

Everybuddies Podcast Episode 7

Conditional Happiness, Unconditional Laughter: The Science of Being Human

Camwadam: [00:00:00] Nice and tied in here. Episode seven of everybody's bop.

Neighbor Dave: Let's take that again.

Camwadam: Episode seven of Everybuddies Podcast, and we are now broadcasting our pirate code and hacking into the matrix. Coming straight at you from Burnsville, Minnesota. Jake the Bean, Camwadam, and neighbor Dave.

Neighbor Dave? Yes. Neighbor Dave's our first guest, first guest ever on Everybuddies Podcast. What do you do, Neighbor Dave?

Neighbor Dave: I am mental health therapist and licensed in the state of Minnesota. And that is most of what I do. That is for now all of what I do professionally. I am also a meditation instructor and a nerd.

Not professionally a nerd Exactly, but close. It feels like it a lot of the time.

Jake the Bean: We don't get paid yet, [00:01:00] so

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. We're all doing this for free, so

Camwadam: none of us are professional nerds. where are you originally from?

Neighbor Dave: Oh man. So my parents are both, American citizens.

But when I was two, I'm the first born of four kids and when I was two they moved us to Belgium and I did not leave until I was 20. So I from Belgium, but I am a US citizen. And, that's the

shortest version of the answer for that Yeah. Grew up in Belgium, what's

Camwadam: the most prominent cultural difference?

Between the US and Belgium. If you could pick one or two things that stand out, what would they be?

Neighbor Dave: It might be, yeah, it might be easiest to focus it on the US because most places in the US the culture is still pretty heavily influenced by what you might think of as the American dream, myth of, or mythos of the [00:02:00] self-made man.

So there's a lot of that in the us, which in many pockets means that it's very driven, culture overall, very work focused culture overall. So that's a pretty significant contrast for sure for a lot of Belgium, but also Belgium's a fricking weird country culturally. So that's, it's hard to, okay. So that's

Camwadam: a loaded,

Neighbor Dave: I don't think anybody's gonna disagree with it. So at the very least, there's like the northern half and the southern half cultural bands.

Okay. Where the northern half the borders on, the low country. The, Dutch, what is it? What is it actually? The Netherlands? The Netherlands, Holland. Yes. It was like four official names. Anyway, and so yeah, the northern half of Belgium speaks Flemish, which is a dialect of Dutch, more or less.

And they are more hardworking. There's this sort of historically Protestant work ethic kind of influence up in the north. And they're also, on average at [00:03:00] least more internationally minded, almost all of the Flemish, like Native Flemish speakers in Belgium also speak English more than passively.

Like close to fluent, a lot of them. And then in the south, that is not just about economics or about attitude. It's like a life thing where lots of the, francophone and culturally, somewhat more French in the southern half of Belgium are a little bit more chill, a little bit more lax in a lot of, at least some ways.

But yeah, so like from the ground up, different cultures okay. There. And then get into the international population former colonies, immigrants from there. And also like political and business related kind of hubs and central, governing bodies also in Belgium.

So there's a lot culturally going on in Belgium. It is weird. I love it. It's like I also just enjoy weird and complicated and difficult to explain. And [00:04:00] it took forever to give a basic outline, but I love it.

Camwadam: in the US you said you had the mythos of this self-made man or this self-made person.

Yeah. And that it, you specifically point out that's work driven.

Neighbor Dave: yeah. Work driven. Yeah.

Camwadam: So what do you mean by that?

Neighbor Dave: it work and a prioritization of one's career and lots of talk about work life, like that is a difference in the us compared to most, exposure that I've had in Western Europe.

And certainly especially. The French. So I mostly grew up in the southern part of Belgium where they speak French and there's more of the French cultural influence, and the French are fanatically, protective of their holidays and their time off. lots of French people, very hard workers.

And there are, there's a lot of similarities in some ways to us culture in some pockets, at least of France. [00:05:00] But even like the, usually the most intense businessman types are still take they're leaving right at five or bye. It time. They're taking like hour and a half long lunch breaks and not apologizing.

so it is, yeah. Overall it's quite different

Camwadam: face me, it can't hear you, so it can't hear me unless I'm facing you. Okay. So gotta get directional. Yeah. A little bit with the volume.

I wonder what if we put it right on here? Oh,
all right.

Jake the Bean: Not quite an option.

Camwadam: Okay. So how does it look now?

Jake the Bean: gotta face me if you want to talk.

Camwadam: Okay. So I gotta face Jake if I want to talk. Alright, hopefully it's able to pick me up in all that.

Gotcha. I'll be able to level it in editing. Nice. So with the US with, when you talk about being self-made and to being work driven

Isn't that a contradiction? [00:06:00] Yeah, because most people work for someone else. So if you're working for someone else, by definition, then your workday, your identity while you work is defined by someone else.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: are you not actually giving up your autonomy? Are you not actually losing your own definition? Aren't you taking on someone else's definition and then calling it your

Neighbor Dave: own? I'm sure some, I'm sure some folks are. The other phrase that cultural tagline if you will, that this cultural difference reminds me of is land of opportunity uhuh.

So that's another way in which, connect that to like self-made man kinda a notion where compared to the vast majority of countries around the world, the US in many ways culturally, but also legally, like encourages striking out on your own, starting your own company, [00:07:00] like most countries, at as if my understanding is correct, it's not super easy to start your own thing.

And culturally, for example, in the uk

Camwadam: to start this, I paid 50 bucks to the Secretary of State And registered a business. Yeah. And all of a sudden everything I buy for it is tax deductible. Yes.

Neighbor Dave: for example, culturally in the uk it, it's often frowned upon if someone, is appearing too big for their britches.

If they're like, okay, you know what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna strike out. They'll be like, listen mate. You are from Norfolk. Okay. You're not doing anything really. I'm, again, I'm hamming it up a little bit and I'm not meaning any disrespect, there are pros and cons of America having this you could do it, follow your dreams, work your ass off, and it can be your name on the storefront.

And that attitude of I could make it happen. That is not an especially common, at least that I've [00:08:00] encountered, and that I'm, there gotta be other countries.

Camwadam: in Europe.

Neighbor Dave: And most of the rest of the world, I think it is relatively, unique, like a standout feature of the us.

Camwadam: I've heard that a lot of China is like that too. I bet it is.

Neighbor Dave: I've never been

Camwadam: Okay. To anywhere. Me either. they talk about China is actually extremely entrepreneurial.

Jake the Bean: whenever I've visited like Southeast Asia, like they just have, there's like a mall at every corner that's like multis, storied. And each of the shops is like mom and pop stuff. There's still like a lot of, chains, uhhuh, especially at the kind of ritzy spots where it's Louie, north Face, stuff like that.

They still have places like that. But if you go to the working man's mall it's all like mom and pop stuff.

Neighbor Dave: That's cool. I haven't been. Anywhere in Asia. I gotta fix that.

Camwadam: Me either. [00:09:00] Insane. Are you able to see that up at the top there?

Neighbor Dave: Which part?

Up at the top.

Camwadam: Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: The diagram. It looks like a, universe.

Camwadam: you handle this. Have you ever heard of

Neighbor Dave: Einstein Rings? Rings? Yeah. Where it's like the light from a single source gets lensed and so it looks like a ring when it arrives to us, right?

Is that what it Yeah.

Camwadam: what happens is you get one galaxy behind another. Yeah. And it comes out, the one that's in the back and you can see on the left side Of that diagram. How that one is basically the one that's further back is the lens. And you can see that in the center there's that bright spot, but that's just supposed to be the galaxy in the middle.

And then when it hits the Hubble telescope, it actually winds up acting as a magnifier. It's like a telescope and then it starts. Do you want to go to the next slide? Boop. Alright. So you can also have, you can have a lens and a lens.

Neighbor Dave: so [00:10:00] great.

Camwadam: seen this. So this is actually three galaxies. One is at 3 billion light years, one is at 6 billion and the other is at 11 billion. except when you talk about that one, that's 11 billion light years away, it was 11 billion light years away at the time the light left.

Now it's more like 15 billion light years away.

Because the universe is expanding. The universe continues to expand. So that light that's leaving, that galaxy now that's leaving it today and coming toward us, probably will actually never be visible because the pace of the expansion of the universe

Neighbor Dave: Oh yeah.

Camwadam: Is greater than the speed of life.

Neighbor Dave: Sorry. Is it supposed to be a face? 'cause it looks like a face to me.

Camwadam: It's amazing, right? Oh man. The, so the lensing isn't being done by a single galaxy, it's a whole cluster. That's why you see those two in the center and then you can see there's actually multiple galaxies

Creating [00:11:00] circles around it. Go ahead and hop to the next boop. So this particular one that I'm talking about, you can see the name of it. Can you read the name in that, top left? Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: Ai, high resolution multi-band view of the infrared, infrared Einstein Ring of insert data name of, either a Galaxy or a Star.

Camwadam: you got that long name, right?

Neighbor Dave: SB 1 9 3 8 plus six.

Camwadam: Yeah. That plus, so one is the near one and the other is the far one. Oh yeah. Okay. So the plus shows, they're the same like visible object, but they're actually two separate objects.

And one of 'em is, two or 3 billion light years away. And the other was. About 11 billion light years away. The one in the back. Yeah. And this was the first analyzed image of 'em

[00:12:00] and they analyzed this in 2012. It's been further analyzed. So if you go to the next slide, happily

That's the same objects, right? Except this is their computer diagram of those objects, right? Yeah. Yeah. But you notice in the far one, there's a couple of different, there's two markings

Neighbor Dave: Uhhuh.

Camwadam: There's one that's looks like an A and another that looks like a V.

Yep. So that a, that was actually analyzed, I believe it was 20 20, 20 21. Okay. That, that turns out that it's a smear of a dwarf galaxy. You have a big galaxy like the Milky Way, and you get little satellite galaxies Got it. Orbiting around it.

Neighbor Dave: Okay.

Camwadam: And then that v that's what was analyzed in this particular paper.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: But, what that v was deter is believed to be, is actually according to their model, it's a 26 sigma [00:13:00] result that says it's actually a lump of, it's a dark matter halo. So you understand dark matter.

I understand you got it.

Neighbor Dave: I understand the basics of dark matter, but

Camwadam: Dark matter exists and we have no fucking clue what it is. If that's what understanding dark matter means, I'm all,

Neighbor Dave: all over that.

Camwadam: Dark matter is about 2% neutrinos. Experimentally there's a fair amount of certainty that about two to 3% of the dark matter in the universe can be explained by neutrinos.

But what else it is nobody knows. If you go to the next slide, I have an image of those are, that's the larger and lesser, the greater and lesser malan clouds that we've never seen 'em because they're visible from the southern hemisphere. They're named the Magellan Clouds because of Magellan's Traverse around the world.

Yeah. that image on the left shows it with the foreground stars. And then on the lower right, [00:14:00] that's the European Space Agency's image with the foreground stars removed. Got it. if you go to the last slide, you have a couple different ideas of what dark matter is. Now, what this image shows is it's based on the cold dark matter model.

There. There's two kind of cos competing cosmological models, the cold dark matter and the warm dark matter model. The idea with the warm, it's exactly what it says. Cold dark matter is cold and it doesn't move around very fast and warm. Dark matter would be hot and quickly moving in the early universe.

Neighbor Dave: Oh, okay.

Camwadam: I got

Neighbor Dave: it.

Camwadam: The cold dark matter model is considered much, much more likely. Okay. you can see you have this like web, this network, these streams of. Cold, dark matter, and then you have these clumps. Yeah. And those clumps would've pulled in gas and dust not really dust there.

[00:15:00] In the early universe, there wouldn't have been any dust. You would've just had hydrogen and helium and, maybe a very extremely small amount of heavier atoms that were created in the Big Bang. But, they pulled in all this gas. And that's what formed the first galaxies.

So with warm dark matter, it would be more diffuse and Okay. So you have a bigger question of how quickly would galaxies form. And so with the, with this Einstein ring we were

looking at, what they're saying is the, their model actually, and their observations are more supportive of the cold dark matter model.

Okay. Because otherwise you wouldn't have just this clump Of cold, dark matter.

Neighbor Dave: would've happened, but like much slower and therefore much

Camwadam: Okay. Yeah. So it wouldn't have been visible at that, got it. 11 billion light years ago. Age. Yeah. So anyway, that's my input.

Neighbor Dave: I love this stuff, man. I [00:16:00] put this kind of stuff on, there are some other pretty great cosmology focused YouTube channels and. I just put that on as entertainment,

And I just enjoy absorbing it. I just find it fascinating. So it is really cool. They piss me

off I'm always like, some of them do. I get, probably not, they're not showing the papers and diving into the papers, so fair.

Camwadam: Yeah, that's true.

They gotta appeal to a

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: To pay their bills. They gotta get millions of viewers. And you can't get millions of viewers if you're going that deep.

Neighbor Dave: It's inherently nerd content,

Camwadam: but there's diversity even within the nerd umbrella, Yeah. you can't be a nerd about everything, for sure.

Neighbor Dave: My, partner Brita is a nerd about musical theater and I knew basically nothing about musical theater. When we got together. But she knows stuff. Yeah. It's pretty cool.

Camwadam: Musical theater, huh? True story. Okay. So she knows everything about Oklahoma.

Neighbor Dave: You know what? I bet that's [00:17:00] not her favorite. I think culturally there's some stuff in that one that she's probably not gonna enjoy it as much. Okay. But, wicked is I think possibly her favorite.

Definitely one of her favorites. Really? Okay. She and I got to go see Miz together here in the Twin Cities and that, that's definitely worth seeing. That is an incredible story.

Jake the Bean: Sorry,

Neighbor Dave: what does she think of Hamilton? She's a Hamilton Enjoyer. Okay.

Yeah. She and her sister can like.

Quote it back and forth and sing it together and stuff. It's, oh, are you serious? Hella cute, huh? Yeah. Yeah. That's funny. How did I never know this. I don't know, man. She's into a lot of stuff I know y'all like talk photography and stuff. Sure. But yeah.

Camwadam: Yeah. How long have you been a mental health therapist?

Neighbor Dave: I got licensed this year in April, I'm pretty sure is when it was. I am phenomenally bad with timeframes and calendars and also schedules. Incredibly, I was basically on time today to this, so that's good. But, yeah, so that is [00:18:00] a approximately four to five year journey for a master's level.

To become a master's level therapist. Assuming you have a bachelor, you can sign up at most places to start your master's, approximately two years of studying, and then two years of practicing under supervision. Then you can,

depending on what licensure you're pursuing, apply for kind of final state level test and, apply for licensure.

And then only once you have a license you would be allowed to like, start your own company. Like we were just talking about. And so you can do that if you want. I can do that. I can put out my own shingle With my name on it,

Camwadam: Yeah. So would it be ethical for you to do that?

Neighbor Dave: Yes. That's, on a per company basis. a lot of companies in general, but including mental health, therapy companies have a non-compete clause our company doesn't

We're allowed to also see clients outside of the company that we work at.

Camwadam: Okay.

Neighbor Dave: [00:19:00] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It is that, the reason that I'm working there, like it is, it's very good. Okay.

Camwadam: So what made you It's an ordeal to become a therapist,

Neighbor Dave: Some of the hoops you gotta jump through to me felt like ordeals. I know different people are different, and some folks I talked to, they're like, yeah, that's annoying, but you just kinda do it. I'm like, sounds nice. Must be nice to be you. So some of it for me was beyond a headache.

Some of it was like, I don't know, to be dramatic. It was like tormenting and can't sleep at night. Not literally, but yeah, some of, some of it's really difficult, a lot of spoiler alert, a lot of therapists being humans struggle with imposter syndrome. try to imagine you studied, but then it's your first time ever being in a room just one-on-one.

First time you're meeting this person, it's your first ever appointment session as a therapist. How are you supposed to be like, hi, welcome in. Let me [00:20:00] tell you about your confidentiality and privacy rights also. This is my first time ever. Hope that's okay with you. Whoa, so I remember my literal first time ever.

did you say, this is my first session. So it is, unethical to not have the client be informed of the fact that you're an under licensed or pre-licensed Therapist. Clients should know that, that feels like fair.

Do they get a

Camwadam: discount for that?

Neighbor Dave: I think maybe at some companies. Okay. But again, that's gonna be like, based on different companies, but I think mostly not. And part of the idea is, that it's they're under supervision and so the hope is that with the combined efforts of the baby therapist and their supervisor, you are actually providing sufficiently good services and that the therapy is working as well as it should work

A discount isn't necessarily called for or appropriate. That's [00:21:00] at least the theory, I think. Okay, gotcha. Yeah. Therapy is such a strange thing also, like very strong opinions on what counts as effective therapy. So that's the whole thing we could spend the whole podcast on, frankly.

Oh man. Give us a quick breakdown.

Whoa.

Camwadam: You had something in mind when you said that.

Neighbor Dave: Oh, yeah. What did I have in mind when I said that? That's a great question. We might never find that. Lemme see if I can capture it.

How the field of psychology started was with psychodynamic theory, Freud and Yung. And it was very subjective. It's very interesting. There were some stuff that Freud got right. It was like very interesting. But quickly thereafter, the behaviorist camp. Arose within the field of psychology. And they were very based on animal studies, and you've heard of Pav law of another big name Skinner, and they're like looking, they're treating the brain, even the human brain in mind as a black [00:22:00] box, almost as if they're saying, let's pretend nothing goes on there.

Sure. What is the input stimulus? What is the response, the behavior, and let's train humans as well.

Camwadam: Oh, okay, sure.

Neighbor Dave: So the fact of the matter is there's actually a lot of success to that. We turns out we are still animals, so you study, some animals and how they get trained, how they respond to stimulus and what training and behavior change looks like for rats or other mammals, et cetera.

Jake the Bean: And you apply similar things to humans and like to a large degree, it's pretty successful. Huh? Okay. So we still have a lot of those basic biological learning mechanisms happening, even if subconsciously we don't realize it. Minus the ethical question, I've always wondered how well would a treat and a clicker work on a human?

'cause it works well on dogs.

Neighbor Dave: I'll give you a slightly maybe initially strange [00:23:00] answer.

It's already working on humans all day, every day. Gotcha. All of the various types of stimuli and rewards or punishments that we're experiencing all day are already forming our behavioral patterns and mental patterns as it turns out.

Camwadam: Sure. Okay.

Neighbor Dave: It's mind boggling. And it's, it's also very understandable why in some ways there's, it's not so much like debate. Between the two camps in the field of psychology, in terms of behaviorism versus more subjective, more qualitative kind of stuff.

But it's pretty understandable why, historically there has been quite a contentious relationship between behaviorism and other approaches to psychotherapy and or psychology in general. 'Cause behaviorism as an approach is so inherently, fundamentally more quantifiable. It's much easier to study.

This was the [00:24:00] exact input, this was the exact output behavior.

Camwadam: Okay. Alright. So that becomes problematic because you bet when you're talking to, I'm gonna put this down, is that okay? Yeah. When you're talking about a living thing, even a bacteria, right? You don't really know what the input is, right?

Even if you have a controlled environment,

Neighbor Dave: uhhuh,

Camwadam: you could say, all right, we've got these bacteria and we're gonna put 'em in this digester, and we're going to keep it at this temperature and we're gonna shut out all the light. And then the only thing we're gonna change is the pH, or the only thing we're gonna change is the amount of sugar going in, right?

So from that perspective, you can say we're controlling the input, right?

But you can't control the amount of vibration. you can't really control. What other microorganisms or what viruses

Entering that

Neighbor Dave: digestion. And that's like the simplest case, right?

Yes.

Camwadam: When you [00:25:00] say, we're giving humans this input, we're giving a person this input.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: Yeah. Yeah. So how can, even if you're gonna say, I'm gonna be a behaviorist, so I'm gonna be reductionist like that, like how can you define, design an effective experiment,

Neighbor Dave: So I think that, I'm gonna say to some degree, all of, any scientific endeavor suffers from quite similar problems. And in this case, it sounds like we're mostly talking about unidentified confounding variables, right? Sure. Yeah. And so any finding in science could be subject to,

oh, we just didn't know that was actually the thing, and that just correlates with what we were treating as the input. But this is the really, the actual causative agent, okay. So like that is a problem, but that's always a problem, sure. But I agree with you that when it comes to, psychology and human behavior and human suffering, yeah.

It's complicated. in a way, my [00:26:00] responsibility, what I do professionally is intentionally finding what are the most reliable things that at least appear to be effective for mental health stuff. And how do I articulate that in a way that is gonna connect with and actually make sense to whoever my client is.

Okay. And so in some ways I'm faced with that at work all day, every day. It's we think this is why, a gratitude practice works. But the amount of possible confounding variables, is insane.

Camwadam: Insane. Yeah. Okay. So let's ask a question. Let me ask you a question from 20 something years ago, Uhhuh, it's popular 20.

So what is the point of positive emotions? What is the value of them like? Yeah. So if you're mad, if you're threatened, you run. Yeah. If you feel good, you dance. Yeah. An obvious evolutionary [00:27:00] value.

Yeah. But just feeling good, sitting there and feeling good. What's the

Neighbor Dave: evolutionary value of that? Yeah. So one and the, from the behaviorist kind of start starting point, rewards are also like part of what can, create, adaptive, like functional and adaptive behavioral patterns, right? So like, why does like sugar taste good, to us, that is one part of the answer to what you're exploring there.

Motivation is also another of the main, most basic answers. It's a sense of excitement and, enthusiasm for something that motivates. And usually, again, towards things that are, functionally advantageous or evolutionarily important, like sex, food, right?

I think in that sense that's usually the answer that a lot of, psychologists or evolutionary theorists are probably gonna give you. But in a lot of [00:28:00] my work, there's also, the

bonding aspect, the relational aspect, which, I find very interesting in terms of positive feelings or emotions or affect,

the positive emotions in relationship in that context have to do with the success of the troop as a whole.

Okay. And not exclusively the individual. At least that's what a lot of, theorists will claim. And what seems to make a lot of sense to me, which, if you want to segue to, although not directly, but attachment is one of the things that, we were saying maybe is one of the topics for today. And that's exactly what that is.

Camwadam: Okay. Alright. So get us going.

Neighbor Dave: Should we,

Camwadam: you might

Neighbor Dave: Please note this is for educational purposes and you can see the reference to the website of where this came from.

we might need to briefly, do a loop through hemispherical differences before we get onto attachment. But we could probably do at least some of the basics of attachment and then loop through hemispherical differences. start where you want to [00:29:00] go.

Okay. But in the, I'm pretty sure sixties and seventies, I hope I'm right about those dates. There was some initial, research being done on the difference between the left and the right hemisphere.

Camwadam: yeah, cutting people's brains down the center. Yep. That's what a lot of it came to see if you could relieve, see if you could

Neighbor Dave: relieve seizures, epilepsy. That's right. That's right. That's where a lot of that research initially came from.

Jake the Bean: wasn't that sometimes successful?

Camwadam: Yeah. That was by far the best approach for like really severe hemispherectomy. They wouldn't remove, as far

Neighbor Dave: as I know, they're just so I know they cut the corpus callosum is the Yeah. The thing that connects the two, but I can't remember what it's called.

so back in the day, decades ago, they were doing some of this research, some of the findings were maybe a little bit overblown, but welcome to science, and then the media got ahold of 'em and they made outlandish very stupid claims, like the female half of the brain.

And it was just, it all went to shit. It was really bad news. [00:30:00] It actually became like close to taboo in serious scientific circles to do hemispherical research. Huh? Because of just how like bad it looked for a while. Like the optics on it, or, anyway, I wasn't around then, the media has to sensationalize Yeah.

To get people to watch. Yeah. Yeah. That happened and that research basically, like laid fallow for a while. And then at least this is how the oversimplified story goes. There's a gentleman named Ian McGilchrist, single-handedly resurrected the serious scientific study of hemispherical differences.

And that's at least to some degree, fair to state, like he is the big name in, in all of this. Not the only one, but he's definitely a big deal. 2009, I believe he released, his first series and big book on the topic called the master and his emissary, which is a metaphor for the two hemispheres.

Which one's the master. So the left most things, just so y'all, most [00:31:00] things are connected, across laterally. the left hemisphere controls the right hand.

so the left hemisphere in this metaphor should be the emissary. The right hemisphere should be the master and kind of the overseer, the one that has the big picture in mind the emissary is doing all this stuff, right?

Is like being sent, and delegated stuff by the master That part of us, if you will, the emissary starts to feel like I know all the things. This guy doesn't know what he's talking about, really. And I know how to do all these things, man. I am in charge.

This is very Hegelian. This is like master slave dialectic from Yeah. Phenomenology of spirit. There's a lot of really cool. Okay. but I don't think that's where this metaphor is actually from originally.

Camwadam: Okay.

Neighbor Dave: But

Camwadam: he may have been influenced that perhaps.

Unknowingly.

Neighbor Dave: No. Gilchrist is very up on philosophy. Okay. And like really [00:32:00] into it. And sociology. But for the purposes of this, there's a master, there's an emissary. The master intentionally doesn't get in with the nitty gritty and the, actionable and concrete so that it can maintain this big picture view and understanding and connection to everything that's going on.

Okay. By contrast, one of the biggest issues with the emissary, especially as it gets too big for its britches, it doesn't know what it doesn't know. But with what it does know, it feels like I got this and really starts to believe I know everything. If there's stuff, I don't know, it doesn't matter, is the attitude almost.

Camwadam: it's Dunning Kruger.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. Outcome of that. Yeah, this is a really helpful kind of metaphor, for what goes on with the two hemispheres of the brain. The way that, Listeners and watchers will be able to find it in the show notes.

The way that Ian mcg [00:33:00] gilchrist likes to explain it is using an animal example of a bird. Hi Charlie, you gotta stay down buddy. A bird where birds have eyes on either side

of their heads and when they're trying to pick up and pick out some food, if you imagine from like a gravel, ground, right?

Trying to discern, oh, this is food. This is a pebble, and they're trying to get the food. They orient the eye that's connected to the left hemisphere, the emissary hemisphere, in order to control and grasp and get something it doesn't already have. So that is the half of the brain that is more or less it's ethos is controlled.

Camwadam: doesn't just show up more commonly in humans, it's also showing up in birds.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: Interesting.

Neighbor Dave: So this, lateralized nervous system,

Camwadam: because you're talking [00:34:00] about a split between birds and mammals, that goes all the way back to the dinosaur

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. So this lateralization of a nervous system is already present, of course, in a tiny degree, but does appear to already be present in the oldest known species.

So the control in that sense. And the looking out the vigilance and the being in touch with what is currently the case. What is Okay. And so getting, we don't already have,

Camwadam: so is it like, when you think about it in terms of I gotta eat this steak, but I also gotta watch for threats?

Neighbor Dave: Yep. And so that actually is the, but those are both

Camwadam: immediate issues.

Neighbor Dave: The getting stuff the acquiring and more control oriented is at least a lot of the time about stuff we

don't yet have. And so it's often this, future and this abstracted, this imagined for humans.

Jake the Bean: Could it be [00:35:00] like, it's summer now, right? Let's say it's summer now gas is three 50. Okay. I need gas today. But I also know once winter comes around, it's gonna drop.

Neighbor Dave: I, so certainly the hemispheres are relevant with that. But it tends to be really tricky for us to, really grasp this.

And I think it's because of how fundamental it is. It isn't, this isn't part of our conscious experience where we're like consciously and knowingly noticing, Hey, here's this left hemisphere aspect of me, part of me vibe, oh, and here's this. We just experience, human consciousness in this much more, interwoven kind of way.

Yeah. And for most folks, it takes a while to start noticing how consistent this pattern is. Where it is there's a part of us that has very left hemisphere vibes and [00:36:00] another part of us, which folks often find more difficult to, access to experience in a more direct way and notice that they're experiencing it at which the right hemisphere, is like that because inherently the left hemisphere, which is the one that's about control, it's connected to the right hand, which is for most folks being right-handed is about fundamentally manipulation.

Your speech centers are also in your left hemisphere. Exactly. So the very model we use to communicate Yes. Is

so speech. But specifically Veys area and Broca's area are in large part, those are about word labels.

Okay. And so there is a, if you're familiar with the map and the territory problem, right?

Camwadam: The map is not the

Neighbor Dave: territory. And the exact same thing is happening where the left hemisphere, the emissary, is confusing the map for the territory and is quite happy to just keep doing so. Okay. Yeah.

'cause it doesn't know what, it [00:37:00] doesn't know what it's, whatever it's looking at. It's like I understand it, I got it. And when we don't, that's often very distressing for us. When we don't feel like we understand what's going on or what's happening to us. That's usually a big issue for humans.

Okay. And really any animal. But,

Camwadam: My, my question is the right hemisphere then more associated with perceiving and the left hemisphere is more per, more concerned with acting? And construct. No. Projecting. Projecting, okay. Yeah. So is it accurate to say then that you would associate the right hemisphere with perception

Neighbor Dave: one of the most fundamental things earlier I was referencing, it's often difficult for us to understand this stuff.

his book Ian McGilchrist book Master and emissary is like tome that thick and relatively dense, very well written, very understandable. It's not like reading hagel. one of the difficulties we have, and I think this actually just is about being verbal, [00:38:00] right?

That we're trying to understand this conceptually and verbally. But the hemispheric differences are not mostly about what this hemisphere does and what that hemisphere does. It's much more about how, so the vast majority of things heavily involve both hemispheres, right? And also it's this parallel process that we don't typically notice a huge differentiation between the two, but it's this parallel process of the left hemisphere doing the control and concepts and boundaries and mutually exclusive kind of thinking or experiencing of the world and conceptualizing of the world.

And at the same time, we do also have this like kind of immediate connection and perception thing, right? So the right hemisphere is about perceiving, okay? Because the left hemisphere, if your MO is control, you're not interested in what you don't know yet.

How are you gonna control something you have [00:39:00] no concept on, you're not aware of.

Camwadam: So what I tell, what I, my philosophy, I am an avowed imperf perfectionist.

Neighbor Dave: cool.

Camwadam: But what it means is I know I'm gonna fuck up.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: I look forward to fucking up, man. that's a pretty cool attitude actually. the most intelligent president that the US ever had was James Buchanan. He's also the worst president the US ever had. He was the president right before Abraham Lincoln. And, he believed very strongly that states had no right to secede.

He also believed that he as president, had no right to stop them. he thought himself into a corner. I'm sure he was an attorney, he was a lawyer. So was Lincoln, by the way. He successfully thought himself into this corner.

Where everything's going to shit, but it's, I have a duty to not stop it from going to shit, which was directly in contrast to his duty to [00:40:00] stop it. So earlier I mentioned the Dunning Kruger effect, where there's this point where you have just enough knowledge to think, oh, I got it

Neighbor Dave: I know everything about hemispherical differences.

Camwadam: So what you have to do is you have to say that Dunning Kruger effect is actually, It's an emotion, it's a, oh, this is starting to click for me. I am actually good at this. You are not, but you feel like you are. So what you gotta do is you gotta grab the kite, you gotta catch that wind and you gotta start doing before you get to where you know enough to say, oh, I really shouldn't do anything till I know more.

No. Start doing. And then learn, start doing with the understanding that actually I'm gonna be a fuck up, I'm gonna be a fool.

And you just, but how do I put this? You can't learn just by observing and reading. The real learning you're gonna get is by doing. Babies observe their caregivers, [00:41:00] but they

also are constantly running experiments on their caregivers. If I do this, do I get fed? If I do this, do I get positive attention or do I get negative attention? So I think that, when you talk about, you've got the side that just wants to do and go and says, oh, I know.

I think the way to actually learn the strategic information is to run with the assumption that you're gonna learn down the line. What you actually don't know.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. This is something that I'm still learning, I'm still figuring out and retraining myself to do because for whatever all the reasons are, very interesting.

Combo of nature and nurture, I'm sure. That is really hard for me. I want to get stuck in on learning theoretical stuff and making and remaking plans, and I'm happy to do that. Functionally, I'm just procrastinating starting Okay. And learning through doing and messing up. So I, [00:42:00] that's, this is really speaking to me.

I like this. Oh, really? I should be like, I'm an avowed imperfect perfectionist. I gotta start saying that. Put the Dunning

Camwadam: Kruger effect

Neighbor Dave: to work for you. Yep. That's a very cool idea. I wanted to, so you were actually just pointing to attachment stuff with baby and baby learning Oh, sure.

Experiments. So let's go there next. But the last stop on this hemispherical difference thing is one place where we often, can be familiar with and almost like one of the most direct ways of experiencing and noticing it is the tip of the tongue phenomenon. Where, you know something but you can't find it in the brain.

Somehow it won't come to you. And this mode of trying harder usually doesn't work. And almost as soon as you give up and you open up and you allow it to arise

Camwadam: Oh yeah. It just arises. You're laying in bed trying to go to sleep and you're like, that's [00:43:00] what I meant.

Neighbor Dave: So this is a very strange thing, but that is the left hemisphere and how it operates to a large degree.

It is very try harder when when it's, up against something that isn't working. And even if you actually know the real solution, it's often just now don't need to know that. Don't know that. Don't need to know that just could, trying harder with what I already know. So it's, symbolic in a way, but it's also like an experience that everybody has had, and it's the, yeah, one of the most visceral, one of the most direct, manifestations of the relationship between the hemisphere, where the left hemisphere is capable and needs to be able to block out the right hemisphere for periods of time.

But especially with creative work and especially where you need novel ideas, You need new ways of rearranging the stuff you do [00:44:00] already know. And also with relational stuff, the left hemispheres just try harder and I already know everything I need to know. That attitude messes us up so consistently.

So that's a big part of what I do as a therapist, is help each of us get out of our own ways, with This hemispherical stuff,

Jake the Bean: because I understood the word being blocked from you is being, your brain is blocking out similar words, but in the process of blocking out those similar words, it blocks the word that you're looking for.

Neighbor Dave: That might be part of, ive never what's

Jake the Bean: I've heard of it as it's actually like the left side of your brain basically xing off the right side of your brain from involvement.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah, it is. in that book, the master, in his ary, I think he pretty often describes the left hemisphere as arrogant and basically like [00:45:00] I, not only does the left hemisphere, it doesn't know what it doesn't know, but it also really feels like I don't need to know.

Anything more a lot of the time. But functionally, in terms of like evolutionary function, there's a time and place for that. There is a time and place for no, we just gotta stick with this, we gotta push through, we gotta try harder at this. There is a

time and place for that where you do wanna block out extraneous and like novel stuff.

But in our world, like so much of what we need is creative solutions. And in our relationships we're often stuck in patterns that clearly are not working, but we're blocking out new options and frankly, we're usually blocking out listening to each other really deeply

Camwadam: So this goes back to your self-made person Ooh, yes.

Kind of thing. And your work. Oh, yeah. And your work, because that's what you're encouraged to do, available, just [00:46:00] go hard and dial in and but you can't alpha your way through your biggest problems. It depends, but there's days like when Yeah. You there's a whole pile of snow at the end of the driveway.

Yeah. And you just gotta, yeah. You just gotta dig deep. Literally. Yeah. You just gotta say, yeah, this sucks and my legs are gonna burn and I'm just gonna have to get through this. Yeah. But your biggest problems, like the real things of life. Yeah. You can't just say, oh, I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna push through.

That ain't gonna work.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. The only I was piping up to say, it just depends how you define your biggest problems. Okay. Because the left hemisphere being kind of a. And very self-consistent, but ignoring anything that, oh, that doesn't fit with my model, so I don't need to pay attention to it.

Okay. If we define our biggest problems as the things that do respond well to try harder, the left hemisphere is happy to keep [00:47:00] believing it's a bullshit and be like, no, this is how the world works. Okay. And sadly, to our detriment, a lot of us do that to some degree. And then some people do it

A lot. And it's very destructive.

Camwadam: Yeah. It works great until it doesn't.

Neighbor Dave: Check it out. Attachment originally was discovered and studied in babies, pre-verbal, usually up until about the age of two-ish, around there. And has to do with the attachment bond, the relationship between the baby and its caregiver.

Almost always mom. Okay. And so that attachment that they developed, that bond, that connection that they developed, that's where we initially discovered it and identified the four attachment styles. Okay.

When was this? I'm really bad at timelines. Okay. But for any listeners and if y'all wanna look it up later, Bowlby and Ainsworth are two of the biggest names of that original research.

Okay. And mostly focused on, infants and [00:48:00] babies. And so they, the terms that I'm gonna use for the four styles for attachment styles, whether child or adult.

One thing I wanted to ask you about was like, when you're trying to. Break old habits, develop new ones.

Jake the Bean: Is the observation that a habit isn't really working, coming from my right side and then the inability to break, it's coming from the left side?

Neighbor Dave: I think to a decent extent that is a fair statement.

talking about hemispheric differences is just so difficult because it is really nuanced and it is not concepts that come intuitively to us.

But

I think that, while, perhaps to some degree, an oversimplification that sounds quite fair.

Left hemisphere is very often involved in stuckness. And, for sure the right hemisphere. I didn't mention this 'cause this is one of the main things we'll talk about when we get onto talking about meditation, but one of the characteristics of [00:49:00] the right hemisphere is big picture thinking and being in touch with a bigger picture.

Whereas inherently the left hemisphere is about a narrow beam of attention with lots of details.

Jake the Bean: Okay.

Neighbor Dave: And yeah, being able to connect with the big picture and recognize about a behavioral pattern, this is not actually yielding the results that I want it to, or that I want to happen in my life.

Jake the Bean: Yeah. I've been trying to change the way I think, And it's tough. It really is tough to manipulate that. 'cause from being in the Navy, I get angry like that because being angry. Okay. Like it really drives me and gets me somewhere.

But being angry isn't really helpful.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Jake the Bean: Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. And last little bit, and then we will dive back into attachment, I mentioned that from the vast majority of stuff, both hemispheres are involved. There are very few things that are fully lateralized, right? For example, even, language, [00:50:00] actually not just a left hemisphere thing for sure.

The like labels and categories, part of language that is pretty solidly left hemisphere, but metaphor analogy and the like, art and implicit part of language, like tone of voice for example, is actually more right hemisphere. And that's a massive part of language, right? So anyway, one of the things that is the most lateralized is anger almost all over on the left side, which is about control.

Yeah. Really? Yeah.

Camwadam: is that part of why,

Neighbor Dave: one

Camwadam: day

Neighbor Dave: we'll talk about attachment,

Camwadam: says shitty shit to you Uhhuh, like that's more likely to get you angry than, is that why trash talk is so effective?

Neighbor Dave: Oh, no, I don't think so. Oh, okay. But we could talk plenty more about anger and as part of attachment we could definitely get into some of the function and especially, like the [00:51:00] social function of various feelings and emotions.

Jake the Bean: maybe that's why I'm so effective at getting shit done when I'm angry. Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: That's why it evolved, is it didn't work, try harder. Makes sense. It originally it evolved way before we were verbal and it evolved to energize the physical system to overcome you originally physical obstacles.

Sure. Yeah. And so now we have much more complex brains and the stuff that we want. The desired outcome that there was an obstacle between me and my desired outcome. That can be really abstract stuff like my values. So I want to be respected and so when someone talks smack to me, my response is anger because I want to be and feel respected and be taken seriously.

And this is an obstacle this way that this person was talking to me is an obstacle to that.

Camwadam: Except most of the things that are pissing people off now [00:52:00] are stuff they saw on Facebook or TV

Neighbor Dave: Facebook comments. Woo-hoo. You type it back

Camwadam: So it, it's some bot generated thing that babbles to you at Facebook and then you type back to the bot.

Neighbor Dave: it is no human being.

Camwadam: Maybe two or three human beings actually see it and they don't even know what you're talking about.

Alright, so attachment theory.

Jake the Bean: you, oh, I was about to say where you just finished, but.

Neighbor Dave: okay. No, I think I got it. Attachment theory originally discovered because of these different behavioral patterns that is observable in the babies and really how they respond or don't respond to their caregiver.

so it's the attachment bond between mother and baby. That is why we call it attachment theory. The four attachment styles. there are slightly different names every once in a while that you might encounter for, but the concepts, the four different concepts are more or less the same.

Okay. Even if it's by a slightly different name. Secure attachment, that's the one [00:53:00] that everybody wants. That's the only healthy one. The other three are unhealthy and referred to as insecure attachment. The only healthy one, huh? Okay. Yeah. Although this is, remember, this is the very brief, simplified version of the introduction.

In babies and infants secure attachment looks like when I'm freaking the hell out hungry or whatever my, my, my need or discomfort is when my caregiver arrives, I respond to that soothing and it's helpful.

So there's a kind of responsiveness, and especially of course, as the baby starts to develop grows up. I also am comfortable taking little excursions, taking risks, but in a, calculated, responsible way, in a play setting, a baby with secure attachment, we'll look at its mom and then move away and go play or explore

Look back, check that they're still there. And, before too long actually come back to the caregiver. And so that is a healthy,

secure attachment pattern where there is risk [00:54:00] taking and it's not terrifying to leave. And then, they're still there I have a secure base secure attachment to return to.

So that is what was studied and identified as some of the core patterns, in babies with secure attachment. And that we can extrapolate pretty directly to human, adult behavior with those things. the two main flavors of insecure attachment are anxious attachment style and avoidant attachment style.

In anxious attachment style, the baby is closer to inconsolable. And so even when the mom arrives, the baby often doesn't soothe, doesn't calm down and they tend to be a lot more, whiny, needy, and louder. And essentially they are amplifying their distress, amplifying their suffering. It appears that the main [00:55:00] conditions that cause that attachment style to arise are inconsistent care.

If the baby feels like it's a gamble, like sometimes they'll show up and sometimes they won't. the strategy that appears to work best and appears to manifest there is this amplify my needs become more needed.

Camwadam: And this is a subjective judgment by the infant that leads to this. It isn't necessarily an objective measurable Oh,

Neighbor Dave: Okay. So there's gotta be at least some of that where it's on Yeah. The subjectiveness for the baby. Yeah. Yes. And because. Just like different baselines, like some babies for whatever exactly the reasons are, do appear to be temperamentally like more sensitive. And so that baby would need more consistent care than another baby would.

But overall it does appear that there's like a window of variability. Okay. Wherein it's more or less hey, you need to be at least [00:56:00] consistent enough as a caregiver to enable secure attachment to form. And if you are sufficiently unreliable or inconsistent as a caregiver, odds are good that this is the attachment style that will arise.

Jake the Bean: It's incredibly unlikely to be random

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. Yeah. And that is how they do the studies, right? Is to get the sigma down to a Okay. Sure. Or the what is

that call the P value? Yeah, thank you. The p value get the p value below five no matter what it takes. Yeah.

Okay. And yeah that's how you know those studies are done. And attachment is one of the

Findings in psychology that's like real robust. We've done lots of studies, lots of replication, and there's still so much we don't know 'cause freaking humans very complicated. But some of the basics of attachment are pretty well established and yeah.

Replicated. So that's anxious attachment in the baby's avoidant attachment in the babies appears to arise when there is consistently insufficient care. It's not a gamble as a baby, [00:57:00] I'm thinking they're just not gonna arrive. And so I'm not gonna spend all this energy whining and I'm not gonna amplify my needs.

I'm gonna suppress and ignore my needs. So they had, they initially thought, these babies are so chill, good, healthy attachment style, and they had to like, actually like hook up, and get like vital signs. to realize that on the outside they look pretty okay. They're not as whiny, they're less whiny than secure attachment babies.

But when you take their heart rate and their vitals, it turns out internally they are losing their shit. They're not okay at all. So that avoidant attachment tendency comes from a, it's not worth it. I'm, I've gotta meet all my own needs. I'm not gonna reach out. And so it's avoidant of lots of things, but avoidant of asking for help, for example.

But yeah, so that is, those are the two main [00:58:00] flavors as they were and of course this is ridiculously oversimplified, but, as they were discovered, and then in the initial research they were like, and then there's this other category. Lots of weird shit happens here. We're gonna call it disorganized, doesn't seem to have much of a pattern.

So that's most insecure of the four attachment styles and disorganized attachment is, I think that is the most common way of labeling it. But like I said, sometimes you might see some other labels about that. What does disorganized attachment mean?

I think that term originally came because there wasn't a consistent pattern that the researchers could identify. But it also often results from not just neglect where, these babies, for example, they probably got enough to eat ultimately, but especially emotionally, they weren't getting their needs met.

They weren't being soothed in a way that was good enough, By contrast, often disorganized attachment arises from outright [00:59:00] abuse.

Jake the Bean: Yeah, that's where I figured you were going. Is that it? Yeah. Hey, you were getting no input on these two or, and then the last one would have to be negative input.

Yeah. When they, yeah. Okay. And they ask for help.

Neighbor Dave: Or just in general didn't ask for shit and

Jake the Bean: Oh, and they just get a negative input.

Neighbor Dave: So originally that term attachment that came from studying the mother baby bond, right?

And the how attached they are, or they have a bad insecure attachment, relationship going on. But the way that I have started to think of and want to now pitch attachment styles and the human attachment system is as an embodied system, which got selected for by evolution to facilitate cooperation, flexible cooperation in our hunter gatherer troops.

That's why it got selected for, and why it [01:00:00] evolved, because we do see a lot of attachment stuff in many mammals, right? The more social creatures the mammals. We do see that baby attachment stuff be relatively similar, so chimpanzees and whatnot. But then of course, much harder to study adult chimpanzees when it comes to attachment and attachment styles, but it does appear that system, that probably was mostly about, mother and baby being able to cooperate on the needs of the baby, right? Non-verbally. That just kept getting brought or selected for later and later in life in our hunter gatherer troops to facilitate cooperation.

some of it can be verbal, but a lot of attachment stuff happens at the nonverbal and non-conscious level. Can you give

Camwadam: an example that kinda, abstractly, I somewhat understand what you're saying.

Yep. But I, [01:01:00] it's hard for me to see how that would work, for example. How does having different attachment styles, you know what I'm saying? Yes. Because I Okay. At the individual level I can see how if you expect, oh, my caregivers are gonna show up for me In every meaningful way, then yeah, it makes sense.

Oh, I'll call on them when I'm in need and if my caregiver's aim, then fuck 'em all. I'm just gonna handle this shit. Yeah. Or if I think my caregivers are gonna beat my ass, then I'm going to behave erratically because I'm trying to find a way to get, not get my ass beat. So at an individual level, that makes a lot of sense to me.

But when you're talking about facilitates population survival yeah. I don't, I'm having trouble making that connection.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. Yeah. This is one of the things I was most excited about for, this podcast today, is to have the poke the holes in it kind of questions and for us to explore this.

'cause I think I have some [01:02:00] great ideas. A good amount of it is quite. Clearly connected to what's there in the research. And some of it, in my defense, any, almost any claims that we make about evolution, especially in the evolutionary psych department, is so theoretical. It's very, yeah. How would you prove it?

the way that these attachment styles, these strategies that babies would use, must have been the case that those two main flavors worked in a lot of cases to literally just keep baby alive and get genes into the future, right? Or else that doesn't get selected for.

And it's easy, a lot easier to answer that. What, why does it make sense for babies? So that could make sense to, for the more adult version of it. Attachment relates, is so strong for us, and relationships feel like survival needs for humans, because we did become exactly how, a big [01:03:00] question mark, but we became dependent on each other for survival in these hunter-gatherer tribes.

Sure. And so I think the answer to that question has probably gotta have to do with essentially the evolutionary niche that humans, and then I think a little extra homo sapiens. Were exploring and inhabiting and conquering, and getting really good at, and I think might be a fair bet to say that in a way the niche was really just adaptability.

Okay. Sure. And because most, like you think of a beaver, like they don't, and one part of it is intelligence for sure, but they also don't as a community have flexible cooperation to the extent that humans do. They couldn't build an educated society that can research things and not only build much better dams, but just move outta the water and find a new niche.

Okay. [01:04:00] Whereas humans not a hundred percent, but more or less can do that. We can survive the fricking arctic. We did not evolve in the Arctic,

Jake the Bean: The odds of them finding a use for a down syndrome beaver is really bad. Versus in humans, if someone has an extra chromosome What

Neighbor Dave: Yes.

Jake the Bean: What the, we would find what can't find a job. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. We do know how to include them. That was so not beaver can't expected. I think that yeah, that's true. Yeah. In humans we will find a way.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. So I don't know if that feels like a satisfying answer. And also I'm curious if I actually was addressing the real question your head.

Okay.

Camwadam: So it made sense to me. When you're talking about like things from toddlerhood

Like you're talking about hard wiring, you're talking about it becomes part of the hardware. Like it is not an easily changed part of the hardware.

Neighbor Dave: An attachment style.

Camwadam: Yeah. when you're talking about it's not easily

Neighbor Dave: changed, but it, I wouldn't say the hardwire usually I think of as [01:05:00] a biologically giving based line.

Okay. So it's the firmware then. So it's difficult to update firmware words, so it's fairly good. I like it.

Camwadam: What I mean is, you're talking about your whole HPA. Yeah. HPA, you're talking about, your entire neurological endocrinological axis. So Yes, it's certainly, relevant.

Talking about how someone copes with stress Yes. And that entire, when I say HPA, it's pituitary hypothalamus adrenal axis. Yeah. the way your neurons fire in a very primal way, the way you respond to needs, rewards and threats.

Yeah. Becomes very dialed in a lot, basically with the activity of that axis from when you're born till you're about seven years old, like it is extremely dominant. So you can't just take those things that [01:06:00] go on in that early childhood and then say, oh, go talk it out in therapy, or something like that, because you're talking about how your limbic system processes not just processes.

Emotions on a neurological level. You're talking about your entire endocrine function. Like how it physically built

Jake the Bean: itself.

Camwadam: So it's, and you can teach yourself Yes. To be calmer or to try a different way of approaching things. Yeah. But those emotional responses and those physiological responses, they're dialed in.

They're they're there and they gotta serve you until the devil takes you.

So it makes sense to me that this is something that you're gonna carry through. It's gonna be just part of you. It's just gonna be part of how you relate to people around you for the rest of your life.

And when you talk about in, from an evolutionary perspective [01:07:00] in terms of a population. Having a greater variety of responses within a population makes that population more robust to outside perturbation.

Neighbor Dave: Possibly. But that is one of the big questions with attachment is Okay.

Is it must have, yeah. It must have worked. It must have had some kind of, adaptive bonus, adaptive benefits, and probably on the like troop level, on the population level population, not just one baby at a time kind of thing. Though, of course, that is still the fundamental building block also.

It does also have to be, to some extent, one human at a time as well. Okay. And yeah, the I don't know where that line is drawn in terms of attachment, but what you're pointing to really brings up an interesting thing as it relates to attachment, research. In the original research, studying infant attachment.

It appears that the [01:08:00] care that the child receives and some aspects of in utero and then till the age of two, that's mostly the window during which the baby's attachment style is being developed in like solidified in the way that you're talking about. Okay, sure. And then other things probably still related to attachment, but are also

Continuing to be solidified and yeah, just made harder to change through the ages of seven and eight. Yes. Yeah. And we now also know that adult experiences and often trauma can also impact our attachment system, our attachment styles, our attachment strategy. And we also know that humans can heal attachment styles and move more, at least closer to secure attachment.

Folks who are way up here have much further to go and it is much harder work. And it is possible that over one lifetime, that person that has like [01:09:00] fully disorganized attachment, something really severe, just might not be able to like, get to the finish line of yay, predominantly secure attachment.

Like it's worthwhile because they can improve it, But man, fricking difficult work for those folks. If you're, familiar, I think we've talked about borderline personality disorder and very imperfect, diagnostic label, but there's something there.

And understanding attachment goes a long way to help us understanding, borderline personality disorder and other similar things where a core feature of that diagnostic label is a relational and identity, instability in that person's life. Okay. Cool. I like this. I dig it. Any other questions that are coming up?

Otherwise I'm gonna like hop back into, keep about where we were. Yeah, keep going. Yeah, keep going. Go to the next. Okay. So the thing that I referenced of creative or flexible cooperation, I think that is really kinda [01:10:00] core to understanding what especially adult attachment actually is and why evolution would've selected for it.

Because there are other kinds of cooperation. So I mentioned the beaver for example. They don't have a lot of flexibility. They have some, 'cause like the rivers are so different to one to another, they gotta be able to adapt and be flexible in all of that. Actually don't know enough about beavers to know if they do, cooperate on is it just one beaver builds the whole dam?

I don't know the answer. That would be even more impressive. Anyway, ants are on the other side of this spectrum. Ants do not have flexible cooperation. They have incredible cooperation and they can do one thing, and in fact, so much so that they actually have differentiated the roles, but only those roles, right?

Sure. They're not figuring out, oh, actually you should be an artist, yeah. And so the flexibility and the creativity and the novelty of human cooperation is [01:11:00] what is facilitated by our attachment systems. And so the way that I explain it to folks, because of course for my purposes, I'm not a researcher, right?

For my purposes, I'm trying to empower my clients with the understanding and the skills they need to live the life they wanna live. And this attachment stuff is a really big deal for the life we wanna live, right? It really matters in terms of more suffering, less suffering, more fulfilling life, less fulfilling life, right?

The way that I explain it to folks is that attachment starts with a sense of emotional safety, a felt sense of emotional safety between at least two humans that allows for trust. Whether temporarily just this one moment I, my gut tells me I can trust you or not. Or in a more long-term way where

especially in a healthy partnership, a romantic or other, you build a foundation of trust where we've been through [01:12:00] certain things and I'm really starting to get to know you and the non-verbal signals and like we have a lot of trust going on.

It's kind of foundation of trust. So emotional sense of emotional safety allows for trust. That trust is what enables this flexible cooperation of Hey, you go do this thing that you've never done before and we've never had this plan before, but we're gonna take down this bison together. You go do this.

Trust me, it's this plan's gonna work and like we can actually trust each other.

Camwadam: Trust. Trust is the basis of cooperation, right?

this kind of cooperation. Do

Neighbor Dave: Ann's trust each other is fair.

Camwadam: Okay. Yeah. So if you dust ants with the right pheromones, you dust an ant with dead ant pheromones, the other ants are just gonna keep putting it in the dead ant pile and it comes back and Right. So yeah. that's a fair amount of chemical signaling that just overrides any other logic.

Yeah. With the ants. But with humans, like for cooperation, you gotta at least trust somebody's [01:13:00] competence, trust their ability. Yeah. And then you gotta trust their motivations. I would say that's actually part of the reason, why in the US. Things are so transactional.

Because people figure you can trust the bottom line. You can trust that other person is at least gonna want the money, right? Yeah. What I'm finding more and more throughout my life is that very often that's not true. we have this idea that people are governed by money.

And, I would argue it's because we're conditioned from a very early age To want money. money isn't naturally occurring. There's no reason we should want it if we were just living in nature.

Yeah. You can't eat it. You can't build a shelter out of it. it's like Pavlov's dog, we just get conditioned from early on to say, money is the thing.

Neighbor Dave: I anticipate we are, evolved. We do have this baseline of caring about resources. Sure. And I think money we [01:14:00] get taught quite young.

Money is the resource. Yeah. And that's why it can develop the power

Camwadam: resource and its status. But I see all the time people who are willing to sack out everything for, to suck on the liquor bottle or, whatever other addiction. Or they'd rather, play their video game all day long, then earn a dollar.

Neighbor Dave: And the opposite where sometimes if we take an example of someone who has a good amount of money and who is just actually really, truly, genuinely generous with it, and it's that's true. So that's not just about the bottom line. It might not also be perfectly altruistic necessarily.

But it's kind or it's the Opposite side of, okay. So when you

Camwadam: give philanthropically to a degree, you're purchasing status. Often.

Neighbor Dave: or at the least good for a while.

Camwadam: Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: My day is awesome.

Camwadam: So I'm I kinda take the enlightened self-interest approach where I say, if I help create a better world, I get to live in that better world.

But then the question [01:15:00] becomes, when I'm 80 years old, am I just gonna be like fuck all y'all. I ain't gonna live, yeah. Don't gonna be in this world.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. sense of emotional safety, trust, cooperation. That's the, theory at least of how that might

work. How it then actually plays out is that the two basic survival needs that our attachment system started to attuned to are don't get abandoned and don't get controlled.

If you play that out real practically in hunter gatherer troops, if you get abandoned or in some other way, can't get back to your troop. Okay, sure. You probably dead

Camwadam: you're toes. Yeah. And so you ain't gonna, you're gonna be long.

Neighbor Dave: That's a very, and that's about the relationships, and it's about the truth.

Even if you're able to survive, you ain't gonna reproduce.

From, I never thought of that. That is incredible. Thank you. Yes. Also, good reason to freak the hell out. My gene are not [01:16:00] happening right now.

Camwadam: What it just means to me is that there, there is an evolutionary advantage to being.

Neighbor Dave: being abandoned.

I need to not be by myself. Yeah. So that's one basic attachment. Need the other one, don't be controlled, don't be manipulated, don't be a sucker, don't be taken advantage of. This is the other basic attachment need, which happens sometimes and also happened in our a hundred gatherer troops, right?

And so that's the other, survival need, related specifically to attachment. That attachment became very attuned to.

Camwadam: jealousy then, is it a way to control, is it actually a response to a, how do I put this? Is it actually to avoid, help you avoid being manipulated?

Neighbor Dave: Jealousy is a little more, I don't know if there's like a, here's your answer. Okay. Just 'cause human emotions and social emotions are very complex and almost

none of them are like, just one thing. But I wanna return to that [01:17:00] because, and like we said, be able to talk more about anger.

Jealousy is usually mostly anger. Okay. Gotcha. So we should totally swing back to that, but let me make this connection.

So this is my version of how I think it makes the most sense. For humans to understand attachment styles. And first thing is it's not for mutually exclusive quadrants and categories. It is two somewhat distinct spectrums. all the way at the bottom you've got secure attachment. That's the only healthy good one.

We all want to feel more secure attachments in terms of How we experience the world and our relationships. As you get gradually more and more insecure, heading upward on this diagram, there do appear to be two main paths. They're not mutually exclusive though, but it is often the case that we see folks showing up as having either [01:18:00] predominantly anxious attachment style or predominantly avoidant attachment style.

So they're not mutually exclusive and I just think of them as these two basic needs, survival needs that attachment is particularly attuned to, and that one of 'em got more effed up than the other. Okay. Something like that, but as a, as just like a personal story from my life and something that I have seen happen quite often with clients, I had a predominantly anxious attachment style growing up.

And then at some point I started, actually doing the work involved in healing that. And then as that started to heal, I was able to notice how much avoidant attachment tendencies I also had.

But I like, that was just like, so it was inconsequential compared to how much anxious attachment stuff I had going on in life.

So as a illustrative example. let me ask you, how has that helped

Camwadam: you?

Neighbor Dave: There almost isn't a way. It hasn't helped me really. Okay. [01:19:00] Because our subjective sense of self, our sense of identity, our self-worth are also part of this attachment stuff. Huh. And so even if it didn't positively impact my relationships, which it hella did, I actually feel better about me.

So that's a very not super concrete answer, but it affects a lot. And actually you were pointing to the HPA, right? we experience all of reality, right? And so if this is true improving stuff there, it tracks that. It would be like, how did this not help me?

It helped me in all the ways.

Camwadam: I was reading the paper the other day, Uhhuh, I actually have it on my phone. I haven't gotten all the way through it, but, one thing they pointed out, and you've known me for a couple years and, I have excessive dopamine loops.

Okay. Yeah. You've seen, right? Yeah. You've seen me risk my life on the ladder so I can paint the top. I have seen that a couple of times. Jake saw me like basically spend 13 hours on my feet [01:20:00] to get this house painted in a day, right? I was reading a paper, where it was pointing out that, children, toddlers, people who are deprived, like pretty seriously deprived develop this huge amount of motivation

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: Yeah. And it made me think of how my mom told me, like when I was.

I was a teenager, but she basically told me, yeah, I quit feeding you really a little before you turned two. And I was like what do you mean? She goes we'd have dinner, right? And, but I didn't have to feed you other than that. 'cause I'd just pull open the refrigerator and pull a chair up and, just started eating ketchup and bread and, leave a mess, create a big old mess.

and she was just like, oh I guess he feeds himself, and I started putting on my own clothes and I'd be like, when somebody would be like, Hey, your shirt's inside out. I'd be like, yeah, keep your fucking hands off my shirt. don't have to guess too hard my attachment style, like from that,

Neighbor Dave: usually it takes a little bit more of an interview [01:21:00] and exploration than that,

Camwadam: So I, I'll tell you, a lot of my attitude is, when you talk about interpersonal relationships friendships, romantic relationships, I'm just kinda like these motherfuckers, they gonna do whatever they want to do. Yeah. I'm gonna do my best to like, have this connection and everything else, right?

But they're gonna do what they're gonna do, and I'm gonna be just fine because I'm gonna go get what I need. if I get hurt, I'm gonna fix myself. When I think about myself in that way, how I'm just like, I don't know what's gonna happen to all motherfuckers, but I'm gonna be okay.

to me that feels like an extremely healthy way to approach life, it's hard for me to comprehend of a better way.

Neighbor Dave: yeah.

Camwadam: I can rest in this trust with other people.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Attachment is in our nervous system. So it's way pre rational and bubbles up to inform how we [01:22:00] reason our attachment related behaviors, our attachment patterns in life will continue to make sense to us. Okay. And usually when I pitch for either predominantly anxious or predominantly avoidant when I pitch, here's what you gotta do.

'cause very briefly, the only way to heal attachment styles is to behave in the ways that someone with secure attachment behaves. Okay. And then you have to holistically mind, body, have that experience, even though your body's telling you this is death, your body is reacting as if saber tooth tiger.

Now

Jake the Bean: it's similar to when someone's trying to get over addiction, they gotta be More willing to die Than to continue on with the Addiction. Because it's actually the addiction that kills 'em, right? Once someone goes homeless from it, they have a 98% chance of dying from it.

So it's similar here where if you actually want to [01:23:00] have a better, life in general, you gotta be more willing to throw away the life that you got now.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. It's, that's such a good and vivid comparison. And this is like the only place in the therapeutic context when I'm talking about the client, where I have to say.

You're gonna have to take my word for it. 'cause they can, like cognitively, they can absorb the information that I'm sharing, which I share something quite similar to this that I'm sharing now. And they can absorb, and they might be able to even then pass it on to their friends and explain it, Hey, this is how attachment works.

This is why da, explain it. You're central nervous system, your attachment system within you doesn't give a shit about what you know or you don't know. Okay. It's responding for survival. So it, inviting someone with a predominantly anxious attachment style to not relationally over-function, telling them like, Hey, just send the text and then your partner will respond whenever they respond.

They're like, n no I can't just I gotta text 'em again. Hey, why haven't you responded [01:24:00] yet?

Okay.

And it's no, you gotta not do that. And it feels like life threatening because we evolved to depend on each other. Attachment stuff became part of survival needs. Oh.

Camwadam: So that person who is you gotta text me back.

You gotta text me back.

Neighbor Dave: a full adrenal experience. I possibly, if it's someone with predominantly anxious attachment, y'all have started to form some attachment bonds and you notice them being like pretty needy. Odds are relatively good. They have an anxious, at least to some degree anxious attachment style.

Okay. Gotcha. And in that case, their body will be responding as if this is a life-threatening thing. And then they may treat you like you did something that bad to me. Huh? Yeah.

'cause that's what it felt like to them, damn. Okay. That's rough.

Camwadam: That's gotta be a tough life.

Neighbor Dave: So here's the thing is there is the equivalent of that on the avoidance side as well. let me circle us back to where we left off. Those two core, attachment [01:25:00] related survival needs of don't get abandoned, don't get controlled, manipulated, right? Those are the things that give rise to the two main, insecure attachment styles.

That fear of abandonment, that concern with abandonment. Folks with an predominantly anxious attachment style are oversensitized to real or imagined signs of abandonment, like not texting you back fast enough, which almost anybody else is gonna be like, that's dumb, that's not a survival thing, Uhhuh.

Camwadam: But I'm just checking the mic, making sure we're still good. Oh, good. Okay cool. On the lower right? Yep. You can see it, so yeah. So the green thing, the bright green thing on the left. Okay, so the two dull ones. Dull ones, those are the two cameras that have the purple.

Neighbor Dave: You

Camwadam: see the red one?

Jake the Bean: Oh, okay.

Camwadam: The one on the left that is actually the mic input and then the one on the right is the overall input. [01:26:00] Got it. But it's the mic input is actually the only sound going into it.

Okay. So then the, yeah the mixer actually slightly, it slightly amplifies the mic input. So what I'm trying to watch, I wanna make sure that when we talk it at least is bumping up between green and yellow. And that it never goes to red. Okay.

Jake the Bean: It's not reaching red.

Camwadam: So Im sorry to have cut you off.

It's all good. So that's what's going on the anxious attachment. Side of things. You were saying for avoidance, there's a similar thing going on.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. So to understand this, the, last little bit that we need to understand is bifurcation in the categories of how we can soothe our central nervous systems as humans.

Talking about the HPA, and remember where this started was baby's freaking out 'cause they are nonverbal, but they still need to communicate. I have needs, for example, I'm way too cold. That's a central nervous [01:27:00] system problem. I have insufficient nutrients and I'm hungry. That's central nervous, this is basic homeostasis kind of stuff. So when we are dysregulated in our central nervous system, the two basic categories are self-regulation and co-regulation. So in this context of hunter-gatherer troops evolving to depend more and more on each other and on cooperation. And attachment is the system that's facilitating this within us. The folks who experience a predominantly anxious attachment style, they are over attuned to potential signs of abandonment. And what that ends up being, or being related to is they're very concerned that they will lose their ability to co-regulate.

Okay. And what that ends up actually end up feeling like, though, not in a way that people can like verbalize, but that ends up being this kind of embodied belief that, [01:28:00] self-regulation is not an option. So of those two categories, the way that I usually articulate it is that folks with predominantly anxious attachment styles have self-regulation in the blind spot.

It doesn't come to. But actually back to how it impacts our reasoning. Even if you tell someone with anxious attachment, like someone's freaking out, they like, why haven't you text me back yet? If you said Hey, what you could have done is done some breathing exercises, some grounding exercises to help calm your central nervous system, that's gonna sound fucking absurd to them.

Because it feels like the problem is in the relationship, I, it looked like I was gonna lose my ability to regulate at all, because co-regulation is the only option.

Camwadam: Okay. So what I would argue is that from an evolutionary standpoint, we are just much more geared to

look for external threats because the external threat can kill you right now.

Okay. While the internal stuff, the internal dysregulation that'll [01:29:00] kill you, that'll shorten your lifespan, but it means you're gonna die when you're, you'll die from poor internal regulation. Unless you're taking drugs or something to try to regulate yourself. That poor internal regulation that'll kill you when you're 60.

Neighbor Dave: not internal, external,

Camwadam: I

Neighbor Dave: might

Camwadam: here's what I'm saying. If I'm having, if I have trouble regulating my adrenal system, right? My, my sympathetic nervous system. Yeah. So I'm just always on. That does shorten your lifespan.

Like you are gonna develop cardiovascular problems and kidney failure and everything else from that, but it's gonna show up in your late fifties, your sixties, your seventies while an external threat, like if something coming at you like that can kill you this minute. So to me, it's obvious that w. From an evolutionary standpoint, there's a bigger advantage to [01:30:00] mistaking to mistakenly saying the threat's external than to making the mistake of saying, oh, the threat's actually inside the house. 'cause

If the predator's behind you and you say, ah, you know what? I just got some butterflies against him. You're doomed. You're better off. Like you have an advantage, of saying, looking behind you and looking behind you again and looking behind you again. Yeah. There's you can be like that and still survive to reproduce.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. I'm not fully seeing the connection to the attachments. So

Camwadam: when you're talking about somebody who's anxiously attached and they're saying, oh, the problem's gotta

be in the relationship. It can't be in my HPA axis. It can't be because my sympathetic nervous system is going off.

Or it can't be just in my thoughts because of how I'm processing this. It has to be external. What I'm saying is we're evolved to make that mistake.

We're more,

Jake the Bean: I could [01:31:00] also I think being abandoned is gonna kill you a lot faster than being manipulated.

Neighbor Dave: So while, research on prevalence of adult attachment styles, it's, something that I'm assuming is ongoing,

That there's variability from country to country and exactly where to draw the lines. Also, with these things, since, at least by my take, it's more like these two spectrums and not these four mutually exclusive quadrants.

Jake the Bean: Okay.

Neighbor Dave: I don't know that there are more or that many more anxiously attached folks per se.

Okay.

Gotcha. But let me also like maybe explain the, some of the more, 'cause I keep on referring to but there's also on the avoidance side, like the Yeah. We

haven't let you get there yet. Gotten there. it's a kind of a yin and yang setup where it's like everything is flipped, reversed for folks who lean avoidant.

And so the, oversensitivity is to potential signs of being controlled [01:32:00] or feeling emotionally manipulated often described subjectively as more like this sense of claustrophobia that I had to get away. So that's often what it looks like. it has to do with just not thinking that co-regulation is a good realistic or, productive way of going about navigating life,

Camwadam: waste of

Neighbor Dave: time. Yeah. Yeah. And in

the defense of folks who lean avoidant

it actually often does, require a lot of time because we end up talking about stuff like, for example, talking about our feelings. but both of the categories of central nervous system regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation, both of those are good.

Like, why would we not want to have more options? So both of these, at least evolutionarily, they both evolved. They're both possible. If you ever had the experience of receiving a massage that just really relaxed. You was like, man, that's so good.

Camwadam: Actually no. Okay. [01:33:00] I'm too ticklish. Okay.

As soon as somebody starts massaging my back or whatever, I'm like, what

Jake the Bean: about like a scalp massage?

Camwadam: I don't know. I've no. Okay. So yeah, I've gone to the hairdresser and they like, yeah, wash your hair and massage your scalp. Yeah. Okay. I'm ticklish too, but I really

Jake the Bean: like when someone plays with my hair.

Neighbor Dave: So that, and anything that involves, your hair. Okay. With me. the tricky thing is that no matter how we feel about it, and it's a significant part of my job to talk with folks and empower them to understand what's going on with their attachment tendencies, and also to help them see at least some of the potential downsides of wherever they are on the attachment field, these two spectrums, right?

But, the another way that I sometimes, articulate it to my clients is I'm like, you can feel however you want about it, and your brain will keep providing logic that reinforces your attachment tendencies. And also it's too [01:34:00] late. Turns out you're already a human and you already have both of these basic attachment needs.

Don't be abandoned and don't be controlled and actually expanding your, experience your awareness, right? And your skillfulness in terms of, regulation, co-regulation and self-regulation like that pretty much is only gonna be a good. Yeah. Getting better at either, it's gonna open up vistas and even though, and this is

Camwadam: if only because you have more tools in your belt.

Neighbor Dave: If only that. But logic, because you have more tools in you use them. The logic that I hear from, 'cause I'll literally tell, like folks who lean avoidant, I'm like, you have any relationships that are good enough where you can start being vulnerable and like really trying to allow yourself let yourself trust them.

And they're like, that's the fucking stupidest thing I've ever heard. Why would I do that? So I'm used to, I'm used to like working with folks, kind of meeting them where they're at, meet you where you're at. But I am so busy trying to think straight right [01:35:00] now. And so yeah I'm just like so used to that.

But I, the level of flourishing that can happen for both, folks on either side of this, predominantly anxious, predominantly avoidant. It's just hard to imagine. It's hard to pitch people on Hey, this could be this much better, so anyway, on the avoidant side, where was I on the avoidant side?

Co-regulation is in the blind spot, does not seem appealing and Okay. Most fundamentally, what's going on there?

Camwadam: you mean on the anxious side, self-regulation?

Neighbor Dave: No, that

Camwadam: does Oh, I meant on the, oh, he said on the avoidance side. Yes.

Neighbor Dave: Doesn't seem appealing or helpful or positive.

Camwadam: know tons of people where growing up, they wound up being the most stable one. I knew a few people where growing up they were the stable one. It's like they were the one who was having to co-regulate everybody else.

And then as adults, they're like, man, fuck that shit. I did that my whole kid hood, I ain't doing it now.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. And who can blame 'em with the experience that they've had, but the real [01:36:00] reason, like what's going on pre rationally, like in the nervous system, is that with co-regulation in the blind spot, it feels like self-regulation is the only option.

Camwadam: And so when someone actually moves towards us with emotional neediness, or even sometimes with any big emotions, co-regulation is an always on thing for humans. I actually would, agree with that. Entirely, if nothing else, we're very highly evolved to pick up on other people's fear.

Yeah. And that just makes total sense. if you spent a lot of time as a prey animal

Which we were. There was a lot of stuff that could eat you. So picking up another person's nervousness or fear is, that would save your life. Now when you talk about, when people say, oh, I wanna protect my peace, or I need somebody who's confident and [01:37:00] calm, right?

What you're saying is, what I am hearing is I'm actually not capable of coping with another person's insecurity.

Neighbor Dave: So insecurity, yes. But folks who are like far enough on the avoidant side. Even when they're in a relationship with someone who has predominantly secure attachment. Folks with predominantly secure attachment are able to allow themselves to feel their feelings.

It doesn't mean it's easy or pleasant to allow myself to feel sadness, for example. Sure. Yeah. But so even someone securely attached, if they're in a close relationship with someone who's like far enough on the avoidant side of the spectrum, that person with predominantly avoidant attachment is gonna feel a kind of threatened by this relatively like normal and healthy display of emotion.

Sure. Yeah. And so I wanna like land the plane on what's going on. The, like underlying nervous system logic is because self-regulation is the only [01:38:00] option, if co-regulation is in the blind spot doesn't even seem like an option. That's not what I want.

And then my self-regulation starts to get threatened by someone having big emotions in my presence.

Especially if they're looking to me in some way, like wanting to feel supported or wanting, like why don't you care? Is it something that ha that I hear a lot working with couples when one partner has avoidant attachment. And it's not that they actually don't care, it's that they're very young.

Usually their central nervous system learned. No feelings, no, I'm gonna take care of me. And the easiest way if people will just stop fucking with me is if I don't have, I don't feel any of my feelings. I don't feel these feelings.

And also nobody with big feelings can come close enough, metaphorically, or literally that it starts impacting me.

That the co-regulation just starts happening then. Yeah.

Camwadam: So what you're saying is [01:39:00] it's actually, it's a self preservation model.

Neighbor Dave: Both are,

Camwadam: they're just

Neighbor Dave: very different strategies.

Camwadam: What it sounds like to me, almost like you're saying is that person with the avoidant attachment, when they see that they're gonna feel disgusted, like a need.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: Get this potentially hazardous thing away from me. You follow me.

Neighbor Dave: It is usually more fear, but they're like, not even in touch with the fear is the thing. They would never say I'm afraid of your big feelings. 'cause it gives me big feelings.

That's not the logic that's going on. They're just saying oh, you're trying to manipulate me. Or I feel claustrophobic or like this feel, it feels outta control. 'cause it is because feelings are not about control really. so that, that's the like overall, picture, folks listening or watching, if you want to check out the diagram, there's some brief explanations of sort of typical characteristics for all four [01:40:00] of the main flavors of attachment styles.

We'll post it on the website too. right on. Yeah. So that's the kind of basic part of attachment styles and at least how it makes sense to me of sort of its evolutionary function. And then in real life in our relationships, whatever amount of anxious attachment tendencies or avoidant attachment tendencies any given person has, it will be beneficial if possible in their life.

'cause sometimes we have life situations where it's just, it's not gonna happen. It's not in the cards for me, but if at all possible addressing or healing our attachment style to develop more and more secure attachment tends to entail less suffering. more meaning, more enjoyment from life, a creative sense of meaningfulness in life.

Jake the Bean: Okay. Yeah. I've definitely, it, talking about this, brings me vividly to working on the boat. Because that's like [01:41:00] living in an echo chamber for any kind of fucking problem you have is that kind of confinement. 'cause it's a high stress Environment, and you're so locked in with the people that you got and the situation just ain't gonna fucking change for you.

Yeah. I've worked with people who certainly, oh I guess I can't label them, but appear to, you appear to have the anxious attachment side. Okay. Yeah. And I definitely, I know from working with my therapist that Eileen more on that avoidant Okay. Where they wouldn't go do work because they were afraid of breaking something so bad.

Like they just straight up wouldn't go if they were alone. Versus me where I would go regardless, knowing that I may

result myself being in a situation where I can't handle it on my own. But I'll just, I say, I'll figure it out when I get there.

And broken equipment knowing [01:42:00] because

I said, you know what, I'll fucking figure it out.

Neighbor Dave:

Jake the Bean: know what I mean?

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. That's a very like, practical manifestation of, again, we don't know them, but like potentially these attachment styles.

do y'all remember when I was explaining in babies the attachment style and some of the initial research and the one where like the baby kind of goes out to play and explore. But then it comes back so anxious Lee attached. Babies don't leave. They just stay, they just don't go explore.

They're too afraid.

Jake the Bean: Wow. And then we avoid and don't come back.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. It's like some Noah's Ark stuff, at the end where he lets the birds go It's really, like the hemispheres as well, this attachment stuff. Once we start noticing it, we keep learning about it and trying to connect it to our lived experience and some of the relationships we have, it's everywhere.

it's too late. We're just, we are humans. It's already happening, for us. And yeah, this understanding of, and again, it is a simplification to a large degree. But overall, [01:43:00] pretty fair to say, folks who lean avoidant, they're just gonna have a blind spot related to self, sorry.

Folks who lean, anxious, gonna have a blind spot related to self-regulation. And when they learn, when they are able to like, Nope, I'm not gonna reach out to that person yet, or in some other way avoid an anxious attachment behavior and I'm gonna actually do the self-regulation thing. Meanwhile, their brain is screaming at them like, this doesn't make any sense.

This is useless. You know what you need to do, just go and talk to them. And They actually holistically like mind and body, they have the experience of performing a secure attachment behavior pattern, and then they like realize they didn't die. And that is how the brain learns.

That is how attachment heals. Okay. And then on the avoidance side, it relates more to allowing ourselves to feel, which honestly is at least as difficult as, yeah, I'm gonna do a breathing exercise, I'm gonna self-regulate. allowing ourself to feel is fricking scary.

Jake the Bean: Yeah. So what I told [01:44:00] her

I basically assume that they don't give a shit about what's going on with me internally. Which is probably true to a great degree.

Camwadam: You mean the Navy?

Jake the Bean: Anyone else in my life?

Camwadam: yeah.

Jake the Bean: Most people,

Camwadam: don't care.

Jake the Bean: But she was like just about the bottom line.

Yeah. And one of the characteristics you actually labeled, or not you, but whoever created that labeled was logical on the avoidance side.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Jake the Bean: She was like, yeah, sure, but you're gonna have to try it.

Neighbor Dave:

Jake the Bean: gonna have to try talking to these people.

And one of, we went back and forth, I was like, I don't want to burden them. And they're like, and she's you don't get to decide what's a burden for them. Oh dude, this is a cool therapist. It sounds Yeah. Yeah. She was like, yeah, you don't get to decide what's actually a burden for them.

If you're worried about it, you can ask them. And, one thing I got good at, like just growing up was like, I can listen to someone else's, but I can't like As easily put it back out. I can give healthy or [01:45:00] helpful advice. But I can't go the other way with it.

Can't ask for advice. I can't open up in the first place.

Neighbor Dave: problem I have. And maybe, or maybe not receive advice, but this is the problem I'm experiencing or the difficult feelings I'm having. Yeah.

Yeah, for sure.

I, earlier I mentioned, like I grew up with and for sure most of my twenties, I had predominantly anxious attachment style.

And again, if you think of that diagram goes all the way up to disorganized I don't know where I was exactly how far away from secure. I was, but I had a lot of anxious attachment stuff going on. And now that has been addressed and at least to a decent degree healed most of my dysfunction, most of my issues are on the avoidance side now.

Jake the Bean: Yeah. Definitely a railroad in the middle there.

Camwadam: you're talking about your sympathetic nervous system becoming activated at a time when it's not necessary, when it isn't really advantageous to you.

It actually [01:46:00] creates disadvantages for you. So from a physiological perspective and emotional perspective, it's actually kinda the same thing.

Neighbor Dave: Yes. Oh yeah. Yep. Yeah. They're both examples of insecure attachment. Yep. Okay. And they're manifesting in mostly similar things, but behaviorally and then our sense of identity, the stories we live in basically.

Okay. on the avoidance side, a lot of the stories are independence. Good. And some like at their most extreme, folks who lean, avoidant, are hyper independent in ways that most people can see. That's too much. That's too far. And but not to them, it just keeps making sense.

The story is I'm just this competent. I'm just like, I can do it all myself. And also other people don't give a shit. Other people don't. And all of the stories Yeah. are reinforcing it.

Camwadam: my efforts. And

Neighbor Dave: again in defense.

Camwadam: But you know what?

There's a lot of motherfuckers who will hold you back. Exactly. No, I'm [01:47:00] saying in our defense,

Neighbor Dave: we're not a hundred percent wrong. And the same goes for folks who lean predominantly anxious. They're not always wrong. Sometimes they are being cheated on and experiencing a lot of jealousy. It's not just because they have anxious attachment.

It's 'cause they did sense something. Wait, you've been talking to Jerry a whole lot. Oh, what the fuck? I see. Oh, I was right this time. So yeah. We're not just wrong. I think this is a helpful of like kind of visualization and conceptualization of it. Yes. It is simplified, once you get the core of it I think is largely what I've shared, right? That attachment is about emotional safety, leading to trust, leading to cooperation. these are the two main ways it gets effed up. This one anxious involves, oversensitization to losing co-regulation because self-regulation is in the blind spot and then avoidant, the way that it goes awry is that co-regulation goes in the blind spot.

And there's really hyper-focused on [01:48:00] being able to self-regulate, which effectively ends up being no, nobody with feelings near me. But also sure I'm not gonna share my feelings in the first place. I'm gonna be out of touch with them. If you remember also back to the baby that was looking chill and initially seemed more chill and then it turns out somewhere inside they're actually really not okay.

Camwadam: being expressive.

Jake the Bean: Yeah. So the baby that's like, when you're talking about the secure one will leave the mother and come back. Or go out, play, come back. The anxious one is going to be feeling the same way when they're staying with the mother. As the avoidant one, staying out to play when really it doesn't wanna stay out to play.

Neighbor Dave: Possibly in the way that you're, if you put up a monitor, it might

Jake the Bean: It might look the same.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. I think quite possibly. It's just so hard to know, like how they're feeling, and I know I'm using very similar language to what you [01:49:00] just used. But, yeah, looking at the research, and where we started with how do you know? How can you know anything? There could be so many confounding variables with this, but yeah, it does seem from the research that some of these claims are like, pretty reliable, at least.

So the way to do it would be give everybody an aura ring or, quite possibly. In couples therapies. Some therapists consistently are like, it's a clip on the finger one, a heart monitor,

And as soon as your heart rate reaches above whatever, then we pause and we all do breathing exercises, help calm the body again, and then we can get back to it. And it's just because when we get dysregulated. We're moving into fight or flight. In fight or flight. All of the energy for the prefrontal cortex is shunted back to the older brain regions that have to do with spatial reasoning and running and getting the hell out,

Jake the Bean: you can't change while you like that.

Neighbor Dave: Learning really bad. But also all the stuff that's up here is [01:50:00] long-term thinking, perspective taking, nuanced thinking. Wisdom is stuff, is the category we

might call a lot of this. And all of that goes offline. So if you're like in a romantic relationship, let's say, where stakes are high, we've built our life together and stuff and like we're part of us is freaking out about man, what if this doesn't work out?

And we get out of our window of tolerance. Central nervous system gets really dysregulated. We go into some level of fight or flight, and the long term thinking goes offline, then we don't give a shit what happens in the long term. We say whatever we want. The perspective taking, that's one of the most detrimental things in couples work when the perspective taking can't happen anymore because of the state of the central nervous system.

Yeah. not getting anywhere. Huh. So I tend to use more visual cues and part of it, I think it's a good idea. I'm not against it, but part of why I don't use that is I'm trying to actually just reflect back to folks and ask them to [01:51:00] self-assess. Instead of exclusively relying on that which it can serve its purpose in a sort of training wheels kind of way.

It's like great way to start, but at some point, like you're not gonna live with that on and you gotta start to notice what are the cues And similar thing, but actually trickier for folks who lean, avoidant, the cues aren't as obvious. The, heart rate monitor might actually be especially helpful there because they tend to not feel like stuff is.

All that bad. And part of it is they're still thinking logically in their, at least in the way that the left hemisphere has this self-consistent logic, my logic, this works perfectly. Yeah. And so they're not, emoting, they're not getting all big and angry or jealous or whatever.

Like someone who leans anxious would. And so it can look like this is the chill one. This is the crazy one In couples therapy.

Camwadam: I can tell you when people describe a lot of the jealousy they have especially retroactive jealousy.

Neighbor Dave: [01:52:00] previous thing

Camwadam: Like when people talk about like getting upset when their partner talks about somebody they dated before. I don't experience that. I'm always just I really don't give a shit what somebody did last week, last month.

I don't even care what somebody did last night, as long as they're doing what I need 'em to do today.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: But I've had people tell me that, that actually sounds too reductive, that it discounts the past too much because then people are like how do you know then? How do you say this person did all this for me before, so I should be loyal to them now. I should, and I'm like, to me that, that becomes more of a cognitive exercise than an emotional one.

a lot of it is because I'm just like, from the way I grew up, I grew up going between homelessness and foster homes and Yeah.

You doing everything perfectly and then you get kicked out. you think you're doing everything perfectly. To the day they can't stand you. And you're out and there's [01:53:00] no predictive data. So I just assume, in a non-transactional relationship, people are gonna keep me around until they don't feel like it anymore.

You know what I'm saying? People are gonna stay around until they don't, until they don't. And that decision is gonna be based on however they fucking feel that day, and that, I don't know what to tell you. I'm like, that's just what my experience was. Like, people are just gonna treat me.

Yeah. However they fucking feel like

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: And there's not really any breaks on it, so I learned to discount the past and just say, people are on my side right now, I'll take it. Or people aren't on my side, and best of luck to 'em.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: So that's why I was asking you is that jealousy thing.

Is that a way of saying, like you said, jealousy is mostly motivated by anger or it has a huge anger component. Yep. Is that jealousy thing a way of trying to protect yourself from manipulation or [01:54:00] trying to protect your investment in someone else?

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: Okay.

Neighbor Dave: there are a few different ways that jealousy arises or maybe even a few different flavors of jealousy, but it almost always is mostly about insecurity of some sort. And not necessarily in the attachment way, but like also, but yeah, a sort of this. If this is true, let's say infidelity, like one part are cheating on another.

Even though they had greed, like our relationship is not like that. The feeling of, oh, they're flirting with somebody else, or they're cheating on me in some other significant way brings up a, I'm not good enough feeling. That is the main fuel.

Camwadam: So wait, you're saying that jealousy has more to do with self definition or there's a big component of self definition in there?

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. I think it is most commonly A self-esteem. So self definition, sounds very unemotional. [01:55:00]

Okay.

I think the main part of the answer is yes,

Camwadam: You're making a good point. I am talking in more of a sense of autobiographical self.

Ah, okay. In more of a verbal logical kinda way. Like how do I define myself? But what you're saying is it's more of the self

as an emotional tale, as an emotional story. Not so much just Here's my hero's journey. And most people's sense

Neighbor Dave: of identity is a very emotionally charged story.

Camwadam: Okay. Yeah. So your memories

Are themselves emotionally charged. You're not going to remember something that has no emotional value attached to it. Yeah. And you can actually reinforce memories by telling a similar story with a strong emotional component, and then you reference that previous memory and it becomes even stronger in your mind.

I guess what I'm saying [01:56:00] is when you talk about that jealousy are you saying that it's a threat to their emotional image of themselves or the feeling they have about the image of themselves? I think like, how could I get cheated on I think, you know what I'm saying?

Neighbor Dave: think that is a significant, maybe the main, but definitely a significant component to it. I'll give you two caveats. One of the other main ones is the attachment, like fear of abandonment thing, and certainly the cost in terms of like nuts and bolts of evolution, right?

The cost of bearing a child for a woman if their male partner or some other form of support is showing signs of not sticking around and not supporting them anymore, that was a really big problem. It still is in most cases around world. Oh yeah.

Camwadam: I can tell the section eight apartments are full of people that happened to

Neighbor Dave: So [01:57:00] that's where a lot the functional purpose of jealousy and of oh, okay, I'll murder that bitch. Kind of feelings of like jealous of another woman kind of thing. That is very adaptive and makes so much sense. Sure. If we understand the cost of childbearing and of losing support in that kind of context.

Jake the Bean: And that kinda, helps explain like why you would be mad at the other person. Yeah. Rather than just being mad at the person being. Infidelities. Yeah. You know what I mean?

Neighbor Dave:

Jake the Bean: Because when I think about cheating, like why would I ever be mad at the person who's outside the relationship?

Camwadam: They're getting it where they can. Yeah. They're not the one digging up and breaking this shit. Except if you're in a hunter gatherer group, everybody would know each other. So inflicting that, that cost on that other person would demonstrate to the rest of the group.

But we live in a society now where there's [01:58:00] basically anonymity in numbers, So it's this, it's almost become this evolutionary relic where your jealousy no longer has that impact. But you're still evolved to feel it.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. So much of what mental health work is comes down to the mismatch between niche we evolved in and this insane World we live in.

Camwadam: I think the biggest, the most prominent mental health problem that we have in our society is just overstimulation.

Neighbor Dave: It's at least becoming that if that is not already the case. Yeah, it is.

Camwadam: We got the cars going by on the road, that alone is outside of the natural of what would exist naturally.

Then you got light pollution all night long. Like you can't even see the stars. Like we went to, the Upper Peninsula and it was the first time we had seen the stars like that. Even on the boat you had a lot of light pollution.

Jake the Bean: if [01:59:00] you go towards the bow, basically all the lights are usually off.

Oh, okay. So that's a good spot. And then like during landings, they turn all the lights off, but you're gonna be looking at the aircraft leaning. It's not the time to look at the stars. the best time to look at the stars is when the bows are already full of aircraft

during landings, that's when you go look up at the stuff.

Camwadam: Okay. And I'll tell you, I know people who like, you'll be hanging out with them and they get 5, 6, 7, 8 texts an hour. And I'm like, I don't even know how you survive that. I get, if I get five in a day I feel like I got a lot, I don't want no more than that.

Neighbor Dave: I'm, this is one of the main ways in which I'm starting to feel old is like I more and more treating text like email. I'm like, I'll look at it in the morning. I can come back to this whenever I want. And just a lot, even folks my age do not feel that way about it.

But it's really great for my [02:00:00] mental health.

Camwadam: Oh Yeah. And your focus too. You probably get a lot more done.

Neighbor Dave: I like to think so.

Camwadam: Okay. what else do you want to tell us about today?

Neighbor Dave: What are we looking at time-wise here?

Camwadam: we got all day

Neighbor Dave: rolling.

Jake the Bean: Yeah,

Neighbor Dave: got it.

Camwadam: Just gimme a chance to, go to the men's room right quick.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah,

Camwadam: do something similar.

Neighbor Dave: Okay. Alright. Something similar. You.

Jake the Bean: So actually, I lived in a house in California where it was three bed, one bath.

Neighbor Dave: Okay.

And trying to use the bathroom in the morning was fucking impossible. Yeah. Yep. All right. We'll do at least a little bit on meditation. Okay.

Jake the Bean: Oh, yeah. What's up? when dealing with someone with, but like that coworker, I said we, they wouldn't go work on their own, but sometimes we really fucking needed them to go work on their own. You know what I mean? Yeah.

It could be effective to label what it seems they're feeling? Or should I Not for their own sake, because [02:01:00] fear? Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: Hey buddy, it seems like you're scared of something. You wanna talk about it

Jake the Bean: Okay. Maybe it could be my own. That's my own thought pattern is does addressing that emotion in that context actually make sense?

Neighbor Dave: So it could make all the sense in the world. But it very much depends on that person's receptivity. Like, how are, how's that gonna make them feel to have that emotion called out?

But also if you're wrong and it's not that emotion, then how does that make them feel? And if you're right and they're like hoping nobody notices or something like, which is understandable, and they're like,

Hey, fuck you, man. I don't know. I'm scared. That's actually fucking impossible.

But yeah. Okay. So yeah, it could be depending on, that person's like receptivity more or less their skillfulness related to their feelings. And perhaps somewhat, dependent on your skillfulness as well, Yeah.

Jake the Bean: relationship.

Neighbor Dave: Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

Jake the Bean: Okay.

Neighbor Dave: I got a commitment later [02:02:00] tonight and need to be not acceptable getting home.

Camwadam: No, nope.

Neighbor Dave: To get ready for that.

Camwadam: em all to get fucked.

Neighbor Dave: I did. And they wouldn't,

Jake the Bean: said no, it was very rude. Yeah. I guess what I was asking is co-regulation, trying to help someone who's being anxious through co-regulation. Is that helpful?

Yes. Both self and co-regulation is helpful, regardless of which side you land on. Yeah. But you need both always.

Both of those are good options and being self-aware and competent in them is really beneficial. Basically what I think it is if you're anxiously attached, right?

You're gonna use co-regulation as a means to self-regulation.

Neighbor Dave: that's what they're trying to do,

Jake the Bean: or what I'm saying is okay, if you. So you, Dave, are anxiously

Neighbor Dave: attached, right?

Jake the Bean: [02:03:00] I can be like Dave, I hear what you're saying right now, but what I need you to try and do dude, is take a deep breath on your own.

And think about it yourself when you're in that situation. So it's using that co-regulation to it ends where it's actually them wearing self-regulation.

Neighbor Dave: In your example, is the co-regulation the therapist talking to the person with anxious attachment?

Jake the Bean: Yes.

Neighbor Dave: That is a big part of how therapy works, is that the therapist client relationship has at least the potential of being a really healthy model that can have a positive impact on the client. So yes. But of course, the therapist won't be there next time when it happens. So in the moment it won't be co-regulation as self-regulation, it'll just be the client on their own having to do the self-regulation thing.

Yeah.

Jake the Bean: And Mike, so I use,

when I know that something's [02:04:00] only going to get better through co-regulation. I use self-regulation to get me to use the co-regulation, is what I'm saying.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Jake the Bean: So I, it's super intentional. It's actually hyper fucking intentional when it tells me You get what I mean, versus with them.

Yeah. It's gonna be hyper intentional when they use self-regulation. Yes. And it's, the bridge that I'm using to get to that co-regulation point is self-regulation. So would they maybe use co-regulation as a point to where. They get to that self-regulation like, Hey, Jake, I'm feeling like shit. And then we sit back and, okay.

Or I'm like, okay, babe, I'm feeling like shit.

Neighbor Dave: Yes.

Yeah. Yep. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Right on.

Camwadam: All right. You got the mic, man.

Neighbor Dave: she, oh,

Camwadam: Yeah, dude,

Jake the Bean: actually,

Camwadam: I know. Yeah. Just to be your buddy, dude.

Neighbor Dave: You can pick him up by the Yeah, I know. I like, [02:05:00] can't ignore dogs. Yeah. I'll be very distracted. Okay.

He's in my lap. Come here. Old man. More distracted than I already am. Hold man. Come on your butt over

Camwadam: here. I'm bored of you, man. Settle for me. Okay. The country, this country was built by settlers. So settle down is

Jake the Bean: what I got

Camwadam: Okay. I don't know the a, the AI on that camera. It don't wanna focus on me. There it goes. Oh, there it is. Did you see it? I did. Yeah. So that was cool. Yeah. They're actually pretty good cameras. Yeah. Yeah, they, that one dialed in on you a little better once we got a light on your face.

Neighbor Dave: Was that

Jake the Bean: dialed?

Camwadam: Thanks for dialing in on me.

Jake the Bean: we're gonna talk about meditation. So

Camwadam: give your thoughts before we talk about meditation. Gimme your thoughts on the setup here.

Neighbor Dave: I've never been on a podcast before this is awesome. Best podcast I've ever been on.

Cameron, knocking out of the park, man. I also don't know, a decent amount about tech equipment, but I never tried to get [02:06:00] into the podcasting space, one of the dudes who I tried to tell him no, but who's gonna be there at this thing tonight, is in podcasting and trying to make it his main career.

I bet that would be a fun connect. we'd be happy to have him on. you'd probably be happy it's Clint the d and e thing.

Camwadam: he have a specific,

Neighbor Dave: The tech part is what he's like trying to do professionally is like so what you figured out did for yourself.

He's trying to provide that service for other people who are like, I wanna start a podcast.

Camwadam: Oh, sure. Yeah. Not a bad idea. He's welcome to take our snoop I'll tell you, I did a lot of research.

Jake the Bean: you mind tell us, how to use it better.

Camwadam: He

Jake the Bean: could,

Neighbor Dave: he's more knowledgeable currently on the audio side as opposed to the video side.

Camwadam: The audio side is Okay. bad video doesn't make people drop out unless it stays bad, but your audio turns bad for a second and you can just see the audience just plummet immediately. And I [02:07:00] honestly wonder if you ask people would, is it cognitively registering to them?

That they're, that the audio's off and that's why they're dropping. Or if it's suddenly they just don't feel like it anymore,

Jake the Bean: I definitely notice exactly why I'm leaving If it's the audio. Or the video.

Camwadam: So if he's helping them get the audio part that's actually more important in my opinion

Than getting the video part

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. Especially if you can put the video part on this kind of autopilot. AI does whatever percentage of it. Wow, that's huge.

Camwadam: Yeah. Except my AI laptop. I had to send it back to hp. By the way, hp, they are really good about it. They were very responsive.

They sent me a box to get it sent back to 'em. We will have it sent back to 'em tomorrow. Took a little while for it to get here, but it's because of shipping delays during the holidays. give it another two to three weeks. So unfortunately we won't [02:08:00] have the video follows audio switching on this episode, but don't worry, we'll get you on here.

We'll make you look even better.

Jake the Bean: Hey man don't think 'em before they send it back.

Camwadam: So far so good so far. They're so good. Broadcasting our

Neighbor Dave: pirate signal to take down hp.

Camwadam: You wanted to talk about meditation?

Neighbor Dave: So meditation is the other thing that I am, super into and like excited about and, has very clear, positive mental health tie in.

So I also get to involve it, professionally in my practice as it is. And I've also started a meditation company, which is in very, early stages. Which is to say nobody knows about it.

Camwadam: Are you taking clients for that meditation company or yeah.

Neighbor Dave: Website's up. It works.

Camwadam: website?

Neighbor Dave: So the website is demystify meditation.com.

Camwadam: Dave, currently, dave christensen demystify meditation.com.

Neighbor Dave: only, it's only in person service in Edina, Minnesota [02:09:00] for now.

Jake the Bean: you're in cities, if you're in the Twin Cities,

Neighbor Dave: Then you should check it out. what I wanna talk about today is really more like the neurological and theoretical underpinnings of meditation and why it rocks and what the hell is going on. Because I don't know what y'all think about meditation, but I would say most folks, let's say like somewhat educated, probably know,

It's like hopefully reduce stress. if anything people know it's related to Buddhism helps reduce stress. Cool.

Camwadam: So to me it's essential. It's an essential part of what do you do? Life routine. Oh, I just count my breaths. Cool. it's just meditation on the breath.

Neighbor Dave: Wow.

Camwadam: And it's, I don't think I knew that it's actually how I portray.

It's how I start the day. A YouTube channel, a YouTuber, I follow. is Nick Kivan. he's a Buddhist monk in Thailand. And what he said in one of his [02:10:00] videos is. Start the day by finding a place of peace. However it is, you do that.

Because once you go out the door and you're out in the world, it's so much harder to find it. So find it first thing in the day and then you can return to it later in the day when you need it.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Camwadam: I will say I'm not perfect about doing it every day.

Neighbor Dave: Oh, but you're an avowed imperfection, so that's okay.

Camwadam: Yeah. I'd say I hit that target three or four times a week. Hell yeah. And it doesn't take a lot of time. You get up, you take a piss and then you do your meditation. 10, 15 minutes. Okay.

Neighbor Dave: 15 is not, nothing, not that 10 is nothing, but 15 is like pretty easy chunk.

Really. Okay. Alright. It all depends like what our goals are. Like what are we expecting to get out of it, so like typically if we're talking about like absolutely

transform

your life, that's like probably two hours a day or just go on a silent meditation retreat for a week or [02:11:00] whatever.

Okay. But then you also still have to sustain some kind of practice after that. But, for mental health purposes, for find a little piece you can get so much out of a 10 minute, 15 minute a day practice. So That's fantastic.

Camwadam: So Jake says that meditation,

Jake the Bean: There's the one fact I think I know Cool is, for people.

I did a lot of research on addiction and everything. Okay, cool. And that's where I think I learned that in order to change that. There's two effective ways to go about is really deep prayer. Okay. Or really deep meditation are like the only two ways to get your brain to that level of plasticity

where it can actually start switching enough connections to get you away from those, addictions that completely override your reward systems. Where you want the heroin more than you want the food.

Neighbor Dave: As opposed to [02:12:00] other additional ways that they could seek help. But

Jake the Bean: community actual license,

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. In most cases, that's gonna be beneficial. But, one of the best, but also one of the dumbest things that we hear people say, and that I'm sure I also say, things people say about meditation is that

it literally changes the brain when

everything literally changes the brain.

But of course they do mean in this way where, in A-F-M-R-I, they can notice differences in brain activity and network connectivity between Olympic level meditators, medium, and no meditation people. There's tangible, quite clear differences that are replicable, It does, it changes the brain and in the way of either addiction type stuff, but really anything else that involves psychological rigidity. You referenced plasticity. Psychological flexibility is the name of the game in terms of [02:13:00] mental health stuff. we can achieve so much if as part of what we're going about doing in life.

We are working to improve our psychological flexibility and meditation is just one of the best things to enable that.

Camwadam: what type of meditation do you,

that, Let's just say this. Let's say you're brand new. You're a novice. I am. You ain't never done no meditation.

Yeah. Yeah. Or you heard about it. Maybe you tried something that didn't work. Yeah. What would you recommend to that person?

Neighbor Dave: What's a good gateway drug? So if this is a client of mine, and I'm also gonna be able to like, see them somewhat regularly and provide them, like coaching feedback, then I actually don't even have to use that word.

I just say let's start working on attention training. And because of how fractured our attention is these days, how overstimulated we are. Like we were talking about earlier, almost everybody is like, attention training. Cool. And then I go, Hey, bad news. This also goes [02:14:00] by another name, meditation. Hope that doesn't freak you out.

Call it meditation training. That's good. Branding.

Attention training.

Camwadam: Attention training.

Neighbor Dave: I know. Yeah. It's incredible that my company has not taken off and becoming, become extremely successful. No, it's not, that's not surprising at all.

'cause I hate marketing, but I love meditation. So meditation as attention training is how I want to be pitching it to folks for multiple reasons. One, that's mostly what it is really. It continues to mostly be about attention training for very long time.

So yes you, like folks do benefit from a decent amount of kind of coaching and troubleshooting, along their way. One of the main challenges also that most people have with the meditation practice is the habit part of it, like building a new habit.

Consistency. Yeah. And

there's so many reasons for that, but that is one of the main reasons that I started the meditation company is so that it can be a community, right? Stuff that convinces people and that motivates [02:15:00] people. One of the most motivating things is, I refer to it as people like us do things like this

when we feel part of a community that is like doing something that's about something that feels good.

People love that and they respond really well, and it's very motivating if it's not just you doing the meditation.

Camwadam: you're trying to do group meditation?

Neighbor Dave: Yep. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, exactly. And that's where I'm trying to start. We'll see what all develops from this. But part of the, for specifically for the company as well, part of the pitch is that it is mental health focused meditation.

Slash attention training. But yeah, so that's how I pitch it to folks, especially in a therapeutic context. if you say meditation, it conjures up so many associations for most folks. Whereas if you say attention training instead that removes it from any like Buddhist robes and chanting kind of imagery that some folks would have a hard time with in various ways.

so it's like this is a mental [02:16:00] health practice. You can train your attention.

Jake the Bean: I'm gonna pay you to teach me how to shave my head.

Camwadam: Yeah. So what are the, And what kind of outcomes can you expect from that? Okay,

Neighbor Dave: The core skills or mental processes or mental abilities that you are improving, that is what all the then benefits actually derive from.

First skill is stability of attention, which kind of make a lot of sense. If you think of attention training, it's probably largely to do with stability of attention. We're not like trying to make our attention like run an obstacle course or something. Which there is, that kind of thing that you can do in meditative practices, but especially starting out, it's just stability of attention.

And then the next thing that, under ideal circumstances actually just starts to come along for the ride, even without hardly any additional effort, is [02:17:00] mindfulness. Now

I'll briefly define mindfulness as a functional, adaptive, healthy relationship between our narrow Bean of attention and the broad field of awareness.

And so right back to talking about the brain hemispheres, the left hemisphere, which is all about control, Has that narrow Bean of attention over which we feel a sense of agency. We feel like I can point my attention at Whereas that broad field of awareness is just this open, receptive, vigilant field.

You can't point awareness somewhere, right? Sure. Basically we have very little sense of agency, especially direct agency over our field of awareness. It just is, it's there. It's the background is often how it feels like, really?

Camwadam: So with this improved mindfulness

you would've better awareness.

Neighbor Dave: You or that is what it feels like. So

Camwadam: [02:18:00] it's a stronger feeling of awareness.

Neighbor Dave: This is gonna sound like the stupidest shit ever, but it's actually pretty fair to say that you'll have more awareness of awareness because

it is always on, it's this field, but the relationship between attention and awareness is often really shit for people. And that's what this overstimulation and just Yeah.

Camwadam: You gotta start, I'm not gonna listen, I'm not gonna pay attention.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah.

Your, the picture you were painting earlier, like fine piece you've got the

Camwadam: there's an entire layer of your brain That, provides a gain control on your perception.

And it throttles things up or turns them down. Oh, cool. And a lot of times when I see somebody and they're at the mall and

they're looking at their phone very intently i'm like, I'm wondering if they're actually trying to turn down the stimulation. But the way you're doing that is by turning to something that actually stimulates you even more.

Yeah. So we get caught in [02:19:00] this loop where we're actually trying to escape this overstimulation.

Jake the Bean: It's trying to avoid a noise with more noise.

Camwadam: Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: Okay. So

Camwadam: a better relationship with your own sense of attention,

Neighbor Dave: Better relationship between your attention and your awareness.

Okay.

Jake the Bean: he's just barely under the camera. This is so funny. He's in it All right. He's still in it.

Camwadam: is it okay?

Jake the Bean: you can see us fine.

Camwadam: Alright. We'll let him know.

Jake the Bean: seeing the wicker basket.

Camwadam: Oh, alright. He's not photo bombing.

Neighbor Dave: Okay.

Jake the Bean: Oh, hammer.

Neighbor Dave: Okay. So that's the pitch is it's attention training. The benefits is what you were asking for.

Camwadam: when you talk about attention training. Yeah. I was reading an article by a person who studies attention span and she was saying like 20 years ago when she started testing adults.

The average attention span was like two minutes and 43 seconds. And [02:20:00] now in adults, the average attention span is like 43 seconds. Yeah. It's dropped by 70%. Yeah. So you have to figure if your attention span is dropped that much, you've lost edge. And you lost so much. If you can just improve that attention span to 90 seconds, you're gonna have an edge. Like you are gonna have a competitive edge. Like just from a business perspective, you'll have a competitive edge over your coworkers, your competitors.

Jake the Bean: But it having a shorter attention span would also help you move away from the trash that's in front of you?

Neighbor Dave: No, it on its own it would not necessarily, we wouldn't be able to bring an intentional skillfulness to it in that moment. And odds are very good that we move to a different trash

Camwadam: Is the

Neighbor Dave: thing. So if you're not aware of it, yeah. So

Camwadam: you're just like a pinball.

Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: The relationship between attention and awareness is our ability to reconnect to the big [02:21:00] picture in so many ways, in all various ways, but that is so often what we're failing to do in life, so we might be jumping from one thing to another, but still not connecting to like, why am I even doing this, for example?

So that relationship, yeah. Slightly different way of putting it is mindfulness is improving our ability to reconnect to the big picture, to reconnect to meaning, to reconnect to the big context of what we want, what the plan is, what time it is, where am I going, from very concrete things to like really like cosmic level things.

Okay. So when you talk about okay. I take the approach that life is basically, it's at its most important point.

Camwadam: It's a spiritual journey. Okay. That gives me. That gives me sense of purpose in a lot of ways, because I could say, even if I'm fucking up, as long as I'm learning [02:22:00] something, I'm developing spiritually. Yeah.

Neighbor Dave:

Camwadam: So is that sense of awareness then that you, that improved awareness you gain from meditation?

Is that kind of a, does that provide a sense of spiritual growth? Is that what you,

Neighbor Dave: Okay. A lot of people do use that kind of language. Not everybody is comfortable with that language, For various reasons, but, yes, the, and actually I think that it is typical of what most folks describe as religious experiences and what the literature even points to as a religious experience, which is often a little more extreme, little more intense than just as we might use it colloquially.

But I think in all cases, one of the components of that is folks say they feel connected to something bigger than themselves. And like that is this connect to the bigger, to the big picture, right? That is of this broad awareness kind of experience, that we can have and that we can feel [02:23:00] more connected to more consistently.

Yes. And it's also in the most basic nuts and bolts way that I was, referring to earlier. And which also goes to the, like having an edge kind of thing where it's I can reconnect to what time is it I can reconnect to where am I in the plan of what we said we're gonna do or what I was trying to achieve, right?

And so often we're like falling shorter shooting ourselves in the foot because we didn't, reconnect to the big picture consistently enough,

Camwadam: benefits, so there whole brain benefits Oh yeah. To this. Yes. Since we were talking about left brain, right brain.

Yeah. It sounds like it improves the connection Yep. Or the communication between the two.

Neighbor Dave: becomes more functional in the way that if we go back to, in mcg gilchrist's, master in emissary kind of metaphor or analogy, whichever, the way that we don't really want things to lean is that the emissary is taking over, getting too big for its britches.

And it's I know everything that there is to know when [02:24:00] actually it doesn't know what, it doesn't know. It isn't connected to the big picture. And this really allows a very functional, healthy relationship between the left hemisphere, which is more about control. It is not about the big picture.

It's about this thing right now. And it has all of the tendencies it has and the relationship to the big picture the right hemisphere, and the sense of meaning, the sense of interconnectedness that we can experience in life. And one way that folks often experience to make a relatively extreme example, often experienced burnout is even in a job where they wanted the job, they start losing touch with why they're doing it.

And it's just that they're working hard. That's all it is. Or maybe they signed on because there was a boss that they really respected and they're like, I could work for this person, and they're working really hard. And then that boss leaves and gets replaced by some kind of tool bag

Yeah. And they're all of a sudden the meaning is gone from this the reason that I was here. The number

Camwadam: [02:25:00] one reason most people leave a job is their boss.

Neighbor Dave: I want to take us back to the question of the benefits. And some of the benefits are actually just really difficult to talk about, and I think it's just because it's right hemisphere stuff, it's non-verbal stuff that's hard to make, kind, actionable or like really concrete. But some of the most concrete and the earliest, benefits that folks tend to notice is that their focus improves.

That is literally stability of attention. Which is an edge in and of itself, right? Yeah. It's so why aren't people doing this?

Camwadam: It's an edge in every area of your life.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. One of the next ones is emotional regulation. So yes, meditation can help you reduce stress, but really what that is functionally is emotional regulation.

And one of the main reasons that it's helpful with that is that emotions are actually predominantly, primarily in the body. And they are this thing that we just don't tend to pay a lot of attention to. It falls into the [02:26:00] background and then big emotions come up and they like get the better of us.

They start directing us. Earlier we were referring to having survival responses being out of our kind of central nervous system, window of tolerance, where getting close to fight or flight, something like that, right? When emotions get really big and we're not aware of them, no way that we can be skillful, at least not on purpose, not intentionally skillful, right?

So emotional regulation tends to improve and in large part that's just because awareness of bodily sensations, awareness of feelings and emotions tends to improve. And so that is huge, man. Again, I'll connect it to the attachment thing, right? Attachment has to do with the social emotions and a lot of the nonverbal, a lot of the embodied aspects of relationship.

If we are more aware of the feelings and the embodied emotions that we're having in a relational context. We are gonna be able to be much more skillful relationally speaking. Okay. If we [02:27:00] notice some frustration or some jealousy coming up, we might be able to take a deep breath and notice it and be like, Hey, I'm noticing a lot of jealousy coming up when you're talking about Jeff.

This Jeff has really big pecs. I'm very jealous. And, but we can be aware of that and we can narrate for our partner, oh, this is what's coming up. Like I don't want to just like all of a sudden be a dick to you because of that jealousy. And like not realize that's what's driving my being mean to you. Instead, I'm gonna take a deep breath and I'm gonna share with you this is the emotion that's coming up. I don't think something's

really going on with you and Jeff, but I just thought I would share it. 'cause it's coming up.

This is what so my, my brain is doing to me for me right now. Yeah. Emotional regulation, that's one of the other Okay. benefits.

Camwadam: Better focus and emotional regulation.

Neighbor Dave: I know, man.

Big fan over here. Yeah. I feel like I'm forgetting one has been a minute since I've done a basic hey, these are the benefits kind of thing.

Camwadam: look it up.

Neighbor Dave: [02:28:00] Okay.

Let's see here.

Camwadam: Alright.

Neighbor Dave: Okay.

I knew there were three, but the, stress management. So that was the third one. So we're all good there. But then, oh last thing. I think like for today, the other benefit, but that does tend to take a little bit longer and, doesn't always just automatically start happening as it, it is almost the case that it's automatic with the first two that we talked about.

But another really big, benefit is increase in self understanding and self-compassion. And this again goes back to the sort of psychological flexibility angle where we are just able to imagine other selves, other stories of me, if that makes sense. And we're allowed to let go of a lot of the identity stories [02:29:00] that we have had, and that feels more like they've had their claws in us, not that we're holding onto them in any intentional way.

So more ability to, how do I put this

to, I was just trying to think,

Camwadam: So not necessarily rewrite your story, but see other possible narratives of your life.

Jake the Bean: Yeah. that's actually one thing that I've noticed with him, he forgives himself way faster since I've been back than,

before I went in the Navy, Oh. Thank you. Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: And thank you. All these things right. That we do our gifts to the people around us too. Oh, really? Really? I think you should beat yourself up a little longer. Come on.

Jake the Bean: Yeah. but Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: one of the reasons that I think that happens is because, and this is of course directly related to the improved self-awareness, improved self understanding, is we start to notice the, basic functioning of mind as we [02:30:00] meditate. Because inevitably, in a very, classic example, we point the attention at the breath, we get distracted.

That's the next step. We realize we've become distracted. That's the next step. And then we have whatever reactions we have, and then we just start over. So actually there's three steps. Focus on the breath, get distracted, realize we're distracted. Start over. It's just these three steps.

But within that, this realize we've become distracted. That's actually where the work happens. The progress happens where we can coach ourselves of common early days experience is that we're very frustrated that we've become distracted again. And we actually have the opportunity so many times 'cause it just keeps happening while we're meditating.

Yeah. Keep having the opportunity to ask, how do I want to treat myself when I notice a mistake that I've messed up? Or, and in this case it's barely that. But we have failed at our goal of maintaining attention on the brakes.

Camwadam: just say I fucked that

Neighbor Dave: That's [02:31:00] it.

Camwadam: Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: And that's actually just, that is part of the nature of mind, that it wants novelty and the breath is boring as fuck. And very quickly, a part of us starts saying it's the breath. This is boring. Stop it, start looking at other things. And so distractibility very understandable in this case.

Camwadam: So I don't know how accurate of a way this is to think about it, but the way I think about it is, those connections that are distractible, that focus in on this and think about that and this and that, right? All those synapses, they get tired, right? If I'm using them at 5:00 AM I'm not gonna be using them at 2:00 PM like when I need 'em.

by focusing on, by pushing the synapses that focus, I wear them out, and that allows the rest of my brain to be a little bit more on the [02:32:00] ball, on the game later in the day.

Neighbor Dave: Okay.

Camwadam: And then if I need to get them to shut off for a little bit so that they can, clear the amyloid beta and

Neighbor Dave: this guy,

So I don't know, if that lines up neurologically With what I'm describing. But I mean that, it might, We were talking about, how our, self understanding, self-perception and self-compassion can change for the better with this. as we start being more understanding, more accepting of this very boring and minute example of failing, quote unquote.

That gradually starts to expand. And we start to notice that not only in our meditative practice where there's nonstop mistakes, nonstop failure, we're able to just, Yeah. This is how attention works gets distracted. It's true. And that, we start being able to do that better in life in general, and we also do start [02:33:00] to notice over time the progress that we're making.

Camwadam: Let's see how long before he back? He chunks through those in a matter of seconds.

Jake the Bean: can't ignore it. You can't ignore his attention on, lawyers.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. Okay we gotta wrap up pretty soon here, but, here's one of the last things that I want to share with all, and this is related to, mental health and, meditation, attention training.

One of the patterns, you get to notice all of these patterns of mind as you continue meditating. And one of the patterns and the most basic pattern, which is the dopamine pattern, is this idea of the conditional happiness thought process or thought shape. Where if you just start noticing, oh, is that thought of conditional happiness?

Thought, it is unbelievable the percentage of our thoughts that are, if this, then good. Oh, sure. It's unbelievable. And so the more [02:34:00] familiar you become with that, you actually get to start just questioning that. You get to start doubting that, you get to start hopping off that train when you start noticing the, I can't be happy.

'cause that's the implication is I won't be happy until

Jake the Bean: something until some outcome.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah. Okay. And so that is conditional happiness. And basically in, in attention training and meditation, we can actually effectively be practicing unconditional happiness. Now, nobody's ever gonna arrive. Dalai Lama doesn't arrive, as far as I'm concerned, that's not a possible human achievement.

Yeah. Perfect. Unconditional happiness. But man, any amount, similar to the like, improve your focus. It's like almost any amount is gonna be worth it, and so being able to notice, oh look, check that out. Another conditional happiness claim. It's like our brain is bought in, fully believes it and is like when you [02:35:00] get married, laid promoted, what?

Like all the things. And we actually gradually over time Get to have the choice.

Camwadam: I wish I had a new car.

Neighbor Dave: Yeah, millionaire. Then I'll be happy. and whatever the goals are, they can even be like hunger. Now I'm not saying ignore your hunger forever.

But our ability to then like, question it, doubt it. And then ask ourselves what is wrong with now what is like I'm breathing, I have enough food and I have more food over there. What is wrong with now? And it doesn't happen overnight. This isn't two weeks of meditation and you got it right. But we can cultivate this ability to drop into the here and now and not shove away, but also not pay as much attention to all those conditional happiness thoughts and just. Love being me or love experiencing this. And [02:36:00] so that if you don't experience it, and or, if you're especially skeptical kind of human, which totally fair.

That is what the conditional happiness thoughts are, is dissatisfaction.

And so the idea of, hey, one of the main promises of meditation is satisfaction. That's fucking laughable. Who's gonna buy that? And I think actually a little extra in the US culture satisfaction is not satisfactory. We gotta go above and beyond. Oh, yeah.

And like satisfaction though, experientially, like, when you can keep working at the meditation practice, you can get to a place where satisfaction is basically ecstatic.

It is wow, this is great. I love this. Anyway. And that doesn't mean like we don't have drive. That doesn't mean we give up on all of our goals. No. Just because I'm satisfied,

Camwadam: the well that's like saying, I rode on a rollercoaster on, on [02:37:00] Saturday eh, I, that's all the excitement I ne I need for the whole rest of my life, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Feeling satisfied for an hour a day, or 20 minutes a day. Yeah. Or even eight hours a day. You are still gonna have all these hours to strive Yeah. To be thinking about how can I improve my life? But,

Neighbor Dave: the real difference is that we get the choice. We get to notice those messages and we get to ask, do I wanna stay on that train?

Camwadam: like saying, I'm saving up money so I can get a new car. Does that mean I shouldn't be able to enjoy the car I have right now?

Jake the Bean: Word.

One thing I noticed, is when you're doing that breathing exercise and you get distracted, right?

So you start with counting the breath, you get distracted, you notice you're distracted.

I've been told to label that distraction and then get back to

That kind of, that looks from where I'm sitting. The same as when you're saying [02:38:00] what's wrong with now and then you're just labeling and getting back to the now.

Yep. You're labeling the future. Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: That's a great way to think of it. And these are, both of those are very good, facilitative tools for a meditation practice. So counting isn't obligatory or the only way, but it can be really helpful labeling, same thing.

Camwadam: The cat? Yeah.

Neighbor Dave: Because that's probably a disaster, whatever that is.

Camwadam: Dave, thanks for coming on today. Such a pleasure. We hope to have you on again. Demystifying meditation.com

Neighbor Dave: without the ING Demystify meditation.

Camwadam: Demystify. D-E-M-I-S-T-I-F-Y. That sounds right to me. meditation.com. Yeah, we can put it in the show notes too. We will. Alright, we'll see you next time.

Neighbor Dave: I'll let y'all deal with this.