**Episode #41**

**Speaker 1** [00:00:01] Welcome to the Cabrera Lab Podcast. Hello.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:07] How are you?

**Speaker 1** [00:00:07] I am fantastic. Happy New Year. Happy New year.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:11] It's official, 2025 is gonna be a great year.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:14] It's gonna be a great year.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:15] you notice anything different?

**Speaker 1** [00:00:17] Oh, you got the shirt on. Nice. Shirt on. The official first edition podcast t-shirt.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:24] This is it. This is the front. You should show them the back. It's got cool stuff on the back

**Speaker 1** [00:00:28] The back says human with the change symbol and the tagline things change when thinking changes.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:38] Notice in the winter months we can layer it, ladies, because it's cold outside.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:43] gets yours is now limited supply.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:46] All right, all right, this is fun, because it's New Year's Day. So you know what we're going to talk about? What? New Year resolutions, because a lot of us have them. In fact, more of us than I thought. I have some fun statistics I want to read to you about New Year resolution, so I want talk about them.

**Speaker 3** [00:01:03] Okay.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:03] Okay, so in the United States, approximately 39% of adults set New Year's resolutions.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:11] 39

**Speaker 2** [00:01:12] But interestingly, younger adults, at the age of 34, 59% make resolutions.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:20] of the younger one.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:21] Younger ones, and people over 55.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:24] They're done with it.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:25] 3.1%.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:26] Yeah, either, either wisdom or, you know, they've or they've just given up.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:33] Or maybe we've learned to embrace reality.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:37] Well, that's the wisdom part. So it's either that the age has given them wisdom and they realize that these, you know, once a year kind of things, you know, tend to fall flat.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:50] Well, and I think maybe as you get more advanced in your years, you realize the time is now.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:56] Yeah. Right.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:57] If you're going to change something.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:58] today. No reason to wait until January 1st. Nobody's coming. Nobody is coming. Right. That's a thing we say in mountaineering, like nobody's coming, right? There's no rescue. You get a self-rescue. So if you're wanting to do some thing, nobody's come. You got to get at it and you got to get it today, not tomorrow.

**Speaker 2** [00:02:21] I mean, I can see the pros and cons of a resolution. So let's talk about it a little bit. So if I'm younger, and I used to be younger, I think sometimes you could use a resolution to have a new mental model of who you want to be the next year or things you want do differently. And so in that way, maybe it's a motivational factor. Thank you very much for watching.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:40] Yeah. I mean, resolution is just a goal. There's certainly nothing wrong with goals. The thing that always catches me is I'm pretty sure the entire gym industry, like the big box gyms, their whole business model is based on the idea that most people aren't going to follow through with their memberships. In other words, they accept more people than they can possibly handle with the idea that most people just aren't gonna follow through with their goals. Again, it's not that, and they focus on New Year's resolutions, right? Because a lot of people, they'll go out, spend the money, get a gym membership, and then never use it. And the gyms count on that. Like the business model actually counts on that, so it's human. It's smart. It's reality. So goals, not a problem. Obviously goals are great. You know, having a goal is a vision, a goal, an objective, whatever. Those can be very motivating. if we call it a resolution and it happens to happen on New Year's, you know, fine, but really it can happen any day, every day, and really it has to be happening every day because the bottom line is whatever resolution you make, you've got to re-up it, re-make it every day.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:02] Yeah, I mean, I think that that's what's interesting because sometimes I think, not to be too direct, but so for me, sometimes I I think it's easy to use it as a hedge because I'm like, oh, after Christmas, I'll eat less. After Christmas, I'll exercise more. Because I just got to let's just get through Christmas. And in a weird way, it would be better for me just to say, OK, every day I'm going to do this and do that and keep myself healthy and enjoy the holiday. but. not use this sort of arbitrary January 1 as, oh, that's when I'm gonna actually make the change. Because it is hedging, it's hedging on today. It's allowing me to permission myself today to carbon and not exercise, which is bad. Well, it is not bad, it was not my daily goal. When you think about it, it' funny.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:54] It's human.

**Speaker 2** [00:04:55] Okay, so do you want to know what the three, the top New Year's resolutions are and there's three that tie for number one? Sure. You want to guess?

**Speaker 1** [00:05:01] what they are?

**Speaker 2** [00:05:02] Yeah, what the top three are.

**Speaker 1** [00:05:04] Oh God, I wouldn't even venture to guess. I would imagine it's something around getting, you know, fit or something, losing weight.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:12] Losing weight is actually second. Second. The three are topped at the time, but they tie together. So eat less.

**Speaker 1** [00:05:18] Eat less.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:18] Exercise more.

**Speaker 1** [00:05:20] That's one and two.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:21] There are three that are tied for number one.

**Speaker 1** [00:05:24] Oh, okay.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:24] Equally so it's exercise more eat healthier not eat less eat healthier and save money. Those are the three Yeah, those are the 3 and then right underneath that is lose weight, which may

**Speaker 1** [00:05:35] sense which kind of the first one is probably for that reason right yeah right and then what's the third one

**Speaker 2** [00:05:40] The third one is spend more time with family and friends, which is actually a good one too. I mean, they're all good. But I think what's interesting to me is, we should talk about micro makes the macro, right? Because if those are the things that people are talking about, save money, exercise more, and eat healthier.

**Speaker 1** [00:06:01] Yeah, the micro makes the macro is a huge, huge idea. It comes from complexity science. It's sort of the something I came up with just to kind of capture the essence of what complex systems are doing, is that the micro makes the micro. And I think that's true of pretty much all like emergent properties, which all of the things that we want are effectively emergent properties of complex. systems right so you know we want to lose weight well that's an emergent property of like micro micro things micro choices to sleep to exercise to build muscle mass to eat you know whole foods and you know good good food and and have a calorie deficit or something like that and get your steps in and those are all micro things that occur on a daily basis on an hourly basis right

**Speaker 2** [00:06:58] Right, meaning that weight loss isn't going to happen all at once. It's every daily choice, every day, choosing whether or not you're going to have the emergent property of losing weight by the things you choose day to day, to day to day.

**Speaker 1** [00:07:13] and so and like micro i was just thinking about this the other day it's like micro is really micro sometimes you got to be really micro like micro micro like micromicro like i heard i heard gordon ramsay the other and he was saying that pan is too hot throw some oil on it to cool it down i was like wow that's really interesting right so chefs will use oil that cool to pan down if it's getting too hot. So they don't even like, yeah, from a chef's perspective, pan's getting too hot, it's starting to smoke, put some oil in it, it'll cool the pan down, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:07:50] while the fish is in it cooking.

**Speaker 1** [00:07:52] While the fish is in a cooking, right? So, or the chicken or whatever it is. And so from the perspective of a chef, that's great. But from the prospective of a person who's like trying to order out and stay healthy, that piece of fish just added 300 calories or 200 calories or 150 calories or whatever. And so. Like a piece of fish is not a piece of fish, is not piece of a fish, right? That fish, and then of course they're gonna put sauce on it and a million other things. So what used to be a nice piece of protein with that was reasonable, just became completely out of control and unreasonable, right. Yeah. If you're trying to have a calorie deficit or you're tryin' to eat healthy or that type of thing. And I think making those distinctions is a micro. set of choices, their choices every single day that you have to make. And you can choose this way or you can chose this way. And society is often set up to super incentivize us to choose the bad choice. Because a bunch of people are going to make money when you make the bad choice. They're using your neurology against you. They are using your cravings against you, they're using everything against you. whether that's getting on your phone that extra one time and getting that dopamine hit from your phone, which is just reinforcing that behavior or whether it's looking at the blue light before you go to sleep or whether its choosing to eat out instead of to make a piece of chicken at home that you're in control of, right? Or a piece fish at home when you're you're control of that piece of fish.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:39] Yeah, I mean, the irony is that person thought they were making the healthy choice because they chose chicken or fish thinking that's the healthier meat.

**Speaker 1** [00:09:45] Yeah, and they're just like throw some calories on there, you know, so some empty, you know, oil calories under that fish, you know, just to cool the pan down. So this, you know, this is about taking perspectives to the chef. They're not thinking about that person that's trying to make healthy choices in the front of the house. They're thinking about how do I make this thing taste good? How do I cool the pan down? From that perspective, it makes total sense. Put more sauce on it, put more of this on it. Put more of that on it Douse it and make a steak, but make it in a half a stick of butter. Yeah, they butter-based it. Yeah, the butter-baste it, right? I don't, first of all, I don' feel that good when I eat that. So after the fact that I'll feel great. And second of all I just don't want it. I'd rather have more steak, right. I'd better have a clean steak and get more steak. than have a bunch of butter that I'm not interested in, right? But again, that's that perspective and the distinctions people are making and the micro choices that happen every single moment of every single day. And those micros add up and they add up into macros. Macro, meaning big picture stuff, stuff you care about. Same with finances. I mean, it's all about It's all about like what you spend, the little things, that little things here and there that you spend. They add up, they add up a lot. Quickly. Quickly.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:18] and people don't even realize, because like, oh, I just spent $10 on a coffee or five days a week.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:24] Yeah, or the kids just door-dashed again, you know, like for the 70th time this week, right? Our neesis. I mean...

**Speaker 2** [00:11:32] Where you pay more to deliver the food than you actually buy the food.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:34] You know, $30 of Taco Bell and then a $50 Taco Bell charge, you know, it's insane.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:42] Yeah. Well, I was thinking about it because, because I literally had that conversation with myself, which is, Oh, cause I've noticed lately, I'm not paying as much attention to my, my stricter cause everybody's been sick and you know, like it's been a stressful few months and I'm starting to degrade on my daily goals. So then I realized the other day, I'll, I I'll just make that my new year's resolution. And then I realize, Oh that's like kicking a football, right? I just

**Speaker 1** [00:12:09] kick in the can down the road.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:11] And I had that conversation with myself. Oh, I should probably think about that. And I'm sure everybody does that.

**Speaker 1** [00:12:16] Yes. To me, one of the things I love, like I love science and I love these amazing, some of these just mind-blowing ideas like evolution and complexity science. These are big ideas and big important ideas in science. But what I really love beyond the science of evolution or the science and complexity theory or something or network theory or whatever is like. when you can take the essence of that thing and it so applies to every single moment of every single day life, you know? And if you take evolutionary theory, there's so many things you can learn from evolutionary theory. But just the idea of incrementalism is so powerful. You know, just incrementalism. Just you apply that to your everyday life and you realize the power of incremental ism, whether it's. Saving money or losing weight or all that like I'm just using three things that people want to do, right? Yeah Or you know eating right? It people think I'm gonna eat right and it's a big thing It's a macro statement, right and by definition almost or just the quality of of New Year's resolutions are big They're resolutions. Yeah. Yeah, and I think we have to kind of shift the thinking to for them to be ultimately micro and ultimately incremental. Then if you take complexity science and you understand micro makes the macro, and then you put those two together, micro makes a macro and incrementalism, and you just have a formula for life there, for living a great life. Incrementalism, micro makes the macro. Think about very small things repeating, you get very big things. And that wasn't, that's not always the case. In fact, in the old days, believe it or not, there's some historical documentation of the way people used to think about things. So when they saw something like the Grand Canyon, something large, right, something big, and they would think, oh, in order for this to exist, it's so big, so grandiose, something big would have had to happen. So if this is the effect, the cause must have been big. Yeah. And that was the thinking. So they thought a flood must have caused this, a huge, bigger than I can imagine flood created this huge, bigger than can imagine, you know, a canyon. Yeah. So big effect, big cause. Yeah. Right? Yeah. When you understand how nature tends to work, it tends to micro effect incrementalism. Yes. So you take micro. and incrementalism, and that's what makes the macro effect. So micro incremental causes macro big effects. So if you want big effects, look for little repeated incrementalisms, right? Little incremental, little repeated things lead to big things.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:34] Yeah, because I know, I love it when you dip the science-y thing. Well, I just think that science is so bars. Humor me for a second. I think part of that, and this is something I've learned over the years, is we're very distracted by an instantiation and we very often fail to look for the pattern of things underneath that led to that. And that's not just a great case, our own personal behaviors around eating money. anything really, how we think about ourselves, any of that. How do we get better at looking at both?

**Speaker 1** [00:16:10] Yeah. I think we've talked about this before on the podcast that the iceberg example of systems thinking where you do, we all tend to focus on the top of the iceberg. The part that's sticking out of the water is the instantiation, the event, the information, whatever. And we don't tend to see the part that is immediately beneath it, which is the patterns. And then underneath that is structures and then underneath that is the mental models. And so this is why mental models are so critically important or thinking, essentially, because those mental models are driving the structures, and the structures are driving patterns, and patterns are driving instantiations. But we're mostly lost and confused and focused on the instantiation.

**Speaker 2** [00:17:03] Meaning we're distracted by what's happening sort of at the surface level of things. Yeah. And we're not taking the time to go and look underneath what's the cause of that.

**Speaker 1** [00:17:12] Yeah, so like a great one is just like permissioning. All of these, you know, what do you call them? Resolutions. They all are subterfuged by things like permission, right? So we all, because we're all humans, we all do permissioning, it's like, oh, well, I'm not going to stay away from alcohol or something like that. and then I'll. my buddies are drinking, so, you know, I can, well, you kind of made a goal not to, and so like, why should that matter? But you make these permissionings, or, you now, oh, it's Christmas, or it's New Year's, or it is Thanksgiving, or it, you, there's always gonna be a reason, and in fact, people are gonna come up with reasons. because they're making money off the reasons, they're getting your attention off the reason, and they're able to sell your attention to the highest bidder. So, all of these things are going to lead to just more and more permissions. And then, so if you don't see that pattern, it's not gonna happen as a permissioning. Permissioning is the pattern. You're not going to see the permissioning, you're going to see the instantiation. I drank, I'm going to you're gonna see the instantiation, Oh, I had that, that, you know, I probably shouldn't have done that. you're not going to see like, oh, I did that because I permissioned myself. I did that because somebody else did that. So I did it too. And then, and I was only going to do that once this week, but three people around me did it. So I did it three times this week. Right. Or something like that. And, um,

**Speaker 2** [00:18:53] Well, it's interesting because our resolutions seem like they're a static thing that we're trying to fix, right? But what we really should be doing is focusing on my resolution, if I had to have a resolution, would be to sort of recognize those patterns, break the pattern so that I don't have to make the same resolution next year. Because I don' have a stat on it, but a lot of people are making the same resolutions every year because they're failing.

**Speaker 1** [00:19:18] Yeah, my advice is don't make a resolution this year on the first. Then when? Because then you reinforce this idea that you have to wait till the first to start.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:27] That's true.

**Speaker 1** [00:19:29] So don't do it on the first, do it on the 31st or do it on the second. Just to change. Just to be like, this is a stupid mental model that we wait until the first to do big things and and we think that big things are big.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:43] And to reinforce the idea that change happens every day in those small moments and over time, next year you're actually not gonna need to make that resolution because you've made that, you've resoluted every day in your choices.

**Speaker 1** [00:19:58] The other thing is just like, we're all really good at excuses, right? So, you know, all of us, all of us do it, just love reality. That's cool. We're human. We do these things. Make all the excuses you want just don't believe any of them

**Speaker 2** [00:20:15] Or here's another way to think about it. Embrace the reality that you know is happening, and then organize your choices and your resolution, your determination around that. So for example, that's why a lot of people who are successful have a cheat day every two weeks. Because that cheat day allows them to stay disciplined in the micro, you know. So for, example, with Christmas and Thanksgiving, you can say, oh, well, Thanksgiving Day, I will enjoy myself. The day after, I'm back to my routine. Yeah. And that's the way to think about it.

**Speaker 1** [00:20:50] Interesting.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:51] How is it interesting?

**Speaker 1** [00:20:53] I don't know how I feel about cheat days. Oh, really? Because cheat days are interesting because they we think of them as like mental things, right? But if you understand the more I understand the physical body and its responses to things, the more the more, I think that cheat days are our reality. Your body, your body needs to understand and that it's not. starving. Otherwise, it's gonna hold. Yeah, right. So I get more out of rather than Oh, if I don't cheat day, then I'm not gonna that I'm gonna, that I've got to, you know, go off the rails. Yeah. Right. And that just seems like a more of a discipline thing, which as an ADD person, I just have never believed in discipline, because it doesn't work for ADD people like You don't have the attention to have discipline. So how do you manage it? Structure. Everything is structure for an ADD person. Like discipline is what ADD people get beat up with their whole life by neurotypical people.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:05] So what you're saying, I just want to stay there for once because I think that's interesting. Because discipline requires control of your focus, what you do instead is you put structures in your routines that create that focus for you because you just follow the...

**Speaker 1** [00:22:20] Yeah. Again, I'm not against discipline. I guess it doesn't really work if you can't remember, like if you, if you cant be focused on it long enough. Yeah. Right. And you don't. And the thing about ADD is you don t have total control over what you focus on. Yes. You have tons of focus. Yeah, sometimes you have what's called hyper focus, which is the, the most extreme type of focus there is in, in, the human spectrum. So ADD people actually, it's not, It's a misnomer. to say that they can't focus, right? That they have a attention deficit. That's just not true. They don't have attention deficit, sometimes they have attention, hyper attention.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:03] So much so that that's right.

**Speaker 1** [00:23:04] That's all you can do, which is one of the great gifts of ADHD. Sometimes they have hypo attention, meaning they have no ability to attend to. But the characterizing feature is not whether they have attention, it's whether they have control over their attention. A neurotypical person tends to have a little bit more control over what they attend to, so for example, if you have to read something that's to You. Boring. You can read it. I'm always shocked. Like, I'm like, oh God, this is terrible. And you're like, here, let me read it and I know that you think it's terrible too, but you read it, you're capable of doing that. That's shocking to me. Like, you know, that's not something, if something is deeply- Boring.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:53] It can't keep your attention. But I can force my attention on it. I can literally force my attention on. Yeah. That's what you're saying.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:00] Yeah, think of it this way. If you ask the dog to read something, first of all, it would be hard. But then if you ask a dog to write something and then you put like three squirrels in front of him, there's no way he's going to end up reading that thing, right? That's like kind of how it feels like. There's just no way there's a squirrel. There is no way, no matter how much discipline and focus I have, if there's squirrel, there's no way that I'm not chasing that squirrel. And to an ADD person, anything could be a squirrel.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:33] and the world's working against you because you get pings from everywhere. You know, like your closet. Well, the world.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:37] Oh, the world is full of sc-

**Speaker 2** [00:24:39] It's full of all kinds of squirrels. Which are cool. And the squirrels push to you, they come to you. Which is even worse. Whereas I can sit on the deck and let the squirrel crawl on my shoulders while I actually read the thing. I don't want them like that.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:52] This episode is sponsored by Training Camp, the ultimate online spot for building the mental fitness that drives personal and professional change and success. At Training Camp you'll have access to the science and practice of thinking with personalized thinking assessments, tiered training, and best of all, practice that improves skill. Go to CabreraLab.org to learn more. And now. Back to the episode. So the idea of discipline, for me, I'm not speaking for all ADHD or autistic people, but I'm saying I would bet dollars to donuts that they resonate with us, is a weird one, because if you don't have the attention or the focus, if you have the intention, meaning if you had the hyper-focus, then you can be incredibly disciplined. But if you dont, then you won't. So a lot of folks talk about this, and again, I'm not anti-discipline. Discipline is an amazing thing, but for people like myself, you handle discipline differently. You handle it through structure, which is kind of the system's way, is like structure determines behavior. So we handle things, if you're going to have success with your ADHD or your autism or whatever, you're gonna do it through Structure.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:12] I think because system structure determines behavior, that can be as useful for a neurotypical person as a non-neurotypical person. Absolutely. I'm not saying that in a defensive way.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:22] No, I agree. I think that's really an astute observation that is so important for neurotypical people. I feel sorry for you folks because you've bought into this whole discipline thing that's so constraining and really judgy. It's super judgy and the thing is it's based on This is good and people are gonna not like this, but but uh, it's based on a completely just untenable concept of free will.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:55] the idea that we have.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:56] It's the idea that you have free will, which we don't, of course. I'm sure a million people are going to write that, you know, we have freewill and we dont. There's nothing in science that shows that we have a free will. We have choice, and this is what people are really going to get hung up on, is like, Oh, well, I have choice. I can make choice. Sure, you have tons of choice. You have local, local choice. Mm-hmm. You can choose between the the you know grape smoothie and the and then banana smoothie. You get to choose that. But you don't get to chose the gold nugget smoothie because that's not available at the smoothie stand.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:39] Nobody makes gold nuggets.

**Speaker 1** [00:27:40] Well, that's what I'm saying. You don't get to choose that you don't get to chose that because it's not available. So it's a it's locally constrained. You get to make tons of choices. But they're not free choices. They're constrained by systems, they're constrained, not just the smoothie stand, the whole system that the smoothie stand is a part of. And the one that that system is a part of and the one that that system is a part of. That system of systems is constraining your choices to such a high degree that in no world would we call that free choice or free will.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:19] Meaning it's its choice within a limited within a limit Right, and that also speaks to why, when we talk about just people, you know, if you look at people and you say, well, this person's successful and this one's not, well they are products of that limited.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:41] The products of their limited choice, the products of their experience and their upbringing, the products have all these different things. If you didn't have those different things, you wouldn't have that choice. That choice wouldn't be available to your mental system or your thinking or whatever. On top of that, even if all those things were available, there's so many examples in science where we can manipulate you chemically or socially. or structurally where we can get you to do things that you otherwise wouldn't do. If you look at the Stanford prison experiments, you know, those people did a bunch of stuff that they would never have chosen if they had free will, right? Yeah, that's right. You know, if I can take a shot of some chemical and put it in your arm and get you instantly behave differently, how much free will do you really have? You're you're a slave to your chemistry. You're a slave to you're, you know, you're you have choice. There's no doubt we had choice. I can choose the red pen or the or the black pen.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:47] but you can't choose a yellow pen.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:49] Right now, locally, I can't choose a yellow pen, and I probably can't choose a pen that's made out of, you know, squirrel skulls. You know, like, I probably can't use that because it's definitely not nobody's manufacturing those pens. Like, liquefied squirrel cells that have been turned into ink. And then, like you can write in squirrel, you can sign your name and squirrel cell ink or something like that.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:18] Interesting.

**Speaker 1** [00:30:19] I'm saying I'm trying to make up something absurd because there are so many things. So we say, oh, well, yeah, I have all these choices. No, you don't. You don't have all those choices. Right. You have the choices that you have constrained choices. We call them local choices, localized, meaning that the local could be local to the popsicle stand, or it could be a local to your community, or local to country, or local can mean a lot of things. but it just means that the the system or system of systems that is involved in that choice is constraining that choice.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:58] Right, but then people are gonna say or think, well then what do we actually have any control over in terms of our own fate, our own outcomes?

**Speaker 1** [00:31:07] This is part of loving reality is realizing you don't have as much control as you think you do, and a lot of that is, again, folks are really afraid of that notion, but I would submit to you and to all of the people that are afraid of notion that that that is your liberation. That is one of the most liberating things in the world to understand that you're not actually in as much control. as you think you are.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:39] Well, and I also think it might be the first step to actually embracing reality.

**Speaker 1** [00:31:42] Yeah, it's a wonderful thing. And I think people are terrified of it. But it's actually wonderful. It's a wonderfully liberating thing. It takes so much weight off your shoulders when you realize that you're not actually as in control as you think you are. Right. And if you just kind of go with the flow. I always say this with like, for a while, I did river raft guiding, just for the fun of it. You know, because it's somewhat ancillary connected to like the guiding and mountaineering and stuff like that. But I was never like a big rafter, but I did it for a while. And so I was, I was trying to pick it up real quick from the other guides. And I would watch the other guys. And it was really interesting to see the kind of old timer, crusty old guys, the old salty dog guides versus the like young up and coming strapping young man, you know, guides and. So the young guides, they were all this is river rafting, right? So you got the two oars and you're paddling this big boat. And these young guys are just huge. And Jack, they get their shirt off and they're all bronzed up. And they're paddling the boat. And they just believe they believe that they can move that boat anywhere. Right. Because they're so strong and they are so powerful. And they are rowing all the time. to move that boat where they want to get that boat and they're working and they are sweating and all that kind of stuff, right? And then you look at the old timers, the salty dogs, they got their shirts on and they are kind of just chilling, they have the big hat, they are just chilling. And then what they are doing is they are watching the river. And then what they do is they're paying attention to the river and they they get ready They put their oar in, they make one or two pulls, right? And they turn the boat, they get the water to hit the boat in just the right way, and then the water moves the boat. Yes. So the difference between those two is, one is paying attention to the bigger system, and one thinks they're in control. Right. And when you pay attention to a bigger system and you realize the power of this river is so much more powerful than me. A lot of people would think that's like a statement that is, oh, it's going to make me feel small, but for me, it doesn't. It doesn't make me feel smaller. It makes me feel like, oh wow, the power of this river, if I understand it, if I love reality, I understand the river and pay attention to the dynamics, then I can use the dynamics in my favor.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:31] Well, if you think about it, the guy who's rowing so hard is working so hard, is likely getting frustrated, and is struggling because they're fighting the natural currents of the river, trying to control that. But the other one, the salty guy, this older salty guy. He's actually experiencing and embracing reality in that moment. And he's going to be more effective and less tired. and have a totally different experience, which I think is a good analogy for everything.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:04] And it's not all about him for a lot of times when we think we're in control. Yeah, it's all about us, you know, but, but it's like, I don't, you know, I'm sure there's lots of people that disagree with me on this, but um, I just think it's one of the most liberating things in the world to realize that things are bigger than you and, and, and you can understand those things by loving that reality and, and understanding the dynamics and the structures and the power that's in the river.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:33] And I think that younger guy wants to believe he muscled through the river.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:38] for sure. That's for sure what he believes, right? And so he's going to go home and he's going to be like, yeah, you know, I did that and I've made that. And you're like, yeah, it's a river. Things are going to where the flow goes.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:51] That's where I go with the flow.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:53] Exactly like you're not gonna you're gonna overcome the flow

**Speaker 2** [00:35:57] Well I also think, I think when you said it was liberating, I mean I think about my own life, you know, once you hit 40, you start to think different. When you start 50, you think a lot differently. And I think liberation is right, because the minute or the moment where you start to realize that you're probably not in as much control as you want, which is a hard, it's a hard moment if you're a person like me who is a little bit of a control freak when you're in my life. Uncleaving from that takes a little bit, but the thing is, once you do that, there's room for distinguishing between where you have influence, where you don't have influence and also just seeing the reality of the situation much differently because your mental model isn't trying to change the reality at the same time.

**Speaker 1** [00:36:41] Yeah, for some reason, I don't know if it's like the neurodiversity or whatever you want to call it. I just think that's something that early on, maybe because of the struggle in school and things like that, I just never thought that. Right. So my whole life, I've been keenly aware that I was not in control.

**Speaker 2** [00:37:06] Yeah, my experience was slightly different because I worked inside of the system, which was rewarded by the system and was constantly reinforcing that I could control it.

**Speaker 1** [00:37:16] Yeah, they're giving you scooby snacks. They're like, hey, you're in control. And even though you're not, it's like a facade or something. It is. And again, people are going to have strong reactions to the absence of free will.

**Speaker 2** [00:37:31] So how does agency relate to that? How does agency related to the lack of free will?

**Speaker 1** [00:37:35] Agency is choice. You have tons of choice. I'm not saying you don't have choice, and I'm not saying that within certain constraints, you don' have free choice. You have free-choice in those constraints, but free-constrained choice is not free. So we're playing with words here if we say that you have free will, ultimately, accept that it's highly constrained by the systems that you live in.

**Speaker 2** [00:38:04] I don't want to leave the impression that what you're saying is a lack of free will means we have no agency, I don t want to say control, but no influence on our own out

**Speaker 1** [00:38:16] You have tons of influence. The absence of free will does not rob you of agency. It doesn't rob you of influence, you have all of that because you have action-reaction, right? If you have an action- reaction relationships, which are universal, then you have influence because you can act and things will react, right. You can have effects. Right. So you absolutely have influence. You You absolutely have agency. The whole edifice of complex adaptive systems and complexity is based on, we call them agents for a reason. They're the elements of the system, the actors in the system and they have agency, they don't have free will, but they have the agency and their agency to follow the rules that are governing that system creates the system. Creates the emerging properties. So there's tons of agency, there's tons of influence, there are tons of actors. There's just not free will.

**Speaker 2** [00:39:21] Right, so if you bring that back to what you were saying at the beginning about micro and macro, what you're saying is there's a lot of agency inside of those micro choices that you make, even though they're in a constrained landscape or environment. those micro choices are the ones that are going to create the outcomes that you want.

**Speaker 1** [00:39:43] Let me give you an example. There's always going to be a time. Some days you're going to love the workout, you're gonna love what you're doing, you are going to just eat it up, want to do more, all that kind of stuff, right? Lifting weights or running or whatever it is you are doing, right. But some days you can just bet your bottom dollar that you're not going to love it. You're going feel a little tired or sore, you know, you are not going to want to the push ups or you know whatever, right, or it's just not going to feel as good, right So you can put structures in place. One of the structures I notice is if I want to get started, getting started is the hardest part because ADD people have trouble with the transitions in and out of things, right? So getting started as the hardest. So for example, I do the, I have found a structure which is I do the sauna and then I do the ice plunge because I want my body to heat up. Um, on its own, I don't want to do the ice plunge and get in the sauna because the sauna artificially heats me and I want my body to heat up.

**Speaker 2** [00:40:51] Get that shiver and get the...

**Speaker 1** [00:40:52] I get the shiver and then I want to heat up myself well then that automatically creates the structure of wanting to heat Up because I'm cold which means you need to want to move which means I want a move which Means I get started right I get Started because I am cold so that structure in place requires almost no discipline Right it just boom boom boom the structure kind of takes itself

**Speaker 2** [00:41:15] Yeah, and it creates the behavior.

**Speaker 1** [00:41:17] I don't have to rely on the discipline to let the structure roll. It's like a ball rolling down a hill doesn't need discipline. It has gravity.

**Speaker 2** [00:41:26] No, that's interesting.

**Speaker 1** [00:41:28] So I'm just trying to put it in like a tangible example of what I mean when I have structure. Same with the, I've talked about it before, about like brushing my teeth. Hard for me, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:41:39] That's hard for a lot of people who are...

**Speaker 1** [00:41:40] Yes. Yeah. If I have my electric toothbrush in the shower with me with the toothpaste, no problem. I know. If it's on the counter and I do it in the sink, I will rush through that and I will forget. Yeah, right. So if I put those structures in place, I don't have to work with discipline. I just work with habituated, structured habit. And I'm essentially distributing. my discipline in the structures around me.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:13] Yes, and I will say, one of the things I've learned over the years, especially and directly credited to you, is this idea of putting structures in place to get the outcomes you want. Yeah. I mean, as you know, I am a person who will focus on work and like completely permission myself out of taking care of myself. And so what over time I've done is done what you said, it's like I've put a structure. or there's a block on my calendar every day. that is not scheduled and I just don't violate that rule and that removes my ability to permission myself not to get in and take care of myself.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:51] Because you're kind of a slave to your calendar. Like, if it's on your calendar, it'll get done.

**Speaker 2** [00:42:56] I will do it.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:58] So that's exactly what you're doing. You're putting a structure that works with you. It works with the flow of the river. By understanding the flow of you, the river, you understand, oh, if I put a calendar item on my calendar, then I'm used to doing that. That's the gravity of the ball rolling down the hill. It's like, well, I had this meeting, then I had that meeting, now I have a meeting with myself in the gym. Yes.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:22] Yeah, it's a very important.

**Speaker 1** [00:43:23] It's an important meeting and it's maybe the most important meeting, so you got to get that meeting on your calendar.

**Speaker 2** [00:43:29] Because it's that meeting that makes me ready for all of the other meetings the next- Absolutely, 100%. Yeah, now, and the thing is you have to put a rule in place that you won't violate it. So it's like you have make a contract with yourself because I know me. So now, that structure has changed my behavior day-to-day, and day-today is going to be giving me eventually the outcomes that I'm seeking, right, like, that I am trying to get at. I think we took a very deep and interesting-

**Speaker 1** [00:43:59] Did we?

**Speaker 2** [00:44:00] Yeah, so I mean, who knew we were going to end up talking about free will?

**Speaker 1** [00:44:03] I know, that was not... You're talking about New Year's resolutions. Well, it's kind of related. They are very related. Yeah. We'll start a great debate. Maybe. Well, I think that's a wrap.