



Conscious Life presents

How Trauma Becomes Conditioned

Guest: Jason Prall

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[00:00:09] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone to this interview, where I'm super excited to be talking with my friend Jason Prall. We're going to be talking about how trauma and childhood experiences become conditions in our nervous system.

In our lives often we don't recognize things even as traumas because we get so normalized to how they play out. We're going to explore that. But also what we can do to create the environment and have the practices to really change that.

To give you 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 nine-part film series that uncovers the true nature of chronic disease in our modern world. He's recently published his first book titled *Beyond Longevity*.

So firstly, welcome Jason, we've done a few of these now, excited to jump in together again.

Jason Prall

Yeah, it's familiar territory, but we always find a nice flow so I appreciate you having me on.

Alex Howard

Yeah, it's my pleasure. We were just talking before we started recording about how trauma and impactful experiences can get so embedded, and in a way normalized, to our experience that we don't see them and name them as that. It just becomes part of our lives. Do you want to say a bit about how that gets set up and how that happens for us?

Jason Prall

In psychology we might define this as our internal working model. How the model of reality starts to imprint on our nervous system, on our psyche, and really in our entire gene expression, maybe that's something we can get into.

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But it's really interesting if I ask you, tell me about your life prior to 3 years old. Most people will sit and think, and think, and think, they might have a flash memory here or 2. But we really don't have a conceptual framework around the beginning part of our life, which is really fascinating.

I actually have a 3 and a half year old, a little bit older than 3 and a half, and I was thinking about it the other day, he's not going to remember anything that we've done up to this point.

Alex Howard

Sorry to interrupt. Which is kind of demoralizing in a way, isn't it?

Jason Prall

Totally.

Alex Howard

All these amazing things they're not going to remember.

Jason Prall

I'm like, we've had so much fun, he's laughing, he's loving. He's conscious, in some sense he's conscious, he'll tell you, I love you, or I don't like that, or... He's very aware in some regards. Yet the memory of the experience of three plus years of existence, let alone, of course, in the womb, is virtually nonexistent.

I can show him pictures down the line. This is when we went to Legoland and this is when we were at the beach, you buried me and blah, blah, blah. We can go over that and it's still probably not going to trigger too much memory. Anything that does maybe come up would be remembered as the thing, not the experience of the thing, necessarily. Again, I think most of us would, I can even extend this to 4, 5, and 6 for many people, they're not going to have too great of a memory of what's happening.

So why is that? I think one of the most simple explanations that can explain a lot, is the fact that in that period of life, particularly in the ages of prior to 2, we're in a delta state. Our brain is operating in the delta frequency. This is the slowest brain wave cycle, that's like up to 4 Hz. This is rejuvenation, this is growth. This is typically in adulthood, it only happens during deep sleep, or right before death.

Look, there's advanced meditators and people that practice this stuff so we can actually engage this stuff in a more wakeful state, so to speak. It is possible, but that's not our normal operating condition. The brain is very complex so I don't even want to oversimplify it to that degree, but that's a good general explanation.

And then after about 2 years or so, we start getting into a little bit more into theta. This is still a more hypnotizing state, this is the state at which our brain is operating, and is very open to suggestion, it's capable of immense learning, which is fantastic.

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A lot of neuroplasticity happening, a lot of picking up information about the world, and almost instantaneously integrating into reality. This is outside the conscious mind's meaning-making aspect. It's just literally just this hypnotic trance that we're in up until somewhere around 5 or 6.

So that means for the first 6 years of our lives, we're being hypnotized. So trauma is this interesting concept because it's like, how do we even delineate what is trauma and what is not trauma? That's a very interesting conversation that I think many people can't agree on. I certainly don't have a working definition of how to clearly define it.

There's gradations, and there's aspects of maybe a traumatic experience, but most of us think about trauma as this event, or a series of events, that create some rupture, or something happening in our psyche, or in our system somehow. But there's all these little micro-traumas, there's all these little events. Because we don't have our full adult conceptual framework online we can't make sense of a lot of this stuff.

I specifically remember, in school in particular, raising my hand and feeling very embarrassed, or doing something on a stage, and it's like these are... The fact that I can remember them, and I can remember them as impacting me in a negative way, then that's defined as a trauma. It's something in my system still.

But then there's all these experiences that I don't really have a recollection of a) because they were a long time ago, and b) even if they were recent, or more near, because they happened when my brain was primarily operating in a different state, I don't really have them in my long term memory bank.

So there's so much that can happen in those early years that affect how we think, how we believe, how we act. Not only that, how our biology expresses that, I think, is really important. For most of my, let's say, career in the health world, I didn't really fully understand, I didn't appreciate just how important these conditionings are, in how they show up in our trauma viewed world, in our health, in our chronic conditions, in our reality.

I mean, I knew about them, I just didn't give them the credence. And now the more the work that I do, and the more work I do on myself, the more I realize how these conditions, these conditionings, and how our worldview is shaped. How much I really appreciate what's really happening in this situation.

Alex Howard

In a way, you just named it, we assume because we don't have memory, because they're not in that memory bank, they're not impacting us like the things that we do remember. We maybe attribute 5 or 10% of their impact. Often, we don't realize how much we are shaped by things, but the things we don't even remember, we just, of course, assume haven't impacted us.

And it's funny you were saying, because it's one of my really big alive reflections at the moment, that we've all heard these phrases like, perception is projection, and we don't see the world as it is, we see it through the lens of our experience. I often think we don't realize how deep that rabbit hole goes.

[00:08:29] Jason Prall

You can't.

Alex Howard

You can't conceive of it.

Jason Prall

And part of it is because you're in it.

Alex Howard

Exactly.

Jason Prall

My worldview is my worldview. In other words, the fish can't perceive the water because it's just all around, it's the bowl you're swimming in. So until you can somehow gain distance from the thing that you're in, it's very difficult to recognize that.

There's some aspects, the beautiful thing about our reality, and about human existence, is that there's constant reflection back to us. If I'm getting something reflected back to me, whether it's a relationship issue that keeps happening over and over again, well, that's a reflection. That's an opportunity for me to see something about this dynamic, my choices, my perceptions, is creating this repeated experience.

We have this reflective capacity about our reality, and that's cool. But it's often difficult for us to really see it for what it is. Just give you a very concrete example that's maybe even outside the trauma world, but is a very strong conditioning, which is something I heard a lot as a kid, 'money doesn't grow on trees.'

You may not think of this as a trauma, or a conditioning, but it's a perfect example of something that is, of course, an obvious truth. Money doesn't actually grow on trees. But the underlying belief system that's embedded within that phrase is what I'm really alluding to, which is that it's very hard to make money.

Wealth is not something that's easily attained, we must conserve. There's actually a threat in that, in the nervous system, somebody that's saying that there's almost like this fear-based reality that they're imposing onto another person.

Look again, I can acknowledge the reality of the statement, so it's not that it's not a not true statement. It's the belief system, the energetics, it's the position that is being held within that statement that is so important.

Let's see what else, more in the reality of the health world, 'stop crying, don't be so sensitive.' What you're telling that child, that is maybe 2 or 3 or 4 or 5, within this hypnotic trance, and maybe even after, is that it's not okay to have those feelings that you're having, and if you keep having

them, you're not going to get my acceptance, and my love, so you must change who you are, and how you show up in the world, in order to get your fundamental needs met.

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So this child learns in order to get this very important thing, which is connection, which is acceptance, which is love, they must change their outward expression, and somehow that means they have to change their inward expression. Which is not really possible, because it's just going to get shoved into another energetic channel. It's going to get bottled up, it's going to get expressed somewhere else in the body, in the mind, in the belief system, because it cannot be moved through the system and expressed into reality itself.

Not only that, it can't be held by another. So the other undertone that's being shared in this 'stop crying, don't be so sensitive,' is as a parent I'm saying, I can't handle it, I don't have the strength, the wherewithal and the capacity, and the awareness, to be able to handle this emotion that you're showing me.

That's the other thing, the child learns, because they want that connection, they want the parent to be okay, or the caregiver to be okay, that they're not going to do that. They don't want to hurt the other person, they don't want to put them into the state.

This is just a very simple example, and these types of conditionings are happening all the time. Again, I'm just pointing to some phrases, but it goes much, much deeper than that. But I think the phrases are really important, because we all have some memories of these things from our childhood, perhaps of what was said to us. Again, that's when we can actually remember, prior to that lord knows what was said. Lord knows what was actually being said, not only to you, but around you.

These types of things, these interrelational dynamics, whether it's between mother and father, father and girlfriend, whatever the case. That the child is around, and experiences father and grandmother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, all these different dynamics that the child is witnessing and being around, they're picking these up, even babysitter to another child.

If I'm a third party in that situation as an infant, or as a child, I'm also witnessing that relational dynamic. I'm going to modulate my behavior, my thought patterns, my belief systems, and my emotions, to be able to fit into and get my basic needs met.

It's very, very complicated, we almost can't even map it, or name all the things we experience. But it's really important to recognize that this is happening all around us. Again, I'm just naming between birth and 6 years old. But of course, it happens even beyond that.

Alex Howard

I was reflecting that these simple statements, or beliefs, that we take on, we need to have simple ways of summarizing the world, to navigate the world. In certain situations, it's true that moving into our emotional body isn't necessarily the most skillful thing to do. Like we're going for a job interview, we probably want to put on the best presentation of ourself that we can in that moment. And contextually that's not the thing that's most appropriate there.

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The problem is that these incredibly complex areas of life, like finances, or emotional health and well-being, get narrowed down to these incredibly simplistic, over-generalized statements. As you were talking, also reflecting on how these childhood experiences that we're constantly trying to learn how to navigate and make sense of the world. Often the conclusions that we draw are massively over simplistic and relevant to maybe one situation, but then get generalized to our whole life.

Jason Prall

Absolutely, veering back into maybe the health world a little bit on this. There's parents that I've been around, and I've witnessed, that carry this almost hypochondriac type of mentality with their childlike. Maybe we can name sunscreen as one of these things. Now, sunscreen can be a very, very important application for somebody who's got very light skin, who's in very hot sun for a long period of time.

It's not that I'm saying sunscreen is bad, that's the end of it. But what I am saying is, that I've seen parents that as soon as a child goes out into the sun on a warm spring day, and the child naturally has the ability to tan, they're instantly putting sunscreen on. Like the sun is this thing that we must fear at all costs. It is cancer causing anytime it hits your skin type of situations.

Or again afraid of microbes, dirt, and whatever the case might be. These are belief systems that get ingrained into another being, and without the ability... Because there's a quality that we have as humans which is discernment. The ability to determine if something is good, or bad, or right for me, or wrong for me, or not the right time, or the right time, or how much. We can discern very, very acutely if our awareness is developed around this area.

But that's a quality, it's attached to the third chakra, or the father quality, the masculine. It's a quality that we all have, this is something that is developed later in our development, we don't have discernment at 2, not a lot of it anyway. It's coming online and it's learned. This discerning quality, if we don't have this, then we're going to choose our more core needs over discernment.

Discernment is more of an older child, adult quality that we start to gain, and actually this can be cultivated especially with good guidance around us. But if we don't have that discernment, then we're going to actually choose love, connection. We're going to choose safety. Safety is the most fundamental, so if we don't have safety, we're going to be doing whatever we can to find safety. And then connection is also really important, and acceptance.

So we're going to choose those things. If we don't have the ability to discern, that's the thing that we're going to choose. We're going to make all these interesting choices, and create all these belief patterns, and adopt all these behavioral patterns, that are going to reflect all of these things that we are soaking in into our reality.

Not only does it show up as beliefs, and thoughts, and behaviors, which are very important toward your health and well-being, but it's going to show up in your nervous system. It's going to show up in your genetic expression. These things get wired into the brain. We actually know how this works, it's the neurons that fire together, wire together. If you have a consistent belief, a consistent thought, and a consistent and /or a consistent behavior, this will get wired into your nervous system.

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This is how a golfer becomes a good golfer. They practice the same golf swing over, and over again, and it gets wired into the neuromuscular architecture of the being. Even to the fascial layers into every aspect of what it is required for a golf swing. That's what happens. And then it becomes second nature. Well, this happens with our thoughts, this happens with our beliefs, and this happens with our genetic expression on every level.

So if we aren't aware, if we can't determine where our belief systems came from, where our mental framework came from, where our thoughts came from, then we're operating on this program that, again, we don't really know what's behind it. I've had to do a lot of dissecting in my own world to reveal this stuff.

Again, I want to point to the fishbowl analogy, or the fish swimming in the ocean. Is that when we're in it, when we're merged with it, we actually don't know what our actual beliefs are. It takes a little bit of practice to be able to extend and create separation from the belief itself, and to analyze it from that perspective and say, where did that come from? What is this? Why do I think that it is required that I work hard to find success, or to have acceptance, or what have you. Where did this perfectionism come from? Is this a quality that is inherent within me? Or was it learned?

The nature versus nurture argument really can be viewed in every aspect of who we are. Where did this come from? And usually what you find is that there's a certain nature quality, in other words, the constitutional aspect of who I am that gets filtered through a lens that is nurture itself.

And this interesting pattern emerges of how we behave, how we think, how we believe, and then, of course, how our genes get expressed. It's not a simple thing, but it's important to recognize that it's really valuable to look at the source of these things, instead of just trying to address all these things downstream.

If I've got thyroid issues, or immune regulation issues, or gut health issues, sure it can be chemicals, and metals, and all kinds of different things, infections, and what have you. And it can be sourced primarily from our thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, which, again, the root of that is something else, which goes back to our core of, what happened to us? What was the condition that created this reality?

Alex Howard

In a way, as you touched on earlier, a lot of the conversation in trauma is about events and things that happen. But the point that you're making here is that sometimes the least traumatic thing is the event, it's the way that we keep recreating that lived experience on the back of the event.

If we learn that when we put ourselves out there we get rejected, okay, it hurt the first time it happened, but then we don't risk getting rejected. We just reject ourselves by not putting ourselves out there for years to come.

Jason Prall

That's right, imagine if the underlying energetic quality of your experience when you're young, especially over and over again, is the perception of I'm not loved for who I am. I'm not okay just

being. I would say this is every single adult human I've ever worked with, and maybe even met. There's a fundamental aspect of themselves that perceives that they're not okay, that they can't rest in well-being, just being.

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This is a wide degree of difference, perhaps, but this is the aspect of just resting, and this feeling of agitation, the inability to meditate, the inability to quiet the mind. There's an aspect of, I'm not okay just as I am, in pretty much all of us. And so where does this originate from? And it goes quite deep, perhaps even beyond this lifetime experience.

There's a transhumanist idea here, which is that we get born into a culture that we adopt and think. So there's cultural aspects, there's lineage aspects to some of this stuff. It goes even deeper than that. But if the fundamental feeling is, I'm not loved for who I am, I'm not okay, I must shut down a part of me in order to receive love, or acceptance, or connection. I'm bad and wrong. I need to improve.

Whatever the case is, the child will learn to stop processing the emotion, or feeling into expressing themselves how they naturally are, and they're going to create patterns of behavior, and patterns of thought, and what have you.

This is the thing that creates who we become into our later child years, into our teen years. We go through multiple iterations of this, especially as we get into teens that starts to change again. But these are the aspects that create our human personalities as adults, that we think is really us, but it's not really. It's just this mask that we're all wearing.

It's really wild because I would say it's not even just one mask. It's so many masks that are layered, that we can take on and off, that are so difficult to see, that once we start taking them off, it's a bizarre reality. It starts to show up because you realize the way you were, but you didn't know it. And then you take off the next mask and you realize, oh, my gosh, that's how I was there.

Part of this is the act of growing up and maturing. But if we're not able to process some of this stuff, if we're not able to shed some of these masks and layers that we've picked up along the way, then we never get to the core of who we are. Our nervous system, our genetic expression, cannot get to its optimal function.

There is a way that our body and our mind can express in a restful state of well-being. And that is the pursuit, I know that you're pursuing on your end, Alex, and that you help people pursue. This is like, how deep into well-being can I get? How much can I get back to my core self?

So much of this is handling the traumas, dealing with the conditionings that are so elusive, that we've all been programmed with from our primary caregivers, our schools, our local communities, our churches and religions, our athletics, and sports that we're watching and playing. Our general cultural reality that we're seeing, and the world political stage as a whole. All of this is programming us to one degree or another.

It actually reminds me of the quote from Terrence McKenna. He says, Culture is not your friend. That's what he meant by that, which is that there's something programming you. And until you wake up and see what that really is, then you're going to be subject to the program's rules. Once

you wake up to the thing that is programming you, then you can use your discernment and say, I like that programming, I'll take that one. I don't like that one, I'm going to leave that one aside.

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That is the idea here, is that if we can start to view all of these things that are now programming us, and that have programmed us in the past, then we can figure out what really fits us when it comes to our well-being and our health.

Alex Howard

The image that came to mind when you were talking about taking off the mask and then thinking, okay, this is who I am, then there's another one, is you know those nested dolls where you have a doll, you take the top off and there's another one inside, and it's like, right now, this is who I am. And then you take another layer, and it's like we often don't realize how many layers there are.

I think people sometimes can get to these places of awakening that happen on their path and they think, wow, this is it. And then a year later and it's like, oh no shit, this is not it. There's another layer that can come there.

I was thinking, as you were talking around, how in those early 3, 4, 5 years and how we're in that sponge-like hypnotic state, and you were saying how there's a predominance of delta brainwave patterns at that point. And have me thinking around, what it really takes to create change? And how important our nervous system is, and actually the state that we're in, is to create that change.

Because I think a lot of what can happen when people do self-development work is there's lots of cognitive processing and understanding, but there isn't necessarily that depth of integration that happens.

Jason Prall

Totally, I agree. The first thing when we're trying to process and transcend any traumatic experience, and I love the idea of transcendent include, because you can never eliminate your trauma. What's cool about any trauma, or any conditioning, is that it's providing you two things. The maladaptive patterns and the awful experience, yes, we're well aware of that. And it's also providing you with a gift.

Some gift has emerged because of the trauma, some gift has emerged because of the conditioning. Now, it may be hard to recognize what that is, but as you get familiar with the territory of what trauma is doing to us, and what conditioning is doing to us, then you can recognize here's all the ways that I've adapted. And in order to create safety, generally speaking, that is the primary.

That's what's cool, is that as you process and transcend these traumas, then you get to include the gifts. That's the beautiful part about what you're doing with this Super Conference, and this work, is that it's awful to go through these things, it really is. And as you move through them, the thing that's on the other side is the pot of gold. It's really beautiful to get to that point.

The first thing that must be recognized in any trauma resolution is safety. You must have safety, not in your mind, but in your nervous system, in your body. This is all embodied aspects. If you

want to truly transcend the trauma and the conditioning, it must be an embodied experience. You can't just read about this stuff. You can't understand the psychology textbooks, you must embody this experience.

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The other important thing is to create, well I would say get curious. Oftentimes we don't know what's happening, we don't know where this comes from. Is this something that I've inherited? Was this something from birth? Was this something that I picked up along the way? What is this?

Getting curious is really, really important to the process. Instead of judging, instead of criticizing, instead of wanting to get rid of, that's an obvious thing that most of us start off with. It's like, yuk I don't like this, let's get rid of this. But as we get curious about it, then we can be with.

This is a really important concept to whatever experience that we're having in this trauma exploration, or conditioning exploration, is to get curious and be with. Oftentimes it helps to have another being there, a therapist of some kind, a friend. It can be anybody that can hold this for you. Generally a loving presence despite what you're doing or experiencing.

Oftentimes, again, it can be helpful to have somebody that's trained because they can help you get in there, and they really know the territory, and the maps, and how to navigate. But if you can get curious, if you can be with it, and you have enough nervous system capacity, whether it's your own, and/or borrowing somebody else's, because there's a resonance in this nervous system world, then we can actually metabolize.

As we metabolize, we actually get some revelation oftentimes of what's happening, and where it came from, and what's needed beyond this. The other aspect that can be very helpful is to gain that separation that I mentioned. Usually we're merged with a part, we're merged with an aspect, we're merged with a process so deeply that it feels like me. It feels like there is not anything else but this thing that I'm feeling, the depression, the anxiety, the anxiousness, the frustration, whatever the emotion, or the experience is, feels like that's me. That's all I am. There's nothing else.

As we get curious and as we have somebody with us, we can start to gain a little separation. We can view it from our witnessing, from our awareness, and that will allow it to relax a little bit. We can start to study it with that curiosity. And again with therapists it's even more helpful because they can help catch these little parts, and protectors, and managers, I'm speaking to the IFS model, the Internal Family Systems model, Dick Schwartz and the work that he does is amazing stuff. I love using that as a model to work with.

You can start to view these, that's a really important aspect. Then to have compassion for how you have been, and being nice to yourself in this process, because it's so easy to criticize, and to have judgments about what's happening. This is some of the process that I find generally reveals itself in a therapeutic setting, that allows for these things to process.

As you get more and more familiar with the territory, and you start to realize that my behaviors, my thoughts, my feelings are not me. I may experience them, and they may be a part of my reality, but they are not me. Then you start to relax a little bit and go, oh, I'm not effed up. It's just the thoughts that are crazy. It's just these emotions that are wild and stuck, and all these things. It's just the behaviors that have set in.

This can be neurobiologically set in. In other words, your neurobiology, your brain is actually locked into these patterns, or your genetic expression. My thyroid isn't messed up, it's just that's the behavior of the biology as it relates to all these other things that I've experienced.

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Now we can stop beating ourselves up. We know there's nothing wrong with us. This is just the happenings. And so for me, that was really beneficial because I was conditioned to be very hard on myself, and critical of myself, and critical of others, and all these things. And I said, oh, that's just the way it is, okay, this is just how it goes. Now we can be with it, we can relax into it, we can witness it.

Hopefully we're getting a sense that we're starting to unmerge from the process, and the parts, and the things, and we're starting to be able to get a little room to work with this stuff. And again, there's a lot of ways that we can eventually process, but I just want to invite in that it's almost always, well, I know always we need safety, almost always we need to have this be with aspect of it.

In other words, we don't necessarily try to do something to it. It's more like being with it. It's actually establishing connection with the thing, and then there's a lot of ways to then process it from there.

I often find that it does take some witnessing, some curiosity, and a little bit of guidance typically from somebody who really knows how to dig into some of this stuff and get nuanced.

Alex Howard

You've been talking a lot around this really important piece, around how we are in relationship with that experience, and in a way cultivating inner landscape that builds more of that safety to allow that regulation. I'm curious, are there particular practices? Actual daily tools, strategies that you find, either in your own experience, or with folks that you work with, that can really help that regulation and that building of safety?

Jason Prall

Yeah, I think what I find in my own experience, and the many people that I have worked with, and that I, let's say, work alongside in this space that are also doing the work on themselves, is that most of this stuff we start off disembodied.

That may be an unfamiliar word, or territory as I say that, and what that really means. Most of us are not actually in our bodies, and this is actually a reality. In fact, a lot of the indigenous shamans and other groups actually work on this, bringing us back into our bodies.

There's an energetic quality, and this is a very real thing, about being in your body. Most of us are tethered, so to speak. In other words, most of our, let's say, our soul essence is hanging out outside of our body. And there's an aspect of coming back into the body again. Most of that was because it wasn't safe. There was a perception as we were birthed into this world, as we experienced this world, and the harshness of this reality, they were like, no way, this is not good.

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We can get into our bodies again. This learning of feeling into our bodies, some of this is just a practice of embodiment, feeling into your body. Most of us don't feel much below our necks, some of us don't feel much below our heart, and some of us can feel our root, and our sacrum, and all these things.

But can you actually feel into your hips, like, really just sitting there, dropping your awareness? Because awareness can go anywhere. Dropping it into our body, maybe you can go down your spine into your central channel, we can get into our heart, we can get into our solar plexus. It doesn't matter whether we call these things chakras or what, it doesn't matter. There's an actual practice of becoming embodied, and feeling into your hips, into your knees, into your legs, into your toes. Can you feel your pinky toe?

This is a very interesting practice, and there's a lot of people online that develop a lot of meditations, and a lot of practices, just to get more embodied, and to feel into your body. Now, when you start to feel into your body with your awareness, you actually are starting to reconnect some of the, let's say, the chi or the prana into the fascial layers, into the tissues themselves.

This would be the main practice that I would give somebody, is to start to feel into their base, feel your butt sitting on the seat, feel your hips, feel your core. This is actually one of the first things that I do when I feel somebody, and I'm working with them is, generally they come in and they're all up here, and it's like all these thoughts, and all these words, and everything's just started flying around.

So we slow things down, that's number one. Whenever we're talking, like I am now, things are ramped up. The energy is ramped up, my mind is ramped up. I'm all up here unless I drop my awareness. Now, one of the things that happens when we're down there in our root, in our sacrum, in our belly, is the world starts to actually slow down.

We can take the reverse aspect and say, let's slow everything down. I can slow the way I talk, I can feel into my butt. And as we do that, the nervous system down regulates, the mind calms down a little bit. This is actually the first aspect, is to get embodied, to feel into our bodies. And that itself can start to establish safety.

And as a practitioner, I'm also doing that. If I have somebody in front of me, I'm feeling into my butt, I'm slowing my language down, and my speaking, I'm calming my voice a little bit. All of this starts to relax us and get us into our base. And I'm pointing for them to do the same.

As we do that, things actually will naturally start to metabolize on their own, because there's a natural intelligence here, lest we forget, there's an intelligence at work in any dynamic, in any system. If we can just start to establish physical embodiment and safety in the body, that's the first step into the metabolization of anything that we're working with.

Alex Howard

Also, it strikes me that often we think there's so much that we need to do to reach that place of safety. But not feeling safe is memories from the past, or anticipating the future, in this moment, the vast, vast majority of people watching this conversation are actually safe in this moment. They're just not landed in that place.

[00:39:03] Jason Prall

This is the paradox. There's something in our system that has conditioned us to believe that we must do something to find safety, do something to find wholeness, do something to be okay, do something to have well-being. It's already here. We just have been conditioned out of the reality of that experience.

That's the irony. Even me still to this day, constantly, it's like, okay, when I'm trying. This whole thing is remodeling how we approach this stuff. When I'm in the aspect of working with some of my parts, and some of these things that are still conditioned within me, there's a manager part.

Again, speaking to the IFS model, there's actually a part of me that is looking for, what is the procedure? What must I do? Some of this is, okay, feel into your butt, and into your base, and into your tailbone. Okay, that's a process, and it's a part, and it's helpful, so there is a certain amount of doing. And that thing that is looking for the procedure, or the process, or the thing to do, can be a part of the problem.

In other words, it can override all the things. Eventually, some of this is necessary, the doer is necessary, and can be a very important thing. And it can be too much a part of the process. As the doer starts to get more familiar with the territory, and finds safety. As that part of me starts to find safety in and of itself, it realizes it doesn't need to do much. It can, if needed, and very important role, and it doesn't need to most of the time, and it can start to relax.

So over time, as we cultivate some practices, as we cultivate a way of being, then the being starts to show up more, and the doer starts to relax more. It's definitely this process of doing, going from doing 100% of the time, or 95% of the time, to doing 30% of the time, 15% of the time. And then you're in being.

And then you look at some of these more awakened beings, or practiced spiritual people that we might have around the world, and you can feel into them. They're at ease, and doesn't mean they don't do stuff, it just means their way of walking through the world is so much more restful.

It really is a practice of the doing to the being. And that doer so often is coming from a place of I'm not safe, I'm not okay, I must do something in order to find that safety.

I know you probably sometimes feel like a broken record talking about safety, but it's so important that you have to keep saying it over, and over, and over again, and keep re-establishing it in a practice, because we have it and then we lose it, and then we have it, and then we lose it. It's like cultivating safety is probably life's long work in and of itself.

Alex Howard

Well, in a way, it goes back to what we were saying earlier about those nested dolls. There's a place of inner depth that we get to, and we go, wow, that this is a real sense of holding. And in a way it strikes me that part of this is developing a psycho and emotional malleability.

You used that, I don't know if it was who you intended to quote, but that well-known Ken Wilbur phrase, about transcend and include. There's this sense of this ability to be flexible, and responsive, and to be shaped by those experiences.

[00:42:47]

What struck me is that those childhood traumas make us more rigid. That lack of safety makes us brace and tighten in response, and it's that very rigidity which often gets in the way of change later on in life.

Jason Prall

Absolutely. And I'll maybe use a sports analogy, and even for those people who don't really watch sports, or care much about sports. If I have a football team, and I run a specific play and it works like a charm, and we're like, this is the greatest play ever, and this is beautiful. And then you run the play again and it works again, and it's like, this is great. We just found the Holy Grail of plays. Let's do this play every time. Well, if you do that play every time, eventually it's going to stop working, and the defense is going to cater to what you're doing.

It becomes maladaptive, so what you must do as a football team is be flexible. Be flexible with the personnel that you have on the field, the personnel that they have on the field, which quarter, or where in the game you are, how much time is left on the clock, what position of the field you're in, what part of the season you're in. All of this, and more, is going to determine which play do I run right now?

This is the flexibility, and adaptability, and the nuance, and the discernment that is required to go through life. I would say the football analogy is so much weaker compared to the reality of life itself. The ability for us to navigate and adapt, literally moment by moment.

It really can get that granular is the key. The behavioral patterns, the thought patterns, the emotional patterns, and the biological patterns. Perhaps more importantly, again, I'm going back to the hardware, the biology itself. It's so easy to get lost in the software aspect of these things, and the thoughts, and the emotions.

But those thoughts and emotions will start to encode a reality in the body, and then that encoded reality starts to reinforce the thoughts, behaviors, and emotions that are there. We can change two aspects, we can change the hardware, there's all kinds of cool technology. There's a lot of really amazing things that we can do just to change the hardware itself, the biology itself, and that's really cool.

And then there's the software. We can change the software, which will change the hardware. We can change the hardware, which will start to change the software.

How you stand, how you sleep, how you move your body. That's literally, moment by moment, changing the hardware. And we can encode that deeper and deeper, we'll begin to change our external reality and how we think, how we feel, and then again, which are coming back to the behaviors.

It's a very interlocking, interwoven reality that we are creating. If I get up and move from San Diego and I move to Bangladesh, that will start to change how I think, feel, and process, because I'm in a new reality. It can be changing your job, it can be changing a relationship you're in. These are realities that we can shift in the very real way that will start to change the software, and vice versa.

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We can come at it from so many different perspectives. But this is why it can be so important to recognize that from a health perspective. If we are struggling with chronic conditions and chronic health issues, which everybody that has trauma is on some level. They have suboptimal function in the biology itself.

You can't just start to throw supplements at it, you can't just expect that a dietary change is going to solve all the problems. You can't just take pharmaceutical medications. You can't just do acupuncture. I love all these things. I love dietary changes. I love using supplements in the correct way. I love using pharmaceuticals when they're absolutely necessary as a way to establish a more coherent and less chaotic environment for somebody.

There's an application for all this stuff. And acupuncture is, of course, great, all these things are good, and they may just be a small piece of the puzzle. We always need to dig deeper to get to the core of these things. I've never met somebody that's walked into my office, or clinic that has a chronic health condition that didn't have trauma and conditioning as a major part of what they were dealing with.

It doesn't matter whether it was cancer, autoimmune conditions, fungal overgrowths, hormonal imbalance, diabetes, it doesn't matter. It's all playing. There's a deeper underlying ideology to this stuff that is creating the thoughts, the feelings, the beliefs, and the behaviors that are then setting up further downward spiral of these conditions. It's so much more multilayered than I think many of us realize.

Alex Howard

Of course, within that, there is an enormous message of hope, because we get normalized to how things are, because we're normalized to the past. When we realize that we can change how those experiences shape us, we can change our lives now.

Jason Prall

Yeah, one statement. This is actually the point in my health practice when I'm practicing integrative health, this was the point that changed everything, was when I realized that all the things that I was helping people with wasn't enough, that it was the conditioning and the trauma. That was the final piece that I was missing. And that's a big piece, mind you. It's a very big territory that I was missing.

I had all this other stuff, and once I unlocked that, then it was like, it was a big sigh of relief. And same thing for my own life, my own world, my own health, my own well-being. Because once I realized that, okay, now I know what I need to work with, and that doesn't mean it's easy. It just means that there wasn't this huge black hole, this missing piece of the puzzle.

And that's really frustrating when you're trying to create greater well-being, get rid of your anxiety, fix your autoimmune conditions, and you don't even know about this piece of the puzzle. If you're just blind to it, it's really, really frustrating because you just chase, and chase, and chase, and you're looking, and you're looking.

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You're spending thousands of dollars sometimes, finding healer after healer, and this person worked, but it didn't work for you, and all these things, and it's like, this is the piece. It's a major message of hope, because once you start to understand this aspect of your reality, now you can start to work with the fundamental core aspect of what's going to give you health, what's going to give you greater vitality, what's going to give you greater well being, and the things that are in the way of that.

Alex Howard

There's so many more things I could ask you. We're going to keep having conversations, we've got more summits coming up. Jason, people that would want to find out more about you and your work, where's the best place to go? And what some of what they can find?

Jason Prall

They can go to awakenedhealthacademy.com. That's where you can find a lot of my past interviews that I've done, some of the summits that I've put together, the documentary film series that I've created, and some of the courses that I've created as well. That are really all around these topics, around how to create greater health and well-being, both in the trauma sphere as well as in the integrative health sphere, and the blend of those two things.

You can also go to Amazon, or anywhere books are sold. You can find my latest book, *Beyond Longevity*, this is really all about how do we age in a healthy way, because we're going to age, so that's the premise. You can find my work there awakenedhealthacademy.com.

Alex Howard

Amazing. Jason, thank you so much.

Jason Prall

Thanks, Alex.