



Conscious Life presents

ANXIETY SUPER CONFERENCE

Using Ayurveda for understanding anxiety

Guest: Jason Prall

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[00:00:10] Alex Howard

Welcome, everyone, to this interview where I am super excited to be talking with Jason Prall. Firstly, Jason, welcome. Thank you for joining me.

Jason Prall

Thank you for having me, Alex. Good to see you.

Alex Howard

We've done this a few times together, and I'm looking forward to the way we're going to explore it today, because we're going to look at anxiety initially from this perspective of Ayurveda and Ayurvedic medicine, in the way of really mapping and understanding some of the different ways that people can experience anxiety.

Just to give people a little bit of Jason's background, Jason Prall is a health educator, practitioner, author, speaker, and filmmaker. In 2018, his independent research and experience led him to create *The Human Longevity Project*, a 9-part film series that uncovers the true nature of chronic disease in our modern world.

He's currently finishing his book titled *Beyond Longevity*, as well as his next film series that explores the ancient methods of healing mind, body and soul from Indigenous cultures around the world.

So Jason, maybe a good starting point is just to set a little bit of context and frame around Ayurveda and particularly the three types within that framework?

Jason Prall

Absolutely. I think it's a great place to start.

Ayurveda is a different language when it comes to health and how we understand life itself. And that's really what it is. Ayurveda is the study of life.

And they really came up with a framework that can be applied to the physical health, the mental body, the emotional body, spiritual aspects, the energies of which that govern the planets. They use a philosophy that is interconnected. It's a whole system.

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And the three fundamental principles they call doshas, which is essentially the traits, are vata, pitta, and kapha. And again, this is a new language so it can be a little bit confusing at first, but I think it's really important to state that those three doshas are the three fundamental energies that organize to create all of reality.

And so because we humans are a part of reality, we have these three doshas within us, as part of us that make us up. And when these three doshas, each constitution, each person has a constitution made up of these three doshas, and they're all in a little bit different balances, so to speak.

So we have a pitta type, which has a lot of pitta, which is like your fire, your metabolism, your digestion, transformation. That's kind of the pitta.

The vata is more of the air quality. This is the windy, dry, cool movement aspect of the universe.

And then kapha is slow, it's soft, it's unctuous, it's oily, it's springtime. So it's a different quality.

We use these descriptive qualities because this is an energy. And so we're trying to map out what these energies are. And so vata doesn't mean wind, but when we say wind, it gives us a really good indication of the qualities of vata. It moves, it's very light in nature, it can be often cool and it can fan the flames.

So we find these same traits or characteristics as it pertains to our constitution. And again, this shows up in the body, this shows up in the mental aspects, and it shows up as it pertains to our entire life.

So we don't need to go too deep into Ayurveda to get a grasp for some of this reality. And the more familiar I find that I get with it, the more I start seeing it show up in my personality, in my body structures, in my physiology, in every aspect, even the seasons.

Vata is the winter, so we can actually think of that as the vata time of the year. The pita time of year is the summer and fall. And the kapha time of year is the spring, where it's a little bit more wet, things are new, they're springing up, they're growing. And so this shows up in finances. These are, again, the universal traits that we can utilize to map out the world.

Alex Howard

So do you want to walk us through each of these types of vata, pitta and kapha? And you've touched on it obviously a little bit already, but just some of those key principles and elements of each of those types.

Jason Prall

And I'll do so in a way that shows up in our personality as pertaining to this discussion.

The vata type, which is super relevant for this discussion, is your anxiety type. This is your one that, these types that dominate in vata, they're more of a vata constitution. And again, we have all three. Every single person has all three, vata, pitta, kapha in different ratios and combinations.

And before I get going, what's interesting is that we have a constitution that is a balanced constitution, meaning I'm more of a pitta type. So I have more pitta kapha. And so when I'm in perfect balance, for

me, my pitta is a little bit higher than my kapha, which is a little bit lower than my vata or higher than my vata. So that's my perfect balance based on my constitution, my genetics, so to speak.

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And a more vata type would be when they're in balance, they have a little bit more vata than they do kapha or pitta. And so that's when each of us are in our individual balance and alignment.

Now, beyond the constitution, beyond the genetics, so to speak, we can become out of balance. So if I'm more dominant in pitta, I can actually become even more pitta. And then what's going to happen for me is I'm going to get more angry, I'm going to have more inflammation. All the aspects of that dosha, of those traits are going to increase in me and throw me even more out of balance.

And so it's prudent for me to be mindful of that. So spicy foods will aggravate pitta. Even citrus foods will aggravate pitta as well. So there's foods, there's traits, competition will aggravate pitta. So these are the types of things, if you're looking at UFC, those are a lot of pitta people because they have this aggression and this competition.

Now, what I'm pointing to is that these aren't bad qualities or traits. None of it's bad or good. It's just a matter of balance and how it's showing up. And when things are imbalanced, we tend not to prefer them. And so when it comes to vata, this is your anxiety, your fear, your worry. It is the type that is very mobile, very flexible, actually, in their thinking, even in their joints it'll show up as greater flexibility.

So this is the person that can travel around and bounce around, doesn't need a lot of stability. They're really comfortable on the move and on the go. Now, when they're out of balance, then we get this hyper mobility, things are moving too quickly. That creates too much uncertainty. A lot of anxiety can start to show up in your world.

And so we think, well, I feel a lot of anxiety. Well, part of that could be due to the fact that you've got this vata energy that you're amplifying and that's creating a more destabilizing environment.

And then the kapha is the person that's super stable, grounded, rooted. And in the personality patterns, it's the person that doesn't really want to budge. They have this, when they get overwhelmed, they'll go inward and down and they're actually hard to find because they'll just take a beating.

This is the person that won't put up a lot of fight. They'll just stand there and take it. They're not likely to take action. Sometimes they don't want to exercise or workout. They're the person that's just not excited about working out, not excited about going for a run, so to speak. And if they do workout, it's going to be more like lifting weights.

So this is a totally different personality type. A little bit slower to do things, a little bit more easy going, not a lot of things rattle them. So this is the person that's not going to have a lot of anxiety around a lot of things.

Alex Howard

I was going to say there's people watching this right now going, this sounds great, how do I have more of that?

[00:08:18] Jason Prall

Exactly.

Alex Howard

But that's your point, there's not right and wrong. It's about balances.

Jason Prall

Exactly. So how can we bring more of that, and again, sticking to the Ayurvedic model, how can we bring more kapha into our life? So if I'm a lot of vata, then oftentimes what will help is actually a little bit more pitta, a little bit more kapha, and that will slow things down, bring more stability, create a little bit less anxiety in my world.

Now it doesn't fundamentally change, perhaps the things that create a strong anxiety in our childhood. And we can get into some of that because there are layers here.

And what I'm pointing to is that we come in with a constitution, and if constitutionally I'm more vata, meaning I'm a little bit more thin boned, I have more dry skin typically, my hair is a little bit more brittle, my digestion is not so good, I might have some gas bloating. You see it as irregularity in the bowels. You don't go to the bathroom regularly, your sleep is a little erratic typically, you sleep lightly. So you can see these qualities that are starting to show up in our daily lives: irregularity, lightness, dry, movement, all these things. And so it shows up.

And so I'm pointing to this to perhaps help people identify a little bit more about them and to recognize, oh, I'm more of a vata type. That's just me constitutionally.

And then it can get out of balance and get pushed even further. And that's when we start running into a lot of issues. And we see a lot of nervous system issues, physical health wise. Later in life, dementia and Alzheimer's, and that kind of thing is the progression. But we see a lot of nervous system dysfunctions.

Vata people are a little bit more sensitive, so they're actually more likely to, when they feel pain, they feel it stronger than others. The kapha person actually doesn't feel pain as strongly. So they're a little bit more sensitive to energies, sensitive to emotions, sensitive to changes.

And so these are the qualities that start to show up. And when we can identify those, then we can start to work with them and start to bring in some of the opposite qualities so that we can find balance in our life.

Alex Howard

It's a really interesting point you made a few minutes ago that we come in with a certain constitution, and then that meets the events, the circumstances of childhood. But the constitution we come in with plays an important role in terms of how we're impacted.

And so you gave the example of someone perhaps being a bit more sensitive and delicate, they're more likely to be bruised. But also, in a sense, what that's doing is that's setting up a feedback loop with themselves of how they're learning them to respond to their constitution through life.

[00:10:52] Jason Prall

Absolutely. And there's some interesting aspects when we get into this idea of Karma and things that are unresolved, perhaps from past life, that we come into this life with.

And I don't claim to know for certainty how this all works, but what I do find are these patterns, and it seems to match, which is that it seems like there's things left unresolved that we'd come into this life with. That essentially life tends to set up circumstances for us to face these things.

And I'll point to my own son as an example. I'm very familiar with healthy birthing and we did all the right things to set up a really conscious nourishing birth situation. And we gave birth in the water. It was beautiful. It went really well. He had the cord wrapped around his neck. We had midwives, we had prenatal massage, we had all kinds of things going on even in that situation and for whatever reason, we couldn't prevent that.

Now, perhaps we could have done something, but we did our best and we still couldn't prevent that. The cord wrapped around your neck, that is really highly linked with greater anxiety in childhood and adulthood. That's a trauma. As we come into this world, there's already a threat, which is that the cord wrapped. Now, he wasn't blue and it wasn't anything serious, but I unwound the cord.

We went to the bed and everything was good, and we then birthed the placenta 45 minutes later. We did this thing as good as we could have done with all this amazing help around us, being guided by just true wisdom. And yet after the placenta was burst, we were measuring his oxygen saturation and it was low. It was in like the 80s, and it should be up around 90, 95, 98. And it wasn't coming up.

So long story short, we ended up having to call the ambulance, the fire department came, put him in an ambulance, went to the ER, now we get all this trauma. He gets poked and tested and bright lights and ripped away from Mama. So all of these birthing traumas that we might think about, that we really did everything we could to prevent were unpreventable. And so he faced this. And then he was in the ER, the NICU for four days.

And so we did as best we could to be there and mitigate some of these things but I mean, look, he had antibiotics, he got an X-ray. And I'm trying to mitigate all this as much as possible and yet all this is happening.

And my point of this story is that there seem to be these situations that come in life that basically bring this stuff up so that we can work through it and deal with it.

Now, that story, as it pertains to this conversation, is that a lot of the birth traumas and early life traumas will set up this anxiety pattern that we experience later.

And then some of these other models that we can look at, you might call this a leaving pattern. And energy actually is leaving the body. So we actually see a leaving pattern actually shows up in the body, typically in a little bit thinner people, taller, leaner, smaller boned. The energy is actually up and out. It's like out of here.

And so from a shamanic perspective or Indigenous wisdom perspective, this might be the soul fracturing. In other words, the soul didn't come into the body and fully land and integrate in a really stable way. And so it's threaded, it's just gone. It didn't fully land.

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And so it's really interesting when we weave together all these maps and ideas, what I notice is the patterns start to show up. And a lot of early life trauma, particularly around birth, will set up a really strong anxiety pattern later. And a lot of Karma from past lives will create situations in this life to set up these traumas, to set up this anxiety so that we are the way we are, so that we can deal with some of the stuff that's unresolved.

And so it's really interesting to think about the constitution as it manifests in the reality that we experience, which then manifests in our personalities and all the things that we have to work with.

Alex Howard

I also want to just echo something you said and put it another way as well, which is that often the childhood traumas we experience are not an ultimate lack of good intention or a lack of love from our caregivers. It's often a lack of resource, it's a lack of resource of time or the skill to be holding and nourishing.

I think most people's parents wouldn't think twice about throwing themselves in front of a bus for their child, but if you ask them to come off their phone and be emotionally present, it's like the hardest thing in the world. So it's just separating everything, the love that may well have been there from the actual lived experience of those human needs being met.

Jason Prall

My son can actually feel abandoned, so he can actually come out in life and feel this deep abandonment in his nervous system because that's his experience, his perceived experience. And of course, at four days old and two days old, he doesn't have a conscious understanding of what was going on.

And so what we're talking about here can be applied to the 1 year old, the 2 year old, the 4 year old, the 5 year old, even the 9 and 10 and 15 year old who don't have a full conscious understanding of all that's required and yet all they're experiencing is their perception. In other words, we just experience the nervous system as it's reading the environment.

And so I love your point here because it's not only the perception, but it's also this idea of we can't control this reality. No matter what we do, this is just the way.

So in other words, we can relax a little bit and to some degree recognize that this is how things are meant to play out. There's a bigger design here. There's something greater going on, so we can let go a little bit about what could have been done and shouldn't have done and how it needed to be done. It's like there are certain things that need to happen in order for us to live this life that we need to live and resolve some of these unresolved things that we come in with.

Alex Howard

Thank God there's something wiser than us.

Jason Prall

Right.

[00:17:10] Alex Howard

So you said something in the notes that you shared when we were organizing the interview, which I really liked. This wasn't quite the way you worded it, but how it landed in my mind was the gifts of anxiety. Maybe it was the words that you used, but this idea that we're so quick to medicalize anxiety and make it wrong and see something that needs to be gotten rid of.

And I really like this idea of the recognition that actually these different types, and perhaps we can say a bit more in a minute as well about how these different types might experience anxiety, there's also gifts in there. There's potentials within that which I think is important to name.

Jason Prall

And that's why I love the Ayurvedic map because it's pointing to just the raw energy of things. And so, again, if we point to the wind, it's not good or bad, it's just the wind. And it has certain characteristics and traits, and some of those are going to be better for other things and really not very good for other things.

And so when we talk about vata, when we talk about anxiety, the gift of that energy is the ability to embrace change, the ability to open yourself up and feel things. Oftentimes these types that have a lot of anxiety, they're really good meditators, whether they know it or not. Once they get into meditation, they can actually find this zero point, this emptiness and just rest in pure emptiness.

So that's a really, really strong gift of that type. And the value of that is that when you rest in this emptiness, it's pure potential. In other words, anything can come through. That is the ground of awareness itself. It's the ground of being when you can actually get into that place.

And what I'm talking about is not just this mental thing. I'm talking about your awareness is able to expand and open up and basically just get into the pervasive all. And when you can be in that place, unbelievable things can come through.

The opposite of that is the anxiety. And typically with anxiety, it's a mental aspect. It's a lot of mental movement. It's a lot of thinking. It's a lot of worrying about the future. It's a lot of uncertainty. So the mental comes into play. And so it's just a recognition of vata, this energy can show up as erratic mental behavior or it can show up as this empty space. And so we can start to gravitate towards those qualities.

A lot of these people, in my experience with anxiety, they're very playful, they're very energetic. They can be tired, too. That's the flip side of that. The fatigue is a very strong correlative with anxiety. But when it's in balance, it's very energetic, it's very dynamic. It's a lot of fun, a lot of play. So we can rely on some of these energies and apply them in really interesting ways.

And I think, again, it also highlights for me to accept ourselves for who we are and not try to be something different. So, yes, there's some great qualities in the kapha and in the pitta, but if I'm a vata person, it's like me trying to be kapha is just not going to work very well.

Now, we can bring in some of these things, so with the vata person, lifting weights is a really good thing to do. It's a little bit more stabilizing, it's a little more structured. Whereas the yogas and the running, which more vata anxiety types love to do, is going to further exacerbate some of these things.

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So it's a matter of just recognizing where the energy is, how it's balanced, who I really am and leaning into that, accepting that aspect of me. For pitta, this is just a little bit of divergence, but it's easier for me to speak from my perspective because I have a lot of pitta, which is a lot of energy, it's a lot of fire. On the downside, it's a lot of anger and frustration.

Now, I really didn't like that aspect of myself for a long time because I thought that was me. I was bad. I was wrong. I didn't know how to quell this anger. And then when I realized, oh, that's pitta. That's an imbalanced pitta. This aggressiveness, this anger, this competition, this fierceness, that's just part of my pitta. Oh, cool. Now I can recognize that's just part of my constitution. That's just one way this gets expressed. And now I can take responsibility for that, to shift that and to move it into a more healthy balance.

So I think a little bit more acceptance can come in when we recognize some of these positive traits and some of the things out of bounds.

Alex Howard

What comes to mind when you're speaking is that, we have a bit of a joke internally that, those of us that have anxiety tendencies within the organization, when we have to do a risk assessment we all get really excited because we're thinking about all the things that can go wrong. But there's something about that ability, again, used in the right way to be able to look to the future and go, well, actually, that's a risk or that thing that could happen.

And what I realized is that particularly the years that I suffered from quite severe anxiety, I got really good at problem solving because I invented all these problems that weren't real and then figured out how I was going to manage and address those, that actually trained a real capacity towards future planning and strategic thinking and be able to see how different things may organize together or may impact each other.

So there is a real gift in that ability for one's mind to work in that way, it just needs to have some containers around it, in a sense.

Jason Prall

Absolutely. And that type of energy is very quick, too. So oftentimes the mental activity, again, it can be erratic, but it can also be very quick and very sharp. They can pick up a lot of pieces and they can see a lot of things and feel a lot of things.

Again, I think it's a big one, too, is the ability to feel. And oftentimes that can be a little overwhelming for somebody that's a little bit more of an anxiety type because they feel so many things and there's a lot of stimulus and it's really just unnerving. But as you embrace that and you start to pick up on the ability to feel the subtle aspects of life, you can actually feel the subtle body, you can feel energy moving through the body.

You can train these things and apply this trait or this characteristic, as you're saying, the ability to perceive danger, in a very subtle way. So imagine you're hunting or you're in a dangerous situation, those types would naturally be able to sense and pick up on these dangers more so than others.

[00:23:51] Alex Howard

I guess part of that, because I'm imagining what some of our audience is thinking, they're saying, Jason, Alex, how dare you say that there are positives to an experience that obviously can be incredibly difficult. And I guess really the point we're making here is that it's one thing if that anxiety pattern is running someone's life and they're feeling at the victim and at the mercy of that because there is no container, that there's no ability to influence what's happening.

And I guess really what you're saying is that the more awareness one has, and the Ayurvedic map is a helpful way to bring awareness, one can also have more influence on these patterns. So to put it another way, they're not a victim of these patterns. They're perhaps utilizing them, but they're also able to provide a little bit more steadiness or a little bit of a different perspective.

Jason Prall

Absolutely. And again, going back to those maps, this is where I think, let me take a step back, because what is anxiety? Where does it come from? In my experience, aside from the constitutional aspects, it gets exacerbated or really developed in early childhood. And so we experienced these childhood traumas or conditionings that happened.

And I think it's a big one. We think about trauma, and that's important, but conditioning is perhaps as important, if not more important. In other words, it's the things that we were consistently getting or inconsistently getting. And this is what I find with this anxiety type is that it gets, again, constitutionally it's there, and it gets reinforced oftentimes through childhood because let's say the parent or the caregiver is there and they're not there. You can't rely, there's no steadiness in the experience.

And again, it could be physically where somebody is there and not there, or it could be the fact that they're physically there and then emotionally or energetically, they're just not always there. They're on their phone or they have so much going on.

And so when we get this irregularity, this unreliability showing up throughout our life, then that's really what anxiety, I think, represents. It's this uncertainty, uncertain future, uncertain that I'm safe. Because I know safety exists, but it's not here and I can't count on it and so I've got to try to move all around and do a lot of things to try to find safety.

What I find is that it's this movement aspect to try to find safety. That's the tendency. Now what can we do to augment that or to stabilize that is we can actually provide more stabilization, more certainty, more regularity.

And again, the really cool aspect about Ayurveda is the energy is the energy. And so the vata energy or the things that pacify vata can come from food, can come from exercise, from breathwork, from sleep, from all the things. So we can actually use all of these things to help calm our anxiety.

So setting up regular sleep patterns, meaning you're trying to go to bed at the same time every night. You're creating a lot of routine in your sleep routine. In your dietary routine you're eating meals at a very consistent time. A lot of the vata types actually need more frequent meals. It's a fairly common thing to have four, maybe five meals even sometimes. If they're the right type of meals, that can be healthy. But creating a lot of stability, a lot of irregularity in your routines. Also in your environment, straighten things up, clean things up, keep things organized.

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So what we're pointing to here is this idea of creating structure, creating stability, creating regularity. And oftentimes especially in childhood, this is oftentimes, most of us didn't get this to the degree that we needed, but this regularity. And when we provide more regularity, then particularly with the vata types, it's going to calm that down. The anxiety is really going to start to calm down because you can count on things, you know where things are, things are in the right place, you know the times of day.

Now, again, this is not the tendency of the vata type. This is not the tendency of the anxiety type. The tendency, the natural patterns are to be irregular, to be all over the place. And so it's just paying attention to that, noticing that your patterns are perhaps creating an environment, a situation that is exacerbating the irregularity.

Alex Howard

I think you're making a really important point here which is, selecting and choosing practices which balance us. Because I think what tends to happen is people will pick the practices which actually are more comfortable, which actually perpetuate the problem.

And so, for example, the person whose system is moving too fast will tend to pick exercises like running and hobbies that involve lots of fast movement. And so by staying in their comfort zone, they're actually perpetuating that cycle.

What I'm hearing you say is that if someone perhaps is a vata type and their system is often moving too fast, maybe something like weight training or something that's actually going to slow the system down is more helpful. But equally, someone that's more kapha, for example, actually needs to speed the system up. And that awareness, I think, is really interesting.

Jason Prall

It is. And this is perhaps the most difficult thing. And it doesn't seem like it's difficult because it's so obvious.

But again, using myself as an example, I'm in the middle with this pitta, which is this balancing of energy types, but I have my preferences. And particularly when things are overwhelming, what do I rely on? I rely on my strengths. I go to the things that are comfortable. I go to the things that I'm constitutionally good at.

And so same thing with vata, if I'm constitutionally good at moving around and going and finding safety and doing all these things to either distract myself or what have you, then the hardest thing for me is going to be to sit still and meditate. The hardest thing for me to do is going to weight train and actually do slow moving stabilizing building up of the system. The hardest thing for me to do is going to create routines and structure.

And theoretically, it's not hard at all, but energetically it's diametrically opposed to what you're good at. And so when you find yourself in overwhelm, that's when the anxiety starts to bubble up and get crazy. Even people with pretty strong anxiety, if they're in a blissful comfortable, beautiful state, the anxiety is pretty minimal or non-existent. It just gets turned on really quickly and really strongly when things start to get unstable.

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This is the case for all of us. It's not like because I'm pitta, I don't feel anxiety. I feel anxiety quite often. It's just how does that then show up in my life? Well, for me, it actually pushes the pitta. Actually, what they say in Ayurveda is vata pushes pitta, meaning the wind actually starts to blow the fire stronger, and that's what happens. So anxiety comes and I go into my fire processes. So either the frustration or the fire in my body or I go into exercise if I feel anxious. That's one of my outlets, I go lift weights. So that's a funny thing.

Well, the thing that's probably better for me in that situation is to meditate, is to relax, actually feel into the body just to let things process. So what I'm pointing to here is that even some of the things that are balancing that seem obvious, can be the most challenging because it's not our strength. It's not what we have typically relied on to find safety and security.

And even though the things that are driving the vata, the anxiety higher, it seems obvious to not do those things, ironically there's an aspect of finding safety in those because we've relied on them for so long as our pattern.

And so it's really important to bring awareness to these things and just catch yourself noticing when I feel overwhelmed, when the anxiety starts to come on, what do I tend to do? Do I find more irregularity and more movement and more cold, fast, dry qualities of things that I'm doing, or am I finding the opposite?

Alex Howard

So I think, obviously awareness is a really important piece of this, but also sometimes people can have the awareness, let's take the example that you gave. Someone's system is overstimulating, there's fiery energy, for example, and they want to go and do weights to continue that. And actually what you most need in that moment is to go and to sit and slow down and be quiet.

And you have the awareness that that's a good idea, but you have a lot of emphasis towards going and doing the weights. What do you find helps you in those situations make a different choice?

Jason Prall

It's a great question. I think, for me when it comes to anxiety and really just overwhelm in general, what I find is that we lack a resource. When we feel overwhelmed by nature we don't have the resource capable of dealing with the perceived threat or danger. And this could be an email from a boss or it can be it can be anything. And the threat then is perceived, and we lack the ability to resourcefully metabolize or work that through or move it through the system. And so it gets stuck and it overwhelms us.

And then we look for something to pacify that, and we can find patterned ways of doing that, conditioned ways of doing that. So resource, I think, is probably the most important thing that I can recommend.

So whether it's a loved one, a friend, a counselor, and this is the part of the work that I do as a counselor is really providing resource for the people that are with me. To be honest, it doesn't even involve talking. It's actually nervous system resource. We can actually sit in a coregulated state, and my nervous system and their nervous system can help regulate, and they can process things that are getting stuck.

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And the anxiety just starts to come down naturally because things are actually being processed and moved through the system. And their nervous system can actually find my nervous system and actually read it and actually find stability and safety and go. It's like it's learning. It's like AI, so to speak, it's learning my system. And this is what an awareness can do. It's amazing what we're capable of.

But that's really what I find is perhaps the most important thing is finding another human, another person that can help you metabolize and resource this stuff. And to be honest, even though I work as a counselor, therapist, coach in this realm, I'm still a patient or a client constantly. And so I set up, I have a network of people that I work with that help me regulate.

And so it can be at 2pm on a Wednesday, it can be after this call and I feel so jacked up and overwhelmed because, oh my gosh, Alex was asking so many tough questions that my nervous system is all excited. I might need to go sit with somebody and just metabolize, just resource a little bit.

So I think that's a big one. It's not relying solely on ourselves. It's actually using another. And this is why oftentimes when you get in an argument to fight any kind of issue, it's not the talking that always helps. Sometimes it's just a hug. Sometimes it's just a relaxation.

So we can do meditation, we can do breathworks. These are very valuable tools to help us move some of these things through. But I find another person, another nervous system is probably the most valuable tool that I've used to help process some of this overwhelm that can then jack up either the anxiety or the fiery nature or the stubbornness in the kapha person that doesn't want to do anything.

Alex Howard

What I'm really hearing you say is it's having the awareness to go, what do I want versus what do I need? And it's like in that moment, what I want is to continue this, be that to continue in the busyness or continuing the anger or continuing the stubbornness and stuckness, but what do I actually need?

And it's like what you're describing is the recognition and actually I need some coregulation in my nervous system, or I need a sense of safety and holding that's actually going to allow my system to settle.

And then I think what we get into is having the courage in that moment to actually ask for what we need. Like you're describing, being able to reach out to people, which I think is something that you probably worked to put in place. And for other people, it may be that just that very act of asking for a hug or that very act of, can we go and have a cup of tea I just want to be around someone that's got my best interest at heart? That's not always easy for people to do.

Jason Prall

I'm still working towards that. It's still not easy for me to ask for help. I've become self reliant. That's a pattern that I've run strongly in my life and still run to some degree. So I'm still working those pieces.

And this is what I find, is that with a lot of these traumas and conditioning that we grew up with, what we lacked was repetition and regularity. What it takes to unwind all that and to recondition the system is regularity, is consistency. And so for me still, I'm working on this stuff constantly because I'm not

particularly great at asking for help. I'm not particularly great at reaching out. There are times where I can feel I need resource, and I don't do it.

[00:37:21]

And I have awareness. So to your point, I understand very much this thing that you're talking about, and the only way to get over that is through it. It's little bits and continuing to work those edges. And I find that the anxiety types, the vata types, they actually run this pattern really strongly. In other words, just people are a big source of anxiety and fear.

And I know this because I have people very close to me that run this pattern. And it's common. For those of us who don't run that pattern as strongly, it's hard to understand sometimes, but the level of fear just being around others, just having a conversation or opening up or being comfortable around people, they can fake it but the fear that's running in their system can be so debilitatingly strong.

And so it's something I've really grown a lot of compassion for because I started to realize how big that is. And there's really good reasons for that. It's not something to be shameful for. It is a really important thing to recognize. And so I want to honor that as well.

Alex Howard

I think what also comes to mind as you're speaking is the danger of overthinking. We were talking about the gift of that pattern, but there's also a price to that pattern. Like being in that moment where you're in proximity with someone that loves and cares about you and you need a hug, and you just need to ask, can I have a hug? But then this whole massive internal dialogue around, maybe they don't want to hug, what will they think? Will they think I'm weak? All of this. And there's a whole story.

And I think sometimes the awareness to not buy that story, to not get pulled down that path and just to recognize right now I'm overthinking this, let's just come back to my body. What does my body need? And to have that courage is to take that leap in that moment.

Jason Prall

And this is a good time to bring in the body, the energetics of the body. And so from my perspective, the energy comes down through us, goes all the way through the chakras, if you will, goes down into our base, into our root, and then comes back up.

Well, for many of us, it gets stuck somewhere along the way. For me, the pitta types, and you'll see this in the representation of the body shapes typically, pitta types are like this. They're the broad shoulders, thin waist, tiny legs. It's the athlete, it's the Gladiators. It's those types. And oftentimes what they're doing is actually bulking up this area as a defense mechanism, so it's actually armor. So it's interesting how these things come up.

But that's where a lot of energy is, right up here in the shoulders and chests and heart. That's why it's the fire, the heart and the pitta. The vata types, actually, not much comes in. So actually not much reaches the base or the root or the ground. And so for the vata types, for the anxiety types, one of the things that we can do is actually work with our awareness, feel into our roots to actually get more ground energy.

I don't necessarily mean this like the New Age spiritual, meaning that you can just place a crystal down there and everything's good. But I mean, using your awareness and actually feeling into the

subtle body, into the body, you can actually feel into the root and whatever you want to call it, you can feel into your pelvis, into your coccyx. And this is where some of the things like yoga and Qigong and some of these other practices where we can develop a greater body awareness, we can actually pull the energy into the ground.

[00:40:47]

And when we get into that energy, you actually feel time slow down. You actually feel the safety, security. And so the more we can bring that energy down, then we can actually find that the anxiety starts to dissipate. With the anxiety what we find is that the energy is up here. It's literally floating up here, and you have almost nothing throughout the body. Again, this is why the vata types tend to be a little bit more narrow and tall. Not always. These are the maps. Everybody is unique. But that's what happens is the energy is up here.

And so if the energy is up here, the only resource you have is here. It's using the mind, it's using the mental. So that's why the anxiety types are so brilliant in that way, is because all the resources, and it's going on up here. But energetically speaking, there is resource here and here and down in the root. And if we can bring ourselves with our awareness into these other body centers, we can actually find greater resource there. And that's when the resource is found in these other places in the body, this doesn't have to work so hard. It can actually quiet.

And so some of this is actually body energetics. And again, I would point to Qigong in particular to help develop a greater sense of this dantien and moving this, it's not just energy, it's actually different energy, it's Prana, it's Qi, it's awareness that is actually sourcing energy, it's sourcing life force from these different places.

And so it gets really deep, and I didn't always think like this. It was only through practical experience that I started to recognize, oh my God, I exist below the chest. I actually had to get down there to feel it and to recognize, oh, there's resource there. And when I run there, then I don't have to work my pitta and my vata and all these other things so hard.

Alex Howard

The phrase that comes to mind as you're speaking is that you can't think your way to a feeling of safety. And it's like we work so hard in our minds to try, and if I do this and that happened, but if I get there, and we're trying to think our way to a place that you can't get in your mind because it's a felt sense in your body. So to get there, we have to stop thinking and we have to start feeling.

Jason Prall

The reason that we don't feel so well, and I was frozen for quite some time, I really couldn't feel into my body, is because it generally wasn't safe to feel. At some point in most of our childhood, perhaps, that when we were in that feeling state, that there was a lack of perceived safety. And so it just wasn't safe to get in there and feel because either there was hurt and there was pain and there was a lack of love, a lack of connection.

And these are fundamental aspects to being a human. We need connection. We need to perceive connection. Connection is always there, but we need to perceive it. And if we're not perceiving it, if we don't perceive that we're loved for who we are, if we don't perceive that it's safe to have big feelings. I mean, I have a 2 year old. This kid has some big feelings sometimes. And logically, they make no

sense. If I use my adult logical mind, my prefrontal cortex, then it doesn't make sense. But if I feel into what he's feeling and I can feel how upsetting some of this stuff is.

[00:44:05]

So embracing him and allowing him to have these big, unreasonable feelings, that's going to actually create a perception in him that it's actually okay to have certain feelings, that he's still accepted that he still loved, that he still feels the connection when he is totally irrational and throwing a fit. To be honest, I don't do that 100% of the time. I may not even do it 80% of the time, but I try to do my best.

And interestingly enough, it doesn't actually take that much. We only have to get it right about 30% to 40% of the time for the child to feel the perception of regularity. If we weren't given that for whatever reason, or if we didn't perceive that, maybe we were given it but we didn't perceive it, then we're going to start to develop a lack of feelings. My gosh, I'm still working on this. I'm still working to embrace the feelings and be vulnerable in various situations.

There's different dynamics here. Sometimes I always thought, well, I have a very strong emotional connection because when I watch movies, I feel it very strongly, I cry. But in the presence of another, then I shut down. Then the emotions start to squeeze off. And I realized, okay, there's a different relational dynamic. When it's me, with me, things are flowing, but when I'm with another, it can be closed off. When I'm in front of a group, it totally changes.

So there's different dynamics here that can show up. And so I'm just pointing to these hopefully to give people a sense for starting to know themselves and how this is starting to show up. But ultimately, when we get better at feeling, everything starts to change. And it may be that we start feeling more sadness. It may be that we start feeling more anger, more disappointment. All these things can start to show up. But ultimately, if we can start to feel those, then we can start to move them.

Alex Howard

And if anything, that's highly likely, of course, because if we've got a whole history of stuff that we've not been feeling, when we start to feel, some of that is going to come forth. And that's a sign of progress, not a sign of something being broken.

Jason Prall

And ultimately, that's how we get out of the patterns of just living in our mind. So circling back to that. That's why it's important to go into those feelings, as painful as they might be, so that we can actually start to relieve this anxiety, start to relieve this mental burden that's just constantly moving and we can start to rest more.

Because when we're in balance, when we're in alignment, then we can rest in well being. And all these things can come at us. And we can feel anger and disappointment and sadness and love and connection. We can feel all of them while still resting in our alignment without getting into this overwhelming.

Alex Howard

That's beautiful.

[00:46:46] Alex Howard

I'm mindful of time, Jason, but I want to ask, for the people that want to find out more about you and your work, where can they go and what can they find?

Jason Prall

They can go to awakenedcollective.com and that's where I do a lot of my more spiritual work, trauma-informed work, personal growth and development and that kind of thing.

Jason Prall

And then I have *The Human Longevity Project* as well, it's humanlongevityfilm.com and that's more of the scientific physical work. So that's the microbiome and the mitochondria and longevity and physical health and well being.

Alex Howard

Awesome. Jason is always a pleasure. I love the fact we get to do different interviews in different areas, and we go to these different places, and it's always a joy to share in your knowledge, so thank you.

Jason Prall

Thank you for having me.