



Conscious Life presents

How to Reconsolidate Memories

Guest: Dr Dawson Church

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[00:00:09] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone to this interview, where I'm super excited to be talking with Dawson Church. We're going to be talking about memory reconsolidation. Often when we have traumatic memories, the way it can feel is those memories are always going to be the same. They're always going to have the same triggers and overactivations that are held within them. This is a really important conversation about how the memories may still be there, but how they feel can change and evolve.

To give a little bit of Dawson's background. Dawson Church is an award-winning science writer with three best-selling books to his credit. *The Genie in Your Genes* was the first book to demonstrate that emotions drive gene expression. *Mind to Matter* showed that the brain creates much of what we think of as objective reality. And *Bliss Brain* demonstrates that peak mental states rapidly remodel the brain for happiness.

Dawson founded the Veterans Stress Solution which has offered free treatment to over 20,000 veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. His groundbreaking research has been published in many prestigious scientific journals. And he shares how to apply these breakthroughs to health and athletic performance through eftuniverse.com, one of the most visited alternative health sites on the web.

Firstly, welcome Dawson, thank you so much for joining me again. I really appreciate it.

Dr Dawson Church

Alex, I love our conversations.

Alex Howard

We've got a really good topic for this one, memory reconsolidation. You were just saying to me before we hit record, that a lot of the research and data at the moment around trauma, is that the event stored the way that it happened, and that's how it is. This relatively new topic is really exciting because that may not be the case. Do you want to start off by just giving some context of what memory reconsolidation is, and then we can explore together from that?

[00:02:27] Dr Dawson Church

That's a perfect way to get into it, Alex. The old belief in neuroscience was that once you had a strongly encoded traumatic memory, and this means something like being one year, two years, three years, four years, five years old, and having traumatic experiences of either abuse or neglect. It doesn't take a lot to traumatize a baby, just not being cared for the way children think they inherently know they should be, can be traumatic for them.

The belief was that if the brain is formed, if the brain is growing, and as it's expanding after we're born, and you're having these negative experiences, that this builds in neurological structures around those expectations, experiences that are very, very hard to change. These are called strongly encoded emotional memories. One neuroscience researcher said, "It's like the brain, once it's encoded those memories, locks the door and throws away the key." That was the view of neuroscience in the 70's, 80's, early 2000's. I was talking to a couple of neuroscientists recently, and they're still in that paradigm.

But some intriguing research, initially with rats and now with humans, has shown that the brain has ways of revising those old ways of seeing the world and can rewrite the hard drive. We used to believe that once that programming was there on the hard drive, that you came to believe as a child the world was an unsafe place. You weren't going to get your needs met, that there was trauma around every corner, that fight and flight was the best way to be, high adrenaline, high cortisol was the way to meet the day.

We've now discovered that under certain very precise conditions, those trauma memories can be overwritten, and you can replace them with happiness, joy, positive expectations, a positive attitude, and all the mental and emotional characteristics that make life wonderful and exciting.

Alex Howard

I suspect one of the resistances that may come up with folks is, well, I don't want to change my memories. There can be a protectiveness. Now, that may sound strange when someone's protecting a horrible traumatic memory, but there is a place where people are worried that they're going to lose the sense of self, or identity, or history.

Dr Dawson Church

When we were young, we would encapsulate those memories, and there's something called the trauma capsule in psychology, that when we've had an adverse experience, we encapsulate that. That's very useful for us to have those embedded in our bodies, our minds, our energy fields, wherever they might reside. Because you needed to remember 100,000 years ago, 500,000 years ago, your ancestor needed to remember about the snake that almost bit him yesterday, the snake that might bite him tomorrow. So encoding these as permanent memories was really useful.

While that has been so useful for us along the evolutionary pathway, to anticipate and respond to potential threats, that's kept us alive. Mother Nature has designed us that way. Unfortunately, now that there aren't a lot of snakes, there aren't tigers waiting to spring out behind every tree and tear us apart, our brains are still hardwired that way.

[00:06:04] Dr Dawson Church

That very method of keeping us safe along the evolutionary pathway is now contributing to stress, to anxiety, depression, PTSD, because we're anticipating bad things in an era in which there are no more tigers, there are no more poisonous animals, snakes, plants, ready to zap us every day. But we walk around as though that was still the case.

We measure people's cortisol levels, for example, in some of my clinical trials, and their cortisol levels look like they're in the jungle. Meanwhile, they're just living a normal suburban life, with two kids, and a decent job, and a good salary, and relatively secure. Yet they're keyed up with this trauma response every day, and it really is degrading to the body.

We found that high cortisol correlates with increased bone loss, increased muscle mass loss, increased skin aging, increased aging of all the internal organs, and over time, results in a much shorter lifespan. It's important to realize that even though our brains and bodies are wired that way, we can learn tools to change.

That's what a lot of my educational programs are all about, is finding ways like meditation, like energy work, of shifting that balance, and after you do that, after you reconsolidate those memories, even if you've had a traumatic past, you find that you don't need to cling to that way of seeing the world, that way of seeing yourself. You can release all that old material, and when you do, it's so exciting Alex.

One veteran I worked with, he had been in Iraq for four tours of duty, emerged with severe PTSD. When I was talking to him, there was a TV crew there filming us. One of the people, during one of the breaks, one of the crew members had a water bottle, and she took this plastic water bottle and just made a crinkling sound with it. That crinkling sound was enough to send this veteran diving under the table, thinking of a small arms fire. Totally dysfunctional association between that sound of a crinkling water bottle, an innocuous sound, and the fight or flight response.

After I'd done, worked with him on releasing those memories, he could hear that sound without going into fight or flight. A lot of these memories are dysfunctional, they don't service anymore. We need to live as though we're free, happy beings that are destined for a life of love, and creativity, and productivity, and let go of all those traumatic mindsets that keep us stuck.

Alex Howard

I think one of the things that people often don't realize with traumatic memories, it's not just the memory, and the impact of that being held within our physical, emotional body, and also our nervous system. It shapes the lens through which we see ourselves and the world.

Like our worldview perspective, how we respond what we're attracted to, what we push away from us, is filtered through the impact of those memories. Maybe you can speak a little bit to not just the benefit of changing what's held in the body, but also how that can really change our wider life.

[00:09:22] Dr Dawson Church

It changes us dramatically when we're able to rewrite those old stories, those old patterns. We can live in a very narrow world, you find people with PTSD, their world shrinks, they don't do things because they're afraid of what might happen. One man I worked with, that was in his late 70s, lived in a retirement community, never left the retirement community, because he had a fear of heights. He was worried he'd wind up on a tall building, and his fear of heights would be triggered.

People's worlds shrink, they don't do things they used to do, they don't do things they love. They aren't expanding, they're contracting. The beauty of this is, we used to believe that memory, memories once formed, especially those early memories, were permanent. What neuroscience now shows is that under the right circumstances, we can revise those dysfunctional worldviews. When we do that, suddenly our lives start to expand again. You go and take up trombone classes, you go learn salsa dancing, you go take an art class. You feel a sense of anticipation, and joy, and love about your days when you start your day.

Once we revise those old worldviews, we expand, all kinds of things become available to us. You look at highly creative people, and you find that they are always on the leading edge. I know people in their 80s and 90s and they're learning to tango dance, they're taking art classes.

Alex Howard

I really hope that's how I am when I get to that age.

Dr Dawson Church

Absolutely. It's so inspiring to find people who are at that age and just enjoying life in an incredibly powerful way. That's the fork in the road that all of us face every day. We have to make those choices that will take us on a positive direction, and not have our world getting more and more contracted by trauma, by avoidance, by those limited worldviews as we get older.

And reconsolidating those old memories, actively doing the work, doing the energy work, doing the meditation, doing the various things we know from science are effective, is our way to shedding those layers of trauma, those layers of limitation, and then just being the glorious beings of joy, of potential, of expansion, of creativity, of resilience, that we were born to be.

Alex Howard

Let's dive into this idea of memory reconsolidation. How does that process work? What are we actually doing? Maybe it's the more high level of what's happening, and then we can come into some of the specifics.

Dr Dawson Church

The old view of memory in neuroscience was that it was like when you remembered something from your past, whether it was a traumatic memory, or just a neutral memory. The idea was that you were pulling a photograph up, and looking at a photograph, like pulling up your phone, looking at photographs of your vacation, or of a bad scene you saw, or whatever it might be. And then you close your app, and you're no longer looking at that photograph.

[00:12:28] Dr Dawson Church

But every time you bring up that photograph in your phone, it's the same photograph, the same scene. Our view of memory used to be that memories were formed, and then they were just that way, that's the way they were. We looked at them, we thought about them, we put them back in our memory banks, unchanged. That view of memory has been changing now. That view of memory has been revised, and we now know that every time we fire those neurons and bring up a memory, we are combining that old memory, that old image, that old experience, with material from the here and now.

The way that works in therapy is that if I remember an old traumatic memory, so that veteran I was working with was remembering those firefights in Iraq, he's remembering that. But here he is in a safe environment. There are nice people all around him, he's looking at me. We were using EFT tapping emotional freedom techniques. Tapping, which involves tapping, putting pressure on acupuncture points. He's stimulating his body with acupressure while he is holding that adverse memory of those rocket firefights in mind.

Now, what's happening is the memory is being recombined with all of these positive cues. A friendly coach looking at him, giving him the safe space. Acupressure, which is regulating the energy flows in his body and his neurology dramatically, when we hook people up to EEGs, we see that when they're remembering that memory, their emotional brain is highly aroused. It's all lit up on the EEG.

As we apply acupressure, all of that arousal goes away, and the emotional brain resets itself, and returns to normal because of all these safety cues. Now when that memory is tucked back away in the memory banks, it is reconsolidated with all of the positive cues of a friendly face, a safe environment, energy resets through acupressure, positive language, and all of those things remove the fight or flight tagging previously attached to the memory.

Before the memory had all these fight or flight cues. Now the memory is still there, he was still in the firefights, he lost friends, he had tragic events, he saw dead civilians. He had all of these highly triggering events. But now all of those fight or flight tags have been removed, and replaced with positive cues. He might say things, often veterans say things like, "I've grown so much through the experience."

One of the very underappreciated aspects of neuroscience and psychology, is that research shows that only one-third of people who have traumatic events develop PTSD. The other two-thirds of people actually move on to what's called post-traumatic growth. Two-thirds of people are resilient. They reflect back on cancer, they reflect back on their divorce, they reflect back on the financial crash, losing their job. All of these life tragedies, you think these would be big losses, those do drive a third of people into trauma responses and PTSD, but two-thirds of people, Alex, actually use those as the fuel for personal growth, and wind up often happier, and more grateful than they were before the trauma.

[00:16:04] Dr Dawson Church

So you want to be one of those people, one of those people who's reconsolidating their memories in a positive way, and then moving into post-traumatic growth, and using that adversity as the fuel for the fire of transformation.

Alex Howard

I want to come back to this idea of post-traumatic growth in a moment, but also just to speak to memory reconsolidation. What you're really saying is it's not that the actual memory is gone. It's not that the person doesn't know what happened. It's the associations and the triggers and what's held in that memory is restructured.

Dr Dawson Church

The full name is memory reconsolidation and extinction. The extinction part doesn't mean that the memory is extinguished, it means the emotional response to the memory is extinguished.

You'll hear people who've gone through this process. We've now worked with over 22,000 veterans at our Veteran Stress Solution. It's this volunteer organization that pairs veterans of PTSD with coaches and therapists. It's called the Stress Solution. We've had 22,000 veterans go through that, and they still have the memories, they still remember all those traumatic events, but they're no longer attached to the fight or flight response.

We find that once you break that association between the fight or flight response and the memory, it stays broken. In our clinical trials, we follow up with people six months, a year, sometimes two years later, and you talk to them about the memory, and they still remember that, but it's been reconsolidated without the emotion. That's the extinction part. Memory reconsolidation and extinction of the emotion, that used to accompany the memory.

Before, you'd think of the car crash, and every time you'd go into this heightened sense of threat. Now you think of the car crash, it's just something bad that happened in your past, but you grew through it. You are now a survivor, you are resilient.

One therapist I worked with on a big stage in front of hundreds of people, and she'd been sexually abused as a child. We did these processes with her in front of this big audience. Eventually she, after doing this intensively for about an hour, she stood up and looked at the audience and said, nothing that man could do to me for those 14 years of abuse ever took away my joy. She's now turned that horrible, terrible history of abuse into, not just a neutral set of memories, but as an explanation of why she's so resilient. She now sees that as something she overcame in her life. If you can overcome that, you can overcome anything.

So that's how people turn these narratives of suffering into narratives of triumph, of resilience, of strength, of coming through, getting through it all. That then makes you much more resilient in the face of whatever future threats you, or the world, might go through.

[00:19:07] Alex Howard

I just want to really amplify something you said earlier on, which was that historically there was a really important purpose of holding on to the triggers in that memory, as a survival, as a protection. We needed to know that certain things were dangerous and have a reaction so we could respond. Taking the example of your very important work with veterans, that they're no longer in the war zone, but the war zone is still inside of them. That taking away of that allows them to still have the memory and the history, without the triggers. I think that's the piece that's really important that people understand.

Dr Dawson Church

Absolutely, and knowing it's possible. We've done many clinical trials, randomized controlled trials, meta-analyses published in the world's top medical and psychology journals. This isn't just some... We talk about energy shift and memory shift, and these simple techniques like meditation, like EFT, acupuncture. These have been shown in hundreds of clinical trials to produce these effects.

I want to emphasize this, because people who are sharing this moment of reflection with us, may think they are stuck. I wanted to speak directly to you for a moment and say, maybe you think you're stuck. Maybe you've had this traumatic memory that just keeps on repeating. Maybe you have flashbacks, maybe you have nightmares, maybe you have repetitive negative thinking you just can't escape. We call that the trauma loop, and the trauma loop is so useful for your ancestors 100,000 years ago, but you being stuck in the trauma loop is not helping you today. I want you to know that the evidence shows absolutely clearly that these techniques work.

Do they work for everybody? No. Our research shows that about 10% of people, one in ten people, these techniques do not work for them. They remain stuck in PTSD, and they're going to need other things. The other things include perhaps intensive mental health therapy, they may include medication. You may need to be on medications, that's for one person in ten.

Our research, including research at big hospital systems in different parts of the world, our research with veterans, with Rwandan trauma survivors, we're working intensively with people in Ukraine, we have a whole team of psychologists who are now deploying these methods for Ukrainian refugees and combatants. All of this research, and all of these cases show you can heal, you do not have to have your life, and your mind, captured by those traumatic experiences of your childhood. You can recover. Science is really clear about this, and it's simple, it's quick, it's available to everyone.

Alex Howard

You were saying Dawson that around two-thirds of people will come to a point of post-traumatic growth when they go through these difficult, challenging life experiences. What's your sense of, what the difference is for those folks that come down that path, as opposed to those that stay in PTSD?

Dr Dawson Church

What a fabulous question, Alex. What's the difference between the people who... There was a lot of research on this in the early 2000s, because at that point, 2005, hundreds of thousands of

women and men were coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan with PTSD. The US government had big research projects to investigate subjects like that.

[00:22:40] Dr Dawson Church

Why did roughly three-quarters of them recover, and a quarter of them not recover and develop PTSD? They'd had all the same experiences, they'd seen the same terrible things, they'd been deployed in the same region, they'd had very similar experiences, yet a third to a quarter develop PTSD and the rest don't. Why?

The answer turned out to be childhood trauma. If you have childhood trauma, you are predisposed to developing PTSD as an adult. Now childhood trauma isn't necessarily going to guarantee you develop PTSD, but it's a predictor of developing PTSD when you have that car crash, that terrible divorce, that financial loss. Childhood trauma is a big part of it.

What we developed in response was a program called the Personal Peace Procedure. What you do here is a lot of the therapy and coaching we do is helping people with current problems, the Personal Peace Procedure is different. It has you deliberately go back into your childhood, and work on childhood trauma, and clear it. This is so valuable and important because if there's a time in your life when you have some hours, you have some days available, and you proactively go in, and you then clear childhood trauma when you aren't traumatized.

Our research shows you can do it, you can do it in a few weeks. Now you're not going to do it overnight, you won't do it in a single session, it's going to take some time. You will probably need to work with a certified clinical EFT practitioner. But our research shows that when you do that, you go in and you can clear a lot of childhood trauma. I would give yourself about three months of the process, don't rush it and try and do it in three weeks or four weeks.

But certainly if you apply yourself, if you are finding those memories, making lists of them, working on them, one off the other, a few of them every day. Even if you have 1000 adverse events that you've listed, 1000 bad things happen to you, you remember. If you work on three a day, in 365 days in a year, you worked on 1000 events and you cleared them. If you have 300 events and you work on them one a day, again, it's three a day, it takes you 100 days, three months, or thereabouts. So think in the terms of that three-month time frame.

I really urge people to go in, and do the Personal Peace procedure. It's free in my book, the EFT manual, or the EFT mini manual, they all have the whole outline of how to do that. Then you go and clear all that childhood trauma proactively before you hit your next life challenge. Now you're resilient, you aren't carrying that weight of trauma into your next life challenge. You've now let go of all of the emotional impact of all those memories. You're now living this life in which you are dragging this whole bag of adverse experiences behind you, and all the emotions that come along with them.

That's the way to approach it when you aren't traumatized, go clear your childhood trauma. Work with a practitioner. We have an app where you can do live one-on-one live sessions with a certified practitioner. There are all kinds of ways to clear those early memories, but it's early memory that predisposes people to adult PTSD.

[00:26:09] Alex Howard

Someone that's watching this, that recognizes they have some memories which are still alive, they're showing up, they can feel the toxic impacts of those. What are some of the starting points for working with it? Obviously, people can go deeper with both your books, and also with the various pieces you recommend. But for someone watching now, what would be some of the, almost like the prep work that they would do, that then would allow them to go through more of that reconsolidation?

Dr Dawson Church

What's the first step you take? Because for most people, even approaching those memories is very triggering, and very threatening. If you think about the bad things of your childhood, they're going to trigger you, so we don't think about them, we try and avoid thinking about them. Research shows that you can't recover unless you focus on them, unless you feel those feelings. You have to feel the feelings to resolve the feelings.

You can't do some magical thing like meditate a lot, and jump over that step of feeling them. I wish I could tell you you could, but you have to feel them to heal, you have to feel first. The first thing you have to be willing to do is to go and revisit those memories.

We recommend people who are traumatized of PTSD do this with one of our certified clinical EFT practitioners. Do this with a professional who can walk you through. If you try and do it yourself, if you try and face those memories alone, the chances are you will retraumatize yourself, that you will have overwhelming feelings that you won't be able to easily manage, or cope with. Do it with somebody who's trained to help you through this territory really quickly.

The first thing we need is a willingness, you have to be ready and willing to do this life work. If you aren't ready or willing, nobody can help you. That might sound like a difficult first step, Alex, that you have to be willing to confront your past. But if you aren't willing to confront your past, if you aren't willing to heal, then we have all this research...

As you can tell, I am passionate about this, but we can't help you if you don't just click the button, and make an appointment with one of our practitioners, and download our app, or go to our website download the free manual. Do those things, take that first step.

That's why I mentioned all the evidence, all the research because the evidence shows you will heal. Nine out of ten people will heal if they take that first step. But you have to be willing, you have to be ready and willing to say, I know I'm destined for a really miserable life if I hang on to all this trauma, and I am willing to let go and give myself a better life, do I want to drag this through into my old age?

Research shows that people who have trauma Alex, have more cancer, more heart disease, more smoking, more diabetes, more obesity, more hepatitis, more of all these ills. This giant study called the Adverse Childhood Experiences study showed that people who don't heal their childhood trauma have far more disease in their 50s and onward, and they have shorter lives, and much more medically complicated lives in the last part of their lives. You don't want that kind of a life, and it's up to you to choose right now to make that very different future possible for yourself, by healing that childhood trauma.

[00:29:41] Alex Howard

I was thinking, Dawson, that often when people are seemingly not ready, it's often fear. It can be different fears, it may be fear that they don't have what it takes, it may be fear that it's not going to work anyway, it may be fear that they're going to go back and get stuck in the place they spent their whole life trying to get away from. If you're having a conversation with someone who is not ready to take that step, but what's really in the way is fear, how would you guide and steer that conversation?

Dr Dawson Church

Start small. Start with things you can do and will do. In my book *Bliss Brain* I outline several different styles of meditation, for example, and people often say which form of meditation is best? You're a scientist, you've looked at all these meditations. You've evaluated them through the lens of MRIs, and EEGs, and cortisol, and adrenaline, and gene expression. Which meditation is best? And I say, I'll tell you exactly what meditation is best, the meditation that's best is the one you will actually do.

And if that's dance, then dance. If it's yoga, do yoga. If it's qigong, do qigong. If it's walking meditation, then do walk meditation, if it's sitting meditation, then do sitting meditation, if it's chanting, ohm, go and chant ohm, count the rosary, whatever it is you're going to do.

Alex Howard

Just to be clear, are you saying that reading books on meditation doesn't work?

Dr Dawson Church

You got to apply it, you got to do something and make it consistent. In one study we did, we did this landmark study, it was a big randomized controlled trial, where we had people use a simple form of meditation called EcoMeditation. EcoMeditation, science-based meditation. They did EcoMeditation 22 minutes a day for 28 days. It's not a very long period of time, only 22 minutes a day for a month. We had one group in an MRI, a control group, doing mindful breathing. We had the second group, also in MRIs, doing EcoMeditation. And we measured their brain structure and function before and after that month.

After only one month, Alex, of this very minimal time commitment of 22 minutes a day, the EcoMeditation group had marked changes in the functionality and structure of their brain. This is worth taking a deep breath and thinking about, because in only one month, your brain anatomy is changing. The part of the brain that handles repetitive negative thinking, that handles rumination, that handles self-obsession, the suffering part of the brain, that part of the brain dropped in its level of activation.

The part of the brain that handles positive emotion, compassion, gratitude, awe, joy, that part of the brain was lit up like a Christmas tree after only one month. So if you're fearful, if you're afraid of taking the first step, just do something simple.

[00:32:52] Dr Dawson Church

Whatever meditation works for you is the one to do, that you'll do consistently, but do it for that one month. We recommend EcoMeditation, we also recommend time-in-nature, grounding, we recommend body movement. There are a lot of things you can supplement that with. But that simple commitment for one month, you're going to feel different after just a few days. And you're going to feel radically different, and your brain structure will change after one month.

The first thing to do is simply to make that commitment to whatever works for you, whatever it is that moves the needle for you. It may not be sitting in the lotus position for an hour, that's applicable to very few people. A lot of the meditation methods we read about, and hear about, and the classes you can take, these come from monasteries, these come from cloisters, these come from places where people had their whole lives focused on spiritual growth.

Not our busy mom with three kids and two jobs. Not our frantic harried dad who's trying to bring home the bacon every month. These aren't good models, these meditative models drawn from monasticism are not relevant to today. But EcoMeditation, or simple forms of meditation, you can do for that 15/20 minutes, those move the needle. Commit to that for a month, just do it for a month, you'll feel the difference. And you're triggering changes in your brain that again accelerate over time, and really start to shift your entire life.

Alex Howard

It strikes me that often what we need is to have some experiences of one or two things feeling different. It's almost like if we can gather a few of those experiences, the sense of what's possible really starts to open up for us.

Dr Dawson Church

Yeah, and the experiences that we find in meditation are that you feel different in your body. There are rises in seven pleasure neurotransmitters, and the first one we focus on raising, in people who are new to this, is dopamine.

Dopamine is a really exciting neurotransmitter. It makes you feel energized, makes you goal oriented, it's your motivational neurotransmitter. It's the neurotransmitter that's triggered in heroin and cocaine addiction. But when you meditate effectively, you have a 65% rise in dopamine. Now you're motivated by this pleasure drug, like you're getting a mild dose of cocaine and heroin, and you're just sitting there, and you aren't taking any pills or shooting anything into your arm. You're sitting there, you're breathing in a certain pattern, and you're having this big, big rise in dopamine.

Then we focus on having you get the next neurotransmitter, oxytocin, the love neurotransmitter, the love hormone. When you feel that sense of expansive love, you look at the poetry of Rumi, and the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, and these great saints and mystics. They're in ecstasy, and they're in love, but they're not in love with any person, they were monastics. They're in love with that which is greater than themselves.

[00:35:55] Dr Dawson Church

But we have you focus on evoking that outburst, outpouring of oxytocin, so now you're having dopamine, you're having oxytocin. Then we introduce nitric oxide and serotonin. Eventually we have you focus on anandamide, which is also called the bliss molecule. Then you're feeling this sense of expansive self-transcendence.

All of this is done simply through meditation, no outside drugs required. You will feel different in your body as you use EcoMeditation, and you'll often feel it the very first time. One veteran had been struggling with PTSD for years after his deployments in Iraq, and he was just trying things to help himself feel better. He even went to Japan, and spent a whole period of time in a Zen monastery, learning Zen, learning to meditate, trying that in different ways of making himself happy to recover from PTSD.

Then one day, he was just clicking around the Internet, after he got back from Japan, he happened to find the EcoMeditation track and listened to it, and boom, suddenly he was there. He said, you know after all these other experiments I tried for years, I did this one thing, and suddenly I felt this in my body. That's what I've been looking for.

You want to feel it in your body, if you're just up there in your head trying to have a nondual experience, have a transformational experience, it's hard. You want to get into the body. That's why I recommend all these movement type of meditations, because they are helping you have that experience of well-being in your body. Once you've felt that fantastic in your body, you're highly motivated to do it again, and again, and again. It's those ecstatic places.

Alex Howard

There's both the impact on motivation, but there's also when we haven't had that space of internal holding, and safety, and ease, when we get some tastes of it, it's like a signpost, we know what we need to get back to. I think that's where often those early experiences are important. It goes back to what you were saying around that will for things to be different, that needs to get us to those early experiences, which then propels us forward, gives us momentum.

Dr Dawson Church

Yeah, one person who was doing this, said that listening to that track, it was like somebody turned on the lights, and gave him the signposts, and he could find the target. Before that, he said, I was doing different styles of meditation, I was shooting in the dark, I was wandering around in the darkness, no signposts, trying to find my way.

But if you use a science-based form meditation, evidence-based meditation, that MRI research shows changes your brain, then you hit the target. Once you've learned to hit the target one time, you know what that 65% surge in dopamine feels like in your body? You know what oxytocin feels like in your body? You know what the impact of serotonin and anandamide are like in your brain.

It's like a cocktail, it's like a mixture of things, like making tea, and knowing you like sugar, one lump of sugar and milk in your tea. You know the formula. You know the biochemical formula of what feels good in your body. Once you know how you like your tea, know how you like your internal biochemistry one time that tastes really good to you. I'm now free of my toxic thoughts. I'm free of

repetitive negative thinking. I'm feeling the sense of inner well-being in my body and my organs. I'm feeling bliss in my mind and heart. I'm feeling expansion. Once you feel that, even one time, you can hit the target. You've hit the target once you know what to aim for in the next meditation.

[00:39:51] Alex Howard

A lot of questions I want to ask and I realize we're out of time, but there's one question I definitely need to ask, which is the next steps for people that want to find out more, Dawson, about you and your work. Signposts where we can go, but also if you could particularly speak to this piece on memory reconsolidation, if there's particular places in books of yours, or resources where people can get more visibility of that.

Dr Dawson Church

There are a couple of places that I talk about it in my science books, I've written several best-selling science books. One place I talk about post-traumatic growth and memory reconsolidation is chapter 7 of my book *Bliss Brain*. And *Bliss Brain* has a lot of other things in it, but that chapter is all about post-traumatic growth. I recommend you look at that chapter that's free at blissbrain.com.

I recommend people download the EFT tapping mini manual plus a free EcoMeditation track at dawsongift.com, because there you can get the EFT mini manual, Personal Peace Procedure, all of it's free, as well as that EcoMeditation track.

We measured people and found that when they were using that track, they were able to experience that shift in brain function in 30 days. So dawsongift.com is the entry point. You'll find our practitioners there, our classes, a bunch of free online programs, it's a really rich source. But go to dawsongift.com as your entry point into all the offerings we have to try and help you overcome these obstacles.

Alex Howard

That's awesome. Dawson Church I really appreciate your time and your wisdom. Thank you so much.

Dr Dawson Church

Oh, what a joy as always, Alex. It's been a pleasure.