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Speaker 2: Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave Asprey: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that isolated brains shrink. I don't mean isolated, operating in a bell jar because that'd be kind of gross, but fodder for science fiction, I mean, social disconnection. A crew of eight people lived and worked at a German research station for 14 months in the Antarctic. And except for a little bit of time during the summer when they had other scientists, they just had long darkness of a polar winter and social isolation. Apparently, the Wi-Fi signal there is weak as well. So persistently, white polar landscape, temperature below -50 degrees, and you can't even be evacuated if bad things happen. Afterwards, researchers in Berlin looked at their brains with MRI and want to know before and after changes. And what they found was really interesting. So interesting that the New England Journal of Medicine published it, which is pretty much a very legitimate journal, even though some of the stuff they publish around [inaudible 00:01:41] is probably garbage. Sorry guys, time to revisit that.

Dave Asprey: Anyway, the social isolation and monotonous environment is pretty much what we're going to experience when we go to space. So it's really important to know what's going on here. Good news, what happened is reversible. And their hippocampal volume, the hippocampus in the brain shrunk by 7%, which is not a good thing. The good thing is the brain's plastic, you can grow it back. My hippocampal volume is 87th percentile for my age group. In other words, my brain isn't shrinking the way it normally does. Hippocampal volume is an early indicator whether you get senile cognitive dementia or Alzheimer's. So you want a big fat juicy hippocampus, being alone in a featureless landscape in the dark is apparently bad for you. And if you live in Canada, I'm sorry. Sorry, I live in Canada too. That was just a joke about the winter darkness, seasonal disorder et cetera, et cetera.

Dave Asprey: Today's episode is a special live episode recorded in an actual proper studio, in fact, a more than proper studio because I met Steve Aoki's fun house in the studio that he uses for his work, and Steve is the guest today. I almost feel like he doesn't need an introduction, but I know some people listening to the show pretty much spend all their time at treating patients or in lab rooms, or probably in social isolation, and this might be the one bright light of their day. So if you don't know who Steve Aoki is, he's one of today's most successful cross genre artists, with about, oh, just 1.5 billion music streams on Spotify, and a couple 2 billion on YouTube. And founder of a record label, an events lifestyle company, called Dim Mak. And he's launched the careers of global acts like The Kills, The Chainsmokers, and tons of others.

Dave Asprey: Just a creative genius, a guy I've admired for a long time. And also, a guy who's recognized by Forbes as one of the top five highest-paid DJs of 2018, and the world's hardest working DJ. And they call him one of the most in demand entertainers in the world. And he let me into his fun house where I just jumped into a pit full of foam blocks. Steve, welcome to the show.

Steve Aoki: Thanks for having me. Thanks for coming here, actually, yeah.

Dave Asprey: Oh, it's super fun. We've been, I think, texting back and forth for three years trying to find a day where we're both in the same city. And, I still have yet to come to one of your performances because every time I check, I'm on an airplane going somewhere else. So we finally made it work. Thank you for having me over here.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, absolutely.

Dave Asprey: There's so many things we could talk about on the interview. Because you have a fashion label, you have this lifestyle thing that you do, and the ability to create your own music as well as to find other acts. You're a creative genius. I want to dig into your brain about why you're creative genius, do you know?

Steve Aoki: I wouldn't call myself a creative genius. I would definitely... I'm a grinder. So, I grind it out. I'll work three times as hard. When I think of creative genius I think of, in my field, Calvin Harris, Skrillex, artists that... They put their time and attention into one song, or one project and it literally influences culture. And they do it time and time again, they always find a way to pioneer. And no matter what's happening, they'll do something different than everybody else, and everyone follows. Those to me are the creative geniuses in my field. But what I do is... That's not my strategy. My strategy is... Since I don't feel like I'm there, I'm just going to do a lot. I'm going to do a lot of different songs, a lot of different ways to challenge my process, so that in time, I just get better and more fluid with my whole process, my approach on how I'm creating. And one of those might hit.

Dave Asprey: So for you it's hard work and iteration, not creative genius.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, yeah. It's not natural for... I would even say, when I got into music... I feel like when I get into anything that I'm passionate about, I'm generally a C-level talent. I'm dead serious. I really feel this for... Whereas playing ping pong, I'm the worst ping pong player out of my friend group, but I will take the lessons and I will be playing ping pong over and over again, which has... All my chess friends at play, they always beat me. But I still take the lessons, I get the passion-

Dave Asprey: Okay, you grind it out.

Steve Aoki: And when I'm in the studio, I just shut the door, here we are in the Neon Future Cave, and I just keep working, start pumping out, whatever I can do. And I'm still 42, I've done so many remixes, so many tracks, so many collabs, and yet I'm still doing the same amount of remixes, the same amount of tracks, the same amount of collabs, nothing's really stopping that same consistency at work even as I have excelled, or have reached levels of success where you think, well, slow down, and then put out less.

Steve Aoki: I'm still pumping out the same... I don't want to say, quantity over quality here, but the way my career has grown is from doing a lot and then sharpening. It's like sharpening your sword, the more you use it, the more you just get better at it. And then one of those strikes is going to really shake the world up. And it's like, some artists can get it on that one try, for me, it takes about maybe 10.

Dave Asprey: Okay, you write about some of this in your new book that is fascinating, it's called Blue: The Color of Noise. And I'm having a hard time believing what you just said. So if you were perfectly average at this, I mean, you're well-funded, your dad created Benihana, so you might be able to afford a mistake or two more. But if one in 10 of the things you did actually hit at a certain point, people would maybe tune out a little bit. You're here, it has to be better than that.

Steve Aoki: Yeah. Well, I guess this is what I say to myself. So it's a lot of mindset approach. Because I guess you're right, if I did put out nine really horrible songs, or put out nine things out of 10 that people turn away from, then they wouldn't listen to that one, right? So, I guess you're right on that approach. But in my head, I keep myself grounded in that place, because I don't want to feel like, well, I only need to do this one thing and I'll be fine. I'm always kind of anxious that people just... They won't like it as much as me. I just have to love it myself, and then I'll put it out there.

Steve Aoki: But I know that in what you're saying is that the way that I love... And once I love what I'm doing and I'm able to put that out to the world, there is that level of like, okay, this is going to be something that's going to be important for the culture, because I just know to that point, now as far as how much it shakes up culture to the artists that... When we go back to the talented artists that just put out the one record and boom, they break the mold. I've said this before, it's like, I don't ever think of myself as the anomaly that does that. Otherwise, it's just like, I might stop my process and I feel like it's working.

Dave Asprey: You mentioned something about a just knowing in there, and I interviewed Rick Rubin and I've gotten to know him, and we've actually talked back and forth about it on the show. About that sense of just knowing and being sensitive to things, because I can kind of believe you accept... You also just know, because we looked at where you go to design fashion, which is like a finger floor above or below as I get lost in this [inaudible 00:10:14] house. But you look at it and you just know what you want to do, and you know when it's right. Where does just knowing live in your... Is it a cognitive thing? Do you feel it in your gut? Where does that live in your body?

Steve Aoki: It's an informed feeling, and it's also fleeting, it comes in it goes. So, for example, when I'm in the studio, if I'm working on a record, right? The melody is really important. I think it's easy to say naturally, when you listen to a song, the melody is what's going to make you sing along or make a hook out of something. There's a million melodies that you can make. And actually, music is an interesting thing because everyone's done the same melodies. It's like, it's been rehashed a million times. It's like wearing the same pair of pants, everyone's worn those pants, you just have to acid wash them differently or paint it differently. But people have already done that, it's just how you wear, how you present it out to the world that makes it a little different.

Steve Aoki: So, for me when I'm in here and I'm trying to come up with a melody that's going to... That gets to that part of like, okay, that's the one. That's definitely the one out of the 60 melodies that we're trying to find, or I'm trying to write on, on the [inaudible 00:11:45], this is the one. Now, for me, I can't think about what's outside the room.

Dave Asprey: So you get into the flow state when you do that.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, I can't think about what other people's opinions are. That fucks up your whole flow.

Dave Asprey: And when you talk about that though, you're always pointing to right in the middle of your chest. So you feel it in your heart when the melody's right?

Steve Aoki: Yeah, it's definitely the center. It's the center of my body.

Dave Asprey: So it's [inaudible 00:12:11].

Steve Aoki: Yeah. Because it's an emotional thing. I mean, when you boil music down, when you boil a lot of this stuff down, the creative process, it's a feelings process. It's an emotional process. So you get it, you know it. It's there before you even realize it. Once you hear it, once you know, once you've played it 10 times, you're like, it's part of your DNA, you know that well. When I get there, then it's a hit to me.

Dave Asprey: Then you feel it-

Steve Aoki: And I'm ready to be able to develop the song enough to give it away to the people. So that's my process as far as this, is getting to that place where I'm willing to stop the experimental stage.

Dave Asprey: The reason I'm asking is, I go through a similar process as an author and a writer. You know when you've constructed a paragraph or a chapter, and I just feel like, oh, if I'd seen an Olympic diver, there's no splashing the water. If I wrote my stuff right, it should go to someone's brain without a splash. And I just somehow know in my gut or somewhere, and I don't know how to teach that,

but I'm interested in how people who are creative and know how to spot it, how we do it. Because it's a very unusual skill.

Steve Aoki: I think that the skill is that 10,000-hour rule. I felt that when I first started and when I listen back to those productions, I just can't listen to them. You know what I'm saying? It takes time to get there. To all of the different stages of my creative process since I was a kid, I always felt like I had that. But you're living in your own head, or if you're in a band, or if you're working with different groups with people, you're living in that space. And sometimes it's a good thing, and sometimes it's a bad thing, because you're not vacuum. You also need that kind of... In some instances, you want to get the feedback, in others you do not.

Steve Aoki: I think when I'm in my space here, I feel like I've broken the 10,000-hour rule for a long, long time ago. I have trust in that gut process of not only what it means to me emotionally, but how I feel it'll connect with people outside the room. From my informed experience by... Luckily, I travel around the world, I get the best litmus test of playing in front of so many people, so many countries, so many different backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, and languages, country, whatever it might be, and that ultimately, helps my decisions without me even thinking about that.

Dave Asprey: So the experience just gets baked in.

Steve Aoki: Oh, yeah. It's just baked in without me even thinking about like, "Oh, the Italians are going to love this. Brazilians are going to love this."

Dave Asprey: It's not cognitive, it's all... You're connecting in some other-

Steve Aoki: Yeah, I mean, I guess if I want to break down the science of it, which is very interesting, because just [inaudible 00:15:24] this house talking to you about stuff, it makes me want to really boil it out and see what the science is too.

Dave Asprey: I want to measure your brain and even have you compose something in your head and I will show you what your brain does. And I'm pretty sure I can predict some of your brain states that are unusual. Because what you find after looking at a bunch of different brains, I'm talking about the 40 Years of Zen stuff, you end up realizing, you know what? There's a lot of people who aren't average and they might suck at some things, but they're super, super powered in some areas. And creative brands, you probably have a little bit more theta, and there's some stuff going on. And then of course, that's performance tuneable but we'll see if the hypothesis matches the data, and I'll tell you the hypothesis afterwards so we don't-

Steve Aoki: Well, I'm all about for one, being self-aware and self-critical, that's a very important thing for just me as a human being. And two, when you are self-aware and self-critical, then you know that you have areas that have inadequacies and you need help with, or you need that support you're talking

about, okay, here, we could advance this side of you. So I always go into everything with this new mentality, "Hey, guys, I don't know anything but I want to learn, constantly learn." Even if I'm still in the studio for so many hours, I still try to bring myself down to that student level. And always listen first, hear a different experience, a different approach. And that's also another reason why I love collaborations because the challenge to listen to the approach and process of other artists is essentially going to help get this gut the center, the knowing part just more rounded.

Dave Asprey: Do you ever have someone come into the studio... I'm not asking you to name names because that would obviously-

Steve Aoki: No, yeah-

Dave Asprey: But someone who came to the studio who you just didn't gel with, and I can't work with this person, it sounds wrong. Does that ever happen, or you find a way?

Steve Aoki: Okay. So, whenever I get to that state, then you have to just be completely unmarried to any of your things, your ego or whatever it is that's like, that could be you that's making it hard. And I think a great producer can do that.

Dave Asprey: Got it.

Steve Aoki: I try to be as adaptable, like what Bruce Lee says, "Be like water." Just be kind of flowing, and it's also what's nice about this house, is that the studio is our place to create, but this is a house where I'm being hospitable. So, I care more about you being here and your feelings and I want to make you feel special. So, if I can give that to you first, then you're going to be more willing to open up. And when you're an artist in here, especially if I don't know you, I want you to feel like you're comfortable to open up-

Dave Asprey: So you're creating a safe space, and your whole decor is super cool, but also playful.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, yeah. It's fun and-

Dave Asprey: So you designed it to encourage that.

Steve Aoki: No tension. And yeah, there are times where it's like, we're not going anywhere. And we might come up with some ideas and no real progress is made. I have plenty of vocals from incredible huge artists, massive artists that for one reason or another didn't execute into a song. And it breaks my heart because some of these artists have passed away too, and that breaks my heart like, wow, we made some beautiful music together. Well, it wasn't necessarily about the gelling issue, just because of one... It could be a label thing, but-

Dave Asprey: Sure.

Steve Aoki: ... there's so much unfinished work that comes in the studio, whether it's from... I'm kind of digressing here, but from not gelling, or from other-

Dave Asprey: It's incomplete, and that's frustrating.

Steve Aoki: Yeah. But I always try to make it fun, no matter what. And, I think the most important thing is, you got to be the bigger person in the room, if things aren't working, you just kind of take that self-critical approach like, well, I can change it, or I can at least try.

Dave Asprey: Why is blue the color of noise in your book? That's an unusual title to choose, how did you get that?

Steve Aoki: Yeah, well, first of all, blue is my favorite color. I mean, you kind of see spots of it in my house, especially in the studio. It's also my last name, which means blue tree, Aoki.

Dave Asprey: Oh, interesting. Okay.

Steve Aoki: Yeah. And what's strange is that when I was finishing this book, I didn't actually put the two and two together. I was like, "Blue has always been my favorite color."

Dave Asprey: And you never-

Steve Aoki: I never really put the two and two together until the last... I think I talk about it in the book in a way where I'm like, "That's the way it ties to the public." But for me, I didn't really... It's kind of that knowing thing, it's there, but you didn't realize how close it is to you.

Dave Asprey: Do you know how your family got that name?

Steve Aoki: Well, I mean, we're family of samurais, so it's not a very masculine name, I think. It's not like, we are the family of the blue tree, fighting in honor for this piece of land.

Dave Asprey: But the samurai were more about inner peace. If they kill you, they're not going to kill you in anger. They'll still cut you in half, and they made peace with that. But that was the... The Bushido code was very much like that.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, right. But yeah, I actually don't know. It's like when you ask these questions that makes me think like, I got to know these things, I want to learn. Yeah so that's an interesting history that I need to figure out but yeah, that's pretty cool. Yeah, and also blue... When I started this memoir, or when I actually started finishing the memoir, I was coming up with a title, actually I wanted it to

be about all the different colors that kind of shaped the person that I am. The stories are in the book. And it was just too cluttered that way-

Dave Asprey: Okay, [crosstalk 00:21:56] rainbow.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, I was talking to Neil Strauss-

Dave Asprey: I love Neil, he's a friend.

Steve Aoki: It's like, go on a call with him and I was like, "Having trouble with some parts of my book and I need some insight, advice." I love... I read all of his books, I'm such a fan.

Dave Asprey: I want my writing to be at the level of his writing sometime. I definitely, name his podcast, that was my highlight-

Steve Aoki: That's awesome.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, [crosstalk 00:22:21] but-

Steve Aoki: Yeah, he gave me some... He-

Dave Asprey: Did he?

Steve Aoki: I mean, just in the 20 to 30 minute call, he gave me a lot of great insight and he's like, "Maybe you do a little different pages, different colors." And now I just kept on boiling it down and boiling it down from just our conversation and I was like, "Well, it all points towards blue." And then that's when it was like, "Okay, I'm going to frame these stories as different shades of blue, how they're different emotions in my life, different histories and times of my life. And the color of noise." Now this is interesting because blue is a color that calms you.

Dave Asprey: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Steve Aoki: So quite the opposite of noise. Blue is in a state of where I go to reset.

Dave Asprey: Okay, so it's that inner peace the thing again?

Steve Aoki: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: All right.

Steve Aoki: I need that blue in my life, because I live in noise.

Dave Asprey: Well, you look at... There's that and also blue tree, the trees are grounded, they've roots on the earth and also, it's where you're going.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, but the way I see it is that, it's like, my world, my career, my life, my passions are in this noise. I'm in a loud environment. I make loud music. I'm in very energetic places. But in order to be in that noise, I need to be in blue, so it's-

Dave Asprey: Let's talk about how you prepare for that. I mean, it's exhausting to be in front of an audience. And it can also be energizing, at least it is for me, and I've talked to lots of people about that. For me, a large audience is 15,000 people at a Tony Robbins event, and you sort of go a bit high from that. But the art of preparing, and if you're going to deliver for hours, you're bringing something of you and you're giving it to the group. How do you keep your energy up so that... Especially after you fly all over the place, your time zone disruption, do you have some sort of magic yoga pose or something you do before you-

Steve Aoki: I like the rituals. Yeah, I mean, the rituals are like... It's not just this moment right before the show, it's more about bringing my lifestyle that I want on the road, and treating the road like my home. That's a really important just mindset that I need to have. It's not like, "Oh, I can't wait to be home, three more days and I'll be home." I'm like, when I'm on the road, I change my whole way of living. This is my home now. I am comfortable, and I am at peace. Because I'm on the road, I do 250 shows a year, and I've done it for 15 years straight. So I've never not been off the road for a huge part of my life, over a decade of my life.

Dave Asprey: Does that wreck friendships and relationships?

Steve Aoki: I wouldn't say wreck, it just changes. You adapt. Yes, some of my friendships diminish to very few visits, but it's a sacrifice, what do you want to do in your life? So, I just kind of... For me, people that are in my life now understand, this is a passion, a very critical passion of mine. And they understand that, and they kind of have to because this is how I am going to live. If they don't get it then the relationship in a negative way will be wrecked. Just-

Dave Asprey: They have to accept you for who you are.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, exactly. But I think that in itself is really important, the mindset of first of all, taking the... I'm away from my home, outside my head, take that out. And then I bring in my workouts, my health regimen, meditation, whatever it might be that I would do at home. I try to do my best to make sure I have it on the road. The hardest part is dealing with airports, is dealing with waking up early and late nights, and waking up early, late nights, waking up early to go the airport and the drudgery of security, waiting for the flight, and the whole ordeal.

Dave Asprey: They need to fix that, it doesn't even make sense. The airports, they can charge more rent, the longer you have to wait at the airport, the higher the rent they can charge to the restaurants and the merchants there. It's they're incented to make us spend two hours waiting in the airport for a one hour flight.

Steve Aoki: I didn't think about that, but it makes total sense-

Dave Asprey: That's why it happens that way. And I mean, I only travel about 150 days of the year, so I'm kind of a medium weight compared to 250. And, yeah, I figured I was spending 400 hours a year sitting in airports, and they're the least hospitable environments, echoing voices overhead and all. So do you use noise canceling headphones, baseball hat, sunglasses-

Steve Aoki: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Dave Asprey: Same here.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, yeah. I got my... I have a flying regiment too. I carry an obnoxious pillow with me. I hear the headphone, I got a hoodie up if I have to, put my hair up in a band, glasses.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, I carry little... It's a yoga kneeling mat, but it's one that raises the seat high enough for me, because I'm just too tall for those damn little seats.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, right.

Dave Asprey: Yeah. And I feel kind of bad. I'd like to have a lighter, smaller luggage but I can still carry it on, and that's how it's going to be.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, So you got your obnoxious big all yoga thing, I got my obnoxious pillow. We're very similar, I have to say [crosstalk 00:27:55] the eye mask is important.

Dave Asprey: Okay, eye mask.

Steve Aoki: Big fat eye mask. Cushy, soft, kind of pillowy eye mask, that's important. Once people see you there, they don't bother you. I'm like, "I'm good." And I used to produce on the plane, I used to be super-efficient. But now it's not about trying to cram it all in, it's more about just trying to sleep and kind of entertain my brain with just movies and stuff like that.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, there's a downtime value there and you're really not. There's less air pressure, there's background noise, there's no oxygen, the air is crappy. So in terms of being at your hype of creativity, it's an unlikely place.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, but I had the discipline to be like, I got to produce every day.

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Steve Aoki: I got to make music every day. Because it's just that habits rule. You do something for two weeks, it just gets ingrained in you and it's not this drudgery or this chore-

Dave Asprey: Okay, having [crosstalk 00:28:54] you like.

Steve Aoki: Yeah. So, I would challenge myself in certain places where I feel uncomfortable, and I do it for a month, and just like reading your book and how you talk about yourself as this human guinea pig. You have to see if your brain is going to change in these environments, which it should, it's plastic enough to do that, so. But then it's just like, after you get that done, you're like, this is just too much, then you have to scale back. So I guess it's trial and error.

Dave Asprey: You read about being a vegan and straight edge, and in your life you've talked openly about alcohol and things like that. You're 42 now, where have you ended up just from an overall nutritional perspective to be able to handle the lifestyle that you've chosen?

Steve Aoki: Well, so, I talk about this too, just like we're talking about how I think about my life on the road, as being home, I also think of myself as an athlete.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, you are. It's the same amount of work as being an athlete.

Steve Aoki: Right. And it's a wear and tear on your body, whether it's on... I talk about this in the book, by vocal cord abuse, singing in a band, screaming in a band, I was in this hardcore band. So I destroyed my vocal cords, and I would yell on the mic, "Everybody jump." Or whatever it might be. And soon I had to get the vocal cord surgery, cut the polypoid out. I had one month of silence which was amazing reset for me.

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Steve Aoki: I mean, it wasn't going on a meditation camp or something, but I literally was like, "Okay, now we're going to start the School of Aoki, all the things that I want to learn and digest. One was Transcendental Meditation, that was a big thing for me.

Dave Asprey: Do you have a daily meditation practice now?

Steve Aoki: I am reading on this book about Beeja meditation. I want to learn other meditation forms, or styles, whatever, but-

Dave Asprey: It's neat to have a palette of them to know the one that works best for you.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, TM has been my consistent one, but I'm wide open, I want to learn more.

Dave Asprey: I went to Tibet to learn meditation from the masters. That was when I first had yak butter tea that was the genesis of Bulletproof Coffee. But I tried all these art of living, just wrote a foreword for the book about that, and that's out of India. But I couldn't [inaudible 00:31:21] what's the best one? I don't know, what's the best food? They're different. So, I think you're doing the right thing. I'm always a

little bit suspicious of some, so this is the only kind of meditation I'll ever do, because I get to look at people's brainwaves, so only do one kind of meditation. And, I think we want to have a diet of broad depths of meditation-

Steve Aoki: Yeah, exactly.

Dave Asprey: Just like if all you eat is Fruit Loops, you might not like what happens even though they might be spiritual for you.

Steve Aoki: Right.

Dave Asprey: Now, let's talk about what you do in philanthropy. Because we have some interest there on brains. What are your thoughts on philanthropy in general, and what there is you care about the most?

Steve Aoki: Yeah. So, I have a foundation that... The entire focus is on brain, health brain science and working alongside scientists and researchers and an orgs that deal with the human brain, and actually, [inaudible 00:32:16] anti-aging, longevity.

Dave Asprey: Well, you can't really talk about brain science without talking about-

Steve Aoki: That exactly, yeah.

Dave Asprey: Because they're so interlinked. Why that? I mean, you could have chosen to feed the planet, to bring water to Africa, there's all kinds of charities out there, why brain health?

Steve Aoki: Because it's a huge passion of mine. Well, first of all I'm obsessed with the idea of living indefinitely, so that's like a-

Dave Asprey: We're on the same team there.

Steve Aoki: Yeah. So, Neon Future, I have a whole album series called Neon Future, and outside of the org, the foundation, my whole approach on life and Neon Future ideology is the conversions of AI and our species. This new-

Dave Asprey: It's happening-

Steve Aoki: New species that will form when we will merge with AI to the point where we'll be more a positive outlook than Yuval Harari's Homo Deus. So, I'm excited about that. I'm crossing my fingers it'll be in our lifetime. And if it's not, I have my insurance policy to cryonically freeze my brain.

Dave Asprey: I was going to ask you that. So, are you freezing just your head, or your whole body?

Steve Aoki: I'm doing the whole body because I can afford to, I know it's not necessary, but-

Dave Asprey: How do you know it's not necessary.

Steve Aoki: I don't know. I was talking to Max from Alcor, whose where I work with-

Dave Asprey: I like Max.

Steve Aoki: And he's like, "[inaudible 00:33:46] freezing my head because at the end, I just want to upload it into another body. Anyways, I'm like, "Well, I'll just take the whole body, even though it'll be a shriveled up, old man.

Dave Asprey: There's a whole assumption there that consciousness is only in the brain but it's an unproven assumption. So, my book, Head Strong... It's funny you mentioned Yuval's book, Homo Deus and Sapiens were both on the monthly science bestseller list. And Head Strong was sandwiched between [crosstalk 00:34:16]. It was the meat in the Yuval's sandwich, which was a super big honor for me. And what I found in writing that book and just processing all the information, is that a huge amount of our subconscious stuff, it comes from the tissues in the body, and it rolls up. And saying consciousness is just in the brain, the brain is a recipient of all these signals that it's processing and filtering. And I feel like you might stitch your head on a new body, but even with organ transplant things... There's a famous study from an organ transplant scientist or doctor who wouldn't write about this till he retired.

Dave Asprey: And he said, "Look, I took the heart from a 22 year old girl and I put it in an old cowboy. And his family calls me six weeks later and says, "He's taking bubble baths. What's up with this? In his entire 60 years, he's never taken a bubble bath and would never do that."" And so, there's something in our tissues that's part of who we are. And I find it arrogant to say, "I'm only going to freeze my head." Because we don't know where consciousness lies, we don't know what it is-

Steve Aoki: ... we call the gut the second brain, right?

Dave Asprey: Yeah.

Steve Aoki: So yeah-

Dave Asprey: You should preserve your gut, if you're going to freeze yourself.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, I guess you're right. You never really know. So I am doing the whole body.

Dave Asprey: All right.

Steve Aoki: I hope I live to this point where the conversation that people have is like, "What? People used to die?" I think it'll happen but I hope it's in our time.

Dave Asprey: All right.

Steve Aoki: Going back to the foundation, it's exciting to also have this foundation just for me personally, so I can get into conversations with scientists, and researchers. It's not just about raising money, but raising awareness. And first of all, informing me, so then I can also be a mouthpiece and inform whoever wants to listen to what I have to say. So, I just love meeting up with doctors and scientists and hearing breakthroughs, and meeting up with you Dave, and hearing about what's going on with breakthroughs happening. I know you're out here for the-

Dave Asprey: The American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine. Yeah.

Steve Aoki: When you said that, everything just flickered, I'm like, "Oh, tell me more about the peptides, and the stuff you're talking about."

Dave Asprey: There's several interviews that I picked up there for the show and most people have never heard of them. But they're doing this cutting edge work that everyone on the planet should have access to, that even people who can afford it don't have access to because they don't know about it. And by making it accessible, so people hear about it, the cost just drops precipitously. So, if I do my job right, if you do your brain philanthropy right, the stuff that's the realm of science fiction, or the billionaire realm suddenly becomes... You know what? I think [inaudible 00:36:58] my mom to that, and I might get another 10 years for her to get to know the grandkids, and-

Steve Aoki: Absolutely.

Dave Asprey: That's unquestionably already happening and it's accelerating in our life. I've never been more excited about that.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, yeah, exactly. The first person to think about when I hear anything about longevity is my mom. I give a mom on that. We did the NAD last week, I was telling you. It's like, "Mom, you got to do the NAD even though it's going to make you feel really weird."

Dave Asprey: I'm impressed that she did it. I've sent both my parents down to get their NAD as well. And there's a chapter in Super Human about that. And right now, NAD is still reasonably expensive. I imagine that the cost should drop over time.

Steve Aoki: Absolutely will, yeah.

Dave Asprey: Yeah. And there's supplements you can take orally, I've talked about on the show, they give you a bump, but they don't give you that... I want 20 year old NAD levels forever, but they'll probably keep your levels where they are.

Steve Aoki: Right.

Dave Asprey: So how do we do all that? And some of it is commercially motivated in that they're selling a supplement or going to a clinic, and have a clinic that does that,

full disclosure, et cetera. But what's much more interesting is who's going to fund the core science on this. And a lot of times it does come down to either government grants through NIH, or it comes down to philanthropy. Because if one company upgrade labs, this is a Bulletproof spin out, the experience of biohacking two clinics in LA, and I'm opening one up in Victoria.

Dave Asprey: So we are not in a position to say, fund an NAD study because it would take 20% of our annual revenue to do it, and then it would benefit all of our competitors. And I'm working to move it back, the industry up. Some of us see it as competitors, but I do know that if I took that money, and I opened a clinic and a place where people wanted it, I would help more people than if I funded the research. But I want the research, and I'll be willing to contribute something to the research but I can't pay for all of it.

Steve Aoki: Yes, kind of thing that when you bring that up, you could almost create this union of people where, listen, we all put in this amount. We're all in the same business. I'll let you know, when the water rises, we all rise.

Dave Asprey: That's what it calls for and across the supplement industry, even across some of the brain science. So there's this weird thing where, okay, if I spend a million dollars in research, I would like to have the right to earn that back. That's what [inaudible 00:39:18] so far. But if it's a substance that can't be patented, because it's already in your body, and you're not a drug company, there's this big gap. And so, I'm hoping for anti-aging, some of the things like... There's a Japanese roots called Ashitaba, and it extends lifespan in rats by either 15 or 20%. That's pretty darn meaningful and it's been used for thousands of years in Japan. Doesn't taste that good, I tried putting in my Bulletproof Coffee. I wouldn't want to spill coffee with that stuff. So I just put it in a little cup with-

Steve Aoki: Sounds like something you would put in tea.

Dave Asprey: Even then, it wouldn't be a tea that you wanted to drink. You do those mushroom coffee things, that's gross. Just take the mushrooms in a capsule or in a tincture and then drink your coffee.

Steve Aoki: This is kind of, you just put it in a pill and you just-

Dave Asprey: I think that's [inaudible 00:40:02]. I take the powder because that's the traditional way of taking-

Steve Aoki: Right.

Dave Asprey: But it's more like a medicinal tea like the Chinese tea where they boil with eye of newt and a piece of bark that you've never seen before and it smells horrible and you hold your nose and you drink it. It's more along that thing, but-

Steve Aoki: I like it when it's pungent, weird, and hot and old Chinese lady is giving it to me. I'm like, "All right, I'm in." I don't even care if it's bad. I'll be like, it's-

Dave Asprey: The first time I had that was in Chinatown in Victoria, and a prescription from this older guy. And he sends me into... It sounds like something out of a movie, and you go in, and the guy who's there, he had to be in his '90s, and he had all these little wooden doors just full [crosstalk 00:40:45].

Steve Aoki: I love the visual.

Dave Asprey: Piece of newspaper, there's seed pods and all these crazy stuff, and he puts them in there. And he has... It was either a glass eye or something different, because when I was looking at over there... I mean, and he was truly a master of his craft, and he had the prescription from the acupuncture guy and I drank the stuff. I think it helped, but man it was an experience boiling that for 20 minutes and-

Steve Aoki: The smell.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, but you like that.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, I do. I like the process-

Dave Asprey: It's hardcore.

Steve Aoki: I like the whole visual of it too. You need all that, you can't just be like, "Hey man, here's a drink, just drink it." You'd be like, "Oh." But if you get the whole process, no story, and like, I'll sip it down.

Dave Asprey: You're sort of earning it when you-

Steve Aoki: Yeah, exactly.

Dave Asprey: I mean, you've got all the art, all the music out there, you have multiple companies. It takes a huge amount of time to write a book. Why did you choose to write a book? How many hours did you spend on it anyway?

Steve Aoki: Six years.

Dave Asprey: Six years.

Steve Aoki: Six years from when I first started writing, because I've written down tons and tons of different stories and originally, the first three years I was putting together the Dim Mak book. It wasn't about me, it was about my company. Because the company has been around for over 23 years now. And it's just like we've dodged a lot of bullets that would have killed the... Indie companies in the music business is really, really tough already. But we were able to just dodge a

bullet and then go from genre to genre and influence culture the way we did. And then it was a lot about the beginning for me, I was writing a lot about... But the beginning of why I even started a label. And when I was a kid and the story of Japanese kids living in Newport Beach and it was very difficult to make friends, very difficult to-

Dave Asprey: Because this was 40 years ago?

Steve Aoki: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: Okay. And I'm guessing Newport Beach was mostly sort of-

Steve Aoki: 96% white.

Dave Asprey: Oh, wow.

Steve Aoki: And as liberal as California is, it was probably as conservative as Alabama-

Dave Asprey: Wow.

Steve Aoki: Maybe not that bad, but-

Dave Asprey: I grew up in Albuquerque in that same time frame, it was pretty darn conservative.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, it's very conservative and very... There was this just straight up racism. It wasn't subliminal, so.

Dave Asprey: I had never met anyone from an Asian country until I was a teenager, because there was simply no one... Oh, except there's a Chinese food place. But that was the extent of it where I lived, and now Albuquerque is [inaudible 00:43:26] breaking bad, it's very multicultural. There's Indian restaurants, all kinds of cool stuff. But yeah, I think a lot of people, especially if you're 20 years old, you can't imagine a world like that. It was very separate. So you were there, you're a Japanese kid, so people treated you differently there.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, but in the end... I mean, it's funny because I'll bring it back even further. So my mom moved to Newport Beach from Miami. So, she moved in late '70s, early '80s. And I don't know how why she picked Newport Beach. It's almost like, okay, we're going to move to the other side of the country. And if she pinned the dot on the map just 10 miles away, she would have lived in a Japanese community with 80% Japanese people.

Dave Asprey: Wow. But she didn't do the research. I guess it's part of-

Steve Aoki: I guess not. I don't know [crosstalk 00:44:15].

Dave Asprey: ... google back then.

Steve Aoki: And she's a woman who speaks broken English. She doesn't know how to assimilate herself into a Western culture or a white culture. So she just would go to her Japanese churches and meet with Japanese friends but she had to drive far to do that. And so, we grew up in Newport Beach and in Irvine, which is a city I'm talking about just all Asians-

Dave Asprey: Oh totally.

Steve Aoki: It's just right around the corner. But for me, growing up, it was a blessing in disguise in the end because I didn't excel... Like I said, I would say talent wise, I'm a C-level person or individual. So I didn't excel in sports, I didn't excel in all the traditional ways to make friends and socialize and be accepted. So, I just hang out with... I eventually met up with these kids that also felt like they didn't get accepted in there, we listened to the same kind of music.

Steve Aoki: And the way that we got our cool points was by contributing to the little culture that we're part of. And by contributing is you have to pick up an instrument, you have to learn how to start a band, you have to do a Zen that talks about this little culture. And then all of a sudden, I had my own Zen, I was [inaudible 00:45:31]. I learned how to play guitar, bass, the singing, and you practice all the time. And I was like, "Wow, this is my way to contribute to get my level of respect." And now I don't need the respect from everybody else, because I found this vehicle to find my passion.

Steve Aoki: And that eventually led me down the music path, which led me to start my label. And then fast forward going back to when I was writing this book, after three years of going, "Well, this isn't working for Dim Mak, I don't know how we're going to sell this." And I'm realizing 60% of it is really about me. I'm just going to put Dim Mak into what would become my story. And then I just kept on writing with no intention of actually releasing the manuscripts or something like that. And it was just a ton and ton of stories.

Steve Aoki: And then I worked with different writers, different authors to help me boil it down, to help me color in, what stories are we going to put in? How are we going to color these different moments? Like dealing with my father's death, which was really hard to write about. Dealing with my friends passing DJ AM, to Avicii, to Chester Bennington of Linkin Park, talking about their influences on my life. The different career moments that excelled, really talking about failure and how to deal with failure. And then putting it all together in this lens of blue, which is the last step. So I had to shave off tons and tons of stories.

Dave Asprey: So it sounds like it was kind of healing, or it helped you identify your process.

Steve Aoki: Very therapeutic. Same time the last three years, I had a therapist I talk with, so a lot of those sessions went into the book, so it was great for me. It was actually double prong attack.

Dave Asprey: Did you have to pay your therapist a portion of royalties?

Steve Aoki: No. You stop telling him that though.

Dave Asprey: Steve, it's been a real pleasure and an honor to have you on Bulletproof Radio. And normally, I close out the show by saying how long you think going to live but you already talked about it. You're looking for immortality and you and I are in agreement on that. I just say 180, at least 180.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, yeah 180 is a good number?

Dave Asprey: I think it's achievable.

Steve Aoki: Yeah.

Dave Asprey: So I'm not going to ask you that, but I'm going to ask you something that is maybe more in line with Super Human, my new book. And you have this vibe all over the place, cool robots and stuff. If you can get one superpower-

Steve Aoki: I mean, are you talking about superpowers-

Dave Asprey: Straight out of a comic book. You have a comic book, right?

Steve Aoki: Yeah, yeah, no. Because I know who'd I want to be.

Dave Asprey: Yeah, Who would you want to be?

Steve Aoki: I mean, he's kind of the cheat though, he's got everything.

Dave Asprey: That's not cheating.

Steve Aoki: Green Lantern.

Dave Asprey: Green Lantern. I wouldn't have expected that.

Steve Aoki: Oh, dude he is a... Whatever he imagines comes to life.

Dave Asprey: That's true.

Steve Aoki: It's amazing. I mean, imagine you can swim underwater because some people be like, "Time travel." He could time travel, he can just imagine it. So it's kind of the cheat, because you can do everything, going to space-

Dave Asprey: It's like you're asked by a genie what I want, unlimited wishes.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, yeah. It's unlimited imagination, the only thing that stops him is fear. So if he's fearful of something, then his powers diminish.

Dave Asprey: So you [inaudible 00:48:55] in a Zen master mode all the time, where you can manifest... That's a pretty slick answer.

Steve Aoki: And actually, we really boil it down. I look at life like that where I can achieve anything as long as I work hard. And going back to what we're talking about, finding that center, I can be able to approach all these different things that I do. And whether they're successful to other people is not what's important to me. So, whether it means something to me, is what's important. And then I can actually go and execute on those things, whether it's music or fashion, or having a pizza business mainly based in LA, or whatever it might be.

Dave Asprey: What's your pizza business? I don't know about that one.

Steve Aoki: Yeah, so I have a pizza company called Pizzaoki.

Dave Asprey: Oh, no way.

Steve Aoki: Yeah. And I'll tell you the quick... Down to the story is that we started in the summer of 2018. We have over 23 kitchens now.

Dave Asprey: I've had a restaurant in LA for six years, the Bulletproof Coffee Shop, and we've got two locations. I'm sort of feeling I'm a little-

Steve Aoki: The different thing is, the smoke and mirrors of what I'm saying here, we have 23 kitchens.

Dave Asprey: What does that mean?

Steve Aoki: They're mainly delivery.

Dave Asprey: Oh, so there's a distributor that makes it a little bit easier. Okay.

Steve Aoki: So, we started as a pizza delivery business, but because of the hype and everyone's like, "It's doing so well." And then we opened up to dinners, one in Studio City, one in Venice. Very small-

Dave Asprey: We're probably neighbors because I'm in Santa Monica around the edge of Venice, I have to swing by. And do you have a gluten free offering for me.

Steve Aoki: I think we're working on that, but a fast casual, a lot people love it.

Dave Asprey: That's cool. I was not expecting you to say yes. And gluten free pizza it's not really pizza, then is it? Awesome. Thanks again Steve. Your new book is called Blue: The Color of Noise, and it's fascinating to read just to get inside your head, and I appreciate your introspection.

Steve Aoki: Thank you, I appreciate that. Thank you.

Dave Asprey: If you liked today's episode, you know what to do. What I always ask you to do at the end of the show, pick up the book. If it sounded interesting, you want to know about Steve's career, which is really in depth and just what makes a world changer like him. Hey, he wrote it down for you over six years, you should read it. And if you read it, you also know because you're always listening the end of the show, right? I always say the same thing, leave a review already. It's free and it's like leaving a tip for your favorite authors. Have a great day.