self-imposed physical pain. So I would have broken bones and things like that, that were a result of drinking.

Dave: Okay.

Gerard: And then I was never really present, because I was either drunk or hungover almost all the time. So the pain that I experienced was more of an internal pain of what is wrong with me, and I really do believe like Gabor Mate, and from what I've seen here that all or almost all addiction is the result of unhealed trauma. Almost all of it.

Dave: Yeah.

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: And Joe would say the same thing, in fact we went through that in his interview, and I'm upholding to that as well for people who want to listen to that. It's interesting. It is about old trauma and it can be emotional abuse, it can be physical abuse, it can be sexual abuse or it can also just be birth.

Gerard: Absolutely. Fact.

Dave: That was a big trigger for me. I had the cord wrapped around my neck, I came into the world thinking someone was trying to kill me, and I sort of believed that for 30 years. And you will be in physical pain. So it makes sense to me, and I've seen, we've all see videos of a preacher in the front of a church, and people throwing away their crutches. Some of that is totally staged and BS, and some of that is actually people who had a healing and they re-related the way they thought of their pain. And Dr. Sarno from, was it Harvard, Oxford, right. One of the big schools. Has written multiple books about that. People read the book and they stop hurting, because they re characterize their pain. Do you think that part of your healing as an addict, you know, you're experiencing less pain, it came about from just a change in perspective that was from the plant medicine or was it actually like a biological, biochemical sort of thing?

Gerard: I honestly believe that when your knowledge of what's going on, like I really believed that I was given a new heart, and then I merged my soul. And then that belief changes everything, right. The belief, because this is all belief related, there's nothing that's not belief related.

Dave: How do you know I was a new heart, not just you finding the heart that was yours that was always in there?

Gerard: Because the moon handed me, well the moon in this thing has hands, handed me a heart.

Dave: Two types. Okay.

Gerard: N-types. And put it in my chest, and told me this is your new heart. So I having this world of plant medicine was so far into me, and the next day I just knew, and this is the difference I think between hoping, I hope my cancer gets better, I hope my pain gets better, I hope my hair regrows, whatever the hope is versus knowing that I got fixed. And from that knowledge everything else follows suit. I mean you've found that scientifically, right.

Dave: That is true, but you made me think of something here. Now is it true that when you're an ultra-successful guy you have to have Richard Branson hair?

Gerard: Well, I heard that.

Dave: I mean, you've kind of got it going on there. You've got this thick wavy hair, I don't know. I think there might be something to that, I'm going to grow hair out.

Gerard: That's great.

Dave: Let's talk a little bit more about the rhythmic breath work. That's a part of the week at Rythmia. What is it based on, is it a box breath, do you breathe a lot, just kind of walk me through what the kind of breath work you do looks like.

Gerard: It's very similar to transformational breath work where it's a continuous breath.

Dave: Continuous breath, so like very rapid deep breaths?

Gerard: Deep slower, but continuous. And people can actually have out-of-body experiences during this, the breath work and very similar changes happen to their mind. That they believe things they, so the premise of the week and you can see if this is by suggestion or not, like the statement you mad earlier where the course is given on Monday, and the course is just this what happened to me and what other people have reported. And then they drink medicine Monday night, Tuesday night Wednesday night, Thursday night. Friday night they go into breath work, Saturday night they go into breath work. Ten percent of the people have this merger happen in breath work Friday and Saturday night. And so they see this thing occur, and is this the result of them being prompted? I don't know, because this was happening consistently here before that class was being taught, so it's hard to [inaudible 00:47:25].

Dave: It is hard to sort all that out, and you're stacking modalities, which can be exponential in how it works. I do know the first time I did breath work they didn't put any cues in there. It was part of a ten day thing, but I went in and I was, there's 25 people in the room doing breath work with about, I think we had a dozen facilitator therapist guys in the room as well.

Gerard: Yup.

Dave: So this was a place you could go really deep, but I'm very much an engineering mindset here and I completely leave my body, and all sorts of stuff. And then I hear screaming and I kind of come back, and I look around and like four mats down some lady has like taken all of her clothes off and is ecstatically dancing on her thing. The staff is like safe space, you do whatever you need to do to heal, right. She was in some altered state, but there was no drugs here. These were just from breathing.

Gerard: I got you.

Dave: But people are listening to this going breath work whatever, like I've done Pranayama or I took some deep breaths. You don't understand. You can trip balls from the right kinds of breathing. And I'll tell you, I talked to that lady afterwards and she had huge amounts of body shame, and she had had some sexual trauma, and she was letting go of that like nothing I've ever seen. And afterwards she was like I can't believe I let go, and I'm better. And this is completely a world of nonlinear, not rational. It's all spirit, emotion, feeling stuff. So if breath work to someone listening just sounds like oh, I'm going to do the box breath to calm my nervous system, this is a different recipe, right.

Gerard: Different animal. And Dave, I know a lot of your listeners and followers are super smart and educated, and they may hear this and go oh well that sounds...

Dave: They just have big egos, really.

Gerard: Well, that's the [inaudible 00:49:22].

Dave: Just kidding.

Gerard: But you know, when you hear this kind of thing and sounds so ridiculous, I have people all the time that are sciences based, they're saying, "Well, is this really happening or is it a placebo?" Because these people that report six months later how their health has changed, and all this stuff and comeback to that is how would anybody know, and why other than a scientist would you care? If the result is there, how it happens, I mean we don't really know how many things happen, do we.

Dave: Well, it turns out it is very science based. And like you, with the neural feedback facility where I would say this is complimentary to what you do.

Gerard: Right.

Dave: We've done brain scans. This would be science, because we're measuring data. And 90% of people have the changes that they turned on when they did the deep work.

Gerard: Yup.

Dave: And you're seeing as someone 90% of people you were saying after a while, I don't know what your time frame is, are experiencing changes that stuck, right?

Gerard: Yeah. They stick. And they stick six months later.

Dave: So now the first part of the scientific method is observation. Okay. So you've observed that there's a change. That would be science, right? And then the next one is you make a hypothesis. And my hypothesis is this combination of stuff creates this change, and then you test it. And gee, 90%, there you go. Now, the next step of the scientific method it'd be okay, let's make up a story about why this is true, right. So let's make up a story, and I'm going to piss off a lot of people with this, let's make up a story that it's because the plant medicine increased levels of brain derived nootropic factor. Oh, and we have a

study that shows it does that in mice. So it probably really does. And that increase neuroplasticity, and by the way there are supplements. Some of the ones I make, and other ones other companies make, and there's mushrooms, not hallucinogenic ones, that do the same thing. You can raise this. So our story is going to be this came about because of BDNF. So now, I'm going to do the test again. 90% of people saw a change, therefore it's BDNF. Now that story may or may not be true, but you can believe it.

Gerard: Right.

Dave: And it goes back to you know who Candace Pert is?

Gerard: No.

Dave: So Candace Pert, she passed away before I could interview her, which I'm sad about. She discovered the opiate receptor in humans. She worked at the NIH and wrote one of the first books about signaling molecules, and her life's path went from hardcore kind of hateful angry western scientist to talking about oh, I went to Esalen and I realized this. And she ended up meeting with shamans, and she's like look, we have these neurotransmitters and these peptides, and I can actually show you after all these studies that this is the opiate receptor in the brain. This is how it all works, and the shamans start laughing. She goes, "why are you laughing?" And they go, "Because you believe those things are real." Right.

Gerard: I love that.

Dave: They're both right. Candace's work was groundbreaking, and we can now manipulate the opiate receptor with pharmaceuticals. Some of which are plants, and some of which are chemicals, and some of which come from exercise, but we understand more. But it's still a hypothesis, and a story. Likewise, you could say it's because leprechauns.

Gerard: True.

Dave: So as a western scientist, as long as you have enough belief in your story about how something can happen, therefore it can happen, and as someone who's equally a western scientist and open to experience, like hey, I did it, it worked. Other people do it, it works. And as a biohacker, I'm about getting results. I will do five things, and if only four of the five worked, did I get the results. And if the result is I felt better, a western scientist is going to say, "How do you know you felt better? You don't really feel better." And you're like hold on, what about this observation stuff?

Gerard: Yeah. Right.

Dave: So I'll get off my soap box there.

Gerard: I so understand that, and that's where the whole thing gets super interesting. It's the most interesting thing when you get in these altered states, and then what happens next in your life, it's super interesting stuff.

Dave: One of the things that people report when they use DMT, and DMT is one of the active ingredients Ayahuasca. So for people who don't know about Ayahuasca, it's a plant, a vine, but for it to work the shamans figured out oh, you've got to disable some other enzymes called MAO in the body. So the combination, otherwise you just digest the DMT right away, it doesn't work. But people who use DMT report the same types of visions reliably. There's a rebirthing sort of thing, there's also the machine elves. What the heck is a machine elf? Do people see those?

Gerard: A ton.

Dave: Okay. Tell me about the machine elves.

Gerard: Well, what we, the 73.88% of the people that come here have sacred surgery while they're here.

Dave: What the heck is a sacred surgery?

Gerard: It's when they come in and start operating on people, and there's...

Dave: You're saying the machine elves do that?

Gerard: Well, there's aliens of three descriptions. A mechanical praying mantis is number one, and then the machine elves we call small silvers and minions, and they report the same. And if we had a police sketch artist, they're all reporting these things look very, very, very similar.

Dave: They all say the same thing. The witnesses there all saw the same suspect, right?

Gerard: Yes, exactly. Yeah. And the way that it works is that they'll feel some pain in their mouth, then they'll feel a numbing, and then they'll hear these beings talking and saying, "Is it okay if we come in?" And then they start moving things around, and we call it sacred surgery. And they talk about it in such detail, it's amazing.

Dave: Do you think that Ayahuasca or other plant medicines have their own consciousness?

Gerard: I believe so.

Dave: How do you know if it's working for your interests?

Gerard: The only thing that I have is the people that have been here and myself, so I have let's say 6,000 stories as to it working. And that's not actually true, because there's 50 out of every 1,000 that say that it didn't work. So that's what, 50 out of 1,000, so there's 300 people that say it didn't. 6,000 or 5,700 that say it did, in detail how it did. So it's amazing stuff.

Dave: Very interesting. And it's, I just, the reason I wanted to have you on here is because I knew you'd be real open about it, and you talked about the moon typing. You talked

about the moon having, about it giving you a new heart, you talked about a praying mantis robot like thing.

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: And you're also a 1% guy.

Gerard: Yes.

Dave: Do people ever just tell you that you're batshit crazy?

Gerard: All my friends that knew me from 15 years ago say, "You know, before Gerry went crazy..." You know, they all think that I'm nuts. And a lot of people that I meet think that I'm nuts, but I actually feel like my life is making more sense than it ever has.

Dave: It's very hard to put words to it, and it's the same thing if you tell someone about a dream. Like so, you turned into a box car and, like what are you talking about, right. But there is something going on here and the big question I think in everyone's mind is you know, is this something that I would do, and would I like what I find. Do people like what they find when they do this kind of work or are they like oh my God, I'm a total shit show and I don't like it.

Gerard: Well, I can tell you this, it is the hardest week's work I've ever seen someone do. If you come here with an open heart and say that I want to do this work, it will be a very, very hard week. The benefits of it though are amazing. I'm going to tell you something, we're Trip Advisor's highest consumer rated resort of any type in the world. You've been here, it's not the Taj Mahal. It's a nice little place.

Dave: It's nice, but it's not, you know, white linen kind of a place.

Gerard: It's not the Waldorf. And yet, we rate higher than the Waldorf.

Dave: Did you really just say Trip Advisor?

Gerard: Yeah.

Dave: Okay. That's funny.

Gerard: It is funny, I know. Yeah. Crazy. Like how that could be, it's nuts. So if you read what happens to these people, and they write these things on Trip Advisor which is crazy.

Dave: I thought Trip Advisor was the person leading the session with plant medicine.

Gerard: It is. That's the internal Trip Advisor. But I'm saying that the people that report these things, it's amazing if you read what these people are saying after they're here, all you have to do is read a couple of pages of these things. There's a thousand of them out there. It's amazing what happens to them, and how they feel. But if you were to tell

anybody it's easy, that's completely false advertising. It's hard work. Really, really hard work.

Dave: Any sort of personal development is hard work, and I will just be the first to say having lost 100 pounds, having recovered my biology, and then working on these superhuman things, if you get your hardware working right so you have enough energy in your cells, you're going to have more energy in your brain. And if you have more energy in the brain, personal development work is easier to do, and if you say, "Oh, I'm not going to do that." You're only achieving some fraction of the performance you're capable of performing. And so that's why I just openly talk about meditation and personal development, and yoga, and plant medicines, because you've got to do some of that kind of stuff if you want to show up the way that you choose to show up instead of the way your traumas make you show up. So thanks for doing work on that in the world, Gerry. And thanks for being a guest on Bulletproof Radio.

Gerard: Thank you for having, Dave and thanks for coming to see our place.

Dave: And your website is Rythmia.com?

Gerard: Yeah, www.Rythmia.com.

Dave: Excellent.