



Biohacking for better sleep

Guest: Dave Asprey

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[00:00:10]

Alex Howard

Welcome, everyone, to this interview. Where I'm super excited to be talking with Dave Asprey. In this interview we're going to be exploring some of the key principles from his work in biohacking around sleep. Particularly, we'll talk about the impacts of light and sunlight. We'll talk about the impacts of food and nutrition, and also some really simple, practical behavioral changes that you can make.

Just to give you a bit of Dave's background. Dave Asprey is an entrepreneur, 4 time New York Times bestselling science author and host of the Top 100 podcast The Human Upgrade formerly known as Bulletproof Radio which has more than 200 million downloads. Over the last two decades, Dave has worked with world renowned doctors, researchers, scientists, and global mavericks to uncover the latest, most innovative methods, techniques, and products for enhancing mental and physical performance.

Dave is focused on upgrading humanity in his role as CEO of Upgrade Labs, a franchise chain of human upgrade centers, and on leading thousands of people enrolled in the Upgrade Collective, his online mentorship and membership group, where a community of people learn everything it takes to upgrade themselves from all the way from cells to the spirit.

So welcome, Dave, to this interview. It's great to have you on the Sleep Super Conference.

Dave Asprey

Alex, it's my pleasure to be here.

Alex Howard

So I want to start with a fundamental, which shouldn't really be an important question, but I think it's an important question, of why sleep is important, but also how much sleep do we need? There are so many different contradictory perspectives. And just before we started rolling, you were saying that a very specific 6 hours and 29 minutes sleep has been your average over the last however many years. So I was curious about that as well. But let's just start with why do we need sleep? And why is quality of sleep so impactful on really everything else in our lives?

[00:02:21] Dave Asprey

No one knows why we actually need sleep. We've theorized it a lot, and very likely it goes back to 2 billion years ago when life was first on Earth and we had little bacteria floating in the ocean, and at night when it was cold and there was no food and no sunlight to make energy, they went into a dormant phase and did some other repair work. And we just kind of kept doing that. That's a good theory, but no one can exactly tell us why.

And we know that people do stuff when they're asleep, both biologically and even spiritually. You have dreams and things like that. We know the brain cleans itself out. So as a computer hacker turned biohacker, well, you do need to do systems maintenance, and these are self-repairing systems that we live in that last for a long time. So maybe that's why we need sleep.

Alex Howard

It's funny you say that. I remember, I did a psychology degree, and I remember having a sleep lecture and them saying, we don't know why we need to sleep, we have decades of research but we don't actually know.

Dave Asprey

I used to weigh 300 pounds, and I can't convert that to stones, but I weighed 50% more than I weigh right now, and I was a terrible sleeper. And the reason I was a terrible sleeper is I'm just going to have to admit it I had better things to do. In fact, a lot of people listening right now, if you could just say, you know, I feel great all the time, I really don't want to sleep. Well, okay, that we don't know how to do yet, and you'd probably go crazy. In fact, that's what studies show would happen if you didn't sleep. And studies show that you'll become obese, depressed, and a long list of things, including cancer risk, cardiovascular risk, Alzheimer's risk, all go up very meaningfully. Because going up doesn't really matter. If it's a tiny percentage and it goes up a tiny amount, it doesn't matter. But these are big changes in the wrong direction.

But there's no rule out there that says that all sleep is created equal. What that means is that it's possible to get more sleep in less time. And that we can do. And what I do as a biohacker who created that field is say, well, how can we use science and technology and math and everything we know about the environment and human body to do it better?

And it turns out that when we gathered a huge amount of data back in the 80s on 1.2 million people for 3 years tracking their sleep, that's a huge amount of data. It was so much that computers in the 80s couldn't do anything with it. So a researcher in the 90s, when computers were faster, uncovered all of this data and then ran it through and said, oh, that's so weird. People who live the longest sleep 6 and a half hours a night.

The all-cause mortality from people who sleep 8 or 9 or 10 hours is much higher, and the mortality goes up when you need more sleep. So if you say, I don't feel good if I don't get 10 hours of sleep at night, that's not a good thing. That is a bad thing. Provably. Now, does that mean you should restrict your sleep to 6 and a half hours or, like me, 6 hours and 29 minutes for the last 15 years of monitoring my sleep? Probably not.

[00:05:33] Alex Howard

You're a minute late there, Dave, just to say, you know.

Dave Asprey

I'm really worried. What happens is healthy people need less sleep. People with less toxins in their brains, in their bodies need less sleep. People who eat the right foods need less sleep. But it's not just about needing less sleep. It's about making sure that the sleep you get counts really well. I used to go to sleep before I started the biohacking field, and I would go to sleep with a headband on that tracked my brainwaves, and my wife didn't really like it. I don't think it's Victoria's Secret approved, but I would track my sleep because I was terrible at it.

I intentionally slept as little as I could because I was an entrepreneur. I built several companies. And why would I sleep more than I need to? Well, the reason you sleep more than you think you need to is because you want the mental focus and the clarity. So having spent all of this time hacking my brain and hacking my biology and actually working on longevity, well, my body naturally sleeps 6 and a half hours a night. I don't have to set an alarm. I'll wake up after 6 and a half hours. I'm done with my reset cycle, with all the stuff that happens.

Biologically, I'm about 38 years old, and chronologically, I'm about 49 years old. So I'm doing really well on sleep because I learned all the variables for sleep after 15 years of tracking my sleep every night and looking at little graphs to see what works. And more and more studies are coming out and showing those things really do matter. And I love being able to share.

Alex Howard

And also leading to something I wanted to ask you about as well which is the relationship between sleep and our mitochondria. Because I think you made a really important point here. Which is that if we have energy and vitality then our need for sleep is going to be less as a positive. Not that we're trying to force ourselves into a predefined amount that we've been told we should need.

Dave Asprey

Absolutely. One of the things, and I think my longevity book, a piece of research I came across, it was very hard to track this down, is that there's something called the glymphatic system. And the glymphatic system is responsible for washing your brain while you're asleep. What it does is it refreshes the fluid inside the cells in your brain, your neurons, your glial cells, and they dump their liquid full of toxic proteins, and they replace it with fresh, clean cerebrospinal fluid. And they take the dirty brain fluids, this happens every time you go to sleep, and then it goes into your lymphatic system eventually via the glymphatic system.

But this is a pump. And your normal body, when you move around, you do a curl or something, you walk, it moves this waist fluid called lymph. But your brain isn't moving when you're asleep. So what you do is you pump it, and you pump it with a mitochondrial driven pump, which means if your pump works better because you can make more electricity than other people, then you will provably sleep better. And a lot of the things that I teach people about sleep have to do with making the brain better at making and using electricity.

And these are things that we now know for sure you can modify. And it's really cool because you go to bed. Well, I woke up and I felt like myself and I didn't have to do what I did for most of my life, which is,

oh my god, give me 3 cups of coffee and you're a zombie for hours. Now you can wake up feeling normal. And if you do that, you'll probably live longer and you'll probably weigh less and put on muscle more easily and your hormones will work better and you won't get Alzheimer's. So there's a really big benefit to this because it pays you today and it pays you down the road.

[00:09:18] Alex Howard

I think one of the perhaps things to make explicit here is it's not just that sleep is about functioning basically well. It's also the better quality of sleep we get, everything else in our life becomes easier. In terms of our moods, our emotions, our focus, our ability to stay on track with the things that matter to us.

Dave Asprey

I have been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. When I was younger, I have reversed that, ADHD, which I probably still have a little bit of, but if I get enough sleep and I eat the right foods, my brain works really well. And I've started companies. I think I'm working on my fifth New York Times bestseller now, quarter billion podcast downloads, father, all that kind of stuff. You can't do that if you don't sleep well. You can't do that if you allow sleep and other environmental variables to scramble your brain.

But if you start by fixing your sleep, everything else that you want to improve about yourself gets easier. So it's just less work to put on muscle. It's less work to get your college degree. It's less work to do any parenting tasks that you might have to do just because of quality of sleep, not length of sleep. And people make this mistake quite a lot. I say, well, calories are all the same, so I'm just going to eat some amount of food without paying attention to what the food is. And they say hours of sleep are all the same and they're not going to pay attention to what kind of sleep it is or how good it was.

And is it any wonder then that we don't understand why our results are different? Why some mornings do you feel scrambled and others you don't? Is it possible that something you did 12 hours before you went to sleep caused a change in your sleep or even two days before? It is possible. And I've spent the last 15 years going through and teasing that out because frankly, I was tired of being tired.

Alex Howard

There's a lot of places we could go here, but one place I want to get to get some of the more specific people can do to impact their sleep is the impacts of sunlight, but also the impacts of blue blockers in the evening.

And how I first came across this was, and I'm sure I'm not the only person to say this, was actually seeing you pop up in various places wearing these yellow glasses. And initially I remember thinking, who is this dude that likes wearing these yellow glasses? And then over time came to understand it was a very specific logic and intent behind it. I'd love to open this piece up because I think that it's a really practical piece that doesn't require massive changes in someone's life that can have an impact.

Dave Asprey

It turns out that our system is run almost entirely by these ancient bacteria I talked about earlier, floating in the ocean. That's what became our mitochondria. There's way more mitochondria in your body than there are cells in your body. And people say, oh, mitochondria, 7th grade power plant of the cell. No, they're environmental sensors. And after they sense the environment with their own

intelligence, bacterial intelligence, then they decide what to do. They can make inflammatory molecules, they can make protein, they can make electricity, and they can move around on their own.

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Those little puppet masters are in charge of us to a very large degree. So since I'm a hacker, I'm like, okay, how do I control them? The most important thing that controls your mitochondria is light. And within the area of light, there are five things that really matter. One of them is the angle of light, because is it a horizon, is it a sunrise? Then the lights from the edge. Is it daylight? Lights above you. Another one is the intensity. How bright is the light? Another one is what is the color of the light? And scientists have figured out now which colors affect you, and it turns out blue light isn't the only color.

So when people say blue blockers, it drives me crazy. So it turns out some colors of blue are good for you, and some colors of blue stress your eyes out and will probably give you macular degeneration if you're staring at these bright white LEDs in your office, for instance. This is called TrueDark. This is my company. I wrote the patents for this company. I've gone really deep on this stuff. I wear these during the day when I'm under fluorescent or Led lighting. Right now I'm under halogen lighting and natural sunlight, so I don't need to. And what these do is these block some of the blue light.

But if you make the tragic mistake that I made twelve years ago when I started figuring out all the slight stuff of blocking blue all day long, you will be a zombie. Because blue is the wake up signal. So you have to block the bad blue and block some of the blue. But full blue blocking isn't a good idea. And then once the sun goes down, well, that is the biggest signal to your mitochondria that says, get ready for sleep, and we can destroy that by turning on our bathroom and our kitchen lights and watching bright screens and all that kind of stuff.

So what I did for that is I said, what are the four colors that are going to mess with you that go long before blue? For instance, I just got back from Peru yesterday. I'm in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. And I wore these on the airplane. I don't get jet lag anywhere on the planet because when you filter out more than blue, several other colors, and the intensity, well, you want to go to sleep, but your brain thinks it's pitch dark. So darkness is really important and truedark.com is where you go to get that stuff and learn about it.

But if lights the first signal, what is the second signal for sleep? Well, it turns out it's food. So if you eat after the sun goes down, you will probably get worse quality sleep. I've used a variety of sleep monitors. I think the best one out there right now is WHOOP. Oura is one that I recommended until their most recent update, where a lot of people have had problems with it. Sleepspace is actually my favorite one. So I've monitored all sorts of different things. And what you're going to find is, no matter even if you're just using your Apple Watch, if you have a big dinner after the sun goes down, your amount of deep sleep will drop precipitously and you'll have a harder time going to sleep.

You'll still go to sleep, you'll still sleep a full night, but it will be junk sleep, just like junk food is a thing. So we have junk light, which is from LEDs. We have junk sleep, we have junk food. And you can do almost anything that you do poorly, including sleep. So what I would recommend that people do is they shift their dinner to an earlier time. And my most recent book on intermittent fasting is called *Fast This Way*, where I teach people how to fast.

And it turns out a 12 hour window of not eating has metabolic benefits and so does getting enough sleep at night. So what would happen if you had your dinner at 6:00pm instead of 8:00pm? Well, that means if you can just not have a snack after dinner, strangely if you wake up at 06:00 a.m., you've already gone 12 hours without eating and you'll sleep better and you've got the benefits of an

intermittent fast even if you eat breakfast. So that's kind of remarkable. It turns out having that midnight snack will ruin your quality of sleep, and that's a really big deal.

[00:16:40] Alex Howard

I'm also curious as to your thoughts around what people eat in those meals. I remember reading somewhere, you're saying that actually for evening meals, from your experience, fat is better than protein. I'd love to hear you speak a bit to that.

Dave Asprey

The idea that fat versus protein versus carbs, it is relevant for sleep, but the problem is it depends what kind of protein and what kind of fat. So I'm never going to tell someone, eat some french fries with fats and some starch. That's just not a good dinner. So I do think it's important to have some protein. But if you're going to have half a kilo of ribeye steak, which I'm not opposed to, as long as it's grass fed, do that at lunch or mid afternoon and you'll get better results than if you have a very protein heavy dinner. But I do think you want some protein at dinner.

The reason that you somewhat limit protein at dinner, and like I said do have some, but if you eat a lot of it, there's a compound called orexin that is stimulating in the brain. In fact, it's the same stuff that Modafinil, which is an alertness drug for narcolepsy, one that I'm well known for taking as a cognitive enhancer. And, well, protein has a similar effect. So protein is energising in a way that's not going to help you sleep, but different proteins do different things.

There are 3 things that I teach people to do before sleep, especially if they wake up between 3 and 05:00 A.m. with racing thoughts. And this is really important to teach, just given where you're taking people. So right now, a bunch of people are going, oh my god, that's me, and they're jumping up and down. Well, let me explain what happens. The brain needs energy at night in order to run that glymphatic pump we talked about. It needs energy for dreaming and for cleaning up and for maintenance. And if it doesn't have enough energy because your blood sugar just crashed in the middle of the night, what's it going to do to get energy? Well, from the brain's perspective, it's an emergency because it can't do its job. So it says, let me get some blood sugar via the fastest way possible. And there's two hormones that our bodies make that will create blood sugar very quickly. They're very useful. If a tiger jumps out and is going to eat you you can turn on energy. They're adrenaline and cortisol, very useful hormones that keep us alive. They're not all bad. Problem is, if you get a surge of adrenaline and cortisol at 03:00 a.m. because your blood sugar crashed, you're going to have racing thoughts, wake up and be blaming your spouse for stuff and worrying about your boss and your kids, and you're not going to go back to sleep and your brain is going, thanks, I needed that energy, but it doesn't work.

So, number one, you need to fix your metabolism. But number two, let's talk about what to do before you go to sleep. One of the things that works remarkably well is raw honey. And by raw, that doesn't mean you can put it in hot tea, because it's not raw anymore. It's just a little bit. A teaspoon or two of raw honey, for some people will stabilize blood sugar. It'll raise something called glycogen in their liver, which is a store of extra carbohydrate that the brain will call on first. It's 22% better than eating sugar before bed just to have a little bit of raw honey. Not a lot. Brush your teeth afterwards. This is just a crutch until you get your metabolism fixed.

The other group of people do very well before bed with some protein, but a specific kind of protein called collagen protein. Now, I'm responsible for making collagen into a billion dollar industry category where it wasn't before. My company Bulletproof is one of the companies that makes

collagen these days. So I've done 15 years of research on it. It turns out collagen contains an amino acid called glycine and a couple of other ones that work with something called tryptophan.

[00:20:39]

So you take a scoop or two of collagen before bed, maybe with raw honey, maybe without, maybe with another thing called MCT oil that I'm well known for putting in coffee as a part of the Bulletproof coffee recipe. So MCT oil will increase fat energy, fat burning energy called ketones. Collagen will shift neurotransmitter levels, and honey will make sure there's enough glucose available for the brain. So for some people, having a little bit of that stuff in water, wow they can sleep all night, sometimes for the first time in years.

But if they didn't wear their TrueDark glasses, or you could do what I do, I don't have to wear my glasses unless I'm watching screens at night, because I have red lights in my house, at night, in my bathroom. I have dimmer switches everywhere. And I set my computer screen and all to be dim and more amber and red colored. So you can control your lighting environment. But honestly, if you're going to go to the trouble and say, I'm going to fix my sleep, why don't you think about getting some dimmer switches? Or at least, another hint for viewers, blackout curtains.

And I've been saying this for a decade now because I tested the difference on my sleep. If you can see anything in your room, you won't sleep as well as if you can see nothing. And that means no LEDs, especially tiny blue, green, yellow, white, any of those little charging devices they need to be taped over. And curtains are a major problem. There was a study out in Japan, 800 people, this was all men, just for whatever reason, but it's likely even worse for women. And they look at the amount of light that in a normal city. So, small amount of light pollution at night, 69% increase in depression in the people who had that amount of light versus people who slept in a dark room.

So get some velcro blackout curtains, make sure they velcro around the edges, and you should see nothing, and you will sleep blissfully and peacefully massive improvements. I do this every night. But then, and this is really important, when you wake up, you do not stare at a fully illuminated phone. You need to at least have your phone dim if you're going to stare at your phone. But better yet, get up and go outside.

No sunglasses. Ideally, no contact lenses or other glasses either. And let full spectrum light, including ultraviolet morning light, into your eyes at exactly the angle of morning, at exactly the color of morning. And what that's going to do is, it's going to synchronize the clock throughout your body via a mechanism called the SCN inside the brain. And if you do that in the morning, you will probably sleep better that night.

After the sun goes down, you stop eating. Or maybe soon after the sun goes down. When it's getting close to bedtime, you put on your TrueDark glasses. And yes, we have fashionable ones that are slightly lighter tinted, but I wore my crazy ones for you. And make sure your room is dark. That totally changes your life. But there's one other thing that's a signal for your mitochondria. Just imagine your bacteria in the ocean. You don't know what time it is because you're dumb little bacteria. Okay, angle and color of light, temperature, those are big things. Was there food to eat? Well, algae that bacteria eat that's available in the middle of the day when it's all sunny.

What else would be available? Oh, temperature. So it turns out for the first half of the night, you can have a slightly cooler environment, and that improves your percentage of deep sleep. And for the second half of the night, if you have a room that's not too hot and not too cold, you'll have more of the

dreaming sleep. In a normal sleep architecture person, which I am now, but I didn't used to be, the first half of the night is all about deep sleep, the second half is all about dreaming sleep or REM sleep.

[00:24:41]

So temperature is a variable there, but it's the third variable. And then there's a couple of others, like loud noises, dance parties, and even seeing tons of faces. If you see that, that will be simulating. But it's so far down the list of priorities that it's all right. And if you've ever seen me at a party after, say 9:00, I'm almost always wearing red glasses. And one of two things happens. People think I'm a pimp. Or at one time, Paris Hilton said my glasses were cool. So I'm going to go with Paris Hilton's perspective on this because my quality of life is so much better.

Alex Howard

And I guess maybe people that are watching this, and I really appreciate you breaking it down into simple steps with enough evidence to hopefully help tip people towards it, but also sometimes people can think oh my god, it's too overwhelming, I can't do it. And often, particularly if someone's watching this because their sleep is a major issue, they're less resourceful to do it. So I guess one of the key things here is someone can start with one or two pieces, and then they get the gains from that, and then that becomes the momentum that helps them to change more.

Dave Asprey

That is at the very core of biohacking. And the definition of biohacking is change the environment around you and inside of you so you have control of your own biology. And if you sleep poorly the way I used to, it's maddening. If you're tired all the time and you're in pain all the time, even if you're just angry all the time. You're stressed and anxious all the time, well, it could be everyone else's fault. Or maybe it's something you're doing that you could change. The problem is, change takes energy, and you're out of energy, which is why you feel this way.

So you're kind of stuck in mud is what it feels like. So what you want to do is do one thing that gives you a little bit more energy. And instead of using that energy watching Netflix reruns, you could use that energy to put it back into biohacking, back into transforming yourself. And what I'm finding is that there are five big areas where people are focusing, and some people want muscle. Some people want energy. They just want it to work. Some people want their brains to work. Some people want cardiovascular fitness, which is different than muscle. And most people just want resilience. They want the ability to bounce back from whatever happens.

And those are the things I'm training at my company to franchise called Upgrade Labs, where we're saying why would you go to the gym when you could choose which of those five and do them with the right technology? My belief, fundamentally, is that we've barely tapped what our biology is capable of. We just have to know how to tell it what to do. But for people listening to this, unless you're a super nerd like I am, you're not going to go to the trouble of unpacking it, and you're going to have the midnight snack because you're hungry.

It messed things up. And then, oh well now you've got an extra few kilos or pounds or stones or whatever you like to measure your love handles in. I have lived all of this before I was 30. Every single one of those. I am not going back to that. It's amazing what happens when you start sleeping, right, because when you start sleeping right, it's the highest return on investment activity you can have, except maybe intermittent fasting. And since when you're asleep, you're not eating anyway, they kind of go together.

[00:28:05] Alex Howard

I want to take a sidestep for a moment on, you were just referencing in terms of, the importance of really the power of biohacking. And part of my background is running a very large clinic specializing in chronic fatigue. And a lot of the people that we work with, part of the reason they come to us is they've tried a lot of the obvious things that haven't really made it for whatever reason, haven't made a difference. And what we notice is in those cases, both as clinicians, but also for the individual on their own healing pathway, is really figuring out on a personalized level what's actually going on for them.

And to me, that's really the heart of what you're talking about with biohacking, which is that you've got to figure out not just what science says or what some experts say, but what's actually happening in your body, which sometimes may be an atypical reaction, but nonetheless is important information. So I'm curious to hear you say a little bit about the importance of that personalized approach, but also people following the pathways of their own experience and their own data.

Dave Asprey

Well, I would say that you're doing God's work here. Someone has to tell our politicians that we are not meat robots, that everyone has a unique immune system, everyone has different DNA, everyone has different epigenetics, which is how our body switches are turned on or off by our environment. And to say this is the right amount of protein and to say that soy protein is the same as an egg, it is provably false, but it's convenient to do this.

So medicine, historically, for the last 150 years has been trying to reduce humans as if we're all the same. And I promise you that a 40 year old woman is different than a 22 year old woman, and that 22 year old woman is very different from a 70 year old man. And if we try to just generalize it, we will do what medicine has done, which is be exceptionally expensive and very poor at its job. So you go to the hospital if you break an arm and they will save your life, and magic can happen. But if you wanted to fix your metabolism or you wanted to solve a chronic problem, stay the hell away from Western medicine and go with functional medicine, because what functional medicine is going to do is look at you, where you are today and then create a path forward that's going to fix you.

This is what fixed me. And I'm still a little bit angry that I had to spend a million dollars getting rid of my chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia and long list of other problems going back to the 90s. But I'm also grateful for it because it created the biohacking field, because it turns out you can go way beyond the baseline normal performance that people expect from themselves.

And we do the same thing with medicine, but we're doing it in our food supply. Oh, everyone should eat a plant based diet. Probably no one should eat only plants. It doesn't seem like that's very healthy for us. In fact, I could cite hundreds of studies about bad for the environment, how it's causing extinction of animals when we take farmland. You could do all this stuff, but even exercise. Oh, everyone needs to do three sets of this. No, actually, you don't. There's something called functional movement and Upgrade Labs, my company, is replacing exercise with other things you do that put muscle on three times faster than actually lifting weights. And we can do ten times better than running away from tigers on a spin bike, which is what people are doing.

My goal is for everyone who listens to this to wake up with 90 minutes less sleep, feeling fully refreshed and getting younger every day, and instead of working out 5 or 8 hours a week like the government says they should, to only work out maybe 40 minutes a week and get 5 times the results. Because I believe when we all have enough energy, when we all have bodies that work, we're

fundamentally wired to be nice to each other and to be supportive of our society. And that when we're exhausted, when we don't sleep well, when we don't eat well, and when we're stressed all the time, we're fundamentally wired to be programmable and to be mean to each other. And I don't like that. So it's up to us to fix it.

[00:32:13] Alex Howard

And just riffing on this a little bit more. You're someone that's worked with enormous number of people. Through the different ways that you've worked, you will have come across, I'm sure, people that say, but Dave, I've tried everything, or I've tried the things that you recommended or someone else recommended.

And I'm curious as to in those instances where someone's lost faith. Perhaps they've been struggling with sleep for many years, they followed many recommendations. Maybe it's not one we're talking about here, but they've tried many things. When you're having those conversations with people, what do you find unlocks that motivation again, or helps people to recommit to the path that they need to just be on?

Dave Asprey

Well, it's three words that I love to use. Are you ready for them? Trigger warning. It's your fault. I say that because what that means is that you have control. If it's not your fault, it means you're helpless. And no one likes to be helpless. Of course, no one likes to be blamed either. But the bottom line is that this stuff is programmable. It is something that you can unlock. And what I used to inspire people is that I had arthritis since I was 14. I was on antibiotics for 15 years. I weighed 300 pounds. I had fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, mercury poisoning, toxic mold poisoning, Lyme disease. Oh, and I was bitten by a vampire bat.

Alex Howard

Oh you were?

Dave Asprey

I totally was right here. Let's see, what do you get from that? Bartonella, which is a bacteria that comes along with Lyme. You'll know about it because of your functional medicine practice. I grew up with this stuff by the time I was 30 they diagnosed me with lab tests of high risk of stroke and heart attack and profound brain fog and let's see, toxin induced brain damage from mold toxin. So I was a complete biological wreck. I was older by the time I was 30 than most people listening to this who are in their early 60s.

I reversed all of that. No, I don't like that I'd spend this much money and time doing it, but it really has been educational. So if you're listening to this, hopefully you're going, man I haven't had to deal with all that crap. You had to deal with your own stack of stuff, but it probably wasn't that bad. If I can do it, you can do it. And the good news is you've got guys like Alex and other functional medicine practitioners, you've got biohackers like me who are unpacking the stuff and making it actionable.

So all you have to do is say, I'm going to try. And most of the stuff we're talking about isn't terribly expensive. You can afford blackout curtains. If not, aluminum foil works just fine. Your neighbors

won't like you, but who cares? You'll sleep and they won't. So there you go. You can do this, and that's the big thing. And if it doesn't work, that's okay. It doesn't mean you failed. It means you learned. And then you do something else. And what I want people listening to understand is that for sleep, you just got the master class in this.

[00:35:10]

It needs to be dark, don't eat before you go to bed, lower the temperature, see sunlight in the morning. None of those is particularly expensive. And all of those in that order work. If you try just one of them, you'll probably get a little bit. And to really bring that home, imagine if an academic researcher was going to say, well, I'm going to discover if there is bread. So he buys some yeast and he bakes it, nothing happens. Takes some water and he bakes it, nothing happens. Takes some salt and he bakes it, nothing happens. And takes some flour and bake it. Same thing, nothing happens. Therefore there is no bread.

And the moral of that story is that you have to do the right things, with an S, in the right order sometimes to get the results. There's a recipe for sleep, and you just learned it in this part of the video. So just try these things. Try at least one. But if you try all of them at the same time, you're going to wonder what happened.

You also need to get a sleep monitoring device. The cheapest one to start with is Sleepspace, which is something that runs just from your phone and can also modify your deep and your REM sleep with certain sounds. It will also plug into your Apple Watch if you have one of those and there are a variety of other devices so I mentioned earlier. But it's great to just get the feedback so you can motivate and encourage yourself. But even if you have none of that stuff and you just track on a piece of paper how did I feel when I woke up? On a scale of one to ten, you will see that what you just learned here is going to change your life.

Alex Howard

Dave, I feel like there are so many places we could go here and I'm also mindful of time. Perhaps a place to go is the people who find out more about you and your work. You've mentioned a few things as we go, but where's the best place to go and what some of what people can find?

Dave Asprey

All right, daveasprey.com is my blog. There's 3000 articles you can read for free. Don't have to read all of them. I'll sort them for you. [The Human Upgrade](#), Almost 1000 episodes, top 100 podcast and lots of episodes about sleep. Just search Dave Asprey sleep podcast you'll find them. And [TrueDark](#) is my company that is making these glasses that go so far beyond blue blocking that it kind of makes me itch when we talk about blue blockers because if you block blue during the day, you won't like it and if you block only blue at night, you won't like it. So I think we can do better optically as a species so that we can all sleep the way our mitochondria want us to sleep from 2 billion years ago.

Alex Howard

Amazing. Dave, thank you so much. I really appreciate your time and really encourage people to go and check those resources out.

[00:37:49] Dave Asprey

Thanks, Alex.