

Why Advice is Overrated | Rick Rubin & Dr. Andrew Huberman

Being attached to the past might be the worst thing that one could do in terms of being able to make good decisions in this context. Because if we have a kind of a playbook of what's worked and what hasn't worked but you actually talk about this. Uh, There's a passage in the book you know that um I'll just read it um to be beware of the assumption that the way you work is the best way simply because it's the way you've done it before. I sat with this page for almost 10 full minutes which is not something I do very often. Maybe you could elaborate on this a little bit. I mean we want to have you know mechanisms and routines we can trust but this is a I think an important warning. Yeah when when something works it's easy to be fooled into believing that's the way to do it or that's the right way. It's just a way and it's just a way that happened to work that time. And this plays into when you get uh advice from people who have more experience than you you explain your situation they tell you their advice the advice that they're giving you is not based on your life or your experience. It's based on their life and their experience and the stories that they're telling are based on experiences they've had that are that have very different data points than yours. So maybe they're giving you good advice but maybe they're giving you good advice for them and not giving you good advice for you. And it's it's easy when we try something and have a result a positive result thinking this is e everybody can do this. You know the way I I uh was vegan for a long time 22 years. And then I started eating um I started eating animal protein and then eventually changed my changed my diet a few times to the point where I lost a lot of weight. The way that I did it worked for me be right before that happened I did uh something that I was told that everyone else who did what you did they all lost weight for whatever reason I didn't. So the idea that we know what's right for someone else I I think it's hard enough to even figure out what's right for ourselves. And if we do somehow crack the code of what's right for us be happy we have it and then still know I wonder if that's the only way maybe there's an even better way that we're not considering you know like uh not to get comfortable with thinking we know how it works just because we get the outcome we want. I was raised in science with a principle. It was literally dictated to me as a principal almost like a rule of religion which was that the brain is plastic it can change and learn until you're about

25 and then the critical periods and and that's it And this was a rule essentially it was dictated a Nobel Prize which was very deserved given to my scientific great grandparents they deserve it Um But I was told there was no changing of brain structure function in any meaningful way after age 25 or so turns out that's completely wrong Sorry David and Torsten but they knew it was wrong Yeah it was actively suppressed because of the competitive nature of prizes and discoveries at that time And a guy named Mike Merz and his student um Greg recen zone were showing that adult plasticity exists And only now is this really starting to emerge as a theme right Just crazy Like there were so many reasons and the textbook said it we were all told it and it changed our behavior Now we know this to be completely false There's plastics throughout the lifespan There's limits to it here and there But like it's just far and away a different story So why would that be the only time that ever happened Right Exactly And and but the field was run by a very small cabal of people at that time fields are run by a very small cabal of people who have an investment in things being the way they are now because they're in charge And one of the great things about getting older is that um well fortunately everyone eventually ages and I hope that you know uh David unfortunately passed away He was lovely Torn is lovely He's still alive And they would say I think Toston would say yeah we should have been a little more open or kind in in allowing these other ideas But I think that but just think about all the years that were wasted with this misunderstanding Absolutely Absolutely And and it went beyond that and there were BBC specials that help propagate this And you know one of the goals of the podcast has been to try and shed shine light on ideas that at first seemed crazy Like I know you and I are both um semi obsessed with the health benefits of light and you hear about this stuff like negative ion is therapy It sounds crazy right Sounds like something you would only hear about at Elin or in Big Sir turns out negative ionization therapy for sleep and mood is based on really amazing work out of Columbia by a guy named Michael Turman the Nobel Prize I think it was in 1916 was given for phototherapy for the treatment of Lupus like this idea that certain wavelengths of light can help treat medical conditions is not a new idea but somehow we see a red light we're not used to seeing red lights except in sunsets and on stoplights And somehow it bothers people or it makes them feel like it undermines a um a business model that doesn't take red light into consideration right Until it does And then it was and then it's co opted there And the place what I looked to is acupuncture you know for a lot of years

people said well acupuncture this is like no mechanism no mechanism No me there's a lab at Harvard guy named Chu Fu Ma who I know reasonably well whose laboratory is dedicated to trying to figure out the biological mechanisms of acupuncture And they are discovering what everyone has known for thousands of years which is that incredible effects on antiinflammation the gut microbiome So uh I have a friend who was having a terrible back problem and I suggested that he see an acupuncturist and he went to the acupuncturist that I suggested and his back problem completely healed almost instantaneously And I asked him you know have you been keeping up because he had another another flare up He's like no II I can't go back there because acupuncture doesn't work I said well it you saw it work for you It's like yeah but there's no science Wow Yeah Oh he's got it There is now there's good science and published in premier journals It you know what's interesting is is a little bit of science editorial But since we like to exchange information about health and things of that sort the editorial staff of a journal dictates what gets published and what doesn't And the premier journals have a an outsized effect on what the media covers And so the beautiful thing is the journal staff now is of the age that they grew up hearing about acupuncture hypnosis has a powerful clinical effect if it's done right Um Yoga Nidra and similar practices and so the tides are changing but I sometimes like to take a step back and think what are we confronted with now That seems crazy that in 10 years the kids that will be the cause to me their kids will be journal editors like oh yeah absolutely Um You know I'm making this up but putting tuning forks against your head or something like that like sound sound wave therapy Um I think when one adopts a stance of like we we have to filter everything through the limitations of our biology but also through the the socio sociology of like the way culture goes it becomes a different story How do you deal with that Not just in terms of of health but in terms of um thinking about anything it sounds like you don't spend a whole lot of time thinking about what people are gonna think is cool or not You're a punk rocker at heart You still are I can't I can I just know what I like and what I don't I know it works for me and what doesn't you know I try things and I'm constantly looking for new better solutions to anything and wherever they come from doesn't matter It could come from it could come from Stanford or it could come from the guy uh talking to himself on the street if it works I'm good You know it doesn't really matter to me at all II I don't hold um I don't hold any of it tightly