**Episode #14**

**Speaker 1** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Cabrera Lab Podcast.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:06] Hey, how are you doing?

**Speaker 1** [00:00:07] You having fun?

**Speaker 2** [00:00:08] I am having fun all the time. It's always fun. Nice. All right. So I was thinking about this. I always.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:15] I always have this moment where I'm like, what's the topic? I know. And then you're gonna tell me and then.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:20] Well, most of the time, I'm just spitballing it because there's so many things that we can talk about. Yeah, there's a lot. But it seems to me— Here it comes. What? Drum roll, please. I think we should talk about neurodiversity because we talk a lot about thinking and we talk about how we can get better at thinking.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:40] This is gonna get personal. Well.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:44] I wasn't going there, but maybe, but I, I was just thinking.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:48] How are we going to talk about neurodiversity without it getting personal?

**Speaker 2** [00:00:51] Well, I know we will get personal because of your own experiences, but my hope is that anyone listening out there, if they're neurotypical or neurodiverse, is getting something out of what we're talking about because we're really about everybody getting better every day about whatever they're trying to do and leveling up their thinking, raising their TQ, all of that. And it occurred to me that maybe there are people out there. watching who think maybe it doesn't apply to them because of some reason or the other, but I would like to disabuse them of that idea. I would, like, you know, people to know that this is all possible for everybody.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:31] Yeah, I mean, I would I would go kind of even further and say that like this is as a as a neurodiverse person, I don't love the word neurodiverse, but as a person with of neurodiversity descent or whatever, I know. Yeah, I don't think I would be alive without it.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:53] Yeah, I think it would be really helpful for people to understand the relationship between your own struggle with understanding your own neurological characteristics or patterns or whatever, and how that actually was in some ways the impetus for your whole life's work and how it has been connected and what you're hoping for it. I think that would be really helpful.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:22] Yeah, and it's hard to know where to start, but I guess, like, historically, you could just start at the beginning. I mean...

**Speaker 2** [00:02:28] That's mostly where most people.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:29] Yeah, like, you know, I mean, I did terribly in school. Just absolutely as bad as you can do. Like I have report cards that my mother saved that have straight Fs, like F, F, F,F,F. That's actually kind of impressive. I'm a little proud of that. Because it's not, it's easy to get like, yeah, some people can get Cs and Ds and F or two, but I had, I have report cards. that are literally all Fs.

**Speaker 3** [00:03:01] I have seen them.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:02] that is not easy to do that is an accomplishment in and of itself and uh... But at the time, it wasn't so funny, right? I can say that now in retrospect, but at the it was horrifying and not funny and like very upsetting for my parents and it didn't match with what they saw as potential and.

**Speaker 2** [00:03:27] Well, and you weren't trying to get all this.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:30] I really wasn't. I was like, I mean, there's that famous cartoon of like. in order to have equity in our school system, we're gonna ask everybody to climb the same tree except that students, one's a monkey and one's fish. Right. Right. And so, you know, if you'd asked me to do things that I guess would be more neurodiverse, I could have done those things very easily, but I was being asked to do very neurotypical things and I wasn't good at them.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:03] Right, so in that scenario, you're the fish.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:04] At the time, I had no idea I was a fish. I thought it was a monkey, right? I mean, that's the part that people have a hard time understanding. So you're sitting there as a fish, thinking you're a monkey and wondering what is wrong with you? Yeah. What the hell is wrong with me? Yeah. That I cannot do what other monkeys can do. And then somebody comes along and goes, hey, you know, you're fish.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:27] Oh, that almost...

**Speaker 1** [00:04:28] That whole breathing underwater thing.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:30] It would be interesting, I think, for you to describe what you struggled with in the school environment, specifically, even before you knew of, I know that you were diagnosed with certain things in your 20s.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:44] And thirties, yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:44] and 30s. But I think for a lot of people, it would be helpful to sort of have an understanding, almost experientially, of what it was like. What did you struggle with in the moment, in the classroom, in this neuro-typical setting, as a neurodiverse person?

**Speaker 1** [00:05:00] Yeah, so I think it's very difficult because I have so much awareness today of how my brain works and what was going on. But you've got to go back and put yourself in a context, in a historical context. that, one, society itself doesn't even know about these things, like ADD doesn't exist. Autism doesn't exists from, you know, in terms of society knowing about it. Teachers don't know about it, nobody knows about it when I was young. When you were young, it was before we had all of these words, yeah. You're that old. No, yeah, I am that old, but, and that includes me, I don't about it my parents don't no about it nobody knows about it it's not a thing. So what do they know about? They know about, you know, intelligence and they know hard work. So that's how they measure it. You're dumb and you're lazy. because you're not hard working, otherwise you'd get A's, and you're smart, otherwise, you'd A's. So you're dumb and you are lazy. So the entire system on a daily basis in every single interaction taught me over and over and over again that I was dumb and lazy. And I was like, Oh, I agree. I'm dumb and lazy. I must be dumb and lazy.

**Speaker 2** [00:06:35] Yeah, but that sets a whole bunch of stuff in motion, right? How you think about yourself, how you feel about yourself. The choices you see for yourself. you know, just, and how other, you know how other because how others perceive you impacts how you perceive yourself.

**Speaker 1** [00:06:55] I think it maybe did. I don't know. I mean, it made me who I am, so I'm happy about that. So I wouldn't wish it upon somebody else, I guess. I wouldn' wish it on a kid today. But and I think kids today have there's more awareness. So that's good. But I still think, even the fact that it's... Talk about distinctions like ADHD, attention deficit, and hyperactivity disorder, right? So you've got deficit and disorder, and hyperactive, and then attention, right. So first of all, I don't perceive the way my brain works, the diversity of my neurological system. I don' perceive it today as a deficit. I perceive it as a tremendous strength. That's good. I don't perceive it as a disorder. So it's really terribly mean. You know, I jokingly say that it should be called boredom intolerance disorder, right? Because I just have no tolerance for boredom. You know ADD is really about not having total control over where your attention goes. It's not about having a deficit of attention. Right. In fact, we have what is called hyper-focus. hyper focus, not hypo focus. Hypo is not enough focus hyper. We have both. We have not enough focused when when we're not interested. Yeah. And we have an insane, I mean, like, I know levels that normal people can neurotypical people have a hard time understanding what hyper focus can look like. Yeah, you don't always have control over where your attention goes. So when when It's good. Teacher, for example, and I know teachers today know a lot more about this, but in the old days a teacher would say You're not paying attention. The truth is you were paying attention, just not to them. Right. You're paying attention to something that is incredible. Like there's some of that little white spittle in the side of their lip and you're watching them and you just like, is it gonna go up or down? Is it gonna end up on their bottom lip or on their top lip? And you're just like focused on that thing and you were just like wow, this is cool. Or like the sound of water coming out of a faucet or. You know, just amazing things that are happening all around you.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:43] Yeah, it's not that you're not paying attention. It's that you are paying attention, but not necessarily to what they want you to pay attention to. You are paying attention to something. Which could be.

**Speaker 1** [00:09:53] I mean, that one way to say it is that you... deficit of attention but another way to say it is that they have a deficit of interestingness. Yes. They are boring. Yeah. And you have an intolerance to boredom. Right. And what they're covering and the way they're covering it is deadly boring.

**Speaker 2** [00:10:21] Yeah, it's not capturing your...

**Speaker 1** [00:10:22] It is not capturing my attention and there is all this other stuff going on, social dynamics in the classroom and amazing science things happening all around you that is so much more interesting.

**Speaker 2** [00:10:37] Right, so you are actually paying, you have attention, it's just on something that has captured your attention. And that's why in school, it was difficult, right? Because school is all about getting you to pay attention to what they want you to attention to, so that you can take the test and get the scores and all of that stuff, right. Which makes sense that you would struggle. I mean, because I, you know, let's be fair, I was a monkey, you were a fish. I could climb that tree. I had no problem climbing that tree! So for me, when the first time you showed me that cartoon, I actually started to understand what you were talking about, because you had always talked about how you struggled with school. And to me, that was a foreign concept because I'm a monkey, right? And the world is designed for me. The world is design for monkeys to climb trees.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:26] I think the most important thing of that is where neurodiversity as a concept comes from is the idea that these are just differences. They're not deficits. These are just difference. They're no disorders. We don't have to be ashamed of these things, not that I ever was, but we also don't have to ... Actually, I should take that back. there was a time where I was but because I denied it for like 15 years, you know, people said to me, oh, you're ADD, and I was like, oh, that stuff doesn't exist, you now. These things are not deficits, they're not disorders, they're just differences. And those differences, it turns out, are really cool. They're really cool, and it's not just ADD. I mean, it's spectrum disorders and, you know, I mean I have misophonia, I've got this weird sound thing, but that means I also pick up on interesting other sounds, and.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:28] What's interesting is when I first met you, I started to try to understand the whole idea of ADD and all these different types of deficits, obviously, because it was relevant.

**Speaker 1** [00:12:39] When you first met me, I wore the exact same thing every day.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:44] and rocked in chairs.

**Speaker 1** [00:12:45] and I would rock a lot more.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:47] because you couldn't sort of...

**Speaker 1** [00:12:51] I wear the same thing, and even today, I kind of do that. I have five of these. People probably think I wear these exact same clothes every day, but it's just that I have multiple of the same things, so I don't have to make choices about things that I'm not interested in. Right. So then I like I love the granimals. Do you remember your animals, you know where they would have like this matching like you just match a tiger with a tiger And you'd know if things matched

**Speaker 2** [00:13:23] Yeah, I have to think about it.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:24] You didn't have to think about it, right? They should have adult or animals, because then, yeah, so I've basically created the equivalent of adult or animal, which is just buy everything in black. Yeah. And then you don't have the, like black matches with black, also gray. Yeah. So I occasionally will do gray and red. Yeah, you're up to three. I'm up to the three colors. Yeah. You know, everything else I own that has colors, because of you. other than Hawaiian shirts, which I like.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:55] So wives help with that, too. Interesting. Well, what I was thinking about was This idea of difference versus deficit is really important. And it's important both at the individual level and the collective level. I do think that people are starting to move towards thinking of it as a difference, not a disorder. Thank you for watching!

**Speaker 1** [00:14:22] Yes. Somewhat. Although, if you think about the drug prevalence, that's about curing. That's about taking away the symptoms rather than utilizing the symptoms. The notion that all we do is just slap a drug on it and then we can decrease the symptoms Thank you for watching. And again, I'm not saying, you know, if people choose to utilize pharmaceuticals for that reason, like that's their choice. I, if it's helpful, then great. My personal choice was that I use those in order to learn how to not utilize them. So the first time I took Ritalin was it was an absolutely mind blowing experience. What do you mean? So This was many years ago. I finally was open to the possibility that there was even a thing called ADHD and that maybe I was having it. And mostly I had that because life was so difficult in so many ways, in particular around school. Uh, in my 30, late twenties or thirties, um, I, I finally sort of was willing to be like, you know, entertain the possibility that I had this thing. So I got tested and interestingly enough, one of the ways that they determined at the time, the, the whether you had it or not, aside from, you know, tests and things like that was just like how much damage. did how much historically damage could you show like if you if you were a person that you know was reasonably intelligent but just got like terrible grades or if you're a person for example that is a good upstanding citizen but just has like a crap ton of speeding tickets You know, which I have.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:29] Yes, I'm correct.

**Speaker 1** [00:16:30] that those are signs. Yeah. And.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:33] In other words, the outcomes are just as much of an indication as the inputs to diagnosing that.

**Speaker 1** [00:16:41] Yeah, I mean, a lot of people have the experience. A lot of neurotypical people, especially as society gets more complex and faster paced and all this kind of stuff, a lot neurotypical people have the same experience that ADD people have because it's overwhelming. The information is overwhelming. It's a lot. And so we're having kind of filtering problems that we're not filtering. And so they're having sort of that similar thing which is like, oh, it seems like I can't filter everything. I can organize myself, all this kinda stuff. Yeah, so like right there, I lost my attention.

**Speaker 2** [00:17:16] We were talking about how you were diagnosed and you were saying you took some tests and they looked at the outcomes of life

**Speaker 1** [00:17:22] Oh, what I was saying is, so a lot of people experience these things, but they don't have a history of like, you know, like you look back and you have a wake of terrible things that have happened as a result, like a pattern of bad and unexpected things. And so they that in the diagnosis, right? And I had that in spades. So anyway, I got diagnosed, and they gave me Ritalin. And I'll never forget the day I took Ritaline. I took it, and it was like my brain was neuro-typical for the first time in my life.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:06] So you'd never experienced it before.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:12] I think it was like, it was a It was like the first time in my whole life that I experienced being neurotypical.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:26] And what was it like?

**Speaker 1** [00:18:27] It was cool. I mean, it was like, it was, like, I could organize my thoughts. I could, I, I can have, like a direction. Like, instead of, instead of it being, like fireworks, it was a rocket ship.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:49] Oh, I like that.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:50] You know, and fireworks are cool, but it's like hard to do anything with fireworks. Fireworks are amazing and they're attention grabbing and all that kind of stuff. And they're really marvelous. But, but like this allowed me to like take all that explosive power and direct it. And I just had clarity. And I said to myself at that moment, I want to take this drug so that I can learn what it feels like to be neurotypical and then I can mimic, I can use my neurodivergent brain to mimic what I'm doing. And then I spent the next several years working on that. Working on it. And eventually was able to not need the the the Ritalin, because the Rinaldin at the same time that it allowed me to see this part of it, it also kind of had a dampening effect on me. Yeah, my personality was kind of my energy and stuff like that. It just didn't, I didn't like it. And I didn' like being, I just, I personally don't like, you know, doing those.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:02] Well, you don't even want to take an aspirin.

**Speaker 1** [00:20:03] No. So

**Speaker 2** [00:20:04] I get that there are a lot of

**Speaker 1** [00:20:05] I don't like taking anything that I dont have to, so it was just my choice not to. So I just used it. I literally would use it and I would pay attention as I was using it to figure out what is my brain doing that's different and how is it doing it and all that kind of stuff.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:23] Right, so you talked about, you just said that, you know, you tried the, you took, you tried Ritalin, you started to understand what it was like to be neurotypical, and then you use that awareness that you gained from those moments to then figure out a way to Thanks for watching!

**Speaker 1** [00:20:40] Organize.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:40] organize your own thoughts. And that's when you went and started to work on.

**Speaker 1** [00:20:46] DSRP.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:49] Maybe I think it will be really interesting for people to know how does DSRP connect to sort of solving that problem. Do you know what I mean?

**Speaker 1** [00:21:01] Yeah. So, I mean, one of the things that is so powerful about neurodivergent people, especially like high functioning neurod divergence, is they have amazing brains. They have these brains that are super fast, you know, like they're like race cars of brains and they can go very fast and they can do a lot of things. I don't know if I should tell this story because it takes a little while, but to me, this story was when I understood everything historically and about my own neurodivergence all at once. and I was in... It's the floaty city, Venice, I was in Venice and I would get up really early and I and I would just walk around Venice and then there was nobody around it was great and I've always liked that and so and Venice obviously has you know essentially streets which are water. And so I'm sitting there early morning in the lights, beautiful light, and there's all these water channels and then there's these beautiful bridges that people can walk over, right? And I'm looking at the water and the light's hitting it at a weird angle and all this kind of stuff. And it's, and the water is of course full of gasoline and you know, cause there's boats and taxis and all kinds of stuff, right? There's a whole city. So it's got all this film on top of it that's kind of looks like gasoline kind of film, right. Shiny with the colors and all that. And I was thinking about like, what if you lit a match? And it would like, like that on the top of the water. And I thought that's almost like a neuron, you know, where, where when you, you, here's two pieces of land and like to connect them, you would create like a, a match and it would, this is how.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:10] Well, you're literally like burning a path. Yeah, you burning a

**Speaker 1** [00:23:12] Yeah, you're burning a pathway, right? It would like light up electrochemically, right, and that would be like a bridge because that's the neuron is like a bridge so there's a I was literally sitting there looking at the water looking at a bridge and I thought to myself isn't that interesting because it's almost like in my brain and I think other neurodivergent brains you don't always have the right amount of gasoline or chemicals in the channel to make the bridge.

**Speaker 4** [00:23:40] IT.

**Speaker 1** [00:23:41] So what you have to do is you have to run down if you want to get from point A to B, right? And this is what school was on. If you want get from a to B most neurotypical people will be like, well, that's easy. Go as the crow flies. Yeah. But to an ADD person, you're like, I can't. There's no chemicals there for me.

**Speaker 3** [00:24:00] I see.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:00] I can't cross here. So then what you do is you go a mile downstream, you find a bridge, you cross the bridge, and then you run a mile back. Well, this person just ran 10 yards. You ran two miles. And then they call you slow. That's terrible.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:19] It's terrible.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:21] But here's the thing, you feel slow at the time because you're like, yeah, that did take me a minute. Yeah, that was kind of a stupid way to go when I could have just done that, right? But here is the thing. When you're constantly doing that, you get pretty good VO2 max. Yeah. You get pretty, good cardio, right. Right. And you get really good at running long distance and the network of neurons in your brain gets interconnected because you are connecting them as you're running the streets. and every short path you're running much further to get there and pretty soon you're actually so much faster. You're slow in the beginning, but over time, you have a much more interconnected network. And on top of that, you've really good cardio, neurological cardio, and your network is getting more interconnected. And so you just you're fast and you can think very well.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:21] Yeah, well, and you also would imagine see more and more connections.

**Speaker 1** [00:25:24] Yeah, you see more connections because you're traveling more space.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:27] Yeah, I mean, that's one of the difference I think about between you and me. Like, one thing I think is really different about you is you'll see 10 connections immediately and I'll see a handful and then need to be sort of working my way out. Like, you see everything all at once, right? Which is why people talk about this information sensory overload, because you literally see it all.

**Speaker 1** [00:25:49] But it's also how it makes it very difficult to communicate, and neurodivergent people have trouble, like they're not having trouble having great thoughts a lot of times. They're having trouble kind of organizing those thoughts, clarifying them, and then communicating them, because a lot times they're happening like this. They're happening all at once, and they have to take this nonlinear explosion of explosions. and explain it to somebody in this linear way that the words come out of your mouth to a person who probably only sees 20% of what you're describing and sees it in a very linear way. Yes. Right? That's right. When I had this understanding in Venice, it really clicked of how the mind, how my mind was working and having that distinction of the difference. made it just very clear, then I could see, oh, okay, so I have to explain it in this way. I have do things in a different way to communicate better. I have conceptualize in a difference way to get it to be clear enough to get to be communicated. And that got into how information is organized. I see. And that led to DSRP and really figuring out DSRP.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:13] Yeah, so in a way, this understanding of the difference between, because of the experience with the Ritalin, you could actually see the difference between neurotypical and neurodivergent. And then it allowed you to see the scaffolds that you needed to build for your own self to be able to manage in this neurotypical setting. Not that you were trying to do it because you wanted to manage the neurotypal setting, it's because you wanted to mitigate the effect. that you were experiencing.

**Speaker 1** [00:27:45] I wanted to survive.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:46] You wanted to survive in a world that was calling you dumb and lazy.

**Speaker 1** [00:27:51] Or just a world that was very confusing, like socially confusing, like, you know, just confusing. It's a confusing world for neurodivergent people, the social, you wanna be social, but you don't understand why the rules are a certain way. Right, so then you come off as being like, too aggressive or too- Blunt. Blunt or too. Blunt is one, literal. To me, like I have emotion and I have thinking and they're I. I very rarely get them confused, and I think neurotypical people, they don't distinguish a lot of ties between.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:28] So we can inflate them a lot.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:30] emotions in their thinking.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:31] Because that's what's normative. Yeah. That's why.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:34] To me, they're just remarkably separate. It's not that I don't feel emotion. I feel plenty of emotion. But to me, I don' they're not confused. They're not conflated. So it's very obvious to me when somebody's having an emotion versus a thought.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:54] and you'll respond to them.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:55] and I'll respond to either one, but what they do is they try to make, they dress up emotions in thought clothing, and then they dress of thoughts in emotional clothing, and they try and present them as emotions, and then you're supposed to treat them like emotions, but really they're thoughts that are just like, hey, I'm an emotion, look at me.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:14] But that's funny because, I mean, I'm sure we'll have many more conversations about these things, but the literality, just if you imagine, just imagine, I'm saying to this to the audience, imagine you go to a dinner party and there's 10 people there. And there's one person who is literal, right? That they have no ability to do anything but literal. That person is going to seem completely different, somewhat blunt. uh and and not quite fit in with the group right because that person sees everything and sees it differently

**Speaker 1** [00:29:53] Yeah, like if you ask that person, like, do you like my green sweater? And they're like.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:59] because they don't.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:59] because you ask them the question, do you like my green sweater? So to that question, I wouldn't think anything other than do I like the green sweater. I wouldn' think somebody's gonna get emotionally upset over me not liking their green sweater, I would just think they ask me the question. They wanna know whether I like this green sweater So I would say, no, I think, you know. It's a terrible sweater. It's terrible sweater, I wouldn't even say that, I would just say I don't like the sweater.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:34] or you just say maybe not particularly.

**Speaker 1** [00:30:36] Well, now I would say something different because I now understand that people, but generally speaking, there's a secondary effect which is, yeah, sure, now, I understand social situations much better than I used to and I can handle them and all that, but I don't enjoy them. Uncomfortable. It's not even that I'm uncomfortable anymore. It's just that now I just This is not relaxing. This is like a weird chess game where we... pretend to like chess or something like that.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:19] But I would also imagine for people like you, having to run two miles to everybody else's 10 yards for your whole life makes it, it's exhausting. Like I would imagine there's like, I would almost imagine there are many acrobats in your head, right? And they're constantly doing things to keep up, to keep, not literally, but you know, you're constantly more to travel the same ways that people get there much differently or much faster. linearly. And so I would imagine that social situations have a lot of complexity, which would require a lot that kind of, I don't know, the only word I can think about is like acrobatics.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:03] Yeah, I mean, the thing that I would say about that, though, is again, it's like we can frame it that way. And that's typically how we would frame it, is that I'm just doing so much more work and that seems like a negative and these people are just doing this. But you know, I used to guide in Yellowstone National Park and, you know 22 day courses and stuff like that. And the crazy thing about Yellowstone is that, you there's like a couple entrances and then there's a circle. of road, right? And 99, I don't know you can call the park service, but probably 99.8% of the visitors to Yellowstone stay on that circle of road. Oh, the whole time. Yeah. I mean, they don't stray very far, right. Well, there's a huge park that surrounds the roads. Nobody goes into that park. They just stay on the roads. Why? Because that's what neurotypical visitors do.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:08] Stay on the path.

**Speaker 1** [00:33:09] That's what typical visitors do. So the small number of people who go into the backcountry get to see the absolute grandeur and amazingness of what Yellowstone really is. And I see that as being a metaphor for the brain and for reality. It's like, you didn't get to go all the way down here and cross this bridge. You didn't to see all the things that I got to see. So to me, that's why it's not a deficit. Right. I'm not saying if you want to get from point A to point B, there's your guy. Don't pick a neurodiverse person to get you from point a to point b. Known quantities, linear, no. But if you wanna know what's going on in the network, of of of streets yeah and and possibilities i've run i've been running those yeah right and i can run them so fast

**Speaker 4** [00:34:21] You know them all.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:22] And I know them all, you know, because in order to get from A to B, I have to run to a totally different neighborhood. You see what I'm saying? So now I know that neighborhood and I know this other name, this place has great tacos and this place, not that they have tacos in Venice, but

**Speaker 2** [00:34:38] No matter where.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:39] You know, this one has really good, you know, whatever, and it's like, you know the city, well, the city is your brain.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:46] Right, and you know the pathways.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:47] And I know the pathways because I've walked them and I've run them. And I think that's what neurodivergence a lot of times is, is that they, they, they, first of all, they've traveled a lot further. Sometimes they seem slow, but it's cause they've, they came a longer distance and they benefit from the, from the vistas and the experience of the, of that distance. And as a result, they make more connections. They also aren't filtering as much, right? So- Yeah, taking everything in. Yeah, a lot of times they're taking in a lot more information, which is why it's hard sometimes to deal with all that information and communicate it through this little pipe that we have. Right. Because this is a very linear pipe, right, and same with writing. That's why we tend to be very visual, right. Writing and reading is very linear. You can only get what's on the line in the sentence. Yeah. But a visual-

**Speaker 2** [00:35:44] You can take it all in. No, I get that, because I'm the exact opposite. I like to read stuff.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:50] It takes me a lot longer, as you know, to read, you know? Like, I'll read a... But I can also read the headers of a book and pretty much understand the book.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:02] I wanna get back to one thing that I thought would be really important for people to hear. And I would imagine they might be wondering it because you said it but you didn't really elaborate on it. You were talking about needing to find a way or a thing to help you organize yourself, your brain, your thoughts. And then you said that's what led to DSRP theory. So I wonder in our last few minutes, and this might be a hard question to answer, I don't know. Maybe talk about how DSRP, the theory. Let's sort of solve that problem for you. You were saying it helped you sort of organize and understand your thoughts. So how does DSR, I just, I think people will wonder about that connection.

**Speaker 1** [00:36:51] I mean, basically what it did was it gave me a model and a language to understand differences across many spaces, right? So when you're dabbling in so many different worlds in order to connect the thing that you're trying to connect, which a lot of neurodivergent people are doing, right, Derrick, Derrick. You know, they're interested in everything and trying to bring it together in unique ways that people haven't brought it together before and things like that, right? Well, just take two fields, any two fields. Well, each of these fields, let's say, quilting and skateboarding, you know? Well, these fields are so different. They have their own. language, they have their own nomenclature, they have their own motivations, they have their own interests, they have their own history, they have, you know, everything, right? Right. And like if you're trying to bring together quilting and skateboarding and understand how they're similar and how they're different, None of the words are going to be the same, none of the history is going to the same. None of this superficial information is going to be same. That's what's going to different. Right. But the underlying structure is the same and so you can make connections at the underlying structural level, right? You can't make connections between Tony Hawk and a log cabin print. but you can make connections at a structural level.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:34] Okay, you mean the underlying structure of each.

**Speaker 1** [00:38:36] Yes. Okay. Right. And so and that they that they share a similar structure that this is making distinctions that are important to skateboarders and this is making distinctions. That are important to quilters about stitches and types of stitches and things like that. And this is about, you know, trucks and types of trucks and trucks are the not trucks like a

**Speaker 2** [00:38:59] You mean like the wheel thing?

**Speaker 1** [00:39:01] The metal that connects, the axle that connects the... Skateboard. The wheels. And the wheels, yeah. And to the skateboard. there are structures that are similar. So what you want to understand is, how are these different areas organized so that I can deal with them very quickly? I can understand them very quickly, I can organize them very quickly, and I can meld or unmeld them very quickly, right? Because again, at the superficial level, let me give you a different example. What if. you made the assumption that the only people that were similar to each other were people that were named the same thing.

**Speaker 2** [00:39:51] Yeah, so like all the George's in the wall.

**Speaker 1** [00:39:52] All the Georges have something similar. Yeah. But a George never has a similarity with a Bob.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:00] Yeah, that would be weird.

**Speaker 1** [00:40:01] Well, that's how we kind of treat knowledge. Yes. Right? It's like, well, this is a skateboarding term, and this is the quilting term, and there's no, those are just different.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:13] And there's no possibility for...

**Speaker 1** [00:40:14] And there's no possibility to learn something about skateboarding from quilting or something about quilting from skateboarding.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:21] Interesting.

**Speaker 1** [00:40:22] If you understand that those are just superficial details, surface level details, and you understand the underlying structure and patterns that they share, then a relationship over here that is important in skateboarding, you could take that importance and that structure and say, oh, is there anything over here in quilting that's like that that people haven't related yet? And then you can make that relationship. and then you can be the innovator of that relationship. that hasn't been made in quilting or vice versa that's been made in quilts but not in skateboarding.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:58] And in your person example, if you look at all the George's as the same, but then you also see a bunch of Bob's. The truth is George and Bob both are made up of DNA.

**Speaker 1** [00:41:09] Yeah, they both have DNA. They both have underlying structure.

**Speaker 2** [00:41:15] DNA structures, and so what you're saying is underneath different bodies of knowledge or artifacts of knowledge, or however you want to say it, you started to see those similar structures underneath.

**Speaker 1** [00:41:29] Yeah. And one of those George's might be more like one of those Bob's than any two Bob's in structure, in underlying structure. But you wouldn't know it if you're just focused on what are their names, right? And I think mostly we focus on what are the names of things. What are the words we use to describe things? Right. And that's not where the real meaning is. The real meaning is in the organization. Meaning or mental models is made up of information, which Which is the- you know, for lack of a better term, the names, and the way that information is organized. Well, that organization is hugely important. And so DSRP was just... I discovered when I, when I searched for the underlying organization of things.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:20] So was there a moment where you started to realize that all of these bodies of knowledge were organized the same way? They had distinction, there were crucial distinctions, there were relationships, things were organized into systems and perspectives and all of that. When was the moment where, I mean, this is interesting because not many people have thought this, that you took it from, Well, this is how things in the world are organized. which means how did you get to the leap that that means that the way that I'm thinking about to create these things is the same structure. Like, how did. You see that symmetry?

**Speaker 1** [00:43:00] Yes, well, so in classic ADD style, I'm going to go with what this reminded me of. There was a moment actually, this is before I had discovered DSRP, where I was having these dreams, like they're, I forget what you call them, lucid dreams. So you're having dreams that you're kind of in control of. And I was just having these dreams that were just, I have dreams, I don't have dreams a lot, but when I do they're repetitive and I have a little bit of control over where they go, and then just repeat. And it's usually when I'm trying to solve something. And so I had a lucid dream that was just like, all things are connected. Well, what are they connected by? All things are connect, but what are connected by, right? It's just like kind of maddening. That's a lot. So anyway, I'm walking in Boston, I'm walkin' past a store in Harvard Square, and it's a bookstore. And there's a book. And it catches my eye, and it's sitting right like center of the whole window. And it says, Consilience. Now, at this moment in time, I'm a high school dropout. Yes. I'm high school a dropout who's attempted four times to do college and failed. Yes. But I'm of a voracious reader and experiencer and all that kind of stuff, just like many neurodivergent people are. Yeah. I see this book, and I just see this word that I'm unfamiliar with, Consillience. and Underneath it catches my the unity of all knowledge and I'm like, that's what I'm more I'm working on that Yeah, I was shocked to see that a book would be written about that. Yeah, cuz that's when I was working on Yeah, and I so I go inside and look at the book and I look immediately turn it over to see who wrote it Mm-hmm, and it says this guy Didn't even have a name He's he was named after letters E.O. Wilson I have no idea who he is, but it says right there who he is. It's got a picture. It says, widely acclaimed as the world's greatest living scientist. Nice. And blah, blah, bla. E.O. Wilson started all kinds of things. And I was like, wait a minute. So I'm a high school dropout, and I'm thinking about the same thing as the World's Greatest Living Scientist? Wow. Why would that be? It's a moment. Yeah, that's interesting. Like, it suddenly gave what I was thinking about legitimacy. And then I immediately thought, oh, I don't have to do it anymore. Because he's already figured it out. So I'll just read his book. So I literally didn't. I canceled my day. I bought the book and almost got killed walking home to my closet. I lived in the closet. Part of the problem. And I was reading the book, I read it cover to cover. And I have to say, I mean, I love E.O. Wilson. Now I know who E. O. Wilson is. I love him. He is amazing. He did amazing. He studied ants and, you know, just an absolutely, truly one of the great scientists. But it was a terrible book. How so? It was like, it was like so dated. It was like reading something out of the Greeks or something like that. It was not part of this century. It was trying to come at all of knowledge from a thousand years ago. It just felt old-fashioned. It felt like a clunky old model. So then what did you do? Well, then I immediately thought, are you joking? Is this really? This is what we're. This is how we're going to answer this question. There's a better answer to this question, so then I got excited and then I dropped out and then went to Colorado to be near my old climbing partner who would keep me in reality. Because I knew I was going to go deep into it. That was the moment. It took me three years of stuff.

**Speaker 2** [00:47:30] That was the moment where you decided to answer that question, how is all.

**Speaker 1** [00:47:33] Then I knew, because at that moment, I knew that it was an important question. I didn't know that before, I just thought it was a question that my silly mind was interested in. Right. But then I was like, oh my god, this is an important question because this guy's asking it. That's funny. But his answer is not up to snuff, so now I have an opportunity and then my attention was just grabbed forever.

**Speaker 2** [00:48:01] And that's how you got to fast forward back. That's how got to looking at the underlying structure of knowledge because of the connection to how is all knowledge the same? How is it unified? Like what are the things that underneath?

**Speaker 1** [00:48:19] This gets a little technical, but, but if you, if you understand So imagine. I had this idea, this question that kept coming to me, and this happened in a dream also, which was. how do we know about ancient Egyptians? I thought that was an interesting question. Yeah. We know everything we know about ancient Egyptian, not Egyptians, ancient Egyptians. Everything we know about ancient Egyptians, we know from one thing, what they left behind.

**Speaker 2** [00:48:57] artifacts.

**Speaker 1** [00:48:59] What they left behind. The stuff they left. The stuff that they left, behind. Okay. Right? Yeah. So like, I used to wake up in California and go out in the lawn and there'd be those snail tracks. Yeah. You know, there's a little bit of like snot trails. And so, you know, like I never saw a snail. But you knew they were there. But I saw them, I knew they we're there. Yeah. Right?

**Speaker 3** [00:49:17] because you saw evidence.

**Speaker 1** [00:49:18] Because I saw a little snot trail and I'm sure that has a technique. Yeah, sure it does And so everything we know about Egyptians is from what they left behind.

**Speaker 3** [00:49:37] Interesting.

**Speaker 1** [00:49:37] So at the time I was, again, I was drop out, I had no resources, nothing, but I wanted to understand and study this stuff. And I thought like, well, I don't have access to MRIs and MRIs were pretty new. And you know, they really just told us where things were happening, not what was happening and stuff like that. And so I wanted understand the mind and how it worked, but I was studying knowledge. Well, what is knowledge? Knowledge is what the human mind over time has left behind.

**Speaker 2** [00:50:12] and it doesn't necessarily have to be physical stuff.

**Speaker 1** [00:50:15] It could be knowledge of how to build a table or knowledge of how to make a waterfall or knowledge about how to make a pyramid or whatever. So that's what papyrus.

**Speaker 2** [00:50:24] Knowledge is what we've left.

**Speaker 1** [00:50:26] Knowledge is what human minds have left behind so it tells you but but the other thing is knowledge is what human minds of left behind upon attempting to understand the world reality so knowledge is actually the thing the left behinds the lead behinds of this interaction between human minds and reality over time.

**Speaker 2** [00:50:52] And I don't think people thought about it that way, at that point.

**Speaker 1** [00:50:56] If we could understand the underlying structure of knowledge, there's a good chance that that would reflect on both sides of that equation, on both side of that relationship, on the way that the mind works and also on the way that that universe works. You have incredible statistical properties in this knowledge, right, which is like this is a lot of human minds over human time.

**Speaker 2** [00:51:18] Which means, if you're understanding what knowledge is by looking at...

**Speaker 1** [00:51:25] The underlying patterns are wrong.

**Speaker 2** [00:51:28] What you're saying is then there was a corollary thought from that, which is, well, if there's an underlying pattern to the outcomes or the.

**Speaker 1** [00:51:38] So there's a relationship between the human mind and reality, and that is knowledge. Knowledge is the leave behind. Knowledge is what the human mine poops out when it interacts with reality. So knowledge is the leftover of human minds collectively, a huge number of human mind studying a huge number of things about the real world leave behind collectively knowledge. So if we study the structure of that knowledge, not the Bob and John details of the knowledge, but the underlying structure of the that knowledge. Then we are simultaneously studying these two things.

**Speaker 2** [00:52:23] Reality and

**Speaker 1** [00:52:24] and the mind, right? And so that was the hypothesis, at least. And so I found the underlying patterns of this thing, knowledge, of D and S and R and P. And then later, we empirically tested whether or not those things were in the mind and in reality, and we found that they were. Right. Universally, in the the mind and in the reality. Like, they're never not in the in the real.

**Speaker 2** [00:52:51] Right, and it's funny to me that you just say that as a sentence. Why? It's kind of a big deal. It's a big that you had that thought, right? And you're like, oh, and then we figured out the underlying patterns of knowledge and the underlying patterns of thinking. And you just said it like it's a sentence, but it's not just a sentence it's if you go all the way back to the struggle that you started with, it's amazing. It's amazing because it's the thing that helped you understand your own mind so that you could cope and understand how you were thinking about things to then harness the power of your, you know, it's metacognition.

**Speaker 1** [00:53:36] Yeah, it kind of made life possible for me personally. That's not why I did it. That was just kind of a side effect.

**Speaker 2** [00:53:48] Yeah, it's a good side effect. It's a huge side effect, and I guess what's important in in my estimation is the power or the liberation that you might have felt once you understood that. Once you understood.

**Speaker 1** [00:54:05] the patterns.

**Speaker 2** [00:54:06] Yeah, the patterns, what was that effect for you?

**Speaker 1** [00:54:11] Yeah, that's interesting. So the effect that it had on me was that it made things just so much easier to understand, to comprehend and clarify and communicate. Right. It did also kind of, and this is a little separate, it came with a heavy burden, which is that I then had to spend my life dealing with this thing that I found, right? Which is that like, oh, that it's not an insignificant thing, I have to tell the world about it. And I have do things to prove that A, it's empirically true, and B, make it accessible so that people can understand it. you know, that's been a burden that's taken years off my life. You know, that, that I don't think is a burden for everybody that learns it, because they don't have to.

**Speaker 2** [00:55:02] They don't have to go through the process to find it like you did.

**Speaker 1** [00:55:05] and they don't have to feel responsible for it. I would love to not feel responsible for it, but I pretty much can't stand it. I mean, it's not that I can't stand it, I would like to not feel responsible.

**Speaker 2** [00:55:19] for bringing it up.

**Speaker 1** [00:55:20] Yeah, it'd be great to be like, I'm done. Well, somebody else can shoulder that.

**Speaker 2** [00:55:25] But here's the good news, you are not solely responsible.

**Speaker 1** [00:55:28] No, not anymore. When you came, it was a big shift.

**Speaker 2** [00:55:33] Yeah, I mean, you are in a sense responsible for its discovery, which is a wonderful thing.

**Speaker 1** [00:55:39] So there's a quote that I think is misattributed to Gandhi, which is, first they'll ignore you, then they'll laugh at you, then they will fight you, and then you win, or something like that. And, yeah, I think, you know, anytime you discover something new that goes against the dominant norm, yeah, the first thing they do is ignore you. And that's hard. and then then they laugh at you and there's a number of years where they laugh at you. And then they bring out the big guns and fight you and then you know that's that's and then you and you win and then they you know. Right. I've seen all those stages and they're. Yeah but but the point of all of it.

**Speaker 2** [00:56:28] that means it's becoming a point of focus, a point interest, a point of curiosity, which is what you want it to be. You want it to

**Speaker 1** [00:56:36] I think he missed one, which was, then they say they knew it all along.

**Speaker 2** [00:56:41] Right, but I think just as a callback, because I like to do that, maybe it's a personality disorder on my part, you know, we started this whole conversation around around neurodiverse and neurotypical.

**Speaker 1** [00:57:00] Yeah, we kind of, we got a little mouth track.

**Speaker 2** [00:57:02] Because of you. No, we didn't actually have a truck.

**Speaker 5** [00:57:08] This was sort of funny if you think about it.

**Speaker 2** [00:57:10] What I think is interesting through your story is that these patterns of thinking are the patterns of think, whether you are neurotypical or neurodiverse, meaning they have power to liberate people through metacognition, regardless of where they land on that continuum. And so what's nice is, and I appreciate you sharing your own story, that this really helped you. gain that clarity, ability to communicate, and actually bring these ideas out.

**Speaker 1** [00:57:42] Yeah, I would I would go further and say I mean it didn't help me it was like I wouldn't have been able to yeah even make it

**Speaker 2** [00:57:51] Well, you'd be in jail for too many speeding.

**Speaker 1** [00:57:53] I'd be in jail or dead or, you know, I just, I, I just was too. Too many things going on in my brain and not enough control and organization of those things, purposeful, metacognitive. You know, my body just became like a, like a vehicle for expressing the chaos in my brain. Yeah, that's a good word. And so I would just get in trouble and I'd do stupid stuff and like a lot of dangerous stuff and, and

**Speaker 2** [00:58:36] because you needed a lot of stimulation. Yeah. A lot of.

**Speaker 1** [00:58:39] It's a lot. Yeah. And so this just like... it just made things a little more, like a little less on the edge of chaos and more ordered and complex, right? Manageable. Yeah, manageable. Yeah. Complex, but not like, not full blown stochastic.

**Speaker 2** [00:58:58] That's a nerdy way to end on stochastic. Let's all go look up stochast-

**Speaker 1** [00:59:04] It just means like random.

**Speaker 2** [00:59:06] I know, I know. But still. All right, well, this has been a fascinating conversation. I'm sure it is one of many because I think this is a really interesting thing to think about.

**Speaker 1** [00:59:17] I'm not sure we really hit on neurodivergence very much.

**Speaker 2** [00:59:20] Well, we did.

**Speaker 1** [00:59:21] I guess experience we did

**Speaker 2** [00:59:24] Now, people will know the backstory, and then we'll keep talking about it in future episodes. Okay. All right. So that's a wrap.

**Speaker 1** [00:59:31] And remember to like and subscribe!