Your Questions Answered - Bret and Heather 38th DarkHorse Po...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:08

Hey folks, welcome back to the Dark Horse podcast 38th Q and A edition for I don't know, mid August 2020, it's early August 2020. Still

**Heather** 00:20

think it may qualify as bid?

**Bret** 00:21

It's very late early August. I think

**Heather** 00:25

it's only the beginning of the end. Yeah, it is that. All right, let's just get right into it. All right, got a couple of questions from Episode 37. We've got a one from earlier that I kept on forgetting to go back to you. And then we've got one from the discord. So I have told the fine people at discord who were interested in, in voting on questions, I said, we're not going to do a voting system in general, but up to one. Also, the cat does not get to vote no matter what. But up to one, one question a week if they want to vote on we will answer it here. So we've got one like that here. So you guys can owner you get yours. You can see the IRS. Right. Okay. There we go. First question. All right, from Episode 37. Why did consciousness and big brains evolve in homosapiens? It would seem that Sapiens babies being useless for years would have been an evolutionary dead end. So I said last time was the big question. This warrants the whole Lifetime's of research. But I did promise that we come back to it and talk a little bit about it. And you're looking at me like, You got it, you got it in five words or less, you can name that answer in five words, yeah,

**Bret** 01:40

we can do this. I mean, you know, it's anonymizes. Well, it doesn't sit down in my eyes, but it combines consciousness in big brains. And I think we know the answer for disproportionately big brains, which comes from so I'm borrowing from dick Alexander, my PhD advisor, who argued that there was an arms race between human populations that there's a point called ecological dominance at which human beings become the most important hostile force for other human beings. And at that point, thinking about what competitor groups are going to do, counteracting it with your own clever strategies becomes the way to get ahead. And so basically, human against human population level conflict resulted in an arms race that enlarged our brains, so we could out think each other. And I would argue that consciousness fits that model that consciousness is a tool deployed for novelty. And that basically, in order to out think your human competitors, consciousness, and therefore collective engagement on abstract questions was the key tool.

**Heather** 02:52

Okay, so I'm going to add two things here. I'm just going to clarify one thing you said, which is he used the term hostile forces, which is a reference to Darwin's term hostile forces, where he was imagining, I think he split it into biotic and abiotic, although maybe that's a later addition, he was looking at the hostile forces that individuals in species were having to deal with, and saying things like weather and climate, and predators and competitors and pathogens and, and parasites, and seeing that these were the selective forces, that species were evolving, you know, basically away from it, or enabling themselves to be able to respond to and Deke Alexander's one of dick Alexander's many remarkable contributions to understanding of human evolution was to see, in part, humans as our own most significant hostile force in human evolution. So that's that's one point just slightly clarifying. For those who didn't know that, you know, who might imagine that you were just saying hostile forces? Because it seemed like the right words, I think they are the right words, but this is a literally a Darwinian term. And then I would also say, to the second part of this question, it's all wrapped up together, it would seem that homosapiens babies being used this for years would have been evolutionary dead end. This, this gets at the question of effectively, why why parental care, you know, why on a continuum of ways to reproduce, would you ever go away from I'm just going to have as many kids as possible, but because that means that they're way more than I a parent could ever engage with, I'm never going to probably meet any of them. So lots and lots of kids totally anonymous to the parents, all the way to what we see in humans and some other species, where you have very few children at a time and every one of them is precious, and you invest remarkably in them as you move. You know, the, one of the ways that some of you will be familiar with this has been called is excuse me, our versus case election, but as you move over towards that sort of human, dolphin, Wolf, other breeds apes, elephants end of the spectrum, you also end up with not just more and more parental care, but more and more altricial children. So we all know the word precocious, you know, a kid who seems to be able to speak in full sentences before you're expecting them to. It's not exactly the same word but a precocial. Infant in a species as one that can like a giraffe, walk around and run within hours of being born. At the other end of the spectrum is an altricial. Baby, one who is helpless for a relatively long time. Well, what does ultra sociality get you beyond being sitting meet for I would be predator. It gives it basically mandates lots and lots of time with parents during which there's going to be learning and so consciousness, big brains, plasticity, brain plasticity, neuroplasticity, behavioral plasticity, long childhoods mandatory parental care, all of these are of of a type and they all contribute to us being the remarkable beings that we are,

**Bret** 06:03

are another way to say it is that our triviality is the unavoidable downside of something so good that it outweighs the disadvantage that you point to, which is real. Yeah.

**Heather** 06:15

Okay, the next question came up last time as well, asking if we'd read the revolutionary phenotype, we said we hadn't. And the author has since reached out to us and offered to send us a copy. So it's looks like a big long book. I don't know when we'll get to it, but we will, at some point, we'll come back to that. Okay, this one from a couple of episodes ago is a long question. I'm just going to summarize and just see if we want to riff a little bit on this. So this is this is someone who

**Heather** 06:48

I can't actually remember if I'm allowed to read it directly. So because I don't remember I'm going to summarize and try to change some of the details. here's a here's a guy, I think, in a in a relationship that has been in for a year with a girlfriend. She he had COVID she cared for him. She has you know they've had they've been very close their lease is about to be up when they're thinking about moving in together and it sort of looks like it might turn into a you know the serious long term relationship. They might even have kids together. But he says she's caring and loving. But he says and here I will quote she's very leftist and doubles down and fortifies your arguments when presented with grievance studies affair anything I did w Peterson or even Jonathan Hite shuts down becomes hostile in the wake of any credible evidence, watch his videos and somehow finds an entire book about how the ITW are evil Neo right wingers and considers that giving it a chance to consider that to be sufficiently giving a chance unbiased research. So basically he's saying, What do I do? Do I Do I need to leave this relationship. He also adds later that they're both people of color, but he's got some white nm and she's never done up. He is afraid that if they had kids together, it would actually this would this would start getting crowded out in an argument these sorts of, you know, your most fundamental racial differences. So what to do?

**Bret** 08:08

Well, I mean, seems to be one of two things is very likely going on. One is that this is a very dire indicator of some kind of failure that there is

**Heather** 08:23

in the relationship or in the human being

**Bret** 08:25

well in the person's thinking that to the

**Heather** 08:28

extent that girlfriend Yeah. To the extent that

**Bret** 08:31

I mean, you know, we've been dismissed as right wingers. You know, since before I dw was a thing, the problem is it doesn't withstand scrutiny of the evidence, right. And so it's one thing for a person to have this mistaken impression. It's another thing for them to retain the mistaken impression when confronted with the ample evidence that for example, ITW has many left wingers In fact, I would argue it's more left wingers and right wingers. Right, that is relatively easy to demonstrate. And somebody who doesn't change their position in the face of evidence. I mean, there could be other objections, but you can drop that one. And if you don't drop that one or two, because there's something about you that's holding on to

**Heather** 09:11

it. Maybe though, then maybe maybe what we could offer is and we know without knowing or these people, maybe it's impossible, but you know, how, how could he have that conversation? Like how could he approach such a conversation? It may be that when she comes at him like this, he has the sense of like, I am not allowed to speak I don't know how to engage this. I'm expected to be silent here because she's making this point that I'm not allowed to object to like what, what could be done to even just open up the possibility of of a of a two way channel, as opposed to what sounds like him receiving this and feeling like oh, my God, what have I gotten myself into, except she's so wonderful in these other regards.

**Bret** 09:47

Well, so that was what I was gonna say about the other possibility. The other possibility is that this is not a failure of her cognitive model. It's a failure in social space where the cost of admitting that you're living Listening to ITW stuff in some circles is so high, that there are people that are now hearing a lot of these stories of people who know better, but are holding to some position because they don't know where else to go. And, you know, in fact, we are now receiving troubling indications that people who have retained their mental clarity are now finding that their social circle is overwhelming them with this woke stuff. And you know, people who were clear headed are losing their their clear headedness. And so look, your romantic relationship, your permanent one is the most important decision you will ever make. And it is important that it'd be built out of something sound. And what I would say is, if your girlfriend is suffering from fear of what her social group will make of her awareness, or openness to hearing, ITW, or whatever, whatever stuff it might be, then you need to create a place in your relationship where you can be honest with each other, and it doesn't put her in a bind. When she talks to other people, she may not be able to solve her social bind, and she may not be prepared to walk away from people she values who are confused or broken on this issue. So you know, the ability when you close the door of your house to talk about what's really going on, even if you can't, you know, I mean, look, this has happened in every one of these tragic situations. It's the reason that, you know, the Stasi, and the Soviets, you know, did so much spying on their own population is that people very frequently knew what was going on. And even if in public, they maintained their discipline and talking about the parties that were oppressing them. In private, they spoke about the truth. And it seems to me that that is necessary. And so

**Heather** 11:56

you need to have a space where you can converse, honestly, where you can't, no matter how much of an introvert and how self sufficient you are, and I and I count myself pretty strongly in both of those things, you need to have at least one and preferably more, but at least one person to whom you can speak totally honestly, about what it is that you think might be going on, and not fear reprisal in the outside world as a result.

**Bret** 12:23

Yeah. Not fear being outed. Yeah, social environment. So if it were me, I'd probably say, you know, look, Honey, what you're saying doesn't add up. And I'm, I'm concerned that the reason that you would say something that doesn't add up is because this is very frightening moment. And people have gotten really aggressive about this stuff. But let's talk about what really is true. And then talk about the predicament that knowing what's really true puts you in, in the outside world? I don't know. I don't know pre can hear that. But if that's what's going on, it's it's at least a strong possibility that she will register it.

**Heather** 12:59

Yeah. All right. Next question. This this from the discord. How a trigger warning. Now, this uses a word that I didn't know so I had to look it up. So as I read it, if you see if you hear word you don't know, don't worry, we'll define it. How does the discrepancy between biological and cultural sexual maturity lead to harmful paraphilias such as a febrile philia? How can we use evolutionary theory describe this equation and reduce the harm to our society's youth? So a fella philia being the particular type of paraphilia, like, you know, particular kind of attraction that is defined as being attracted to sort of mid to late adolescence. So how does the descriptor human biological and cultural sexual maturity lead to to such a thing? And how I read this question is, at the moment, we have men and women who we have 18 to 25 year olds, who inhabit the bodies of adults, but often are not yet adults. So they cultural sexual maturity lags behind biological sexual maturity. And this is potentially dangerous.

**Bret** 14:08

Yeah, I'm not even sure I would put it that way. I think there is a question about so we have talked frequently about the fact that men have two reproductive strategies. One of those strategies is what one of my students labeled so and go so and go is just purely a matter of delivering a gamete and not taking responsibility for the consequences. This is a bargain for men. evolutionarily speaking, it also is not likely to be historically to have been a very common successful mode outside of rape where men

**Heather** 14:43

forced the situation

**Bret** 14:44

or now more, which includes

**Heather** 14:46

outside of extreme situations. Yeah, right.

**Bret** 14:49

So in normal, functioning societies, women are selected not to reproduce with men who won't commit because the cost of raising Spring is so high that the fact that women are the limiting sex that they deliver something of high value in this regard means they are in a good bargaining position to demand commitment, etc. But because reproducing without commitment is such a bargain for men, evolutionarily, men cannot resist the implication that it might be possible. And so what we have is this, coupled with the fact that birth control now makes it possible for women to engage in sex without nearly so much danger of ending up with the baby that they can't raise, these things have combined to lower the bar to having sex, and that has resulted in new mores arising with respect to who one is allowed to have sex with. And the problem is that basically, the rules as we now have them are, well, woman consents that it's okay if she's above the age of consent, and she consensual and you know, that's her business. Whereas in a prior circumstance, there would have been an understanding that many pairings just are predatory, from the point of view of, you know, men taking advantage of and maybe this is, the point you're making is that, that young women who do not yet have the maturity to actually understand why they are commanding so much attention, what its meaning is to, you know, to suss out that they're being lied to by men who want to lead them to believe something is going on that isn't, but basically,

**Heather** 16:35

to me, the way I read this is exactly at the heart of that, you know, you didn't, you never had the experience of coming of age female, true for which, for which I am quite grateful. You three, and I will say that, you know, everyone within a certain certain distance of societal beauty norms. Who comes of age, at least until the last I don't know what it's going to be 10 or 20 years maybe has this experience that at one level feels very sudden, you go from child and you still feel like a child, and now you are just the object of so much potential, and you cannot escape it. And this is, this is the real part of what the male gaze is right? You cannot escape it. And when you are fully embodied, and in your own self, and you're out there engaging with this, and you know, if you're lucky and smart, and you have to be both, and you avoid having any really bad interactions with your actual predators, which most of the people, most of them I'm looking at young women are not predators by a large degree. But you you learn to figure out the difference by being out there and experiencing it a lot, right? And I'm not saying that that is wonderful in any way, but you do learn to figure out how to navigate and especially because of all the sort of infantilization that is happening. And because so much of the sexual activity is happening behind screens. You have you have this just, you know, constant display of the, you know, fully newbuild sexualized bodies of young women who think that that is where their worth comes from. And they all they get are the comments back, which are some combination of you know, repugnant and disgusting and apparently congratulatory, but they're not real. And it's really hard to tell one anonymous account from another in terms of like, what, who are these guys? And how do I tell the difference?

**Bret** 18:39

Well, and you know, the other thing to say is, I think on the female side, we are completely failing to convey something that one's older female relatives would once have conveyed very clearly, which is that men and women are no men looking for women for sex. And men looking for women for partnership are in very different states of mind. Men ought to have a very low bar, evolutionarily speaking, men on average, very low bar for desirability for some to have sex with somebody and a very high bar for wanting to partner with somebody to raise a family. And so in that second phase, men are very much like women, they don't have the same set of priorities, but they have very high standards, they're very choosy. In this other phase, they may be very so if you're a female and you don't understand that attracting male sexual attention is not one thing. It's two different things than the point is

**Heather** 19:36

and one of them takes nothing and it actually potentially puts you in harm's way

**Bret** 19:40

right? In fact, we know beauty counts a lot, but youth counts a lot too. And so women come online sexually, they discover Oh my god, there's I have all of this power I can detect that I can screw up a roomful of people by you know my behavior. So a tragically that may be the height. of power that most women experience in their life is the sexual power that comes from the youth. And the fact that in ancestral circumstances that was just simply a measure of how many offspring they were likely to be able to produce in a lifetime. And it

**Heather** 20:16

if you prioritize maximizing that power, which inherently comes when you're young, it will get in the way of you learning the things that you need in order to actually have more interesting kinds of power over what you have some control,

**Bret** 20:29

and for which you would deserve some credit. Exactly. The problem, though, is that because civilization is constructed so poorly, a woman who forgoes the exercise of that purely sexual youth based power is not necessarily in a situation to accumulate the kinds of skills and knowledge and insight that would cause her to have more power later in life when it was about something that he had brought to the world, right? So anyway, we've got this tragic situation, we don't tell women look, if you're interested in men, that the kind of attention you will get from flashing your boobs or whatever, is real, but it's not, it doesn't translate into you will find a mate who is worthy of you and, and all of that. So we don't convey that lesson. And we we arm women poorly.

**Heather** 21:26

We simply teach, you know, to the degree that that's taught, it's simply taught as be modest, right, like have modesty. without identifying it, there's really that like, male attention, as you as you just said, is not one thing.

**Bret** 21:38

Yeah, it's not one thing. And then the trivial version isn't really worth attracting, it's too easy to attract, and it doesn't translate into anything. Right? So anyway, what I would say is, in a world in which there is just power, there's a reason that men are focused on young women, especially when it's in the phase about women that they're not going to continue to care about, which has to do with fertility, pure and simple. And so it is not the same thing. The fact that men of all ages in that phase in that mental state are interested in very young women is a problem civilization should not be encouraging that. And to the extent that we are encouraging that it's not surprising that we have deranged the sexual landscape and created a lot of stuff that may not be illegal, but it's certainly predatory in the sense of, you know, it's men taking advantage of women who don't know better.

**Heather** 22:35

Next question, totally different topic. hypothesis on COVID risk, cholesterol and other sterols are foundational, the D group vitamins, hormones cellular structure much exactly what the relationship is their common statens, lower total LDL, interfering with normal function without addressing damaged and oxidized LDL. thoughts. feel like there's a connection? I don't know what statens are. I think doing

**Bret** 23:05

this is off the top of my head. Okay. I believe there is some evidence that statens are actually increasing COVID risk. So

**Heather** 23:11

that's the thing that that has to be true for this to track for me for this question to track.

**Bret** 23:15

So I think I recall reading that somewhere there. So I hope it

**Heather** 23:19

wasn't something we said here in which case I've totally forgotten. Right?

**Bret** 23:21

Well, Soviet. But in any case, I think this is a mechanistic hypothesis for why that would be the case. Okay, akin to the Why do proton pump inhibitors increased COVID. From our last q&a? Yeah.

**Heather** 23:37

So what if, if, if that's right, if the missing piece in The question is that statens use of statens is associated with an increased risk of either contracting or degree of disease badness of the disease of COVID. What do we think of the hypothesis? I mean, I guess, potentially, I just don't know, I don't remember enough about the molecular biology to totally assess it at first pass, it looks reasonable, like each of these seem like causal links that are plausible?

**Bret** 24:11

Well, I'll tell you, if this were class, I would tell you that the next thing you need to do is figure out what the prediction is of this hypothesis that distinguishes it from other potential explanations. And so I'd be very curious if there is a unique,

**Heather** 24:25

well, for instance, like Are there other common drugs that are given to lower total LDL? such that, you know, if statens do this, and this is and the missing piece of the puzzle that we've identified is correct. The prediction would be that those other drugs that also lower total LDL would have the same effect and that they would also be associated with a higher risk of COVID. So that's one that would be one prediction or conditions

**Bret** 24:49

that lower LDL without a drug. Hmm. Oh, good.

**Heather** 24:52

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Next question. Hawaii has instated a new emergency order on a wall. Who? All beaches, parks and trails are closed? As outside is safer. Do you guys think the purpose of this is more to discourage tourists? The 14 day quarantine for visitors is mostly ignored?

**Bret** 25:12

Well, that's a good hypothesis. Yeah. The other hypothesis is that this comes from the same confusion that people seem to have, where they're almost mistaking a signaling function for an epidemiological intervention,

**Heather** 25:29

like look at me I'm careful I'm wearing a mask even though I'm outside

**Bret** 25:32

alone. Yeah, we're serious about COVID bad stuff is gonna happen. we're serious about coke until we're serious because yeah, yeah, so I hate that this is going on but we see it every time we go out we run into people. I mean,

**Heather** 25:44

I got the I got the Sinai today, I was out walking in a park. Alone, and someone someone walked by in a mask that was just the two of us in the park. And she glared at me I wasn't wearing a mask course that wasn't right. For cuts. I didn't need to and I'm not who she thinks I am. And I wasn't wearing my star I was and that you know, like all of this is as become so tribal.

**Bret** 26:12

Yeah, tribal and we are foregoing opportunities that we need to avail ourselves of because at the moment, outside is so hospitable. But I was gonna say the last time we went kayaking, two guys walking down a beach wearing masks, you know, more than six feet apart. The two guys are scampering or bouldering. Yeah, wearing masks. You know, it's not only are they outdoors, there's a breeze it there's the sun shining. And

**Heather** 26:45

I mean, unless they lived right there, they probably got there in the same car. Maybe they were masks in the car. But you know, it's possible they were protecting themselves from each other is my is my point or other? If if not that, though? There was no reason I agree,

**Bret** 26:57

but I don't think they need to do to protect themselves from each other. Yeah, on the beach. So the point is, look, you've got some kind of a budget, you've got some kind of a level of tolerance. And you know, one of the reasons the US seems to be screwing up the COVID response so badly, is that we have a low tolerance for being told what to do, especially being told what to do on mass, that the individualism which is so much a part of the magic of the place, is our Achilles heel, when it comes to epidemiological stuff where, you know, frankly, wearing a mask, isn't that bad, especially like to go into a shop. It kind of sucks. I'm not saying it's good, but I'm saying as you know, it's far short of gulag. You know, it is

**Heather** 27:41

I mean, I was I mean, you and I, I hate it. I hate wearing my mask, and I wear it. I mean, we're not mandated to but I was wearing it in, in grocery stores, hardware stores before it was mandated. Yep. Because it was clearly the right thing to be doing. But I hate it. And as soon as I'm clear of there, the H fac, you know, not as soon as I walk out the door. But as soon as I'm clear of anything that sounds like it's blowing stuff out from the store, I take it off Sure, sooner than then most people do.

**Bret** 28:06

Well, but look, this is in part, a failure of the market, we should be delivering something that does the job that doesn't have this impact. And in fact, I was going to propose winter's coming. What we need are scarves that work. Imagine that this came down to a scarf that you wrapped around your face. And everybody understood that that was functional, and that it was constructed of the sorts of materials that would do this job effectively. And then the point is, suddenly this isn't the mask. Right? But interesting, we need to be doing something like that, you know, I'm watching all of these people wearing you know, their mask under their chin when they don't have it on as to say it's not comfortable, it looks crazy. And you know, we just don't have an infinite tolerance for that stuff. So what we need is something that we do have infinite tolerance for and in the meantime, we need to take advantage of the period of time we're not threatened, you know, by taking the thing off and feeling like Okay, good. You know, I guarantee you, professional skiers do not go to bed with their ski boots on, you know, they take them off, and that allows them to tolerate the boots. You know, when they're working. Wouldn't it

**Heather** 29:19

be safer if they were ready to ski at any moment?

**Bret** 29:22

slightly, slightly, you never know. But But anyway, yeah, we should be we should be borrowing so that we can spend on it when we have to.

**Heather** 29:33

Yeah. Okay, another COVID question. Between mild and asymptomatic cases and newly discovered T cell immunity. I don't know about this is is spread wider than we thought and close to burning out before a vaccine is necessary. cases are declining in Texas, Florida and Arizona. Former hotspots such as New York City, Sweden, Pakistan, Italy seem to have herd immunity to a couple claims in here that I just don't know about. I don't know about newly discovered T cell immunity or that cases are declining in those three states? I would since you you know more mostly I will let you answer this promote primarily but I will say the concept of herd immunity is a is a dangerous one. We, we know the tests suck. So we really don't know who has been exposed that didn't test positive at the time. And even if you didn't test positive at the time, if you hadn't you just there's no way to doubt but but the antibody tests are terrible as well. But herd immunity is a concept that makes terrific sense if your model is did you die or do not. And as we've said over and over again, there's there are so many growing concerns about serious symptoms, systems that are harmed even after you've survived COVID. And of course, we have no idea what the actual long term damage might be.

**Bret** 30:55

Yeah. And I feel quite certain that I do not feel certain we will be able to detect this on the basis of how crummy our data is on who actually had this thing. But I feel quite certain that given the massive damage that seems to accompany these cases, in many ways, even people who didn't have symptoms seem to risk. brain damage and heart damage. Yeah. This is gonna knock years maybe decades off people's lives. Yeah. And we are not tracking that. Well. So what I would say is, it is possible that herd immunity has some utility here and that we would you know, your question is, will we get there before a vaccine is necessary? Yeah, possibly. However, we will get there at what cost if some large fraction of the population has had this disease and is going to have chronic health conditions for the rest of their lives and live shorter lives as a result, then what a terrible price for herd immunity? So not sure but it's certainly not something we should bank on.

**Heather** 32:08

Did a huge generational divide in the democratic party where I live it wasn't woke social issues. It was Medicare. Young wanted old habit already. What do you have wendell potter on this next part of this question? I don't know who wendell potter is. Oh, the question continues. who's a former VP of Cigna health. Now a whistleblower? Sounds like an interesting guest. Yeah. So this is a more of a more of a comment, although it's it is telling that I don't know where the person who's writing lives. But that it was Medicare to split the Democratic Party. And, you know, this may be an aspect of this that we have been talking about that it seems like it's woke, that is that is going to be splitting the democrats and is so polarizing people away from the Democrats, but that there are going to be splinter issues all over the place that are a different, it's basically becoming what maybe it was always true, but it felt in the 90s. Like, the republicans were a collection of special interest groups that didn't really have a lot to do with one another. You know, what, what were the two way enthusiasts doing with the white evangelical Christians inherently, you know, what, what was the connection there? But increasingly clear, the democrats are this a bunch of special interest groups that are that are together and, unfortunately, seeming to try to unite under this sort of intersectional woke flag,

**Bret** 33:40

the natural outgrowth of the abandonment of basically wages and protections for workers as a senator, if you Yep.

**Heather** 33:51

Thanks for being a beacon of enlightenment and dark times. Do you think mankind view ourselves and our race in a sufficiently evolutionary context? Is it possible that our perception of reality is far less accurate than we believe?

**Bret** 34:06

I want to completely understand that, do you think mankind view ourselves our race in it? Now know, what we do is we have a distortion that has been adaptive in past circumstances, that distortion was never accurate. And in fact, I've argued that self is itself a distortion built to get you to behave in ways that are adaptive for something that one would call lineage. The problem is that our distortion, which is adaptive is built for an environment we don't live in. So it's out of place and distorted, which makes it very difficult for us to figure out what we could have which would either be a new distortion that worked for our modern environment, or an undistorted view that would allow us to correct for whatever errors through me Politically understanding that when we have neither, so basically, we are involved in an infinite cycle of self harm. That is pretty needless.

**Heather** 35:10

But this is part of a big part of what we're trying to address in the book that we're writing, right, provide sufficient access to the evolutionary toolkits such that you can, individuals can begin to assess the hybrid novel situation that we're in and make decisions that thread the needle between harkening back to traditional solutions that continue to work and looking for better solutions that have not been imagined before. Absolutely. pooled Batch Group, as are all alternative synonyms, I think pooled batch and group PCR testing could cheaply and frequently test everyone in developed countries. Can you please validate and magnify this idea among your media and elite media circles? So

**Bret** 35:59

I don't know what it means test everybody, you could see whether or not there was anybody in a group that was infected?

**Heather** 36:08

And then you need to narrow it down, right? Yep. And I guess it will work. Depending on what the background rate of infection is, or of pass infection, is you would need different sizes of initial groups to maximize the efficacy and the efficiency of this, because I won't go into the math, but yeah, you know, it would require a lot of tinkering. But I absolutely agree that I guess I haven't caught heard it called all those things. But pooled PCR testing, where you collect whatever, it's usually saliva, right? Sometimes blood? Or is PCR always blood? No, no, I had a PL PCR is a nasal swab, nasal swab, okay, so mucosal membrane stuff. You collect from hundreds of people at a time and just do one test. This, it could cheaply infrequently test everyone the questions again, and still and always is how reliable is the test. So this would be a way of getting more people tested faster. And anytime you had a positive, you'd have to go in and, you know, split a group of 2000 into 10, groups of 200. And, you know, sorted out that way. But it still requires that the testing is actually hyper accurate. And we just don't I see no evidence of it being so mean the number of anecdotes every day, I hear more anecdotes from people I know and people I only know online, but like, saying, yep, my doctor declared me and official, false negative, false negative. Yeah, the hell.

**Bret** 37:44

So I think I would have to look into whether or not it actually was the case. But I have the sense that this is a case of massive market failure, where, you know, a public effort to produce tests might have produced,

**Heather** 37:59

you're talking about not the failure, not the failure to pool PCR testing, but the failure of the test themselves. So low

**Bret** 38:05

quality of the test, is a result, I think of many private efforts to generate a test that were saleable, because there wasn't anything much better. And yes, I don't know, what would have happened if a much better tested emerged, wouldn't have succeeded. competitively. But at some level, this didn't work. And, you know, unless there's some reason that you couldn't make a good test. This was the biggest failure of all, because it has blinded you at every level, you couldn't tell what damage there was. You couldn't tell how it spread? Because you just didn't have good data on who didn't who didn't have it? No,

**Heather** 38:44

there are no there. There cannot there cannot be good data now. Yeah. from earlier, there could be good data going forward at some point, presumably. Love the show just bought the camera. Thanks for expanding my reading list. You're welcome sin You're so boil. It's Mr. Onion. are certain values such as individual freedoms or collective security inherent to the system conserving right? inherent to the system conserving right and the change focused left? Can these values reverse in different contexts such as the USSR versus the US or historically?

**Bret** 39:22

Yeah, I think this is why we're having a debate or at least we're having a debate about classical liberals who are conservative, which is that these things were once liberal values they, they succeeded, and now conservatives are defending them. So yes, that we have a confusion between our relative terms about which direction we should go and our absolute terms about values. But yes, we can reverse.

**Heather** 39:48

This does confound me like, I think anyone with any sense of history understands that, for instance, parties come to change what they stand for over time, right? But the idea that left versus right you know, having the No, being more focused on the individual individual rights and freedom, versus being more focused on making sure that everyone in a society has some human rights and being more focused perhaps on justice, but in both cases, understanding that the freedom loving people on the right and the Justice loving people on the left, recognize that there are trade offs, and that there's no one on the right, who doesn't also understand the value of justice. Nor is there anyone who is on the left doesn't also understand the value of freedom, that those those seemed stable to me. But even that seems to be increasingly muddled. Well, it does make conversation increasingly difficult as well.

**Bret** 40:38

I'm wondering if this isn't the thing we were wrestling with in the first hour, where it seems that these even these things are being lost? Because actually, we're now having the conversation without content.

**Heather** 40:51

Yeah. Yeah, maybe that's it. Another request to invite a guest, Neil Howe, author of the first fourth turning on your podcast would love to know his thoughts on unity 2020, and how to save the republic? Do you know this

**Bret** 41:05

name, I know the fourth turning. So presumably, I do know him as the author. This is a generational model for change.

**Heather** 41:15

Okay, so I'll just put both of these suggestions in yellow for us to return to upgrade our cosmetics and extended human phenotype. women often use cosmetics to increase their attractiveness to men historically, how to cosmetics for men fit in here like war paint or face paint. Interesting question. So just to frame it. The reference to an extended human phenotype is reference to an idea. First posited by Dawkins, in a book the same name, maybe two, maybe it was a second book, early 80s, called the extended phenotype, in which he argued that for instance, the dam of a beaver is part of its extended phenotype that is no less the product of or you know, beaver ish stuff than then the fur on the beaver or its heart. And it was an it was an extension of the model of how to understand the products of evolution. So our cosmetics and extended human phenotype in that model, for sure,

**Bret** 42:13

I wouldn't say for sure. Really? Yeah. Okay, cuz the implication of extended phenotype is that the genes are causing this alteration in the world. And

**Heather** 42:23

so you know, I guess Okay, so, since you stripped out Dawkins extended phenotype Sensi, stricto, not so much since you lotto?

**Bret** 42:31

Yeah. So, you know, I mean, the argument that Dawkins and I had, yeah, several October's ago in Chicago, was I argued that religion was extended phenotype, in other words, that the gene set this thing in motion and that it was advancing their interests, which he didn't agree with. But cosmetics could be that, and they are certainly related in the sense that females are human females are the ornamented sex and that that is true physiologically. But it's also true at the level of adornment, you know. So

**Heather** 43:07

with the exception of things like wear pants, right, like when we see men decorating themselves in times of celebration in times of war. Yep. Yeah. But the question well, and actually end with, with things not on their bodies, with ornaments, like cars.

**Bret** 43:22

Yeah. The question in this case, though, is there some tendency there, physiologically, females are ornamented? There's a tendency to behaviorally? Yeah, anatomically, there's a tendency to augment that cultural tendency, a long standing cultural tendency to augment that across many cultures, right? And then there's, you know, maybe she's born with it. Maybe it's Maybelline bullshit, which is really an economic factor in which the thing isn't driven by the women necessarily. It's in large measure driven by the profit motive of young people so often aren't women.

**Heather** 43:58

So is it adaptive to be deceptive in this way? Yes. Does that make an extended phenotype? No.

**Bret** 44:04

And if it's adaptive only because your competitors are doing it, and so you don't have a choice. You know, that puts it in its own category. It's sort

**Heather** 44:13

of it's I mean, it's it's for Cherian runaway. It's natural selection. Yeah. Exactly. without necessarily being extended phenotype. Okay. Yeah, I buy it. I stand corrected. I sit correct. Yes, I'll stand later and then I'll be corrected. What is the purpose of language like people with periods or pregnant people? Why does this inclusiveness make me so angry? Why is gender identity not provable? And affects less than 1%? replacing sex? Yeah, you're not alone. You're not alone. This being gaslit Yeah, you're being gaslit. I will say, I don't know where we're going to go. But I Abigail Schreier, who wrote the recent book, and I can't remember the name of it, I should I'll show it next time we're on about the rapid onset gender dysphoria that seems to be happening to teenage girls specifically as a as a contagion in teenage girls. She and I have just begun a letter wiki exchange about what is happening specifically over the focus she'd she made the initial missive in, in letter wiki about what's happening to teenage girls and what we can attribute these this these contagions to, with regard to like comparing them to comparing human females to non human primates. And you know what, what friendships among non human primate females have looked like? The question more broadly, of why gender identity is replacing sex is exactly i think that's spot on in terms of the question that why do we even call it Why do we call it gender dysphoria? This isn't gender dysphoria. Gender is the behavioral manifestation of sex and every other species. Gender exists outside of humans, it absolutely does people who tell you it's a human creation. Now they're wrong. We call it sex role. And it is the behavioral manifestation that is typical for the sex that you were born to. So gender dysphoria, that's just like being a tomboy. But that's not what gender dysphoria, especially as understood by, you know, by the psychological therapeutic manuals, is understanding to be what what they really mean is sex dysphoria, and calling it gender dysphoria as part of the confusion. Now add to that people with periods and pregnant people, and yeah, this is this is gaslighting, and it's regressive, and it's misogynistic. And it's nasty. And it all comes in this cloak of art. We are loving and inclusive, and No, you're not.

**Bret** 46:51

So why does it make you so angry? It's because you're being manipulated, and you're being manipulated by a threat. And the problem is, you know, MEGAN MURPHY is no longer on Twitter, because she insisted that men weren't women. Right?

**Heather** 47:09

How dare she?

**Bret** 47:10

That's a measure of threat. And the idea of, Well, certainly, you're supportive of trans people. Yes. Well, if you're supportive of trans people, then you're supportive of trans women competing in women's sports, no, trans folk. Okay. If you're certainly

**Heather** 47:29

supportive of Black Lives Matter, well, I know that Black Lives Matter, well, then you're supportive of abolishing the nuclear family, aren't you? Right? No,

**Bret** 47:36

exactly. So at some level, the idea that some men have periods, for example, this is they don't mind to out you. It's designed to get you to either submit, or to say something that will allow you to be stigmatized. And the point is, you don't have a choice outside of those. So of course, you're angry to be asked a question where those are your two options. You're damned if you do and damned if you done.

**Heather** 48:01

Yeah, it's an attempt to categorize and stigmatize.

**Bret** 48:04

Well, the point is, look, I don't care what you think you say, right? Some men have periods, right? You know, and then it's like, well, no, ah, go your mode a yes. Hmm. Join the club. So, okay, heads, I win, tails you lose has never been a very good game. And this is that and so we're getting at is, we are at the conversation that has no content. Right? What What is the claim that some men have periods except for a delineator of whether you are going to submit or be hunted as a witch? That's that's its purpose is to get you to declare a side its purpose is not to assert something factual, which is what it sounds like it is it's a factual claim that isn't a factual claim.

**Heather** 48:51

So that that's all true. And that may be the most, that's at least one of the most important pieces of it. But it is having ramifications in the real world, on our young people, that is going to create a significant fraction of a whole generation that is going to be extraordinarily damaged. I saw I saw a picture in the last week of someone at some protest, presumably, you know, one of the protests that's happening right now that is, you know, supposedly about police brutality and Black Lives Matter and all of this. The sign said, puberty is optional. puberty is optional. No, it's not. Yeah, these people are so wrong. They are so confused. I don't think the person holding that sign was intentionally gaslighting anyone. They had been gaslit themselves, and they are unable to tell reality from I don't even know what a unicorn.

**Bret** 49:45

Yeah. Well, the problem is, this is all part of a plan that involves d d, individuating. You distancing you from your family unless they're willing to come along. and be part of the revolution. Yeah. And it moves through schools, there was a very interesting, disturbing thread, you can find it on Benjamin voices Twitter, where a public school teacher was decrying the fact that COVID means that many of the conversations that would have taken place inside the classroom are now taking place in a where you can't know whether family members might be listening in, and that this is a threat to the social justice work that this teacher believes is essential. And so really, what that means is

**Heather** 50:39

that there's no i didn't i didn't see this, but from what you just said, I can, I can see what you just said, coming from a place of actual genuine care as an educator.

**Bret** 50:52

As wasn't that

**Heather** 50:53

Okay, let's but but but let's just let's just recognize that the idea that teenagers want may want to be able to have conversations with people they recognize as adults who actually knows something about the world, but not with their own, not within their own families is that, you know, being able to talk to your religious leader, you know, that there is a history of this that is honorable,

**Bret** 51:16

yeah, but no, this is captive audience. The point is, you send your kid to school, and that puts you in the hat and puts the kid in the hands of somebody who then has them by law as a captive audience. Yeah, to manipulate them and to tell them things like some men have periods and stuff like this. And the fact is, it's unacceptable. And your family has the right to tell you Actually, you know what, I don't know why people are insane. But people are now saying insane stuff regularly. And it is important that you retain your ability to think in a world people saying insane stuff all the time. Yeah. Yep. The idea that this is going to be exposed because you may be on a zoom call, rather than in a classroom where you're going to be fed the received wisdom is it's just creating is revealing the depth of depravity that is unfolding in in many schools? Yep. Okay.

**Heather** 52:11

Oh, yeah. It was just switchover. Let me just to more quickly here. Someone asks if we have a Venmo that they can donate to they don't take out any money. I suppose we could put a Venmo link in the in the video description. Yep. Pay Pal also exists. Hey, pal, takes out money, though.

**Bret** 52:27

No. If you use friends and family, they don't do it. And the only reason not to use friends and family is if you're exchanging money for objects and you want consumer protection stuff. So you can do it through PayPal. And it's fee free if you use the friends and family option.

**Heather** 52:45

Okay. We can we can also put a Venmo like though, and then before we switch over apparently, Camilla Harris has just been announced as Biden's vice president thoughts.

**Bret** 52:59

Well, I predicted that one. Yep. Yeah, this is so here's the thing this may it matters a ton because if you so I predict there

**Heather** 53:09

are people he could have picked, absent unity 2020 happening and there are people he could have picked that. Maybe I could have become convinced that because he cannot possibly last for years. He was he was the right guy. Oh yeah.

**Bret** 53:25

If he had pick she's opposite of that. If you'd picked Andrew Yang or Tulsi Gabbert, my thought would have been well, they're gonna end up in the presidency probably within the first year.

**Heather** 53:35

Even Elizabeth Warren frankly, who I used to like a lot and like a lot less now that she's gotten a bit woke but Kamala Harris

**Bret** 53:44

disaster. But you know, look, this is just proof of the entire models accuracy, which is the DNC is the captor of the Democratic Party is about influence peddling it this is to the extent that we have an obviously declining and mentally compromised person running at the top of the ticket. It is not revealing that it is aware of that it is going to put someone else in the secondary position so that it doesn't miss a beat with respect to the policy proposals that it finds preferable. And, you know, we have no choice but to revolt against this. The DNC is not your friend.

**Heather** 54:32

Yeah. Okay. Questions from this? The Super Chat? Did the advent of games increase human activity by providing practice for the part of the brain that contends with hypothetical situations to populations with different games seem to be differently adaptive to novelty? This is a great question. Long ago, I was working on a project about creativity and specifically about game game and sport. Yep. And, unfortunately a lot that doesn't leave a lot of record. Most games that are played among at least pre agricultural people are played with biodegradable stuff. And so don't leave a record and it's hard. It's hard to know. But we have, for instance, talked about what is the game called in llama? Among the Maya, who were before that, maybe even the olmak had some version of it, right? Yep. So I'm gonna say something about that.

**Bret** 55:29

Yeah, the Mesoamerican ballgame. llama is very difficult game, it still exists. You will see on temples very frequently a ring, small ring sticking sideways off of a building on two sides, the court often has slanted sides. And the idea was to get the ball through this like basketball but

**Heather** 55:52

you know, but you're throwing not know.

**Bret** 55:55

Really? Well the modern game of hula involves like hitting you with your hip. It's a really,

**Heather** 56:01

it's more like soccer. Yeah,

**Bret** 56:02

yeah, yeah. But anyway, let's just say in general, these games have to pay back. And there's a lot of cost involved. In the case of llama the cost, as we understand it involves either the winners or the losers depends which culture and at which moment in history were put to death, which is, you know,

**Heather** 56:21

it's not a lesson in perverse incentives. It's

**Bret** 56:25

Yeah, it's a pretty, pretty interesting game. There's also some interesting stuff that unfolds in beliefs, Borneo, there's some conflicts, you know, where there's like an infinite regress of, of revenge. So the idea is that you have to avenge the deaths of people who were killed by the enemy tribe.

**Heather** 56:52

That's certainly the case in Papua New Guinea. Maybe this is part one, I'm thinking we're not having to get this huge, but in some of the tribes in Papua New Guinea,

**Bret** 56:59

it's a highly diverse Island. But in any case, the point is you only count the last death. And so the point is, you're always, you're never even because you're only counting the last. That's great.

**Heather** 57:13

But another place where we need a little bit of math?

**Bret** 57:15

Well, no, I'm not so sure. Okay. Wondering if actually, that the, the, you know, it's terribly wasteful, but that this is a mechanism for making sure that if let's say that you just disengage and you stop making war on your enemy, right, your enemy could get really strong while you're not paying attention. And the next time you make war, they could obliterate you. So what have you negotiated, that you were always eliminating the last You were always avenging the last death. So you were always dead,

**Heather** 57:43

you're always either on active offense or active defense, right, as a village level or population,

**Bret** 57:49

right, which would keep two populations from ever getting out of sync with each I mean, you know, this is a more general problem. And I don't know if that's at all what's going on, or even if I necessarily have the setup, correct, but the point is, games are complex, they are expensive, when you consider the massive investment of time and energy that is put into them. They persist over evolutionary time, they morph, they're clearly adaptive. So they have to be paid for by some some benefit that's even greater. And surely, in many cases, it has to do with keeping your skill sharp for warfare, getting a team of people to be able to understand what each other are going to do on a battlefield. So no doubt, all of those games, any persistent game is going to have an adaptive explanation. And the question is, are they all the same? Probably not. Many of them are probably about war. Yeah, but

**Heather** 58:39

no, and the distinction you know, the militant moderate here who asked the question, specifies game, not sport. And, you know, sport, obviously has element of game and games is as I, as I have defined it, basically, sport absent the physical. So it is precisely potentially about as the question asked, providing practice with the part of the brain that contends with hypothetical situations. Right. And you know, sport can deal with hypotheticals as well, but they have to be you don't perfectly staged and choreographed, whereas the kinds of games that don't involve actual physical negotiation are abstract on the head. Next question, did dark skin originally evolved for antimicrobial protection rather than UV protection? Does it get shed? Excuse me? Does it get shut when pathogens are less abundant? For instance, when populations move away from the tropics, I heard Trevor's allude to this. For instance, in Africa, some very dark skinned ethnicities have historically lived in the forest and constant shade. Thanks, love you both. So this from Eco, I have this sort of fig glimmering of Bob making this argument and I have not gone I can't recall. I mean, I I trust that echo is reporting accurately. What He has said and that he was accurate in claiming that within African populations, some of the most dark skinned people are actually understory dwellers, which would seem to suggest that there is at least some other benefit to dark skin rather than UV protection.

**Bret** 1:00:19

Yeah.

**Heather** 1:00:22

There was a lot of contingencies, though.

**Bret** 1:00:24

Yeah, I have my my doubts about this. And so you have to, yes, melanin has a cost to produce. So to the extent that that cost is not being paid back, you would expect it to be quickly reduced. On the other hand, it may be, you know, how long have these populations that live in the understory lived that way? And is the benefit? Do they spend 100% of their time in the understory is the benefit if they you know, cross between patches of forest and they're exposed to intense sunlight for, you know, a small number of days a year? Would that justify the maintenance? Because the real question is the avoidance of damage? I don't know. I think the fact that dark skin is often lightened in populations that have moved away from Africa, in particular is probably the result of interbreeding more than anything else, but I don't know, what I don't know, is the microbial question. It's not obvious.

**Heather** 1:01:26

So it's an alternative. alternative hypothesis for the benefit. But there's a there's an implied mechanism there that isn't spelled out sufficiently for us to assess, right? Yeah. Did it evolve from antimicrobial protection?

**Bret** 1:01:40

Yeah, I'm just trying to imagine how that would work. Is it just simply a thermal question? That because it's black, it heats up faster? And it would create an extreme environment?

**Heather** 1:01:53

tropical fever? Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Okay. So hypothesis anyway,

**Bret** 1:01:59

it's an hypothesis and

**Heather** 1:02:00

hypothesis COVID aside, what is a model which we can improve our current education system? Do you foresee ways of receiving accreditation outside of universities in the future? I love you too. Thanks. Big question.

**Bret** 1:02:15

You know, I was, I should, I should dredge it up. But I saw today, one of the most amazing Rube Goldberg mechanisms I've ever seen, was made out of stuff that was clearly you know, sourced at Goodwill or something. It wasn't like a really refined one. But it was elaborate. It went all the way around this entire house and down into a forest. And anyway, it was amazing. And I was thinking to myself, how smart would you end up if this is what you did, instead of school, you know, because basically, there were, you know, dozens of different mechanisms for getting things to trigger other things. And you would learn a tremendous amount. And there are, of course, things that you would not learn that way that you would want to supplement with maybe some other game. But the point is, you know, I don't know whether we can rescue the system of education, it's so targeted at the wrong thing. It's really not built to make you smarter. And there are lots of things that do make you smarter. And the question is, can we find people who are capable of I don't even want to say teaching, because it may not be teaching, but capable

**Heather** 1:03:25

of facilitating learning and teaching aren't the same thing they have, they should have considerable overlap. But what you want is children and adults who are know how to teach themselves and who are excited about doing so. Right. And that's not even

**Bret** 1:03:41

two things. It's like, Look, you know, here's an object you would like to produce, here are the tools with which it is produced. Here's some instructions on how to use those tools. Do you have what it takes to get from the tools and the raw materials to the object that you want to have produced?

**Heather** 1:04:00

Now it's exposing, exposing children to problems that they might or might not yet have the facility and tools to solve across a wide variety of domains, you know, physical domains, you know, out out in the woods, inside, in labs, with words with math, all of these different domains, many of which have been just excluded from school, with music, with sport, all of these things, you know, the things like sport are often mocked for being in education at all. And then you know, of course, as soon as sports got sort of demoted, then we started seeing recess cut so now we've got this sort of brands and jars model now we need fully embodied kids who are excited to actually engage with whatever it is what is being done. And same thing with arts programs are being cut. Well, if you know, his art as important, as you know, they learn to read. Oh no, every kid needs to learn how to read but do they really They need to learn how to spell at this point is that more important than being with, you know, their classmates making music every now and again? Or beggarly? I don't think so. Well,

**Bret** 1:05:10

you know, at the point you get to their classes, I just think the model is broken at the reason that you should do x is because we told you to, and it will be bad for you not to and it'll be good for you to do it. Yeah, it's just a lousy motivational structure. And there are lots of good motivational structures where somebody actually feels good about accomplishing something for some reason, other than, you know, the teacher patted him on the head. Yeah. Hey, buddy.

**Heather** 1:05:40

All right. I was delightfully surprised to find George gammon is a fan of yours. You know who that is? No. Economic Collapse is what he focuses on, hit up, he would be you would be a good guest on his rebel capitalist show. Rebel capitalist.

**Bret** 1:05:57

Does he create economic collapses? Or,

**Heather** 1:06:01

in my opinion, COVID social unrest and recession will converge this winter. Yeah, that's I think, unfortunately, not too risky. A prediction. Hello. COVID economic collapse. And so COVID social unrest in recession? Yeah,

**Bret** 1:06:17

and psychosis.

**Heather** 1:06:20

Oh, boy. Let's, what time is it, Zach, how long have you been here? Five. Let's do three more. How about that? All right.

**Heather** 1:06:35

Now, let's do four more, because I like the fourth one in line. Great show. What do you both think about Jonathan heights claim that 2015 Mark, the turning point for campus protests? Was that your experience? So he his sort of two pronged claim, as I remember it was that we along with Greg lukianoff, was that 2013 or so is when people started to see the beginnings of the unraveling of the population of people on campus. And people were beginning to ask for trigger warnings and safe spaces and things like that. And then 2015 is when the protests you know, campus, much like apparently Portland is a protest city campuses are always protest places like protests will happen on campuses every now and again. But that the nature of them changed around 2015. And, you know, I think anecdotally that's, that's a match for us. But I think more interesting is sort of tracking back like what, what all was in place, and yeah, and we've I've used this language of a perfect storm a lot. But you know, broken k 12 schooling, helicopter and snowplow parenting, giving legal drugs to kids to basically mute their moods and make sure that they don't know how to be adults and put them in screens all day long. Well, of course, they get to college, and they are unregulated and incompetent. Of course there.

**Bret** 1:08:00

Yeah. It's, it's hard to know, for one thing. We only had access to one college directly. Yeah. And what we saw was very atypical because of our very vibrant and non crazy community. Right. It was composed of abiertas

**Heather** 1:08:17

our particular students because obviously they were parts of the Evergreen community, though. quite crazy,

**Bret** 1:08:22

clearly. And there were clearly things being taught in some quadrants of the campus. That were nonsense and metastasize. Yeah, worse than nonsense. pernicious. Yeah. malignant nonsense. Yep. So it's a little hard to say, but I think he, he and lukianoff are in the ballpark. Yeah, respect to that tipping point. Now Absolutely.

**Heather** 1:08:46

Many youtubers generate income from live in person events with fans, such as golf tournaments, etc. Have you considered leading a hike for patrons who donate significantly or something similar? Yeah, we have. We've talked about leading what we were calling evolution weekend's in and around Portland. And we've also talked about leading trips farther afield to places like to Puccini in the Ecuadorian Amazon. You know, maybe maybe at some point,

**Bret** 1:09:16

it can be very stimulating to have a discussion about evolution while looking at monkeys. Yes, yes. Especially

**Heather** 1:09:22

if they are squirrel monkeys or marmosets or Titi. Monkeys or Okay, all of them mean night monkeys were Yeah, howler monkeys. Not as interesting. Yeah, but they'll do that. Yeah. It's so weird to me that we have a cat right in front of us and that they can't see the cat. Oh, no. No, they can see here. Yeah. What's up? A little bit on screen. Yeah. Okay. Two more questions for today. I have a theory that mask wearing is more accepted in Asian countries, partly because they look for emotions in the eyes. What do you think? I think we all look for emotions in the eyes. Don't we Do so the question, I think, presumes that Asian cultures are more prone to be looking for emotion in the eyes. And you know, maybe, maybe, therefore, that they are less likely to show emotion on the rest of their face, such that covering the rest of the face is less of a hit, sort of emotionally and cognitively, for communication.

**Bret** 1:10:22

Well, all it has to be is more in order for this to make sense. But it raises a deeper question, let's say, for example, or for the sake of argument that this is correct, and that Asians typically do read more emotion than the eyes. Is that because there's something about Asians that is genomically prone to this? Or is that because emotionality is conveyed in the eyes, and therefore, in the same way, that we don't have a tonal language and have a hard time learning one? Do they learn to convey emotions with the eyes in ways that people from cultures that don't do this don't learn and therefore, they are predisposed? I guess what I would say

**Heather** 1:11:10

it's causing, you're saying, if there's a correlation, you might you might, your default assumption would be that cause and effect are reversed from what the question is supposing?

**Bret** 1:11:20

Well, I wouldn't say cause and effect reversed. I would say, maybe there's some arbitrary reason emotion gets conveyed in every culture. It may be conveyed on different channels, oh, maybe the Asian cultures convey it more in the eyes. I don't know if that's true. But let's say it was. And then COVID comes along, and I just interfaces with this arbitrarily and cover your mouth. cover your mouth in your nose, we could do that. Yeah, yeah. Then it would be less disruptive. So anyway, it's plausible. But I'd be I'd be really curious a whether the claim is right, and

**Heather** 1:11:51

the observation has to be true. And then we can talk about whether or not the hypothesis that would explain the observation might be true. Yeah. Final question. Do you have, do you have advice on how women can stay safe while traveling? Do you ever find yourself holding back from adventures because it would be unsafe for a woman. So this is there's there's a lot to be said here. And, you know, I have enjoyed traveling alone a lot. And it is risky. And you do take on risk by doing so. But you also end up in situations that are good, that you cannot end up in, if you are with someone. So holding back on adventures, because it'd be unsafe, I'm sure I've made those decisions. I mean, I think you'd be you'd be a fool to not recognize that, you know, as a woman traveling alone, there are particular risks that you are taking that are unlike the risks that you would be taking if you were a man traveling alone. And so you have to make different decisions sometimes. But you know, we've, I'm just gonna, I guess the story I was just about to tell us I've been told publicly so I'm not going to say yet we've written it into the books, I'm not going to share that one here. We've definitely when we've been traveling together. We have run into situations where I was incredibly grateful that we were together and that I wasn't alone. But I always have to wonder, what would I have done differently in the run up? You know, I have been that combination of lucky and smart. And I have I have not, I have not been hurt in any of these situations in any in any real way. But it doesn't, you can't just be smart. And you certainly can't just be lucky, because you can't depend on luck. And so there is no guarantee. But you do have to decide in advance what your tolerance is, and also get a real sense of what the background culture is. You know, for instance, it was advised when we started working in Latin America and a couple of seasons we were in different parts of Latin America were both down there at the same time. We were in different countries sometimes. We were in grad school, you know within this is before we were married. That's how you know women should wear a wedding band whether or not they're married, like just you know, because it helps it helps fend off unwanted attention. Well, that fends off unwanted attention exactly as long as the person can ask the question, well, he's not here is he? So you need a boyfriend, right? So it doesn't it doesn't actually work. Like none of these simple signals actually do the trick. You have to be prepared actively to defend yourself and to move out of a country out of a situation if if it's not, if it's not safe, and you I did have to change where I was actually based. A couple of times when I was doing fieldwork alone in Costa Rica, because the the dude who owned the place where I was staying proved not to be trustworthy, and like I said, Never got hurt. Never got hands on me, but it could have well ended up differently if I had not taken the sort of spidey sense I was getting and And some, some more clear indicators seriously. So it's gonna be context specific. But the idea that, you know, not being gender non conforming and being the sort of, you know, a badass and carrying a machete around, like, that's not sufficient, you know, if you're a woman, it's just different, you just have different risks than if you're a man.

**Bret** 1:15:25

With all risk, it is important that you, we have a thing. shorthand is the theory of close calls, which is, as you engage in something dangerous, things tend to go wrong slightly before they go severely wrong. And if you regard the fact that they didn't go catastrophic Lee wrong as evidence that you're doing something right, you will end up with them ultimately going catastrophic ly wrong. And if you take the data that comes from the near misses and things as evidence of what you might change, then you can actually discover where the hazards are and how to avoid them. So

**Heather** 1:16:01

yeah, that's, that's interesting that you raised that here, because we've obviously we've talked about that a lot. We've talked about with our kids a lot, this theory of close calls, and I've always thought of it with regard to the A biotic stuff, right with regard to the the way of the tree falls, and the rising water and the rivers and, you know, these, these things that happen and respond in no way depending on how you respond to them, right? Like they don't, they don't change their behavior, because you were fierce, or careful or smart, or whatever, you just have to have been out of the way or be able to get out of the way as it happens. And a social situation is different, right? And you can learn the sort of categories of people, you know, that the vast majority of, you know, walking down a street in some Latin American Capitol and getting a lot of attention from men, the vast majority of them have no intention of doing anything more than that, how do you figure out who the tiny percentage of people who would, and making sure that you never end up alone in a dark alley with such people, it's, it doesn't necessarily track you know, that lesson doesn't necessarily track to if you're in Egypt, or if you're, you know, if you're in some other place in the world with very different cultural norms around behavior between the sexes. And

**Bret** 1:17:21

those are two different things, though, I agree that the lessons of Latin America won't necessarily translate to the Middle East. But the theory of close calls still works, you know, and you can even detect, you know, there may be parts of town where you're not safe, and you don't know them. And the fact that rate of attention that you get as you move in this direction goes up is one of these things where you will detect you will be uncomfortable before you're in danger. So it's not to say that, you know, you can always encounter the thing that'll kill you, on the first go, just out of sheer bad luck. But that's not how it tends to work. You do tend to get indicators before you get the thing that's crippling Yeah. And

**Heather** 1:18:05

well on this actually, maybe this is this is part of that. And I'm and I assume the way that this question is asked, and the fact that they're asking in this live stream, I assume that they already know this. But one of the things that is so actually crippling about much of the modern discourse around like safe spaces and such as assumption that the idea that women are more at risk, if they're scantily clad, walking alone, late at night, is an outrage. And we shouldn't do that. Right? And like, you know what that is, that is just true. And I'm not justifying the fact you know, you and you said, when we were on Rogen together a couple years ago, right, like, Sure, it would be great if you could ride naked down, you know, down the street, as a woman, but you can't, that's that's, that's not the world we live in.

**Bret** 1:18:47

It's not that it would be great, we should live in a world so safe that you were walking through the center of town lathered up in oil, and, you know, and naked is not taken as consent by anybody, right, but you'd be a fool to do

**Heather** 1:19:02

it, you'd be a fool to do it. And Excuse me. Recognizing, keeping, keeping hyper aware of your surroundings, being very aware of how you were presenting, and how, where you are, and of all of the people around you, and obviously that's different if you're in a public place that you know, where there's a lot of, you know, at a club, for instance, versus walking away from the club back home, on streets that are increasingly deserted, but it's neighborhoods, you know, and therefore, you have some sense of it, versus leaving such a place in a city that you're visiting, you don't really know and you're just going back to Airbnb or a hotel. These are three very different situations. And in each case, what you need to do is have a model of how the world responds to you, especially in the scene in which you're in you know, how you're dressed and how you are presenting and what time of night it is, whether or not you have any friends with you, and no Not being outraged at the fact that the world may do something horrifying to you, even though that is awful, but actually taking as much responsibility as you can to make sure that you reduce the chances that something horrible happens to you. And that is not in any way victim blaming. It is saying, Okay, now you're taking as much responsibility as you possibly can for the unfor, the inequitable outcomes in the world, that result from being a woman versus being a man wandering alone, late at night, or in some just deserted place, because you traveled somewhere alone,

**Bret** 1:20:35

it actually strikes me that it is the perfect analog for the general conflict between the personal responsibility side, which conservatives tend to see and the collective responsibility side, which liberals tend to see. Which is, let's say, for example, that you turn out to be a woman, as I did, yes, quite. And for this, I am grateful as well. But you're a woman, you face two things. One is the question of how you will walk through the world. And the other is whether the world requires things of you that it shouldn't. Right? Should you be safe? in any city in the world dressed however, you feel like being dressed at all times of day and night? Yes, we should want that world, right? But you don't live in that world. So should you say, well, it's not my responsibility to make me safe. society should make me safe. We all agreed to that. So therefore, I'm going to dress however, I will dress I'm going to ignore what time of day it is, what part of town I'm in, etc, etc. And if something happens that civilizations fault? Well, no, the point is, let's say that you invest in the societal responsibility side, how much are you likely to make yourself safer? Almost none. So if you say, well, anything you say about how I might be dressed in what part of town and all that is you victim blaming, then you are making yourself vulnerable. Whereas if you invested entirely in the personal responsibility side, you have a huge impact on how much danger you're in. And so the point is, both things are true. Yeah, right.

**Heather** 1:22:14

Both things are true. No, I yeah, I have. Maybe this is the place to end. This is an anecdote, but I have this memory. From from college. I was I was briefly at one of the seven sisters. I was at Smith, which is a women's college, clustered in with a bunch of other colleges. For those who know. Northampton, Massachusetts Amherst is there and UMass Amherst and Mount Holyoke and Hampshire, they're all close together. And so even though two of those colleges are women's colleges on Friday and Saturday nights, there is a lot of interchange between them. And so I remember coming back from a friend's house and you know, I didn't I didn't wear heels that I don't like I don't and so yes, I did have a judgement about seeing all of these Smith women who were so vocal about their feminist feelings and then dahling themselves up and teetering around in heels which are inherently not good shoes to be in. If you feel that you might be in any danger, you might need to escape from something. And you're coming back. I lived on campus, the very very brief moment that I went to the school. And I could see across campuses, beautifully sculpted land, the landscaped campus, this woman who clearly had been drinking to just her silhouette, she's inhale she's staggering she's almost falling down and you can because she's just in silhouette with the light seems well lit campus in order to keep people safe and all this, but you know, super well lit in the silhouette inhales falling down drunk alone, late at night on a Friday or Saturday night. And I could there was she was across a pond for me, I couldn't get to where my mind my inclination was like, I should just go be with someone, even though I'm a woman too. But I'm not dressed like that. And I'm not drunk, and I could potentially help her get wherever she's going. And I did end up like seeing her get into a building what my thought was, for cuts sake, like this is what friends are for. For one thing, like she never should have been alone in that situation. But God forbid something had happened to her. No, nothing ever should have happened to her. But the combination of being alone at night, drunk in shoes that would never have allowed her to make a fast getaway, all would have contributed to the fact that she would have been hurt and I'm so grateful that I didn't see this woman get hurt. But that scene is just emblazoned in my memory as like, that is someone who is not taking the kind of care of herself as she should be. And so like that's, that's what you don't do when you're traveling right? At CLU. You just don't put yourself in that situation.

**Bret** 1:24:49

Yeah, if you just simply imagine, predators exist, and there's nothing we can do to eliminate them. 100% we should do better than we do, but they're going to be predatory men. And you don't want to be, you know, the, the deer with the limp. Exactly, because the predator is looking for the vulnerable individual. So, you know, allowing yourself to be that is, I hesitate to use the word inviting catastrophe. But, you know, that's not victim blaming. The point is it's common sense.

**Heather** 1:25:22

Yeah. All right. Well, thank thank you for that question. Thank you for all of these questions there, as usual, really, really good. We appreciate the support, we invite you to go to either of our Patreon to get more content, the clips, channel, darkness clips channel, go to what is the URL for unity 2020.

**Bret** 1:25:45

The unity 2020 URL is articles of unity.org. And again, we're gonna have a campfire tomorrow afternoon, four o'clock, Pacific Hoyer and john wood Jr. Yeah, four o'clock pacific time. So join us for that. Anything else?

**Heather** 1:26:05

Nope. We'll probably probably be back in a week. Maybe so.

**Bret** 1:26:08

All right. Be well, everyone.