

Meeting Summary

Summary:

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- There's a brain structure called the anterior mid-singulate cortex
- When people do anything that they don't want to do, this brain area gets bigger
- In people that live a very long time, this area
 - keeps its size
- In many ways, scientists are starting to think of the anteriorMid as one of the seats of willpower, but perhaps actually the seat of the will to live
- It's something that you have to develop over years of suffering and going through hard stuff to develop

Key Decisions:

- [No clear decisions extracted.]

Action Items:

- [No specific action items detected.]

Action Items:

Decisions:

Transcript:

I'm going to share a little neuroscience tidbit, but I think it's one that you'll appreciate. Most people don't know this, but there's a brain structure called the anterior mid-singulate cortex. As we pointed out before, that's a noun, it's a name, it doesn't mean anything. We could call it the cookie monster. But what's interesting about this brain area is there are now a lot of data in humans, that's a mouse

study, showing that when people do something... they don't want to do, like add three hours of exercise per day or per week, or when people who are trying to diet and lose weight resist eating something. When people do anything that they, and this is the important part, that they don't want to do. It's not about adding more work. It's about adding more work that you don't want to do. This brain area gets bigger. Now, here's what's especially interesting about this brain area to me. And by the way, I'm only learning this recently because it's new data. but there's a lot of it. The anterior mid-singulate cortex is smaller in obese people. It gets bigger when they diet. It's larger in athletes. It's especially large or grows larger in people that see themselves as challenged and overcome some challenge. Right. And in people that live a very long time, this area... keeps its size. In many ways, scientists are starting to think of the anterior mid-singulate cortex, not just as one of the seats of willpower, but perhaps actually the seat of the will to live. Now we're talking. And when I learned about the anterior mid-singulate cortex, I was like almost out of my seat. And I've been in the neuroscience game since I was 20. We're the same age. And I was so pumped because I've heard of the amygdala fear, prefrontal cortex, it's planning and action. I could tell you every brain area and every... teach neuroanatomy to magical students, but when I started seeing the data on the anterior mid cingulate cortex, I was like, whoa, this is interesting. And all the data points to the fact that we can build this area up, but that as quickly as we build it up, if we don't continue to invest in things that are hard for us, that we don't want to do, that's the part that feels so Gogginsque to me that we don't want to do. Like if you love the eyes. bath yeah i love the ice bath you go from one minute to 10 minutes guess what your anterior mid-singulate cortex did not grow none but if you hate the cold water if you're afraid of drowning and you get into water and put your head under yep then your anterior mids and survive then the anterior mid-singulate cortex gets bigger but if you don't do it the next day or if you do it the next day and you enjoy it because hey i did it yesterday happy me merry christmas as you say guess what The anterior mid-singulate cortex shrinks again. To me, this is one of the most important discoveries that neuroscience has ever made because it's that I don't want to do something, but do it anyway. That's right. That grows this area. And it's almost like I have a

friend, he's been sober 30 years from alcohol. And he always says, you know, the amazing thing about addiction is there's a cure. The problem is it only works one day at a time. Yep. And so you have to renew it every day. That's right. So the anterior mid-cingulate cortex. To me, when I learned about it, two things went off in my head. Whoa, this is super interesting. And two, I got to tell David Goggins about this. And I waited until now to tell you because I felt like, well, for obvious reasons, I wanted to tell you and I wanted to tell you here. Well, I love that because that's how I've lived my entire life. I didn't know anything about that. But people go, man, you have such a strong will. It's something that you build. Like I never forgot, I was on a podcast one time and this dude goes, you were blessed with a strong mind like what the hell are you talking about blessed with a strong mind that's something that you have to develop you develop that over years, decades of suffering and going back into the sufferer, that's why a lot of people who graduate Navy SEAL training they want to know like I talk about very openly I'll of time a lot of guys don't go don't want to go back into that water don't want to go back into the hard stuff maybe not anything anything hard anything hard in life once you get through it it's like you become a POW like how many POWs you know want to go back to POW camp none when something sucks so bad in life this is on this that we're talking about now very few people want to go back they're happy they graduated i realized i'm the same way i don't want to go back i have to go back i must go back because that is exactly where all the knowledge of my life exists was back there in which you exactly talking about well i didn't know anything about this but how i grew a will was constantly doing these things to now it's just life I wake up. While it still sucks, it's just life. You don't sit back and like, oh, my God. I have days I don't want to do, but I know I'm going to do it. I know from years of just doing it. So that's beautiful. And this is why I came on here with you today. And I'm glad that you're talking about this. Because human beings need to hear this. They need to stop hearing these hacks on this and that. There's no fucking hack, bro. There's no fucking hack. Yeah. You made this and that and saunas and all this shit. Yeah, it's great. There is no fucking life hack. To grow that thing, how do you grow it? Do it and do it and do it and do it. That's the hack. The hack is going to fucking suck. And that's what I realized.

That's what I realized. That's why I wanted to come on here today. I didn't want to come on here and talk about no fucking passion and purpose and how to get the fuck out of bed. how to hit a fucking alarm clock and all this catchphrase bullshit because that wasn't how I lived I wasn't how I lived I lived I woke up like every human being does and goes fuck man I'm a fucking piece of shit today how the hell is this gonna work out for me and you fight that and you fight that you don't override it no override button it's the conversation in your fucking in your head so how you do that we don't have enough of these conversations about the real conversation that every human being is having and they have no idea how to get out of it but they do it's that shit right there man yeah build your will how do you build your will exactly what you said man exactly what you said well i feel like knowing the name of something anterior mid cingulate cortex doesn't fundamentally change us but one thing i like about biology is that willpower if somebody feels they don't have it right feels like this thing that other people have, but everybody, unless they're brain damaged, like a hole through their head has two anterior mid-cingulate cortex, one on each side of their brain. Everyone has one. They have two. So I feel like it's just a question of opening the portal. And the portal, what I, again, I'm going to say 10 times and forgive me is I think people go, oh, I do hard things. I do sets to failure. And then I do four straps. I love training with weights. I love doing sets. to failure. I even like four straps, but guess what? I like four straps. So I'll tell you, they don't build my anterior mid-singulate cortex because I like to do it. Anything you like to do is not going to enhance this aspect of willpower. And it seems so obvious once you hear it, you kind of go, oh yeah, of course. But I think you really close that loop for people when you share what you're sharing today and what you've shared elsewhere before as well, when you're trying to explain the friction is the. critical ingredient right and i think people think oh if it's effort well then i'm getting better that's part of it necessary but not sufficient as we say in science but the suck part the haunt being haunted the stick they're really unpleasant terms very these are probably the most unpleasant terms we've ever used on this podcast those are the those are the levers those are the gears and without those this thing that you're talking about david goggins as a verb right you know i sometimes make the joke but it's not a

joke right goggins is a name and it's a verb people go i'm gonna goggins that right right but that's i think again i'm not a psychologist but i think that's what you're talking about the stick the friction being haunted it's the suck part that grows this anterior mid cingulate cortex so now you know why there's so many people that fail in this world to figure out their purpose, their purpose in life. Where do I go? Because to grow that, while you may not look like me, how my daily life looks, it don't look fun. Don't look fun. So it's a choice that people have to make in life. But what's so funny about it is even the richest of rich, who have everything, they always ask me this question. I feel like I'm missing something. I don't feel like I'm missing shit. I don't have what you all have, but you'll never in my life hear me tell you I'm missing something. Everybody is. They're missing this feeling. I found it a long time ago. I found it right there in that willpower thing. When you're nothing, nothing, and change yourself into. to something like me, you call it happiness, peace, whatever the fuck you want to call it, people are missing exactly what went on with David Goggins. Why don't you smile? I do. I do. But I figured something out. That's why I am never, you'll never hear me say I'm missing something. I found it years ago. You find it in the suck. You find it in the suck. suck and you find it repeatedly in the suck to the point where you know exactly who you are most people are missing something because they don't know who they are they never examine themselves they they've never done this experiment on themselves the lab rat we're all lab rats but you're also the scientist you create your own self most people are missing something because there's so much trapped in there i don't even want to say I think that's a word used out too much, too. There's so much in you that God or wherever the hell you believe in, or if you're an atheist, in you that you have not unlocked. That you walk around with this gorgeous wife or great husband and all this money. You're like, God, I feel like I'm missing something. Yeah, because it's about 75% of you is still fucking in there. Still chained up because you just didn't want to find your willpower. Didn't want to find your soul. will your heart your determination your guts your courage and what that looks like it looks scary like your little scary lab i went in scary to wake up every day and say i'm stupid but i want to figure out a way to be smarter versus saying man i just can't do that so you limit this box so your box

becomes so small of things you can do my box wasn't even a box it was a fucking little like little pinhole and then through examining myself getting some willpower some courage it became bigger than this table but that's what we all do that's why i wanted to come here today and talk to you about real shit not no fucking like hacks there's no hacks bro it's you against you you against you and if you misunderstand that you have a real problem real problem i can understand you misunderstand me running on street shirt off fuck this no yeah i can i can get it i get it if you misunderstand saying right now today, the problem is you, and you don't want to fix it.