

How to Think Like a Monk – Jay Shetty with Dave Asprey – #739

Announcer:

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Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's guest on the show almost doesn't really even need an introduction, although you might not know who he is, and his name is Jay Shetty. He's a British-born former monk who shares practical wisdom in a way that you probably can't miss if you're on Instagram or YouTube or Facebook. He's got 400 viral videos with seven and a half billion views and a podcast called On Purpose, on which I've been a guest, and has a new book called Think Like a Monk, Train Your Mind for Peace and Purpose Every Day. I wanted to have Jay on for you today because he's a really interesting guy. People who've been trained at monk things and then come out into the public sphere and it's very different lives. I want you guys to understand what he's teaching in his book, because there's actually great value for you.

Dave:

If you've ever seen one of his seven and a half billion views of videos, there's life lessons in them. Quite often, they're life lessons that ... they're things that are known, but they're not something that you're going to hear when you're a teenager. They're not something you can hear in your 20s. There's something that you probably run into mostly through mistakes by the time you're 35, and maybe you get your head on straight by the time you're 45 or 50. But he's short circuiting the learning curve for you and that's why I wanted to have him on. So whether you're 60 and going, "I still have some life lessons to do," or you're like, "I'm trying to figure this out and I just don't want to go through all the suffering to do it," Jay and I have a lot of common beliefs around, "Hey, we can help make it easier so there's less suffering and more progress and less time." That's why he's here. Jay, welcome to the show.

Jay Shetty:

Dave, thanks for having me. It was awesome to have you on On Purpose, and I'm really happy to be back on this. This is great.

Dave:

Now, how does one become a monk in the modern world? It's one of those things where I look back, 50 years ago, like, "I decided I'm going to become a monk," or a hundred years ago you just took all the weird kids and threw them in the monastery. Give me your path. How did you become a monk? What did you do?

Jay:

Absolutely. So I was born and raised in London and I grew up like any other kid up. Until the age of 14, I was really obedient. I was a good kid. I studied hard, worked hard. Then I almost got to this point when I was 14 and where I started hanging around with the wrong circles and started getting into trouble and experimenting with drugs and having relationships and just trying to figure out what life was all about. I was like, "It doesn't make sense that I'm getting good grades. You get into a good school. Now it's getting into a good college." I was like, "This doesn't seem to be ... This can't be it." That was the question that was kind of going in my mind when I was about 16 years old, and I was really interested in

learning about people and rags to riches stories. People who went from nothing to something in their life.

Jay:

So the first two books I have a properly read were David Beckham's autobiography and Dwayne The Rock Johnson's autobiography when he was still The Rock. I started reading those books and I was just fascinated by how much sacrifice they had in their life and their discipline they had in their life. I would go and hear entrepreneurs and CEOs speak at universities and local events in London. Once I was invited to hear a monk speak ... Now, I'd never met a monk in my life, I'd never known what monks really did, and a part of me didn't care because I just thought, "Well, what am I going to learn from a monk? That's someone who has gone from nothing to nothing. What do they have to teach me?" So it's really humbling and ironic when you go to something expecting nothing and it becomes one of the biggest life changing moments of your life.

Jay:

I really look back at it as a really humbling moment. I realized how stupid I was that day for going there, having this cynical judgmental view of the value I was going to get from this event. I was just left completely flawed and the reason was when I was hearing him speak, and this is in hindsight, completely in hindsight, I realized that when I was 18, I'd met people who were successful and rich and beautiful and attractive and I'd met people who were intelligent, but I don't think I've met anyone who is truly joyful and happy. This monk, and not even in a spiritual aura kind of way, just in who he was and his demeanor, had this real contentment about him. I think for the first time in my life, I was pulled and curious about, "Well, where does that come from? What is that?"

Jay:

So I started spending all my vacation summer and Christmas holidays, I'd spend half of them interning in finance companies in London because that's what I thought I was going to do to get a safe job, and the other half of it I'd spend interning at the monastery in India, living with him as a monk, as a training monk. It was almost like my first split test or AB test where I was living these two separate lives, literally going from steakhouses, suits and bars to then going to sleeping on the floor, waking up at 4:00 AM and cold showers. Having done that for three years, at age 22 when I graduated, I realized that I preferred the path of a monk. So becoming a monk then became the decision where I left behind my possessions, left behind everything I owned, lived out of a gym locker for three years, all my possessions fit inside.

Dave:

Did you just give all your possessions away to friends and family or just lock them in a storage locker? What did you do?

Jay:

Yeah, so I gave away ... I mean, I was 22 years old so I didn't have that much stuff, but there's stuff I had. So I gave my car to my sister, as far as I remember. I had lots of jerseys. I'm a big football fan, soccer fan. So I had lots of football and I gave them away to all my friends and I had collectors versions-

Dave:

You have away your David Beckham jersey?

Jay:

I gave away Ronaldo, Beckham, Benzema. If you're into soccer, I'm massively into soccer. So I gave away all of these ... the first year that player had been signed by that team, I had all these years, I gave them away. I really regret that now. Apart from that, I don't think I had that many possessions or that much money or anything. I was in about \$25,000, but 18,000 pounds worth of debt when I went off to be a monk because I had my student loan to pay off.

Dave:

Got it. So you basically gave away some things that were emotionally special to you, but I guess now are of financial value. Bulletproof sponsored the LA Galaxy for a couple of years so I've got a signed ball signed by the whole team and all that.

Jay:

Was that when Beckham was there?

Dave:

No, this was right afterwards, but we do have a picture floating around somewhere of Beckham visiting the Bulletproof Cafe in Santa Monica, which was like, "Oh, this is the coolest things ever. I wish I was there that day." Right?

Jay:

I love that. I love that.

Dave:

Okay. So you made the decision, get rid of the car, keep the debt, get rid of the stuff that feels important. But even before we go there, how long does it take to go from corporate and suits when you were splitting your time? Is it a day or a week for you to go into monk mode from corporate mode? Because they're like opposite sides of the coin. What's the transition like? You land and you get in a rickshaw or something. I have no idea where your monastery was. And then what happens?

Jay:

Yeah. So I was pretty quick in my transitions. I would literally go from finishing the last day of my internship to then booking a flight a couple of days later to be in India. I think when you're 18 years old, you're just so much better at just diving into new experiences. You almost don't need this calibration time. It's almost like just refreshing on our phones or just loading. I felt like I didn't have that much of that, and it wasn't that I was as intentional or as calculated. I was just like, "This is what I want to do. I've got this much time left of this vacation. Let's just dive in."

Jay:

So yeah, I would literally get onto a flight, get onto the other side, get picked up, be driven to the monastery that I stayed at, which was two hours outside of Mumbai, literally in the middle of nowhere pretty much. I would just dive straight in and I think that's what's so powerful about immersive experiences. I think we struggle now to allow ourselves to just let go and say, "Can this work? Is this possible?" I would literally go there with that mindset. I'm a blank slate. I'm going to try this out exactly how they tell me, because that's the only way I'll know if it works or not.

Dave:

Why are people in their early 20s or even late teens so much more flexible than people later in life? Because you were able to just make that big transition. Why?

Jay:

I mean, I think it's because we just get more and more set in our ways and habits and stagnant and it's kind of the way society has been set up too. It's almost like you're studying up until the age of 21. You have a lot of change and you're kind of spoon fed or guided the whole way. Then all of a sudden, after 21, there's no map anymore. So I think we almost get shut off when we get into fear and security mode because all of a sudden there's no next step. Whereas when you're studying, you're like, "Oh yeah, I know I've got to go college next year," or "I'm going to go to this class next year. I'm going to study that next year."

Jay:

Once you're after 21, there is zero maps, zero guidance, zero trajectory. So you go, "Okay, let me play it safe. Let me figure it out". I also think as your responsibilities grow in your life, you start to think differently. So when you get married, you now start thinking about someone else. When you buy your first house, you now start thinking about the mortgage. I think as we grow older in life, our responsibilities scare us from taking new steps. But that doesn't mean it's not possible. I still know plenty of people that have taken those wild steps later on, but I think it becomes harder and we have to be much more intentional.

Dave:

It makes a lot of sense. There's really not that much to lose when you're 19. Right? So many entrepreneurs that have done it, that the problem is though, when you're 19 or 22 or whatever, you really don't know what you don't know yet. So you're more likely to make stupid mistakes, which is why you see very few people like Mark Zuckerberg. "Oh, I started this thing when I was 23, 24, 25," it's because they were getting really good advice. And I'm seeing something new. I've put my hat on, 20 something years ago when I was 25, and I was like, "No, I know everything and I'm going to..."

Dave:

I made \$6 million when I was 26. I wasn't screwing around, but I lost it when I was 28 because I didn't take advice. Right? I look at what I could have done if I would've just listened. But now I see you've got, whatever, 20 million something followers. It's like there's a hunger from young people to actually learn and listen that wasn't present in my generation. I'm talking like I'm old here. I'm not particularly old. I'm 28% of my lifespan.

Dave:

But what's different about this generation that you see? By the way, how old are you?

Jay:

I was 33 yesterday. Yesterday was my birthday.

Dave:

33? All right. So you've lived through your 20s, but you've still go your 30s and 40s. So what do you think is different? Do you have a sense of that?

Jay:

I think one part of it's access and that's what it was for me. I never expected to meet a monk and now you may not have to meet a monk, but you have your own monk in your life that you can now meet because of social media and because of courses online and because of books across the world that are easy to access. So I think one part of it is access. I know stories of people in the '60s and '70s that hitchhiked across the world searching for the truth. I know some of my monk teachers who hitchhiked across the world looking for the truth and spiritual paths in ways that we would never do because there were so dangerous that we feel today.

Jay:

So I feel like the journey's different because there's more access and these themes have become more prevalent in today's society because I think more people have taken on the responsibility to share and to educate and to teach. I think there are many more teachers and educators in the world today than there've ever been, and that's a positive thing because it means that more people have more choice about who they want to learn from.

Dave:

Why did you feel like you were ready to write your first book? I mean, you're still relatively early in the monk path. You don't have 50 years of wisdom and wrinkles and you haven't lived in a monastery for decades. Why now to write Think Like a Monk.

Jay:

So I remember being offered my first book deal when my first video went viral in 2016. I remember going, "This doesn't make any sense." It was my first video. I was really excited and I was getting all this new influx of ideas and thoughts. I remember just feeling patient. That was four years ago, literally four years ago around this time. I waited because I really believed that the monk mindset and the way I define it is the encapsulation of Eastern teachings and Eastern wisdom. So the reason why I felt that this was the book that was needed right now is because I truly believe that the mindsets that are most prevalent in the world or that are predominant in the world are potentially of greed, of power, of quarrel, of judgment, and the monk mind is the complete antithesis of that.

Jay:

The monk mind is of compassion, love, non-judgment, kindness. I feel like that's what so many of the people we know are striving for and aspiring for. I felt this is the right time to help us reset our mindset. By the way, it's important, what you just said. I'm not sharing my own monk experience alone. The book is full of studies and research and science behind monks' brains that have meditated for far longer than I have. For me, it was my fascination with almost monk culture that made me want to write this book, less than my own experience of three years. So for me, I'm more excited and inspired by the human behavior of monks and the minds of monks. I talk about Matthieu Ricard in the book, who is known as the world's happiest man for having the highest form of gamma waves in his brain linked to happiness, attention and joy. We talk about Ming Yun [inaudible 00:14:33], who shows attention in ways that no one else on the planet has shown. So for me, it was more of that fascination, even more than my own experience.

Dave:

I share that fascination, and certainly I haven't ... been trained as a monk. I've been through some shamanic training. I've been to a monastery in Nepal and been to Tibet and learned from the masters, but not as a monk. I did shave my head though. It wasn't necessary. I just [inaudible 00:14:57] to wash it so I looked kind of stupid for a few days. But the fascination for me has been there for more than 20 years, including the neuroscience and I started a company around that.

Dave:

It's funny you mentioned gamma in your book, which is one of the reasons I wanted to have you on. I was testing some of our new equipment that ... we're always making new hardware and stuff because the brain hacking thing is a real thing. It's possible. We were able to get my gamma to go up by 20% in a two hour session, which is supposed to not be possible. I feel like we're on this cusp of being able to turn on a monk mind for people who maybe haven't spent the time in a monastery and maybe would like to, and they'll miss some of the wisdom and they want to understand the difference between meditating with your eyes up here versus down here and breathing for exactly this, The stuff you actually learn. But maybe they'll get enough of a taste that it'll help them to go there more quickly. Do you think that's real?

Jay:

I love what you just said. That's my belief system around a lot of the almost shortcuts or upgrades that exist within the world, where if we can give people windows, like you are, to give people glimpses of what's possible, and the fact that this limited viewpoint we have around our mind is not the end and is not the limit and not the barrier that exists. If we can expand everyone's consciousness to realize that there is so much more behind the world and the universe than just what we kind of perceive in our tiny eyes, hands and nose and ears, then I think that that's going to give people a new sense of confidence and courage to actually do the practice.

Jay:

That's partly why for me Think Like a Monk is such an important message right now and I talk about in the book how you don't have to live like a monk to think like a monk, because it is a change of mindset. If your tools and your techniques, Dave, are able to give people glimpses into that from a more scientific point of view, and what I've done is I've taken the practices and the tools and the strategies that are backed by science, I think both of those together could be game changing.

Dave:

It totally can be. To be really clear, no one has to have a device. You don't need [inaudible 00:17:06], you don't need heart rate [inaudible 00:17:07], all the biohacking tech that I'm obsessed with, because I think it helps me get there faster. Right? But you don't have to have any of that because the original biohackers were monks. Before that, there were shamans, right? A lot of the old monk stuff, if you trace the lineage with history, going back 2,000 to 5,000 years, you can see how it spread across Europe and Asia and all these things.

Dave:

So if you're saying, "I'm going to take the distilled wisdom of the ages and say these are what generations have learned worked. I studied it for seven years. Here it is, try this first," instead of just walking around and making it up for yourself, the odds of it working are so much higher. So am I willing

to receive a step up? That was why I liked your book and I like your perspective on it because, man, if I'd have had access to books like this and the wisdom to read them, even just as a teenager, I probably would have been a lot less of a dick.

Jay:

Well, that's a good, that's a good stuff. But I also agree with you that I think there's nothing wrong about making the body and the mind more tangible for people. So I think that's one of the biggest things. You can't do a before and after picture of the mind, whereas there are people now, you can do before and after pictures of the brain, you can do before and after pictures of the nervous system. So I get excited by seeing science able to show the tangible transitions in the mind based on meditative practices. So for me, I'm a geek about that stuff and it excites me. So I love what you're doing and I love everything that you're trying to do with it because I think there's always going to be different minds. That's why the book, I spoke about everything from a scientific, strategic and a spiritual point of view because I believe that we all need all three in our lives to have a complete picture. You can't really have a complete picture without one of those three areas.

Dave:

Is the brain the same thing as the mind?

Jay:

I don't believe it is. I believe the brain is the physical hardware and the mind is more of a subtle experience and subtle entity that exists within the subtle body, as the Bhagavad Gita would call it. So the Bhagavad Gita would call the subtle body ... the physical body's obviously this. The subtle body would be the mind intelligence and false ego. Those would be considered the subtle body.

Dave:

Do those live inside our meat or do they live somewhere else?

Jay:

They live inside, currently trapped inside the physical body. Therefore those are the things we use to process. So the mind and the intelligence are constantly having a conversation. So the way the Bhagavad Gita describes the conversation is that the mind is guided by five senses, like five wild horses. So the senses crave something, they chase it. The mind are like the reins of the horse and the intelligence is the charioteer. So the intelligence's role is to be able to redirect the horses when they're misdirected. So our senses are constantly seeking pleasure and instant gratification, the reins need to be held. But most of us, our intelligence is sleeping, and because of that, the horses run riot and go wherever they want.

Dave:

That definitely matches my experience.

Jay:

That's good. I'm glad.

Dave:

Now, one of the famous studies in the history of neurofeedback in monks is that they brought a very well established, advanced, semi-enlightened monk to Stanford and they were going to hook them up to neurofeedback and he started doing his meditating before they put the electrodes on him and he started effecting the machine. That's very understandable because we have a strong field. That's actually how it works. We have people who go through my neurofeedback stuff where sometimes we can't get their brainwaves because they're basically frying the computers. Literally it whites out. Some people are powerful.

Dave:

So this guy did it, and then all of the researchers said, "Oh my goodness. Wow. What power?" And as soon as that happened, the power went away and he said, "Oh no, my ego just asserted itself. Here I am thinking I'm such a good monk, so now I have to go." And he had to take a day to reestablish this humility in order to reach back into his monk powers and do the thing properly. Now, the reason I'm bringing that up, you've gone through this thing. Okay. Humility, ego, monk, and you've got seven and a half billion video views and you've got your big, attractive eyes that I'm sure all the girls swoon over and all that. So what has this done to your ego and how did you manage that?

Jay:

That is such a great question. I'm so glad we're talking about it. So one thing that I've realized is that your world is as big as it is in the-

Jay:

Is as big as it is. In the sense of, for some people, 7 billion feels like their world. And for some people 700 feels like their world. And for some people, seven people feels like their world. And so it's almost like feedback from seven people at school in the playground feels as painful or as joyful as feedback from seven billion people on the planet because your world is all you experience. So the perception is so proportionately positioned. So if you were the most popular kid in school or you're today, Charli D'Amelio, who's the most popular Tik Toker in the world, it's like you're experiencing similar levels of excitement and enjoyment because that's become your new system. So that's something that I think helps also put into perspective. But here's the thing that I found, that constantly challenging myself out of my comfort zone is the most humbling thing there is. Because if you do what you do well, and you keep playing to your strengths in the same field and in the same league and at the same level, then you will constantly boost your ego.

Jay:

Whereas I feel every time I step out of my comfort zone, whether it was first starting to make videos, then it was starting to make videos regularly, then it was trying to launch a podcast and being an interviewer. And now it's trying to be an author and write a book. To me, all of those steps are so scary that they're so humbling that they make me want to ask for blessings, and energy, and empowerment from the universe, and my teachers. It constantly puts me in a humbler position because I'm realizing that I don't have the intelligence or the complete understanding to actually be able to do this without the support and love and kindness of someone else. And so one of the things that I found and I would say it to my monk teachers often is, sometimes it's easier to have a bigger ego playing small than it is to try to play big because when you try and play big, you get schooled really quickly.

Jay:

And now you're surrounded by...I'm used to being the least famous person in every room that I'm in and the least well-known person, and the least wealthy person in pretty much every room I'm in. And I love it because I'm constantly learning and seeking. So for me, it's definitely challenged my ego, but I kind of enjoy that challenge. I kind of love it because it makes me realize how strong the ego is. So I kind of feel like, we'd always say, it's easy being... As monks, we were told, "It's easy being humble when you're in your silent meditation." Go and try to serve with another monk and see how humble you are. Because as soon as you're with another human being, that's when your ego is triggered. So for me, I feel like being in the world, having to understand ego, monitor ego, recalibrate, I actually enjoy that challenge because it reminds me of the power of the ego and how strong it is versus if I didn't do all of this, I think I might actually think I'm humble.

Jay:

And whereas I don't, I realize how powerful the ego is. My favorite story in this regard, you may have heard it, is Benjamin Franklin. And he had a book called the 13 Precepts. And he used to have a journal where he wrote down the 13 things he aspired for. Things like simplicity, integrity, tranquility, all good things. And he said that he often failed at a lot of them. And I feel the same way. I fail at this stuff all the time. And so he used to say, "I used to drink too much, I used to eat too much, I would spend too much money." But when he was passing away, they asked him, out of the 13 things, which one did he not achieve? And he said it was the 13th one. And they asked him, "What's the 13th one?" And he said, "Humility." And I think that's the power of humility, that you can never feel you've achieved it, and the more you push yourself out of your comfort zone, you'll realize how far you are from it.

Dave:

Do you think you're humble enough?

Jay:

I wish. My wife would remind me that I'm not. I wish. I really access humility through gratitude, and that's how we were trained as monks. So the way we were trained as monks is whenever you receive praise, or you receive love, or you receive adoration, or admiration, or whatever, someone impressed by you, the only way you can avert ego into humility is by passing that gratitude or thanks to the person that gave you that skill or quality. So every time someone says something to me, my brain has to be an algorithm that asks me, "Who is the person that gave me that quality, directly or indirectly?" It might even have been someone who caused me pain that gave me that gift and that quality. And so then I have to thank them mentally, and this habit over years becomes a beautiful way of converting ego to gratitude which plants the seeds of humility.

Jay:

So I trust that process, I stick to that process, and I'm trying to work on it. And to be honest, if you're always surrounded by... I'm humbled by three things. I'm humbled by my goals getting bigger. So that always humbles me because I don't look at it as, "Oh wow, I've got seven billion views," I look at it as like, "But how deeply have we gone with eight billion people on the planet?" That's what I'm looking at. I'm not looking at breadth, I'm looking at breadth and depth. The second question is, I'm humbled by the sincerity of the people I spend time with. Every year, I go back to the monastery and me and my wife, my wife comes back with me and we live at the monastery for two to three weeks. And when I go back and meditate with the monks and I live them, I realize what a long way I have to go. And that's such a beautiful, natural humbling factor.

Jay:

And thirdly, I'm humbled by just realizing that I've made a lot of mistakes in the past. When I talked about my rebellious days, my twenties, and you're making mistakes all the time, and those are humble anchors in your life that made you realize that you don't buy into your own hype.

Dave:

One of my spiritual teachers told me about four or five years ago, right? When you were starting to blow up. She said, "Hey, Dave, when people come up to you and thank you," and you probably get this too, people you don't know, they come up like, "Something you did profoundly impacted me," and just genuinely want to share, like true thanks. And it's really touching. And I would always do the kind of the gratitude, judo move you described there like, "Oh, and thank you for telling me," right? But my spiritual teacher said, "You know what Dave? You're not actually hearing them. You're not accepting the gift of their acknowledgement of their gratitude." So before you acknowledge it, you have to feel it. And then, you have to turn on gratitude. Because I was kind of using gratitude to deflect it.

Jay:

So I think there's a slight difference in what I was saying, and maybe I didn't explain it. So, in the training that I received, what you're doing is you're receiving that gratitude so deeply, and you're passing it on to the person that gave you that skill.

Dave:

So you're doing it right then? Okay. Because I was missing that [crosstalk 00:29:25].

Jay:

Well, not right. Yeah, not right. I just mean it's... I'll give an example. Let's say, Dave says to me, "Jay, you know what? I love that you are an effective communicator," right? Let's say you say that to me.

Dave:

Okay.

Jay:

To me, I think of the teacher that taught me public speaking and drama school at age 11, that I went to for seven years that gave me that skill. Or I think of every comedian that I've ever watched. And I pass on that gratitude to them.

Dave:

Oh cool.

Jay:

And so I have to feel it and then pass it on to them. So, right, that's what I meant.

Dave:

You pass it to the teachers and kind of the lineage of where it came from, which is [inaudible 00:30:01].

Jay:

Specifically, yeah. Yeah. Specifically to the person who gave you that, indirectly or directly. So for example, let's say you say, "Jay, I'm really impressed by your ability to deal with failure." I would think of the person who first rejected me, who got me used to accepting failure, and I would thank them in my heart.

Dave:

That is a seriously profound move. And for people listening to the show, rewind 30 seconds and hear that again, because if you can master that, that would make the whole book, *Think Like a Monk* worth itself. And I mean, it's a really important skill, that gratitude. So it'd be gratitude because someone took the time to tell you, but gratitude from where you got it because most of us didn't invent everything in this life.

Jay:

Definitely not. And by the way, I just want to reiterate my feedback. I'm a terrible communicator because I had to explain that three times to get the message. It's brilliant. Brilliant. Very humbling. I love it.

Dave:

It also reminds me; Dan Brown was on recently from Harvard who is as monk-like as you can get. He's studied with the Dalai Lama and translates Sanskrit texts from the 13th century cave meditators in his faculty at Harvard, right? And I asked him where he got his love of learning, and right away he snaps back into something in grade school, and he literally teared up on the interview when he remembered the teacher's name. And it's like that feeling of gratitude. I feel like it's so easy to lose those connections and that gratitude. Do you have a list that you keep/ do you have a daily practice? How do you keep all that straight? Because most people listening don't really have that automatic habit of saying, "Where'd that come from?" How do you do it?

Jay:

Yeah, you're right. And I think for a lot of us, what you were alluding to earlier. For a lot of us, we deflect people saying positive stuff about us. Yeah, we deflect because it feels uncomfortable and you don't know what to do with it. And that's partly the reason why we remember the bad times more than the good times, because when we win, we celebrate for a day, and when we lose, we cry for a month. And so if someone says something bad to us, we obsess about it for a month. And when someone says something good to us, we kind of deflect and worry about it, and then our mind constantly amplifies the negative. For me in the beginning and I don't do this all the time anymore, but in the beginning, what I used to do was, we would make a list of every item of praise or anything that would come in from that perspective that would trigger ego.

Jay:

So what are the things that you hear that trigger ego? You may write down three things, five things, seven things. Things like "Dave, you've got the best podcast in the world, Dave, *Bulletproof Coffee* is the best product in the world," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, whatever would trigger ego. And then you would write next to it, who made it possible or what experience made it possible. And it could be a person, it could be a place, or it could be a project that inspired that. And having that next to it and then you train your mind literally to connect the lines and the dots every time. And once you've done that

enough, it becomes autopilot in a good way. And you have to re-experience that consistently. And this is the second part. It's not good enough to just think of it and experience it.

Jay:

If you still have the opportunity physically to message that person, to text them, to send them a video, or a voice note, it is so much more powerful. Gratitude is so much more powerful when it is shared, and when it's specific, and this specificity part is the core of gratitude that we all get wrong. I'll give an example, Dave, let's name two of your best friends. Two close friends.

Dave:

I mean, I don't want to call them out here because of all the social media stuff. I'm picturing two of them, right?

Jay:

Sure. Fine. So let's call them, for argument's sake I'm naming them. We'll call them James and Karen. Right? James and Karen. And James and Karen-

Dave:

I'm just glad you didn't say Becky and Karen because we were going to get in trouble for that.

Jay:

Okay, fine. Let's change it up. Let's go, James and Kelly.

Dave:

Karen is fine. Karen is [inaudible 00:34:14] named Karen, it's all good.

Jay:

Yeah, let's go James and Kelly, James and Kelly. So Dave throws a Bulletproof party once lockdown's over and it goes great, and everyone loves it. And James and Kelly come to the party and the next day Dave gets a message. James messages Dave, in common James fashion says, "Dave, thanks a lot. It was great." That's it. And then Kelly messages and goes, "Dave, that party was amazing. I've been missing social interaction so much. It was incredible. I loved the food. Oh my gosh. That new flavor of that coffee is just incredible. And by the way, you and your friends are just such sweet people. Thank you so much." Now, because Dave's a nice person, he is grateful to both James and Kelly, but the level of joy that Dave will feel from that specific gratitude from Kelly, and the level of joy Kelly will feel from expressing that specificity of gratitude, that's what makes gratitude actually work scientifically and for the mind. So it's not good enough to just feel it. You've got to get specific and you've got to share it.

Dave:

I'm going to share a little bit of gratitude that just popped into my head, because we're talking about monk things. Dawa Tarchin Phillips is a friend who's been on the show and also a monk. And he reached out a while ago, and you said that's gratitude for coffee, whatever. And he said, "Hey Dave, I'm going back to Mount Kailash." And the origin story for Bulletproof Coffee is I had yak butter tea on the side of Mount Kailash that woke my brain up, that caused me to do the research when I came back to make Bulletproof coffee. And I actually picked three coffee cherries that I can pick them from our plantation in

Guatemala, the first one where we put in our infrastructure to make clean coffee, and I dried them and I carried them with me every everywhere I went. In everywhere I traveled all over the world for seven years. And he said, "Do you want to leave an offering for Mount Kailash [inaudible 00:36:10]?" I'm like, "Thank you. What an awesome idea."

Dave:

So I actually sent him my three coffee beans and he actually carried them up onto the side of Mount Kailash and left them as an offering to say thanks because there is some cool energy going on over there.

Jay:

For sure.

Dave:

That maybe will quantify someday, probably never, but there was something came to me there. And so, A, thank you Dawa for doing that and thanks to Mount Kailash and yeah, I think public acknowledgement is another angle to that, the specificity, and also just calling someone out. So there's power to that. How do you practice gratitude for the pandemic?

Jay:

Yeah, that's definitely a tough one. And I think the first thing I would say is that you can have, you can share almost toxic gratitude with people as well.

Dave:

Yes.

Jay:

In the sense of, if you're asking people to just be grateful at all times without understanding, and again, Dave, what you said earlier instead of hearing people's pain, and so I think the mistake with gratitude is that we force people to devalue their pain, or we force ourselves to devalue our pain, or to belittle someone else's pain or belittle our own pain because we're meant to be grateful and have perspective. And so for me, the first stage of getting to gratitude for the pandemic is not gratitude. The first step or stage is to experience, and accept, and understand the pain you have gone through. If you've gone through the loss of something or someone, you don't just go, "Oh yeah, I'm going to be grateful for that." You accept it, you feel it, you allow yourself to feel every emotion that that brings. During the pandemic we lost four family friends back in London.

Jay:

I lost my mentor, not to COVID, but he had stage four brain cancer for the last two, three years and he passed away during this time. And I miss him. I think I knew him since I was like 13 years old. He was a spiritual mentor in London and so important at pivotal moments in my life, becoming a monk, getting married to my wife. He did our engagement ceremony for us, he spoke at our wedding, just so many beautiful moments with him and I miss him. And in the moment I just had to miss him.

Jay:

And then slowly as I missed him, and I relived those memories, and I cried, and I sat with that feeling and the emotion, I then found gratitude in that because I thought, wow, how lucky am I that I got to have so many pivotal moments with this human being? And that the only way that he could still live is if I aspire to live by those qualities that he so beautifully set out. And that would be the only way to express gratitude, not to feel gratitude that he's gone, but to express gratitude back to his life and his work. And that's where I found gratitude again, I didn't feel grateful that he's gone, I miss him every day. But I feel grateful I had that time with him and I want to express gratitude by giving it back. But it started with tears and a whole lot of missing him. And I still miss him.

Dave:

So you start out by feeling the pain.

Jay:

Yeah.

Dave:

Authentically acknowledging that it's real. And then you're doing that and then you're finding some good that happened even if it was a little bit.

Jay:

Yeah. I would say there's three stages. The first is, acknowledging and feeling the pain to the depth that it needs to go, right? You cannot ignore the depth. You can't go, "Oh, this is a three step formula. I've felt like this for three days. Now, the next three days I'm going to do this." There's not a nine day program for it, and there's not meant to be, so first is just feel and accept, and relive those memories. Talk about them, share them, share your pain, whatever it is that you're feeling about the pandemic. And like I said, people have lost someone or something. And that's really important there, because I think a lot of people felt bad for losing something and not someone, and then felt guilty that they were upset for losing something instead of a human, because people were actually dying. But the thing is that everything is a loss to you and you've got to own that loss.

Jay:

The second part of it is looking at what you lost and accepting it wholeheartedly, but looking at what you had or looking at what you had at one point and gained from that business, that person, that moment, that actually energizes and fuels the next step. So it's not ignoring the loss, but it's looking for what you actually had and gained before you lost it and why it was so powerful. What was the meaning it had? And this is the best thing about monk teachings, that monk teachings are not there to help you find happiness and joy at every point. They're there to help you find meaning in everything. And you can't find happiness in the death of a loved one. You can't find joy in the loss or a destruction of a business, but you can always find meaning. So look for meaning, and then you'll feel that meaning fuels gratitude from inside.

Dave:

That is such profound advice. And I think right now, so many people are feeling, they're feeling pain from the pandemic, whether it's economic or just fear and lack of connection and all of that stuff. That now is probably a good time for your book to come out because it has a chance to do more good in an environment where these skills are more important than they were before. It's one thing if you're

running around sort of a little distracted, maybe not feeling pain that you're feeling now when you're sort of cooped up, and there's more stress, and there's more time to just sit there and say, "I'm bored and my mind goes to the dark places." So maybe now's a good time for a little bit more monk thinking. And so I think you're going to find a very receptive audience for the book. You talk about something too, in the book, the second chapter, you talk about The Evil King Goes Hungry.

Jay:

Yeah. It's one of my favorite stories. So one of my best favorite parts about being a monk was getting told historical tales, Zen stories, and monk stories. And this beautiful story is of a conversation between a good king and an evil king. And it's actually beautifully depicted in a more recent Bollywood movie called Padmavati. I think it was a couple of years ago, and they actually have this scene. So I'd heard this story years ago, when I saw it in the movie I was like, "This is so cool." And so basically in this story, the evil king goes to the good king's house for dinner. He's invited over by the good king. So they go inside, the good king has a beautiful reception even for the evil king that he knows has some inner agendas and negative motives. He still gives him a very warm welcome.

Jay:

He allows him into his castle, sits him down at the dinner table, they both sit down to have this meal. And then the good king and the evil king are exchanging pleasantries or whatever the opposite of pleasantries are. And the servers bring the food and placed two identical plates in front of the good king and the evil king. The good King says, "Bon Appetit," or something along those lines. And they're about to start eating. And as the good king is about to pick up an item of food from his plate, the bad king swaps them around. And the good kind is bemused and goes, "What's going on? Are you okay?" Like, "Sorry, was there something wrong with your plate?" And the good king starts thinking maybe he made a mistake or maybe he did something to offend the bad king. And the evil king goes, "No, this is my first time here and actually you might have poisoned my plate. So I had to switch it to make sure that now I have the unpoisoned plate that you were going to eat from it."

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Jay:

Sure. And now I have the unpoisoned plate that you were going to eat from it. And the good King just burst out laughing like Dave just did now. The good king just burst out laughing and goes, "Okay, right. Sure, let's carry on." And he goes to grab a piece from the plate again and the bad king swaps it again. And the good king goes, "What is going on? You just told me that I was about to eat." And he goes, "Well, maybe you double bluffed me. Maybe you've created this." And so now the good king just laughs. And that day the good king ate his meal and the evil king went hungry. And what that story was told to us when it was shared with us as monks, was to show how we project our own insecurities, our own challenges, our own issues and setbacks onto the people around us.

Jay:

And so it's not that people around us don't make mistakes or that they're not flawed, or that they don't have their own challenges, of course they do. But often the challenge that you feel most difficult to deal with in someone else, is a mirror to your own challenge. And when I heard this as a monk this was like the most earth shattering realization, because you almost start to realize that the disease that you notice in someone else is a disease that you may have hidden away or not be aware of. And I remember

the first lesson that we were taught in monk school was remember that this is a hospital and everyone is a patient. Even the people that look like doctors are patients. And they said, "Sometimes you'll see doctors act like patients. And sometimes all of you patients may act like doctors, but remember that in a hospital everyone's a patient."

Jay:

And having that mindset just helps you not forget that someone else may have a challenge, but it always makes you grow, rather than that famous 50 Cent lyric that I love, which is you shouldn't throw stones if you live in a glass house. And then there's another line to it that I won't mention because it has some words that I wouldn't say. But that understanding of use other people as a mirror for your own consciousness, because that will really free you of all of that.

Dave:

Now your kind of a busy guy, okay. You've got a podcast, you're writing books, and we both know how much time those things take. And your little company's growing, you've got a wife who has funny dances on your channels. You don't have kids yet, but you're already getting pretty busy. How much do you actually meditate every day?

Jay:

So I spend one and a half hours to two hours every single day meditating. It's been the same way for the last 13 years, since I started at 18 to really take meditation seriously after I met the monk. And of course, when I was a monk we did far longer, four to eight hours a day and more at times, but yeah, for now one and a half to two is the most I can do with my current schedule. And it's not always the best, it's not always perfect. Sometimes I'm doing it... Before COVID I'm doing it on a plane, I'm doing it in the back of an Uber, I'm doing it when I'm traveling. I'm splitting it up and I'm doing half an hour in the morning and then half an hour after breakfast. And I'm splitting it up to manage it. But as far as possible, I've always tried to be an early riser and do as much of it as I can in the morning before I start my day.

Jay:

So my rule as opposed to my exception is I'm up by six every day and meditate from about 6:30 to about eight and 8:30 potentially, and then I go to the gym and then start my work day. So I've really tried to make that time sacred and I totally get that when I have kids that might be blown out of the water, and I'm okay with that, but my point not... And I hear that all the time, and it's really interesting how the mind makes you want to not focus now because people are like, "Oh yeah, but that's going to be ruined by kids anyway." I'm like, "Yeah, but I don't have kids yet which means I still have X amount of time till I have kids that I can really rewire my brain." And I think we do that to ourselves sometimes, we go, "Oh yeah, but next month I've got to travel. So if I get into a good habit now I won't be able to sustain it so there's no point."

Jay:

And that doesn't make any sense, because if you've got 30 days now make those the healthiest, longevity 30 days you possibly can. Because that 30 days is going to last, and I feel that even when I'm traveling and I'm rushing around and I'm busy because of that morning, or because of that consistent time, I'm able to be more flexible and still figure it out and keep myself in check. And that... By the way, I'm quite regulated now on eating at the same times every day so I don't skip meals. I have my lunch, my breakfast and my dinner carved out as special sacred times that I don't miss. And I know exactly what

I'm eating every day and I'm very specific about what I eat. And I'm only doing all those things because I love what I do. And at one point, Dave, I realized that I had two choices. I either slowed down or I upped my health game.

Jay:

And I come to you for that and I'm asking you more questions because I'm really fascinated by how you see health, so I'm hoping to learn loads more from you. But I don't want to slow down. And so at one point which was probably about two years ago, I was feeling on the edge of burnout because my life was skyrocketing. And I had to make a very clear decision, I was like, "Do I slow down or do I up my health game and get more focused on being at optimal health?"

Jay:

Because most people are not reaching their potential, not because they don't work hard enough, it's because they not focusing on having the right health. So I meet people all the time who say, "Jay, how do you get so much done?" And I'm like, "Do you exercise?" And they go, "No." And I'm like, "How many hours do you sleep, and what time do you sleep?" And he's like, "I sleep at midnight and then I wake up at seven for work." Okay. I'm like, "Okay, that doesn't work." And then I'm like, "Okay, what time are you eating and what do you eat?" And they're like, "Oh, well most of my diet's just like pizzas and burgers and whatever I can get." And so I'm like, "Well, there's a reason that you're not able to work, and by the way, I've been there so I know what that feels like."

Jay:

I've also been on a whole carbs diet. I love pizza, burgers and fries. I love chocolate fudge cake. I love not exercising, all of that stuff. But I realized at one point that that was all going to hold me back and I've just tried my best, and again, I'm not perfect, I'm still learning about this, but I've really tried to make those commitments. It was my birthday weekend so I ate a lot of chocolate this weekend, but we'll get back to it today. Today was the day of starting the health and wellness again.

Dave:

Oh, perfection not required. Happy birthday by the way.

Jay:

Thank you.

Dave:

I'm in alignment with you in that before you have a family, if you're deciding to have a family, I'm going to try to not be the Indian mom here and put pressure on you is you can get your brain in order. You can get your health in order. And I will tell you, I was doing what you were doing. I would wake up at five or six, I made myself be an early riser even though it's probably biologically not right for me. I would meditate for about two hours, I figured you could replace two hours of sleep with an hour of meditation.

Jay:

I agree.

Dave:

And I'd drink some tea before I have my coffee, and I would chant and I would do my art of living breathing, and I had this great thing. And then I had my first kid and I'm like, "Oh my God." Like whatever time I wake up, babies have radar, and they'll wake up at the same because they like you. And so it's like this imp that's following you around to disrupt your meditation and you have to escape from the house, and then they're pissed that you escape the house. And then it was just like, "Wow, I'm really glad I did some work because it feels like there's about a seven year period where if you're going to be a present parent, your meditation may take a backseat.

Dave:

You still practice mindfulness, you still do what you can, but the what you can is smaller than it was before. And so if you waste the time that you have in your 20s when it's your job to train your prefrontal cortex, when it's your job to figure out, "Oh, that voice in my head is a lying bastard and maybe I shouldn't have listened to it." And whatever else you've got to learn, and you waste your health and you end up entering your 30s and entering your career and you're already burned out. The way I did to be perfectly honest. That's a mistake that people make. And I think a lot of the things that you're sharing in your videos are encouraging people to make better choices earlier, which is worthy.

Jay:

Yeah, I think there are... I always believe, I have this hypothesis that there are four key decisions that we make in life. The first is how we feel about ourselves. The second is who we love and who we get love from, the third is what we do for money, and the fourth is how we serve the world. And those four decisions define the quality of your life. And I think the funny or crazy thing is that 75% of those decisions are decisions that we don't make intentionally with awareness or with focus.

Jay:

So most of us don't know how we feel about ourselves, or we use other people's validation of ourselves to see how we feel about ourselves. When it comes to who we love and who we give love to, majority of us fall into lust more than love and get into a messy relationship by chance or by fault and may not really know where we are.

Jay:

I've been plenty of those too. The third thing we do is we end up doing what we hate for money for the rest of our lives, and service doesn't even come into the picture for most people. And so we're almost setting ourselves up for a really struggled time. And I've found that in my life, when I started to reengineer each of those decisions. So my videos, the reason why they are before you do this, watch this, or if you do this, watch this. Or after this happens, watch this. Because I really believe that life is lived in the transitions, and if you master the transition you experience the transformation.

Jay:

But for a lot of us, we try and avoid the transition. We try to numb the transition, we try to distract ourselves from the transition and therefore a failed transition leads to no transformation. And so for me, that's how I approach it. And I'm always asking myself that, like, 'Am I in the right relationship? Am I doing the right things? Am I doing the things that I love for this?' And of course, you're never perfectly there, it's all percentages. But you want to be moving in the right direction.

Dave:

Why would... Well, I'm just going to have to just say it. Why would we take relationship advice from a monk? Aren't you guys supposed to be celibate?

Jay:

Absolutely. So I definitely was celibate for three years. Definitely not. before then, that was a new... That was probably one of the hardest things that you have to do as a 22 year old, without a doubt. Everything... Giving up alcohol and meat, I'd already given up meat before, I'd given up alcohol before so that wasn't hard for me. And giving up gambling and stuff like that, that wasn't so big for me. But that was the big one.

Jay:

So the reason why relationship advice from a monk is so powerful, and the funny thing is a lot of monks get asked for a lot of relationship advice, is that the reason for monk life is to truly build a relationship with yourself, one of the core reasons or practices. So [inaudible 00:55:18] in Sanskrit, one of the translations is the right use of energy.

Jay:

So in our teens and in our 20s when so much of our energy is spent chasing someone that we're attracted to, the amount of mind space, the amount of money, the amount of energy, the amount of time that is spent trying to win over the person that you're attracted to, if you really did an audit of how much money you spent trying to date someone and the people you took out on dates and spent that money, and the energy and the effort, I'm sure most of us would be a lot wealthier if we didn't do that. I know I would definitely.

Dave:

Oh yeah.

Jay:

And so we waste a lot of human power and energy on trying to chase someone without knowing who we are, what we need, who would complement us, and what's right for us. And those are the first steps in my opinion of actually understanding and attracting the right partner into our lives.

Jay:

And so the reason why monks can give relationship advice is because they can help you understand that part effectively. The other part is living communally. When you're living with potentially, sometimes I was living with 100 monks, you're dealing with 99 other egos apart from your own. You're dealing with 99 minds that are not yours. And yes, your relationship is different, you're not in an amorous relationship or you're not in love with this person, but you're still learning the art of navigating all the sensitivities and all the different diversities of how ego and the mind show up in daily life.

Jay:

And so when you had to learn about how this monk reacts to this and how this one reacts to this, and they had to learn how I react, that's preparing your mind in a phenomenal way for a life of relationships. And it's almost like a, you're in this like... What do you call it, like a bag of marbles? There's that analogy

that's given, again another Zen story that I was told of a bag of marbles. And it's almost like if... Sorry, it's a bag of rocks. And then when you put rocks in a bag and you keep pushing them around and [inaudible 00:57:22] together, eventually the edges smooth out.

Jay:

So all that sharpness eventually smoothens out all the rocks and they start to become more like marbles, or they at least start to become smoother rocks. And so it takes that in the beginning, and those are all just valuable skills in understanding how to navigate relationships. And so, yeah, you may not want to take advice on your Tinder profile, you may not want to take advice on how to set up a Hinge profile from a monk. They may choose a picture that's too simple, they may pick Dave with his shaved head and that wouldn't work. So that may not... That's not the kind of relationship advice, but when it comes to the relationship of your relationship with yourself, which needs to be at the beginning of a relationship with anyone else, that's the relationship part that monks speak about and that I talk about in the book.

Dave:

There's something else that monks and particularly mindful people from all different walks generally learn, they learn to pay attention to what's going on in their head. And there's... At least according to my Western focused attempt to understand the biological creation of egoic behaviors, is that all life forms have to follow these three F words I talk about. Like the things that you're afraid of, because you don't want to be eaten by a tiger right now so you do that right away, and then you don't want to starve to death so you eat everything right away and then you... The species has to reproduce so you put energy into that. So there's three buckets of ego that are survival behaviors that we all do. But for you at the beginning of your path, or at least when you gained awareness, what percentage of your mental processes was going into fear, food or the other F word?

Jay:

Those are probably three of the ones that are completely removed in monk land.

Dave:

Oh, they're removed in monk land now, but when you started what was your percentage? Because most people listening, they're frittering away their electrons on these three things. And so what's the balance, what do they teach you about that in monk land?

Jay:

Yeah, I would say you're spot on. I would say even in my life, those were the three biggest focuses and drivers before I became a monk too for sure. One of the best things that happens in monk life, and this is the challenge that we have with the understanding of freedom in the modern world, so we think that freedom means you get to do whatever you want whenever you want and you have all the choice in the world. But actually we all know, through science and behavioral science, that humans make worse decisions when they have more choice. It's one of the reasons why Apple succeeded, because they had a total of seven products versus every other platform that had like 200 and 300 products on their line. And so the simplicity of a product range and the simplicity of choice as a monk, so many of these things are automatically removed.

Jay:

So something I say often is like, "You don't see monks training in a strip club, that isn't the goal. That's not where you start training." And so I think for so many people we're trying to train on the battle field of life, and so we need to realize that you don't train on the field when you go out to play the game, you don't train at the Superbowl. You don't train at the playoffs like the teams are playing at right now. You train at training camp and training base. And for 99% of us, there is no training base. And this is why I think that silence, seclusion and solitude have such a strength for us right now and there's such a need for it for each of us, because you need your training base. And so the first thing is actually disconnection from the triggers of the senses, because there's no point trying to learn how to... It's like saying, "I'm going to quit eating carbs, but my refrigerator is only full of carbs." And I'm going to force my mind to really break through that barrier.

Jay:

That's just wasted energy. And so the initial thing of monk life, it's completely removing the triggers of the senses. The second thing is retraining the mind for higher triggers, a higher purpose, a higher taste. So you can't give up bad food unless you have healthy food that tastes good and is good for you. And so we're rewired to process our mind to become attracted to things that are healthy for our mind and that are positive for us. And then the third step is almost reintegration where you get to test your limits on how far you can actually go. So I'll give you an example. I remember we would obviously meditate in the Ashram which was peaceful and calm, and then once we were on a 72 hour train journey from North India to South India. Now I decided to fast because let's just say that the restrooms on the third class train were not restrooms.

Jay:

They weren't toilets, they were pits of poo. And so I was on this train, and by the way when you're on this train for 72 hours, there's villagers who haven't got tickets that are coming onto the train, and so you're like hanging on the edge of your own seat. So you haven't even got your own space. This isn't a fancy train, it's not first class. And so we're on this train, and the train on that 72 hour journey takes 10 to 15 minutes stops at certain stations along the way as people get on and off. And I would always say to my monk teacher, I would say, "Oh yeah, I'm going to meditate in the stop. So when it's 20 minutes, I'm going to pop out, meditate for 20 minutes, I'll come back on the train because I can't meditate in all this chaos."

Jay:

And my monk teacher, when I said that to him, he looked at me and he said, "Do you think that life is going to be still or chaotic?" And I was like, "Chaotic." And he said, "Well, then you've got to learn to meditate in the chaos now." He said, "You've had your stillness training, but if you can't meditate on this train then there's no point of that training now."

Jay:

The problem for all of us is that we're starting training on the train, and that doesn't work because we're always pushing ourselves into all the triggers. So there needs to be that separation in the beginning. And that's why immersive experiences, whether you can take a day retreat, a month, whether you can take a week retreat, a year, or whether you can take a month retreat every three years, you spending time on your own, by yourself, reintegrating, figuring yourself out, creating a training sense, putting on your armor, that's going to give you the skills to get out there.

Dave:

Wow. That's a powerful story. And it makes me think right now many people are spending time at home with a much smaller group of people, with less input than they had before. So now might be a pretty good time to learn how to meditate or to deepen a practice. I know I've been doing that, and because I'm less time on the road that's more time with electrodes on my head and breathing, and all the different things I do to become more aware of what's going on in my head.

Dave:

So I think now might be a good time, Think Like a Monk's available. Just... If you're listening to the show do some more breathing exercises, you don't have to commute. You have time and you're not quite in a monastery, and yes, the world might feel like a bit of a shit show right now, and that's okay. But seriously, now is a pretty good time to step it up a little bit because you're not on the train and the economy will open back up, and you might as well be stronger because of the work you did now, because this can be a bit like a monastery.

Jay:

And Dave, we saw that. We saw that when the lockdown started I was trying to look around as to how I could serve. Because I find certainty and uncertainty through service. That's always what I'm looking for. Especially if I'm happy and healthy and safe, I'm like, how can I serve? How can I serve? That always makes me make sense of a situation. So I was looking and I saw John Legend singing on his piano, I was like, "Can't do that." And then I saw these workout people leading workouts on rooftops, and I was like, "I can't do that." I was like, "What can I do? Maybe I can try to teach meditation." So we did 20 days of meditation, we extended it to 40 days on Instagram and Facebook Live because people wanted more. And we had 20 million people join us over 40 days to meditate together.

Jay:

And 90% of people, I would bring them onto the Live afterwards to see their experience, and they'd all say that never meditated before. So again, I trust that people are wiser, smarter and more reflective than we even believe. And that really proved that to me, that so many people turned up to meditate every single day for 20 minutes. And by the way, I'm not saying meditation is going to change the pandemic, but it will change your experience of it. And that's what you're focusing on, is changing your experience of something. You can't change it, but you can change your.

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Jay:

In your experience of something you can't change it, but you can change your experience of it.

Dave:

Now it takes, I don't know, a couple thousand hours maybe, to write a book at the minimum. And it takes years of work before that, putting things together in your head so that you know how you're going to feel, you know what you want to think and it sort of crystallizes. And when you write the book, you take out everything that you think is unnecessary, right? Here's a problem though. You've got a good 12 chapters in there. I want you to tell me the three most important things in your book, not the twelve, what are the three most important things for people to take away?

Jay:

Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree with you more. The original manuscript was 100,000 words and we pulled it back and I think we ended up with 75,000 or something like that. So we really, really pulled it back. Yeah, it was tough. And the book's fairly thick. It's not incredibly hard, but yes, three key things. So I'd say the first thing I'll talk about is I really thought about the structure of the chapters and I have to pick the chapter on purpose. And there's a reason that the chapter on purpose is bang in the middle of the book and is the fifth chapter, because I really believe that that finding your purpose is that core, it's that precipice, it's that tipping point that connects the letting go of the past and the service in the future.

Jay:

It's like that's that makes the biggest difference. So, to summarize the chapter briefly, and in the book I give a 33 question, understanding your dharma. Dharma is the Sanskrit word that has many translations, but my favorite one is eternal purpose, or inherent nature. And so there's this beautiful quote by Albert Einstein, where he said that everyone's a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing that it's stupid. And that's where most of us live, we're fishes trying to be birds. We're birds trying to be tigers. We're lions trying to be giraffes. We're giraffes trying to be zebras. We're constantly trying to do someone else's life perfectly. And as the Gita says, it's better to do your own path, even with mistakes, than to try and perfect someone else's path.

Jay:

And so purpose or dharma, very simply put, as a formula because this word's thrown around a lot, is passion plus strengths plus compassion equals purpose. So passion plus strengths plus compassion equals purpose. And when you start by that formula, now what you do is you go, "Okay, well, what is my passion? What are my strengths? And where does my compassion lie?" And by the way, all three of them can be entry points to your purpose. So you may find your purpose through passion, which is, what do I like? What do I enjoy? What brings me delight? And you may say, "Yeah, I've tried that. I don't really know. I'm not really ... I can't figure it out." Okay. Let's use the entry point of strengths. What are your power ... what are your superpowers? What are the things that you do differently? What are the things that people come to you for and trust you for in a way that they don't trust anyone else?

Jay:

And what are the skills that you're so motivated to improve that people could ... you might not be as good as everyone, but your work ethic is going to be incredible, or your work ethic is going to be insane. And then the final, you may say, "Jay, I'm not really know what my strengths are." The third one is compassion. Where do you see the most pain in the world? And what problem are you trying to solve? So for me, the greatest pain I see in the world is people not living up to their potential. So I don't believe that I'll solve cancer, but I believe that my work could maybe inspire someone who is smarter than me, cleverer than me, and could find the cure to cancer and figure it out if they were to reach their potential.

Dave:

Very cool.

Jay:

And I feel that if I can help people tap into their unique superpower and dharma, then the world will be a better place. I'm not the person who's going to invent a spaceship that takes us to Mars or create what Dave does to help us live to 180. But if I can be a catalyst that people don't settle, then I'm solving that problem. So I'm not saying my problem is the biggest problem in the world to solve. I'm just saying it's the problem I feel compassionate about. And so where is your compassion? Where is the pain that you're trying to solve and heal in the world? So that's one of them, but I can stop there too Dave, because I talked about that one for a while, but if you want two more, I can give you two more.

Dave:

All right. I love that one. So the first one was find your purpose. I love that answer. Yes, people don't have their purpose, will try and take other people's purposes and feel unsatisfied over and over until they get it. So I love that advice. All right. Give me two more.

Jay:

Okay. The next one I'm going to give you is intention. So this is Chapter 4 in the book. And the reason why I think this is such an important chapter is I believe that everything has four intentions. And this comes from, I quote a Vedic scholar named Bhakti Vinod. And he says that the four intentions that every act in life is done for is out of fear, desire and result, duty and responsibility, or love. And he goes on to say that love is the only intention that truly brings joy to our heart and the heart of others. If you do things out of fear, it may get you going in the moment and it's a useful trigger and incentive in the moment, like you may go, "Oh my gosh, my health is a mess. I'm scared of dying early. Let me solve this." That's a great ignition, but it's not sustainable.

Jay:

If you keep powering yourself through fear, mentally that's not great for you. The second one, desire and result. If you're only result oriented, you may end up disappointed because the result may not be what you expect or the path to the result may not be what you expect. So even being results oriented can be completely debilitating, but again, it's useful to get going. The third one is duty and responsibility. We may do things out of duty and responsibility, they make us feel content, but they don't bring us joy. They don't fill us with enthusiasm. If I was sitting here with Dave because I felt a duty to be here, we'd be having a very different conversation.

Jay:

And if he felt he was doing this just because he felt a duty, it wouldn't be enough to experience joy. So love is that motivator. Now, the way I do it is whether I'm looking at a business proposition, whether I'm looking at an opportunity to meet with someone or connect with someone, whether I'm looking at a decision I'm about to make in my life, I ask myself and I'll sit there and I'll put down all my options and I'll write above them why I'm choosing to do them. So I'll literally do this exercise and I'll go, "Why am I doing that? Ah, I'm doing that out of fear. Why am I taking that opportunity? Result, I just want to make a bit of money. Why am I doing that one? Oh, there's love there. Why am I doing that one? Ego. I just want to feel better about myself."

Jay:

And when I do that, it gives me the opportunity to do the same action, but upgrade my intention. We think that actions define whether you're doing the right thing or not, but it's often the intention. I'll give an example that I give to a lot of my clients who want to give money in charity. So let's say you have two

clients. One wants to give \$5 million in charity because they want the PR story. And the other person wants to give 5 million in charity because they just believe that those children really deserve it and really need it. Now they both give 5 million in charity. So the action is equal, but their level of joy is completely based on the intention. The one who did it for the PR story didn't even get the PR story they quite wanted.

Jay:

It didn't quite get meaningful and it didn't even please them, even if they did get it, it's kind of like a flash in the pan, but the person who did it because they just deeply cared and loved out of love, they felt all the joy, so to me, intention is what's blocking us. You can have a billion dollar business built on the intention to serve people, or you can be trying to have a small startup just based on ego. And that's ... or the opposite. You can build a billion dollar business just for ego, or you can serve 10 people in your local community because you love them. And we pay way too much attention to the externals and not the internal intention. So that's the second one that I would pick out.

Dave:

Okay.

Jay:

Okay. And the third one that I would pick out, this one's an interesting one, I would say is the ... I'd say the routine chapter. So I share a beautiful monk lesson that I took away and learned and share is that location has energy. Time has memory. So the problem ... So location has energy means spaces carry the energy of what you do in that space. So currently we're in Dave's studio. He records in there. He films in there. I'm in my studio. This is where I record and film. It has an energy. I know the guests that have been in here. I know that the feeling, its conversations. Currently the challenge is we eat when we're meant to sleep, we sleep where we're meant to work, and we work where we're meant to sleep. So currently the energy of all of our spaces at home are completely confused, and that's why we can't sleep in our beds. We're staying awake.

Jay:

We can't eat at our dining tables because we're trying to work there, and we can't feel entertainment on our couch because we sleep there, work there and eat there. So we've confused the energy of our environment. As monks, we had very specific rooms for meditation, for reflection spaces. When I lived in New York, me and my wife had a 500 square foot apartment. We had corners for different things because that's all the space we had-

Dave:

Wow.

Jay:

So you don't need to have a huge home to do this. Even a corner dedicated to a specific energy carries so much more weight. And so location has energy.

Dave:

Wow. No one has said that ever on the show. And it's so true, any Feng Shui master would tell you that. I love it. After 750 episodes, that's a new one.

Jay:

I'm glad.

Dave:

That's why I think your book is worthy, because that kind of knowledge, a rational Western engineering mindset, like the one I used to have, and frankly still have, to a certain extent, would say, "What evidence do we have of that?" Well, try it. And that's the evidence. And we have generations of people saying, "Yeah, we know this to be true." And I know at least eight different spiritual paths of people who will all say the same thing about space, but no one just calls it out the way it is.

Jay:

Yeah.

Dave:

So, it's so cool that you did that.

Jay:

Thank you, man.

Dave:

I found that unexpected and awesome.

Jay:

Thank you. Yeah. And that energy space, you create energy through three things. So if you're thinking, "Jay, how do I create energy in a space?" So as monks, we were taught that there are three things that create energy. Sights, what you see, sounds, what you hear, and scents, what you smell. We underestimate how powerful our senses are in helping us feel a certain way. And most of us are living with our senses by default triggers and autopilot triggers. So what's the first thing you see when you wake up in the morning? Studies show 80% of us see our phone first thing in the morning and last thing in the night. First thing before we see our partners, and last thing after we see our partners. That phone is putting you on reactive mode on everyone else's priority and agenda. You're now looking at notifications, there's nothing about that experience that is letting you start your day off right.

Jay:

What if you started to a quote that inspired you? Or a picture or a piece of art that makes you feel moved, or maybe it's a picture of your family because that's who you love the most, or maybe it's an icon that you value like Steve Jobs or Martin Luther King or someone that gets you out of bed feeling pumped. Try that. So that's sight. Scents. There's a reason why we feel relaxed in spas. There's a reason why we felt relaxed in monasteries. We had a lot of incense burning all the time and candles, whether it's lavender or sandalwood or eucalyptus.

Jay:

Every morning in the shower, I turn my shower into a little steam by putting a little drops of eucalyptus essential oils, just to be able to inhale differently, to become aware of my breathing first thing in the morning, because just when I smell eucalyptus, I want to breathe it all in because it feels much more natural to do that. What else are you breathing in? Are you breathing in a scent that helps you focus better in your office? Are you breathing a scent before you go to sleep that helps you relax?

Dave:

Like bacon?

Jay:

I mean, I used to eat meat and bacon used to taste good. So I can relate to that in my ... I can remember what bacon smells like. Yeah. And then finally sound. Sound design your life. We know that music and sound can trigger emotion to nostalgia through to anxiety, through to making you want to dance. Sound design your home. What's the song you hear when you get back from work? What's the first podcast you listen to when you get into the car? What's the first and last voice that you hear every day? Make it intentional and see how you change your environment. And if you're listening to all of this and you're like, "Jay, I'm going to try that out." That's all I want you to think about. I just want you to try it because I'll tell you why. The Buddha tells a beautiful story of a man who wanted to cross a river.

Jay:

And when he wanted to cross this river, he saw all these artifacts that could craft a raft. So he got the sticks. He got some rope. He started putting it all together. He got some big bamboo sticks that really put those pillars in place and he made this raft. And this raft, he jumped on top, he got it all made out of the stick and he crossed the river, and he felt amazing. He was like, "Wow. I created this raft. I crossed the river. This raft saved my life, and this is my life's work." He then put the raft on his back because he didn't want to leave it behind because it was so meaningful to him. So the Buddha states that he started to walk through, but now he didn't have to get over a river. He had to go through a forest full of trees, really tall trees, really close by to each other.

Jay:

So he started to walk through and he was struggling to get through because this raft was like this big thing behind him. And he's trying to squeeze through and he's realizing that it's not happening. And he comes to this realization. The raft helped him cross the river, but it won't help him get through the forest. And he realized he needed a different tool. So he had to put the raft down, leave it behind, let go and move on and realize that that same tool that got him here will not help him get to where he needs to get to next. And so the tools that got you to where you are today may not be the same tools that you need to get to the next stage in your life, so try out these new tools, give them a go, experiment.

Dave:

Jay, I love your ability to tell these simple parables that you can tell are just built in, we didn't script any of this podcast. I never share questions ahead of time. And it's just a conversation that I would have had that a quarter of a million people want to listen to. And when I hear you say that like, "Oh yeah, this is the right story for it." I really appreciate that ability to distill a lot into something that's digestible because that's actually one of the hardest communication skills there is. So you've mastered that some way or another. I think it's engaging and it shows in the number of people who watch your videos and all

which is really cool. And your book, I think goes a little bit deeper than that because you've got some science and all in there as well.

Dave:

And I want to thank you for being on the show and for writing Think Like a Monk. I think it's a worthy book for people who are looking for their purpose. They should probably listen to On Purpose, good name for a podcast, by the way. And they really they should just read, Think Like a Monk, because you go into enough of those ideas where I don't think most people who read are going to do everything that's in there, to be perfectly honest. I have the same problem with some of my books, were like, "There's a lot in there." Pick something, but anything that's in Think Like a Monk that pops out for someone who reads it for the first time, I would say go to the first thing that jumps out at you. But that's what I would say. Would you follow that advice or would you tell them to go in order?

Jay:

No. Actually, I did a video and people have different views about this, but I did a video, which was how I read a book a day for a long time. And I talk about how I've only deeply read books after first reading the chapter that popped out to me, and Think Like a Monk works like that. So if you're currently struggling with anxiety, read the chapter about fear. If you're currently struggling with toxicity and negativity, read the chapter about negativity. If you're currently struggling in your relationships, read the chapter about relationships.

Jay:

I want you to start where you feel the boost of confidence and courage that this book has the advice for you, and that's going to inspire you to read the rest of it. I really think books are like a grocery store and you go down the aisle of what you need. You don't walk down every aisle every day. But if you get inspired by one chapter that will make you read the whole book. So I'm comfortable with people starting with what they need.

Dave:

Okay.

Jay:

And then going through the whole book because I have written it in a specific order for a specific reason, but I'm very comfortable with people starting where they feel the most need in their life.

Dave:

Well, Jay, thanks again for being on Bulletproof Radio. People can find your book pretty much anywhere you would normally go buy a book. All you got to do is look for Think Like a Monk. Your work is all over the internet. If you just look for Jay Shetty, you will pop up first. It always happens. Have a wonderful day.

Jay:

Thank you everyone. Thank you for listening. And Dave, thank you so much for that. It was awesome. I really appreciate it. Thank you, man.

Dave:

If you liked today's episode, there's something else that you've got to do, and it's something that's actually in the book, and it involves gratitude. So if you read the book, *Think Like a Monk*, and you like it, or you don't like it, it doesn't really matter, go to Amazon and leave a review. And this is like leaving a tip for your barista, but it's what you do for an author when their book was worth your time. You tell us whether it was worth your time or it wasn't worth the time so we can do better, and so that we know it worked, and so that others can find it. So read, *Think Like a Monk*, leave a review, and have an awesome day and experience the power of gratitude.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:24:35]