Bret and Heather 94th DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ Is it La...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:05

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream number 94. I checked I'm certain of the number it is 94 it's even therefore don't have to see if it's prime cuz it ain't all right.

**Heather** 00:19

got going on. Yep, we do lots of stuff as usual. We're going to be talking about adulthood and aspects of adulthood and always two ways to mature into adulthood. Today, but first, just some some housekeeping stuff. If you're watching on YouTube, consider switching over to Odyssey that's where the chat is enabled. For those of you watching live. You can submit questions for the q&a that will follow this at WWW dot Dark Horse submissions.com. Please consider joining our patrons tomorrow, August 29. At 11am Pacific is our private two hour q&a at my patreon we have a lot of fun with those they're small enough that we're able to pay attention to the chat and interact with it as it happens. You can go to store dot darcars podcast.org to buy some things and please consider joining me at natural selections. That's natural selection.substack.com my my post this week was about friendship. And I will continue next week talking about other ways to for humans to make meaning in the world. We have two sponsors today so without further ado, let's embark on those. Alright, today's sponsors are vivo barefoot and omaxe cryofreeze. You barefoot makes shoes for feet that sounds unremarkable until you realize that most shoes are not made for feet. They are made for someone's idea of what feet should look like and do and be constrained by most shoe makers have no idea what feet are or what they should be able to do. That's not true for vivo barefoot. We've been wearing vivo barefoot for a few months now and honestly we love them. They are beyond comfortable. They feel like you're barefoot in your shoes you get better tactile feedback from the surfaces you're walking on. They cause no pain at all because there are no pressure points forcing your feet and odd positions. They're fantastic and it's frankly ridiculous how fantastic they are. The people at vivo barefoot in fact say they don't make shoes they make footwear that allows your feet to do what they were designed to do. So your body can move the way it was designed to move in our natural world. millions of years of evolution and our feet are basically perfect bits of kit in their language humans have evolved to essentially walk move and run barefoot but modern shoe shaped cushion shoes have impacted foot foot impacted foot function and a contributing to a movement focused health crisis in the process. So these vivo barefoot are designed wide to provide natural stability thin soles to enable you to feel more and flexible to help you build your natural strength from the ground up and yet they are they are containing so you're not slopping around in these at all. It's not like flip flops, which are not actually as it turns out very good for your feet. I have recently learned to my chagrin, but they really are terrific shoes and there's some research that shows that foot strength has increases by 60% in a matter of months just by walking around in these shoes. I know that when I'm wearing them I can easily walk for miles without realizing how far I've gone and and they've got a great range of footwear for both kids and adults and for every activity from hiking to training to everyday wear probably not your shoes for a formal occasion. But you know who knows maybe they'll get to those get to those next so vivo barefoot is a certified B Corp pioneering regenerative business principles. Their footwear is produced using sustainably sourced natural bio and recycled materials with the aim to protect the natural world so you can run wild on it. Go to vivo barefoot comm slash Darkhorse to get an exclusive 20% offer. All new customers also get 100% day free trial so you can see if you love them as much as we do. That's vivo. barefoot vi VOB ar e f o t.com. Slash Darkhorse. We think you're going to love them.

**Bret** 04:05

You forgot the most important part. Did I? Yes. They were sold by the pair checked for Chi reality before shipping. Oh, yeah. I mean, if they weren't, you wouldn't want it

**Heather** 04:15

and they're probably tested as well.

**Bret** 04:18

They may well be toasted. Alright, next up is Oh, Max cryofreeze. But before we talk about Oh, Max cryofreeze. Let's talk a little bit about pain. Pain is awesome. Pain is actually what keeps you safe. The fact is, pain is an adaptation. It is a necessary feature of your physiology that tells you that something is amiss, that you're doing some kind of damage or that you are putting some part of you at risk. But that said, not all pain is useful. Sometimes you have a chronic pain that isn't informing you of anything you don't know. And in those cases, it's just nothing short of annoying and it's nice to be able to do something about it. So Oh, Max, cry Freeze is a role on smells pleasant contains CBD and does I can tell you from my own situation does seem to alleviate pain. So for example, when we came back from our recent vacation after way too much driving, I had a pain in my shoulder, I tried a little bit of omaxe cryofreeze and the pain alleviated, which is lovely, don't have to ingest anything. So what should you do, you should go to omaxe health, and they have a 20% offer for our listeners 20% off a full bottle of omaxe cryofreeze. The discount also applies to anything on their site. So go to omaxe oh MAX health.com and enter the code Darkhorse to get 20% off cryofreeze sitewide. All right. Nope.

**Heather** 06:01

So for those just listening, we still got the green There we go. When I assume that everyone watching has figured out that we've got that green perimeter around the screen, that means we are reading sponsored ads. And whenever you don't see that green screen, that green perimeter, that means that whatever we're talking about, we're doing so because not because of any financial incentive at all. Okay, today we're going to talk about adulthood. from a number of different perspectives, we're going to talk about error correction. We're going to talk about gratitude and forgiveness and a little bit about totalitarianism, I think. But we are going to begin by reading an excerpt chapter from chapter 11. That is the adulthood chapter of our forthcoming book a hunter gatherers guide to the 21st century, there are 13 chapters in this book. So we are coming up on the end of these excerpts, which means we're also coming up on publication date, which is just two and a half weeks away at this point, September 14. So we've got two more chapters after this week. And then I don't know maybe we'll read something from the epilogue or the afterward, the week after publication, but we shall see. Okay, without further ado, we've got just three pages from the middle of the chapter called becoming adults. And those of you actually before I embark on this, those of you who are familiar with my medium presence, and now I've moved basically all of my new writing over to the natural selections on substack may remember a piece that I wrote on post modernism a couple years ago and for, for this section of this chapter of our book, we modified that piece somewhat so that you will, you will hear some similarities if you're familiar if you are familiar with that piece. Types of reality. Remember, Wile E. Coyote whose life's work was chasing the Roadrunner and Looney Tunes cartoons. in hot pursuit, he often found himself spinning off the edge of a cliff where he would hang suspended in there until he looked down. Gravity did not apply until he recognized that it should. It was funny, because it was ludicrous. It was utterly ludicrous. And yet too many modern people seem to imagine that by changing people's opinions or perspectives, you change underlying reality. In short, they believe that reality itself is a social construct. We argued earlier that con artists on the confused often operate on a wholly social plan rather than on an analytical one. How do you avoid becoming someone who assesses the world based on social responses rather than based on analysis, one of those people who are easily fooled by con artists and the confused to good strategies are to regularly engage with the physical world and to understand the value of close calls. The sad truth is that the more educated you are today, the harder This is to do. Our current higher education system is steeped in a philosophy that doubts our ability to even perceive the physical world. That philosophy is called post modernism. Post modernists have been at the leading edge of promoting the view that reality is socially constructed. post modernism and its ideological child post structuralism were once contained in a small corner of the Academy. These ideologies do contain kernels of truth. They teach us, for instance, that our sensory apparatus biases and that we are mostly unaware of those biases. They reveal that school factories and prisons are similar in their use of power to control populations. That was an analysis done by Michel Foucault, in his metaphorical extension of Bentham's panopticon. And critical race theory has at its foundation, the real observation that the American legal system has had a particularly difficult time emerging from its racist past. And, and that full recovery from that past is not yet on the horizon. These are a few real invaluable contributions such ideologies have contributed to the world. But most modern instantiations of post modernism have jumped the shark.

**Heather** 09:45

Sometimes when fringe academic ideas go rogue, they persist longer than they might but their impact is limited to a few university departments. Not so with post modernism and its downstream effects. What what happens on campus has most definitely not stayed on campus. post modernism minute's adherence have infiltrated systems far beyond higher ed from the tech sector to K 12 schools to the media and are doing considerable harm. One of the most astounding conclusions of some postmodernists is that all of reality is socially constructed. They have taken they have even taken issue with the conclusions of Newton and Einstein, on the basis of the privilege of these scientists is obvious in their equations. And as old white guys, their biases inherently prevented them from knowing anything real of the world. People have particular phenotypes this ironically, biologically deterministic and regressive worldview argues, can't possibly have access to truth. How do you come to be this confused though, to believe that all reality is socially constructed? have little experience in the real world, no Carpenter or electrician could believe that all of reality is socially constructed. No forklift operator or sailor could nor Who would have thought could any athlete there are physical ramifications of physical actions and everyone operating in the physical world knows this. If you have not thrown or caught many balls, or used hand tools, or laid tile or driven stick shift. In short, if you have little or no experience with the effects of your actions in the physical world, and therefore have not had occasion to see the reactions they produce, then you will be more prone to believing in a wholly subjective universe in which every opinion is equally valid. Every opinion is not equally valid. And some outcomes don't change just because you want them to. social outcomes may change if you argue or throw fit physical outcomes. Well, not. Everyone, no matter how trapped they are in their body, with its particular flaws and strengths has the opportunity to experience the world of actions and reactions in the physical world. Not everyone can bike singletrack but for those of us who can and do we face objective reality in the form of routes, hills and gravity, how given your particular body might you force your mind and body into confrontation with physical reality? Consider this, our eyes do not produce a static image like a photograph. Rather, our eyes are tools of our brains taking note of the world, we are fully embodied our bodies are not afterthoughts to our brains are unnecessary to their interpretation of the world. Those eyes and those skulls on those next atop those torsos and legs and feet that move that is all part of perception. Perception is an action. The more you move, therefore, within whatever your particular limits are, the more integrated whole and accurate your perception of the world is likely to be. Movement increases wisdom, so too does exposure to diverse views, experiences and places. We need both freedom of expression and freedom to explore because both speak to the value of environments in which outcomes are uncertain. Nature is still available to us, let us spend time in it and in so doing generate strength and calibrate our understanding of our own significance. Humans are evolved to be anti fragile, we grow stronger with exposure to manageable risks, with the pushing of boundaries fostering openness to serendipity into that which we do not yet know. This is true for both bones and brains, doing things with non negotiable outcomes in the physical world skateboarding, growing vegetables, ascending a peak provides a corrective to many wrongheaded ideas currently passing for sophisticated. Some of these include all of reality is a social construct. emotional pain is equivalent to physical pain, and life is or can be made perfectly safe. A graduate school mentor of ours George Estabrook, who was primarily a mathematical ecologist, but who also spent many years of field seasons working and living with the practitioners of a traditional agricultural system in the hills of Portugal wrote this in the introduction to one of his papers, quote, it is remarkable how the persistent empiricism of human beings struggling to make their living in nature results in practices that make ecological sense, even though they may be codified in ritual, or explained in ways that seem superficial or not compelling ecologically. Indeed, local practitioners may have concepts equally justifiable but very different from those of academics of what constitutes a useful explanation. Unquote. If we were forced to choose between the useful explanation given to us by a villager, versus one provided by your average academic about an object that the villager depended on for her sustenance, we would surely choose the villagers explanation. Here we reference part of the introduction that we haven't yet shared with you guys, that Costa Rican villager who likely saved our lives by keeping us out of a rapidly rising river, whom we talked about in the introduction, knew far more about where we were and how to interpret the signs than we budding academics dead. You can fool a person and they can fool you, but you can't fool a tray or attractor, a circuit or surfboard. So seek out physical reality, not just social experience. Pursue feedback from the vast universe that exists beyond other human beings. Watch your reactions when the feedback comes in. The more time you spend putting your intellect against realities that cannot be coerced with manipulation or sweet talk, the less likely you are to blame others for your own errors. That's the excerpt for today.

**Bret** 14:43

Yes, it is interesting how events proceeding a pace since we completed the book seem to reflect well on many of the things that we described as generalities in there. So much of the modern circumstance that is reflective of exactly these kinds of delusions.

**Heather** 15:08

So once again, the first draft was submitted in March of 2020, just as COVID was beginning to descend on the planet,

**Bret** 15:14

right? So I am inspired to add one thing that is not contained in that, that excerpt

**Heather** 15:23

Yeah, this should be a living document.

**Bret** 15:25

The is ancient that people should have the sense that their desire for something to be true, if they can only put enough will behind it affects the the truth of what is correct. And that obviously isn't. So what we are seeing now involves a sort of second tier. Now, no doubt, this has ancient origins as well. But there is not only the attempt to force reality, to bend to one's desires, but we are seeing an industrial strength campaign now to shift the measurement of what has taken place so that it will reflect well on the belief that one can force something to be by willing it to be. And this is very, it's a very dangerous kind of transition. Because the problem is, in order to get better, we have to see the error of our ways, if the record of what took place is altered, so that it reflects well on the myopia and blind spots of those who arrogantly pushed us in the direction of a policy, then we aren't in ability in a position to correct our trajectory. And actually, I'm many things are happening at once obviously, in the world, what's taking place in Afghanistan, I think, reveals the full depth of the hubris of this system of governance, right that apparently,

**Heather** 16:58

we are talking about the system of governance that we are engaged in or that they were

**Bret** 17:02

no, no, our system of governance, let us obviously into a situation we fought for almost a generation, and the gains whatever they might have been are reversed within hours or days. That suggests that whatever stories we were telling ourselves, were not grounded in in reality, in this Well,

**Heather** 17:27

at least they weren't stable. Or they they needed more work to become stable.

**Bret** 17:33

Well, let's put it this way, presumably, I mean,

**Heather** 17:36

the women's and girls lives were improved over the last 20 years in Afghanistan. And, and that is still it's disappearing.

**Bret** 17:44

Right? But we were not we were not those of us in the society that that launched into this campaign, were not told that what we were doing was temporarily staving off an evil that would descend again, as soon as we left, right, we were led to believe that we were accomplishing something. And then we were led to believe that it was stable. And the opposite has turned out to be true. So I have no doubt that it was better to exist in Afghanistan, under our temporary rule, but the point is, there was nothing accomplished, it was a matter of treading water, at least if this is the way that we left. So in any case,

**Heather** 18:24

give Yes, certainly given given the way that we we left. That's a disaster.

**Bret** 18:29

And I think, you know, there's there's a general question here, which is to the extent that something takes control and decides to mislead us into pleasant fictions about what our power in the world might be, what we might accomplish, what it will cost, all of these things, at the point that we finally get our come up, and it is an extremely rude awakening. And the question is, how much better off would we be if we had a system that made an attempt, at least to be honest with us in real time about what the actual costs of something are? What might actually be accomplished? What are the real risks of doing this?

**Heather** 19:07

Well, just as just as compulsory schooling was, in part, explicitly intended, and its origins in Germany and to a large part we we inherited those intentions, when compulsory schooling took hold, and sort of around the turn of the last century, was to create a populace that was easily controlled. That you know, as as populations grew, and as industrialization and mechanization grew, it was valuable to employers to have a workforce that didn't ask too many questions. And I have not heard it argued explicitly, that it is valuable to a government that is, that proclaims its democratic intentions in both its founding texts and in its current politicians. That it is valuable to have a populace that is under informed. And yet that is clearly implicit in the policies, and the ways that policies are handed down. And you know, the kinds of the kinds of proclamations like hashtag follow the science, except we're not going to tell you anything. But the conclusions that unnamed experts behind closed doors have arrived at. That's not that's not following the science that's following the authorities. And that's not scientific,

**Bret** 20:26

right. And the implication is that the authorities actually have a better vantage point and that their interests are synonymous enough with with ours, that what they tell us is at least a good shot at what is labeled to be the right direction. And the very frightening problem is that once you establish this relationship, that experts will decide something, you won't be able to check it or even understand who they are, what motivates them, but it's supposed to be in your interest, it will inevitably be captured. And what is fed to you as the truth as seen by experts will be propaganda. And the problem is that you are endangered by the very fact that there is an engine of propaganda empowered to dress up like experts and tell you what a thinks. Yeah. And you know, that's where we are. And

**Heather** 21:16

so it's wearing the couture of science without being science,

**Bret** 21:20

it is the couture of science, it is a cargo cult science, as Fineman, yes would would put it in did put it and the problem is, you know, yes, it's all well and good to describe it as cargo cult science. But the real point is, what is the danger of such a thing. And the danger of such a thing is proportional to the seriousness of the matters that are being navigated by the pseudo scientific process. And so, you know, I don't want to draw the connection too closely. But I do think that to the extent that there is anything positive to be derived from the Afghanistan situation at all, it is the recognition that the system that was capable of making errors this big is in charge of many other things in which you are not in a position to see it on the fold on your screen. And so the question is all right, that thing was certainly so radically incompetent, that it could not possibly be entrusted with anything important. Right? And obviously, I'm not regarding what took place in Afghanistan as anything, but of the utmost importance. But the point is, that was important that was clearly lives on the line. And you know, the fate of the people on the line. And we see how well it played out, we can see, you know, the hubris unfolding in, in graphic terms, but the question is what also looks like that, that is not so visible, or so easy to monitor. And, you know, many, many things are of great importance at the moment, we are navigating many uncharted waters, and I don't see any evidence that there's a great deal more competence than what was in charge in Afghanistan in charge of, for example, COVID policy. And so you know, people need to think about that it's at least a question, what if, what if the thing that made this error is also making errors with respect to COVID? That are equally as as terrifying.

**Heather** 23:23

Right? And yeah, that's, that's, that's exactly the question. And I think that's a good segue, actually to, to the next section. But before we go there, I'm realizing, Zack, that I forgot to bring a book upstairs, from which I want to read later. And I'm not going to tell you what it's called, because I don't want to reveal that yet. But if you could grab for me or get Toby to grab for me. It's a small black book, sitting on my desk downstairs. Thank you. So we were going to talk a little bit about the fact that one thing that adults do is they correct their errors, and they correct their errors to, to people in their own heads, and they learn from them. And they correct, publicly made errors in a public way. And so I'm not sure exactly how to how to better do this. I, I don't think that that we made an error here. But you wanted to make a correction to something that we have talked about.

**Bret** 24:22

Yeah, I think there's a necessity to the extent that what we do and what I think we do well, is we build a model, and we show our work so that you can decide whether or not that model is likely to be accurate. You can check how accurate it is over time. And you can decide for yourself how you know, is it a model for your model? Is it too far fetched and you need to build something out of different stuff, but in any case, what's important is that we update with information. Figuring out what constitutes information is not always simple, but when something is a change in the information that we have available. That is important that we show you that too. And so something that we have referred to in a number of different places, is now in question. And we want to show you what it is. And we want to suggest what has happened to our model as a result. So this is a discussion of a paper that people who followed us for a long time will have heard us talk about in one of a number of places, including our substack piece from the very end of July. The piece is a study of Argentinian healthcare workers. The first author is car veyo. Zack, do you want to put it up for a second I sent you a link to the PDF. Okay, so there you can see the paper in question. Now, this paper reports have an extraordinary result. It actually reports two studies, one as a preliminary pilot study, and the other is a full fledged study of 1200 Health health care workers who were divided into 800 in the treatment group and something like 400 in the placebo group or the group, the non treated group. And here is what has happened. I became aware on the ivermectin subreddit that a researcher a doctor had requested the data set for this study. And he said that he had not been given the data set, which is in and of itself a red flag, because it is standard scientific practice. If you publish a paper based on a data set, and somebody says, I'd like to see that data set, you send it to them. And the reason for that are a couple things. One, it is important for people to be able to check whether or not you did the analysis correctly. In other words, maybe you took the data correctly, but the analysis was wrong. And if somebody else looks at the raw data, they should be able to reproduce your result or discover that it wasn't right. And the other thing is it may be valuable to analyze the data in a different way and see if there's something else there. But in any case, the fact that the data was not supplied was alarming. And I decided to find out. So I also contacted Dr. Kerr via and I asked him for the data. And he was initially resistant to giving it to me. Ultimately, a colleague contacted him requested the data and he agreed to send and he has sent us a large number of materials from the study. But we do not have a data set. And that is concerning. So what is one to make of this? First of all, it has been about a month that we have

**Heather** 27:42

this this began to happen just shortly after we posted our substack articles. Yes,

**Bret** 27:45

I think my made my first request for the data set on August 1, which was only a couple days after I made it as immediately upon hearing that the data set had not been provided to this other researcher. In any case, the data set has not arrived. I have a friend data scientist who had put together a small team that was ready to analyze the data, when it was provided in order to figure out whether it was seriously flawed or possibly fraudulent, we don't know. And in a case, because the data set was never provided they were never able to do that analysis. And basically, we've just been in a holding pattern for the month. So in light of that, what do we make of this? Well, one, I still hold out hope that the data set might arrive, I would give it to the team of data analysts and we would find out, you know how well the study holds up. But in the absence of that data set, I think we have to rate the evidentiary value of this study at zero, because we can't even know for sure that the study took place. So I hope the data set emerges. I hope it happens quickly. But until and unless it does, I would say that everybody should treat this study with the utmost caution and not invoke it. I don't think it was incumbent on us to know that the data set wouldn't be provided. I mean, that's not how our scientific work progresses you assume studies have taken place and if you have particular questions, you would request the data set and check. But this is I think this is where we are left now I do have one thing so that is not a correction of what we have said it is an update on what the sum total of the evidence is, it does not affect. So this was a study of prophylaxis. It does not affect the meta analyses that have been discussed on dark horse and elsewhere. It was not a randomized controlled trial. So it was not included for example in the Lowry meta analysis. It also doesn't affect any analysis of the effectiveness of ivermectin as a treatment because it was a study of prophylaxis and not treatment. So it does, it has some impact because it reported 100% success at preventing COVID in those who were treated, it does have some impact on the question of, you know, is there a prophylactic protocol that would be so highly protective? And and we have to assume the answer is no until we see evidence Otherwise, the place where I would correct myself where I do think I made an error is that initially when I spoke of this study, I described it as suggesting there was a ivermectin protocol that was 100%. Effective. That was never implied by the study, because the study was a combination of ivermectin and carageenan. Yep. And so it is impossible to disentangle what part of the effect is carageenan. And which part of the effect would have been ivermectin. And so in any case, I, I should have made that clear that it was a combined protocol from the beginning. And now at this point, I would say no way it should be given to the study at all.

**Heather** 30:52

No, it should be given to that study, in lesson until data are forthcoming. Let me just close that off. By sharing this is a article that I'm not sure we've talked about on air before, but it is it is referenced in that substack post that we made at the end of July. And I just, I just want to share a couple of sentences from the abstract. So this is a systematic, systematic review of what was understood this is from mid 2020, to be the potential efficacy of ivermectin. And so Zack, if you would share my screen, this is in the Journal of antibiotics by heidari and ghera baaghi ivermectin, a systematic review from antiviral effects to COVID-19 complimentary regimen. And just, you know, it had so it has antimicrobial, antiviral and anti concept property cancer properties. It is highly effective against many microorganisms, including some viruses. In this comprehensive systematic review, antiviral effects of ivermectin are summarized including in vitro and in vivo studies over the past 50 years. Here's the one sentence I wanted to read on air. Several studies reported antiviral effects of ivermectin on RNA viruses such as Zika thengai, yellow fever, West Nile, Hendra, Newcastle, Venezuelan equine encephalitis, Chicken goonyella semliki, forest sindbis, avian influenza, a person reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome, Human Immunodeficiency Virus type one and severe acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus to. So just just to remind us that there is an abundant literature long before COVID and continuing now about this particular drug, and its efficacy against a wide range of human and other pathogens. Yes, including many, many viruses, which many viruses, especially RNA viruses. Right,

**Bret** 32:43

which, you know, again, just as a, a lifelong bio geek, does make me wonder what's going on in Japanese soil. I mean, it's possible that there's a very interesting story with viruses, maybe bacteria phages. And that soil, I would love to know what explains this. And maybe it's not an ecological story, but my my guess is there's something there's something interesting to be told there. And we just don't know what it is. Yeah.

**Heather** 33:07

Yeah. Okay, let's move on. Sure. I wanted to talk a little bit about a conversation I had today. So I went this morning out to a local farmers market, and it was less pleasant than it's been in weeks past, because as some viewers will know, are the governor of Oregon reinstated or making may even be the first time that there has been a mandatory mask and mandatory mask, mask mandate for outdoors under most circumstances as of yesterday, Friday, August 27. And as we have talked about since the beginning of these podcasts back in March 2020. Until very recently, there's been no evidence that saris cubby two transmits outdoors. There are now some glimmers that delta variant may actually be able to, but there has been no evidence of that up and up until recently, and having to wear masks at a farmers market where you're, you know, spaced apart and where the space that you're in is effectively infinite is an overreach. Yes.

**Bret** 34:13

I want to point out that to the extent that the outdoor transmission mode may be increasing, this is absolutely absolutely something that we feared and predicted early on. And in fact, our position early on was there is no evidence This is transmitting outdoors and it has been checked. It's not that there's just an absence of evidence. It does not appear to transmit outdoors. But because that renders outdoors safe, we should protect that environment because it's one of our greatest assets. And so what we recommended was that actually, people upon coming in close contact outdoors, do things like mask up and the reason being that we did not want there we did not want the virus to find a selective investment. in which it could learn this trick, right? So the idea was, one probably should exert more caution than is warranted by the epidemiology at present in order to prevent evolution of this change in the virus. So I don't know whether or not it will turn out that there is now outdoor transmission. But if it is, frankly, we warned you. And it's another case in which we will have seen something well ahead,

**Heather** 35:28

well, if the virus remains respiratory, it will still be much more difficult for it to transmit outside. And the, the increasing levels of behavioral coercion that are coming down from on high and in some parts of the world have been, frankly, draconian for a very long time already. Is, is not serving any of us. And anyway, I had I had been at the farmers market, I, you know, I did what I've been doing, for instance, when I go to the market, from the beginning of this, I put it on right before I enter, where I'm mandated to wear it, and I take it off as soon as I leave. And of course, in a farmers market, that border is completely artificial. You know, it's like this, this line, the markets where you're now in farmer's market territory versus the outside where people are just as much milling around and, and interacting and, you know, no one is going up to strangers and breathing on them. And that's not something that you to under normal circumstances either much as

**Bret** 36:25

the distinction between the people walking in restaurants sitting at a restaurant is arbitrary, exactly. Whereas,

**Heather** 36:31

you know, if, if masks are effective, the demarcation between being inside a store and outside of Stories of Real demarcation, that's actually a line that that makes some sense. So I had I had bought the, the peaches, and peppers and deli salad mix and berries and, and various other deliciousness that I I was intending to buy and returning into the car and then got a coffee at a local coffee shop and was and made a point of sitting on a bench on a bench that was empty outside of this coffee shop that one and have it such that there was another end. And in this era, of course, you don't tend to get approached by strangers who asked if they can sit near you because because people are scared. And it's you just never know who or what's the person that you might be sitting next to is or believes or might be carrying as a pathogen, right. So this this woman, totally different person from the women I interacted with in a in a different spot several weeks ago, whom I talked about on air, but of similar age probably, you know, a few years older than than us, Brett and with grown children. But young, young adult children. I don't know this all at first, of course, she approached us we just carry a couple bags, she's got a nice poodle with her. And she asks if she can put the bags down on the bench first and, of course, and then after a little while she asks if she if she can sit down, she says she's agreed to meet someone from Craigslist, she's selling the contents of the bags to here. And then we start talking and, and we'll actually be before she she asked if she can sit down I said of course. But I'm not I'm not wearing a mask, you know that that's gonna have to be okay with you. She says, she says Of course it's outside. So I thought good. She's, I think what she said was, of course, we're outside after all. And we then start talking about how much more difficult this is going to get as the weather turns. And in the Pacific Northwest, the summers are perfect, when when the smoke doesn't make it impossible to breathe. And from the fires, but the middle fall through early spring are pretty dreary and cool and they never get they usually don't get bitterly cold, but very wet. And you're not going to be sitting outside, you know, a coffee shop on a day and on most days in November, it would be too wet and cold for it. Although there are usually moments in every day when you could do that. And we started talking about how we're all going to need to be good to one another and to not look at one another with distrust or anger to not dehumanize one another and she says that it will require creativity on all of our parts and patients and she says at some point in here that that she's a Christian and that she goes to she's a she's a Christian enough and a lot of people claim the mantle of Christianity but she is a Christian enough that she actually goes to Bible study every week and and that her children now grown actually did did missions when they were in high school. And I you know I tell her that I'm not a Christian that my you know, my lineage is is Christian but that I am not but that the The teachings in the New Testament are ones that we might all do well to, to abide by. And some of them, I just wanted to share some of some of the things that that she shared. One of the people in her family, I'm going to I'm going to leave this a little bit vague. I did ask her if I could talk about about our conversation on air. And she didn't, she didn't know of us. And she said, Yes. One of one of her relatives has an office in downtown Portland, there was a shooting outside of it last week. Sometimes he can't see outside of his windows because of the literal dumpster fires. So this is still happening. There is now you know, cosplay on both sides, in which you have sort of staged extremists bringing themselves together to have fights that look Look, look staged.

**Bret** 40:58

So the the gunfire outside the office was the the confrontation between the proud boys and antiva.

**Heather** 41:05

It was it was and you know, of course, these these occasional altercations that have happened between the proud boys and an Tifa are the moments that the proud boys show up, whereas an Tifa has been present much more consistently. I would say that there are people effectively LARPing on both sides. But then Tifa is are the people with the persistent presence in in Portland,

**Bret** 41:29

oh, if I can add one thing. These look at for one thing, they are reported in a very distorted way. But if you look at what actually takes place, these are effectively rumbles that somebody has announced that they're going to have a demonstration and someone else decides that they're going to protect the city from it. And what you have is these pre announced rumbles And the amazing thing is that despite the fact that these rumbles are violent up through gun battle, in this case, the police effectively are staying out of it and leaving Portland, ungoverned in some ways, and it is an absolutely shocking abdication of responsibility on the part of our municipal authorities. But in any case,

**Heather** 42:18

no, I mean, I think I think that's exactly right. And you know, we talked about the lack she, she and I, this woman and I talked about the the lack of leadership and and you know, why? Why aren't the police stepping in at this point? Well, in part because the police were roundly pilloried for so many months last year, and continued to be by by many people who write things like all cops are bastards, and who and things like kill a pig on on graffiti in downtown Portland and elsewhere. And, you know, many, many good cops are leaving or retiring. And this woman has many police in her among her friends and family as well and, and told us some stories of these, you know, these just these good, compassionate, honest, honorable law enforcement officers, both men and women who are being attacked for trying to do their jobs. Of course, at some point at the point that you have basically rumbles that are announced in advance between two opposing sects you know, it's the it's it's the you know, it's, it's not the Crips and the Bloods, but it might as well be the police are gonna say, you know, what we're out. And where does that leave the the business owners and the people with offices who are exactly in the places where the rumbles are taking place? Well, it's left, you know, it's left our downtown, a complete mess. It's a complete mess. Well, and it's

**Bret** 43:49

going to become a disaster as people discover that the police are not showing up. I don't know, I don't think we know to what extent the decision not to show up is the police and to what extent and you know, certainly, our mayor seems to proclaim himself clever for a strategy that involves staying out of these things, which of course, is putting all the rest of the citizens of Portland in jeopardy. But I don't think we know why these decisions are being made but what we can say is that predictably enough if you keep the police out of things people will discover all of the things that they shouldn't be doing and weren't doing because police were enforcing the law and so we're headed somewhere very very dark

**Heather** 44:30

this last week there were literally people driving down the four or five the wrong way the one of the one of the major highways through through Portland. Yep, it was

**Bret** 44:39

filmed. Apparently there's a group of people that routinely commandeers streets and bridges in Portland and uses them for their own sporting purposes. You know, it's obviously a completely unsustainable approach and to the extent that Portland is still mostly hospitable, it's a it's a legacy kind of stability. From when the law was enforced and you know, at some level, somebody's got to wake up. Yeah.

**Heather** 45:07

Now this is the leaders have long since lost the plot it would appear. But the populace is not as quiescent and unaware, as as, as we would be told, right, that those of us who are seeing things and saying things are actually much more abundant than I think it would appear. And this is why this is why I wanted to and I have a few more things to say about this conversation that I had with this, this lovely woman who you know who also Yeah, she's in Portland, she, you know, she says, I'm a liberal, I've got you might she, she reports to me that she's her best friend from high school, lives in another town in Oregon, that is very red, and that her friend and her disagree greatly over politics, but that she loves her dearly, and she always will. And that they, they can still talk with compassion and love in their hearts, about their children and about their futures and about how to make meaning in the world, and how to do good in the world. And the fact that they vote differently, doesn't change that. And so I would just I would return at some level to the reminder that you have been saying for years now that left right liberal conservative, the vast majority of us share values. And to some degree, the biggest thing that we disagree on actually is what we think should be done, like how to how to achieve those values. And of course, right now, things are so fraught, but you know, frankly, they have been for years now. And so who is served by keeping us at fever pitch, who is served by keeping us at each other's throats? Not us. Definitely not the people who are at each other's throats. So this this woman who I spoke with a gun on this beautiful day block from a farmers market in front of a coffee shop with lots of people walking by her poodle attracting attention, because he's a handsome dog. She says her son who lives in northeast Portland had his car broken into, which has never happened before. And he got it fixed. And then he parked it in the parking garage in downtown Portland, it was broken into again. And you know, this. These sorts of things didn't used to happen with regularity in Portland, and they are happening increasingly. And of course, this is anecdote, but this is all from this all from one conversation. So why is this kind of anarchic behavior on the rise aside from the fact that we have vilified the police exactly the people who society has enjoined to help keep us safe? We have basically said, we have no use for you and what you know, and we, as a society have made them try to make them irrelevant and of course in so doing have made them more relevant than ever. But people are scared and underemployed and without agency having had it taken away from them, you know, you must do this, when you do that you must, you know, you must, there's so many things we've been told, we're being told we must do and other things we're being told, we're not allowed to do. And the more of those people acquiesce to, the more they will continue to acquiesce to in the future.

**Heather** 48:08

I would, I guess, add just a couple more things that she said. She said to me, that she used to say to her children before they were grown out of the house, it's again, she's a she's a liberal Christian woman, who really who does Bible study on the regular, so really, actually, Christian, if there's anything more complex than a human being, it's a relationship between human beings, which reminded me very much and in fact, I told her that when I said to my husband, I have this book coming out, and it's not a Christian books and evolutionary biology book, but that reminds me so much of what of what our approach is. And we talk she and I about the value of getting out of your own bubble. And, you know, as I've said on this on this podcast many times before, so many people who would claim that America is terrible, haven't been anywhere else. Or if they've, if they have traveled, they've gone and they've gone within their, with their bubble around them to some Disney, Disney FIDE version, or a place where they can continue to carry their, their cultural privilege, frankly, and being able to actually travel and actually experience how people live, that aren't living the same way you are, give us a perspective that can't be attained any other way. And I offered knowing at this point that this was a woman, a Christian, but I didn't yet know that her children had been on missionary trips, I invoked missionary trips, I said, you know, for me, it was international travel, as a as a field scientist, in in part that really allowed me to, to see this to know this reality that, that I live a life that is more privileged and differently, you know, different than so many other people that you can't just read about. I said, I suspect that that's actually one of the one of the values and virtues of missionary trips as well. And, you know, I used to occasionally run into missionary groups when I was flying to Madagascar or to Panama and I didn't, I didn't like that they were there. Right? I'd felt it felt coercive and intrusive, and, you know, not not okay. But I also never interacted with any of those people and found them hostile or mean or disingenuous. So one thing that I've come to understand about what I think the point of missionary trips is, and what I said to her I sort of positive to her as a kind of hypothesis, although I don't think I said it that way, was that they're actually as much about inner growth as about spreading the word of Jesus, that they're about exposing the young people to other ways of being so that they can appreciate what they have. And so they can know how many different ways there are to be human in the world. And how at base that the thing is that unify us that unite us are far greater than the things that divide us that we are much more similar than we are different. And she said absolutely. And her children actually did do missionary trips. And in fact, one of the places they did missionary trips to was the tenderloin district in San Francisco. I didn't know that was a thing. The tenderloin is not a pleasant place to be at this point. I don't think for anyone, even if you live there. The last time we were there, we sort of stumbled into it a couple years ago, when we were wandering around San Francisco and it was terrible. Completely awful.

**Bret** 51:15

Yeah, we were amidst experience you You almost never have in any major American city, we were shouted at, I can't remember what the content was. But simply walking along the street, we were actually just simply shouted out, which is, you know, I can't remember the last time that happened. Yeah,

**Heather** 51:34

I thought I thought spit out as well, though, I'm not sure. And, you know, they were by no obvious, you know, people who are not doing well, you know, heroin addicts and prostitutes and, you know, people who are on the streets and not able to get off the streets. And so her children, these missionary trips in the tender line. And, and then also, one of them, one or more of them went to a private liberal arts college, and that that also felt very far afield from their experience. And that with their, at their college, they had been surrounded by what she calls her THE COUNTRY CLUB kids, which is not who their kids were. And of course, in the tenderloin, they were surrounded by people who were, you know, beyond down on their luck, which is also not her children's experience. And what she said to me was, I want my children to be equally capable of finding the humanity in people in the country club, and then the tenderloin. And that mean that that's it really like we that's what we need to be doing is to find be finding our common humanity and to be discussing with, with a constant undercurrent of, of recognition that you're talking to another human being, and that you may disagree with them about all manner of things, but that they are just as worthy of respect and care as as you are. And that that seems to me to be increasingly missing from our discourse. And we can either talk about that now, or the last thing that I explicitly or two more things, but the next thing that I want to do is read a little excerpt from the book that I happened to be reading when she walked up to me.

**Bret** 53:15

Well, one thing I would say is, you know, I think the assumption needs to be that you're interacting with another person, no matter who they are, that they are equally deserving of respect as you are or as anyone elses. The problem is that we are running up against so much in which people have effectively sold out their obligation to us as fellow humans. And that is not deserving of respect. And so we are weirdly divided. I think your point from earlier a few minutes ago was exactly accurate. Even though we agree overwhelmingly on what world we want to live in, for the most part, we have been falsely polarized into camps that cannot see the humanity in the other. And that is not for our benefit. That is it, let's put it this way. We're those of us who agree on what sort of society we want to live in, but maybe disagree about how close we are to it, or what might lead us in the right direction, we would be an absolutely unstoppable majority in a democracy. So we must not be united we must be we must be forced not to be able to see each other in order not to be so powerful,

**Heather** 54:32

just to be I mean, I think I think you were clear, but if you tuned out and tuned back in it might it might have sounded like you were saying, It's not possible that we're united. And what you what you're saying is that those who would control us cannot allow for us to know that we are united,

**Bret** 54:47

right, so we haven't talked about it in some time. But the hidden tribes report, for example, describes what it calls the exhausted middle which is this very large majority that are basically in agreement that aren't extreme on Questions of religion, they're not extreme on questions of abortion on questions of gun rights and gun control, they overwhelmingly agree on the basics. And so the point is, well, why is there no party that speaks to that middle ground? And the answer is because there can't be if there was, then the things that are that do have their interest represented in our captured governance structure would lose their power. So in some sense, we need to, or maybe maybe the best thing is, you know, I used to say that the, the NPR listener regards the Fox News viewer, as insane in the Fox News viewer, regards the New York Times reader, NPR listener, as if they've lost their mind. And they're both right. You know, the point is, each side has something that it sees with clarity, and then its blind spot contains all sorts of nonsense. And the problem is, you have to get over the sense that that person, you know, who tunes into that channel that you can't stand is simply, you know, if you think that their worldview has no value in it at that they haven't seen anything, right, that actually, you could take their worldview and take the inverse of it. And that would be correct. If that's the quality of your thinking, then you can't get out of this, if you realize that actually, you know, the right, for example, is correct about the hazard of unintended consequences of new policies, and the right is incorrect, for example, about the hazard that industrial civilization poses to the planet, right, if

**Heather** 56:44

you can, that is that they under undervalue the hazard,

**Bret** 56:47

right, they tend, they tend to think things are better than they are ecologically that things are

**Heather** 56:52

Quantico pianism, right?

**Bret** 56:55

Then, you know, if you can see both of those things, then there's somewhere to go if you're, if you can only see half the equation, and the point is okay, yes, then you will forever be unable to recognize what the vast amount that we agree on, before we ever get to the part that we really disagree on

**Heather** 57:14

Yeah, and, you know, I'm in the final chapter of our book really talks about the society wide stuff, and the political divisions. So we'll be talking a lot more about this in a couple of weeks, as well. But, um, you know, right versus left, conservative versus liberal. You know, there are various definitions out there, of course, and one of the things that we, that we heard a lot after evergreen was, well see, you're not that you're not really liberal, because look at all the people on the right, who you agree with, to which our point was actually that's a postmodern perspective, and we're not on the left because of our social group, or on the left, because of our overwhelming belief in, in what policy is, will help us get to the world that we all want to live in. And we do believe that the vast majority of us want to live in the same kind of world, but we disagree about how to get there. And I guess, I would say, you don't maybe a better response even is, if if left, if broadly speaking, and there'll be, of course, many people that will disagree with these categorizations. But if the left is about leaving the past behind, and moving forward into a future that we haven't yet seen, and if the right is about returning to a past, that is imagined to be rosy and perfect, and, and, and not making the mistakes of of progress that goes too fast. And of course, that's that's imperfect at best. There's, you know, given that, you know, business tends to be, you know, voting on the right, and businesses about, you know, productivity and growth and such, it's imperfect. Well, if you do, though framing is basically Are you interested in a past that you believe was excellent, and could be returned to or a future that you believe could be better? How about both? Like, don't we need both, of course, we need both. We need. We need neither one in isolation, we need to retain those aspects of the past that have been functional and remain functional, and about which we know little enough yet to best with without risking collapsing whole systems. And we need to be able to move forward in a way that is, but careful, but also creative and innovative and unforeseen. And yes, we will make mistakes, but we also have a chance of making the world even better for our descendants.

**Bret** 59:30

Well, you need to have the tension. And you need not to depend on the pendulum mechanism. The pendulum mechanism is in some sense, an unacceptable, unacceptably crude feedback mechanism, right, you know, in other words, if you think about the way complex systems, complex adaptive systems that actually maintain status work, you know, your temperature isn't wildly fluctuating. You know, you don't get fever, right? And then the system that you know, then sheds heat, you know, kicks into high gear and you become so cold, you can't function. Right? It's not like that. The point is it's it's a very narrow modulation that keeps you so close to the optimal temperature, or at least the important parts of You're so close to the optimal temperature that you function very well. And the point is, our system is sort of reactionary in both directions, right? Our system lets the progressives run while they create all sorts of unintended consequences, which creates a you know a distaste for progressivism, which then results in a reactionary overcompensation. That's not a good way of navigating, which what a, you know, an enlightened more adult way of navigating is to recognize that actually, anybody who thinks their side of the right left divide is correct, is wrong. Right? It is the tension between them that allows you to navigate in some useful way. And so that's sort of like, you know, entry into the adult conversation is Do you recognize that it's a tension between the instinct toward progressivism and the instinct to preserve that which functions that actually makes the system work and get better? Yeah. And then from there, you can navigate but you know, as you were mentioning, earlier this week, we've lost the instinct, we've lost even the belief in the loyal opposition. Both sides are so busy painting, the other as detestable and you know, beneath contempt and unworthy of, of dignity or whatever it is, that you know, we are watching some kind of a psychosis, right? We're watching people who have lost basic track of what it is that actually made the system work in the first place, and somehow we're gonna have to regain control of it.

**Heather** 1:01:52

That's right. So the book that I was reading, when and this woman approached me, we had this conversation was le v sells night. And it is, For those unfamiliar with it. His his autobiographical tale of having gone from being a I think he's 15 year old, living Jewish boy living with his family in Czechoslovakia, and then being dragged into Auschwitz, and losing most of his family. But before, while their worlds still looked somewhat intact. Just a little excerpt from this spring 1944 splendid news from the Russian front. That could no longer be any doubt Germany would be defeated. It was only a matter of time, months or weeks, perhaps the trees were in bloom. It was a year like so many others with its spring, its engagements, its weddings and its births. The people were saying the Red Army is advancing with great giant strides, Hitler will not be able to harm us even if he wants to. Yes, even we even doubted his resolve to exterminate us. annihilating entire people wipe out a population dispersed throughout so many nations, so many millions of people by what means in the middle of the 20th century. And thus my elders concern themselves with all manner of things, strategy, diplomacy, politics and Zionism, but not with their own fate. Even moisture, the beetle had fallen silent, he was weary of talking, he would drift to synagogue or through the streets, hunched over eyes cast down avoiding people's gaze. He was someone who had seen some of the truth of what the Nazis were up to, and could not convince his fellow villagers. In those days, it was still possible to buy emigration certificates to Palestine. I'd asked my father to sell everything to liquidate everything and to leave. I'm too old my son, he answered too old to start a new life too old to start from scratch in some distant land. Budapest radio announced that the fascist party had seized power. The region moko shorty was forced to ask the leader of the pro Nazi Nila party to form a new government. We were still not worried. Of course, we had heard of the fascist, but it was all in the abstract. It meant nothing more to us than a change of ministry. The next day brought really disquieting news. German troops had penetrated Hungarian territory with the government's approval. Finally, people began to worry in earnest, one of my friends Marsha Haim Berkowitz, returned from the Capitol for Passover and told us the Jews of Budapest live in an atmosphere of fear and terror. anti semitic acts take place every day in the streets on the trends. The fascist attack Jewish stores synagogues, the situation is becoming very serious. The news spread through cigarette like wildfire. Soon that was all people talked about. But not for long. Optimism soon revived. The Germans will not come this far. They will stay in Budapest for strategic reasons for political reasons. In less than three days, German Army vehicles made their appearance on our streets. One more one more paragraph, anguish German soldiers with their steel helmets and their Death's Head emblem. Still, our first impressions of the Germans were rather reassuring. The officers were billeted in private homes even in Jewish homes. Their attitude towards their hosts was distant but polite. They never demanded the impossible made no offensive remarks and sometimes even smiled the lady of the house, a German officer large in the Khans house across the street from us. We were told it was a charming man, calm, likeable and polite. Three days after he moved in, he bought Mrs. Kahn, a box of chocolates. The optimists were jubilant. Well, what did we tell you? You wouldn't believe us? There they are your Germans? What do you say now? Where's their famous cruelty? The Germans were already in our town. The fascists were already in power. The verdict was already out. And the Jews are still smiling. We never see it when it happens.

**Bret** 1:05:55

Yeah, I have to say it makes me very angry to hear. actually

**Heather** 1:06:02

tell what, what is that? Well, I had not shared that with Yeah.

**Bret** 1:06:09

I think there's something about it. Because, you know, there are these photographs that emerged some years ago lost photographs of Nazis, men and women. Outside of I think Auschwitz, enjoying blueberries or something, right. There's something about the recognition of how much they understood and yet we're willing to behave as they did. That is it's more chilling, places the crime in an even more chilling context and hearing about you know, what is obviously the immediately before times, is very frightening. Now, of course, the people

**Heather** 1:07:01

themselves the targets, the people who will largely be annihilated. The man writing this book, le VSL obviously survived, but most of his family did not, could not convince themselves that what they were seeing the intimations they were getting what they were hearing was real.

**Bret** 1:07:17

I think, I think the problem and you know, we keep encountering this in different places, Eric, years ago, pointed me to this, this costlier piece, the screamer which makes this point about the difficulty of seeing these things as they actually occurred, rather than as history writes them. I mean, the idea that, you know, World War Two was fought without the full awareness of the population about what they were, in fact fighting about, they knew who they were fighting, but, you know,

**Heather** 1:07:54

certainly the certainly the American men who were fighting in the European Theater had no idea.

**Bret** 1:08:02

Well, there's a question about who had no idea and the point of the screamers is that many people had every reason to know and somehow managed to convince themselves that it wasn't happening. But there is also the fact that we tend to minimize the Holocaust and World War Two and in fact, the Holocaust was revealed by the success in in the war, you know, what had taken place as revealed later. And of course, for all of those of us too young to have been alive at that point, it sort of all gets written as the history of the moment rather than the history of the revelation.

**Heather** 1:08:37

Right I mean, that's that's critical actually. There's like we need a history that takes into account theory of mind like the people who you're reading about who lived concurrently with things but they didn't know or they could have known but they didn't know they were they had a cognitive dissonance or they really didn't know and yet they were still willing to fight like all of these things were realities for people and you know, having having it be in history means that it's very hard for most of us to do the additional level of theory of mind of like, okay, sorry, you know, God doesn't play dice but maybe you do is that what's going on? Yes. It's very hard for us to know to recognize what what people's lives are actually like which is part of why these first person accounts from from someone as extraordinary as le BSL are are so critical to to to be reflected in of course he's reflecting after he has survived and most of his family hasn't so you know, he's writing in in retrospect, but to be remembering that there were indication indications, and that it was still so desirable to just to enjoy spring right to enjoy the beaches and the engagements and the you know, rise or summer but you know, to, to, to be human with one another, even as there may be people who are actively working to take that human it away?

**Bret** 1:10:01

Well, there's definitely an aspect of bits later than you think. And that's the problem is that to have an accurate reaction before the Germans to send in that piece, and that segment that you read, before they descend, it was the right time to react, to prepare to flee, or to figure out how to fight. And what the excerpt you read reports is essentially a rationalization process about why it won't be all that bad. And then, you know, there's a reassuring Oh, here's all the evidence that it isn't that bad. And the point is, of course, it was exactly that bad and far worse. But the question, really, the obvious question is how to extrapolate from this, right? It could always be later than you think. And then the point is, you should always be in a state of preparing for it being exactly that bad and far worse, which of course, wouldn't make any sense because it isn't always that bad. But the question is, where are you in history? And one of the things I've been wrestling with him in the present is of course, we have been divided into two camps about everything right in the camps Aren't you know, it's, sometimes you fall in different on different sides based on different divisions. But nonetheless, there is a kind of COVID isn't that serious? This is an excuse for authoritarianism, right? That's like a camp, right? And then there's a COVID is very serious. And this is about public health, you dummies, right? And the point is, neither of these things are right.

**Heather** 1:11:50

For those, those are two camps that have that those are categories, those are sets that are not empty, people belong people, many believe most people, most people fail, but it's but those two things do not have a solution, a complete solution set, man, right?

**Bret** 1:12:03

Exactly. And that's what I'm getting at is COVID is extremely frightening. And the fact that it probably has an at least somewhat non natural origin makes it even more frightening, because it means it's harder to predict what it's going to do, right?

**Heather** 1:12:17

And add to that, that we still aren't fully allowed to talk about what that means about policy with regard to future research and gaining function research and right and how did this come out? How will such a thing be avoided in the future if we can't talk about origins? Right.

**Bret** 1:12:31

And to the extent that there appears to be a very credible argument that gain of function research taking place in Wuhan was the result of Americans circumventing their own legal ban on gain of function research, and funneling reasonable resources to Wuhan in order to get the work done? How is it possible that one of the people in charge of our pandemic response is also one of the people responsible for, you know whether or not this is where the virus came from one of the people responsible for circumventing that ban? There's no way Anthony Fauci should be in charge of our pandemic response no matter what.

**Heather** 1:13:09

So just to that end, let me say, I recommend listening to Josh Rogan on Barry weiss's honestly, podcasts is a two part discussion of, of basically, how China's role in in changing the narrative that we are all engaged in. And and they talk about this. And it's it's it's a remarkable sort of conversation. So I'm not quite done with the second one. But

**Bret** 1:13:31

well, I'm looking forward to listening to it myself. I will say, we have to ask the question, to what extent are the narratives that we are battling over being fed to us by something that does not have our navigating the pandemic? Well, you know, at its core, and doesn't mean that we are being fed narratives from somewhere else, but it's at least a possibility. And that would explain in part why we are managing it so badly if that we're shifting our our view and our approach,

**Heather** 1:14:02

burden. Narrative control is an incredibly powerful kind of control, because it doesn't require the infrastructure. It doesn't require a physical movement of things in this in this day and age,

**Bret** 1:14:13

right? Yeah. And yet the opportunity for an obviously exists and so what are the chances that that opportunity is not being utilized, right or is completely neutralized is pretty low chance but in any case, what I would say is, the two camps are clearly both wrong.

**Heather** 1:14:31

Right? Those two camps COVID is not a real thing. And COVID is

**Bret** 1:14:37

not serious. Yes, it's not serious as an excuse for authoritarianism and the other camp being being COVID is extremely serious. And the authoritarianism isn't authoritarianism. It's public health.

**Heather** 1:14:47

So those two camps are both wrong. They're both wrong. Right?

**Bret** 1:14:50

It is quite clear that COVID is a very dangerous disease. I mean, it's really it's like physiologically diabolical, right? what it does to the body Long COVID all of these things, it is not to be trifled with. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:15:03

Long glass opacities in the lungs alone. Yeah,

**Bret** 1:15:06

right. On the other hand, it does seem to be the excuse for an awful lot of authoritarianism. That makes no sense. Right. And in one way, actually, I think there's a litmus test, right that we can use to detect that there is something about this that is just absolutely not public health and incoherent. Right? Not only is it the case, that there's nothing about the current policy, even if everybody were to comply completely, that actually brings Cyrus Coby to under control, right? Can't do that, even in principle. But there's also this issue I probably should have prepared with a diminishing returns graph. But the The fact is diminishing returns is a feature of any complex system in which there is an objective, right? There are complex systems that have no objective, whether is a complex system in which there's no objective. And so you can't say that there are diminishing returns in, in the case of weather, Because? Because there's no, there's no, there's no such thing as a return. Yeah, so you want to show this

**Heather** 1:16:23

sec, you can show my screen. So this is actually a figure from the final chapter of our book. So this is a describe it for people just listen to

**Bret** 1:16:30

Sure. This is a simplified diminishing returns curve. And basically, if you imagine, so the x axis is investment, the y axis is return, there is a, a shallow, early phase that then curves up and becomes a steep, effectively a cliff face. And then

**Heather** 1:16:55

once your investment is low relative to the returns that you get for it, right, it's like the early the early stages, I'm trying to figure out what it is like, what am I learning how to skateboard, or whatever it is, and it's tough at first, and then you hit some point, like, Oh, I'm getting this, I'm getting this, I'm getting this. And then what happens at the inflection point in the curve

**Bret** 1:17:11

you, you get the emergence of a plateau where larger and larger investments and that smaller and smaller gains,

**Heather** 1:17:18

and it's not, it's not, in some cases, it will be but we didn't mean for it to be drawn exactly as a plateau is a little bit of

**Bret** 1:17:25

an asset. It's an asymptote, there's still there's still returns on investment, but they get less and less. Anyway, the point is the reason that you get a diminishing returns curve in a complex system in which there's an objective is that you have a hierarchy of interventions, right? You've got some stuff that's actually no brainers that work really well. And you do those things first, obviously, because why wouldn't you? And the point is, the more of those things you've already done, the more of the low hanging fruit you've you found, the more you're forced to do things that yes, work, but at some very large cost. And so anyway, you get this pattern reliably because a reasonable, a reasonable person or system attempting to solve a problem will go after the low hanging fruit First, we'll find it and we'll be left with smaller and smaller interventions that are more and more expensive, eventually getting to a point of near pointlessness. But in any case, the point is, our response to COVID does not show an indication that we have gone after the low hanging fruit at all. Right? It's completely insane with respect to the low hanging fruit that we have left on the table and not invoked. And this is leverer instance. Well, for instance, the most obvious one and the thing that I would suggest that we use as a litmus test, is

**Heather** 1:18:47

the question Hold on a second hazy, can I get my screen back? Thank you,

**Bret** 1:18:51

is the question of vitamin D. There it is. Now the vitamin D question is not simple. It's not a simple matter of take vitamin D, avoid COVID. Right, you can take vitamin D and still get COVID. But it is a matter of the evidence strongly suggests that vitamin D deficiency makes you much more vulnerable to COVID. This is completely unambiguous. And that what's more that people who live far from the equator, as many of us do, are very likely to be vitamin D deficient during the winter months. Why? Because vitamin D is naturally produced on the skin in response to sunlight. And so what that means is that vitamin D deficiency, which might not be inherent to humans is very common amongst modern humans because of the way we live because we spend a lot of time indoors, because many of us live in cold climates where climate control allows us to continue but we are then chronically under exposed to sunlight that would produce vitamin D and therefore vitamin D supplementation has tremendous value in terms of fending off COVID For people who are likely to experience deficiencies, what's more, vitamin D is inexpensive. Vitamin D is readily available and vitamin D, not only does it not have serious downsides, but if you take reasonable amounts of vitamin D, you are very likely to fend off other diseases because vitamin D deficiency makes you it's basically immunosuppressive

**Heather** 1:20:22

just one one comment there is the possibility of overdosing. But yes, because it's fat soluble, because

**Bret** 1:20:27

it's fat soluble and not water soluble, it is possible to take too much so be mindful. But the point is, many of us have vitamin D deficiencies in the winter, they have impacts on our health that are negative those deficiencies do, there's probably little or no advantage of having more than enough vitamin D. But getting to the point that you do not have a deficit of it makes a great deal of sense. And yet we are somehow still not widely recommending vitamin D to everybody who's likely to have that deficiency in the winter, in spite of the fact that we have a raging pandemic. And we could reduce the number of cases substantially by simply making that one intervention. Yeah, so

**Heather** 1:21:04

no one there's Sorry to interrupt for just a second. I was just this one of my posts on natural selections. I was specifically talking about vitamin D, this is the hospital's post. Vitamin, you don't have to show this vitamin D or you can whatever vitamin D has been identified. And this is just a shortlist as having effective beneficial to the individual with regard to immunity, autoimmunity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, fertility, pregnancy, and dementia, among other things. And here I linked to a 2013 review article, vitamin D effects on musculoskeletal health, immunity, etc, etc. Review of recent evidence. So you know, it's just it's it's one of these sort of, you know, wonder, Wonder molecules at some level, that yes, you can overdo it, but it's very much more likely that you have effectively under done it. Yeah, with regard to where you live,

**Bret** 1:21:55

you can overdo it. And above a level where you have adequate amounts of vitamin D, it probably does very little good. But the point is, many of the cases of COVID that people get are downstream of deficiencies where they wouldn't have gotten the case or would have been much better off if they had had vitamin D. So the question is, how on earth is this not our first recommendation to people that you if you have any danger of a vitamin D deficiency, that you do something about it, that includes making vitamin D while the sun shines by going outside and exposing yourself to sunlight? And as that becomes less and less useful as an intervention, supplementing with biologically available vitamin D, that would compensate for a deficiency? So I would say that's a litmus test. Why is it a litmus test? Because it's the lowest hanging fruit. So

**Heather** 1:22:42

remind us again, that was just I followed that circle. But we're now talking about low hanging fruit with regard to, you know, why is the pandemic response, not encouraged people to do the obvious, inexpensive, clearly useful things, such as go outside, be active supplement supplement with vitamin D, if there's any reason to suspect that you are deficient in it? Those are some low hanging fruit recommendations, public health recommendations that enrich no one, right, but contribute greatly to public health.

**Bret** 1:23:11

Right? There is no good reason not to address the question of vitamin D deficiency. First, it's the lowest hanging fruit, it should have been our first our first intervention, and the fact that we didn't do it is evidence of one of two things. It is either evidence of absolutely jaw dropping levels of incompetence, which is possible, or that something else is driving our policy that isn't really obsessed with preventing COVID. And we don't know which it is, but I mean, let's say it's the better of them. It's jaw dropping, and competence.

**Heather** 1:23:43

Well, it's the kind of incompetence that can be fixed at any moment, you know, all you know, at any one of these organizations can start saying on top of everything else, and maybe at most of what we're telling you is garbage. But you really ought to consider vitamin D, your vitamin. This is just something that you can add at any moment. It's not like, well, that ship has sailed, we can't start recommending vitamin D now like, no, it's not like

**Bret** 1:24:02

that. So I mean, but what happens at the CDC when somebody who didn't get the memo shows up at the meeting and is like, hey, I've got a great idea. Check out how effective vitamin D is for people who are deficient. This is a spectacular intervention. It really prevents a lot of cases of COVID Let's just recommend it because at least we can all agree on that right? And then what happens what kind of crickets like how does that nama D deficient crickets? Maybe? Yes. So in any case, when the lowest hanging fruit on the tree has not been picked, something is up that at least amounts to jaw dropping and competence. Yeah, that's that's the shallow end.

**Heather** 1:24:44

Okay, so at the end of most of the chapters in this book, we have something called the corrective lens in which we provide actionable actionable suggestions that follow from some of the analysis and stories that were provided in the rest of the chapter. The One, the corrective lens items on this chapter are long, I was considering reading all of them, but I think I won't read all of them. But there are a couple that are particularly salient. I think, given the conversation we just had. The first one is explicitly aimed to be an adult. Do this in part by regularly asking yourself the questions that we posed at the beginning of the chapter. For instance, am I taking responsibility for my own actions? Am I being closed minded, and by minimizing the effects of economic markets on your daily life, become aware of the constant flow of information, telling you what to think, how to feel, and how to act, do not let it into your mind, do not let it steer you, your internal reward structure needs to be independent and unscalable. But independence in turn should allow you to collaborate well with others who are similarly independent. Be wary of those who may well be nice, but who are captured. There's a lot this, I think these are all good, we wrote them. For more, smile at people, the people with whom you live, the person behind the counter the stranger on the street. Put your phone down. No, really put it down. Define your fights for whom and what you love, rather than against whom and what you hate. If a mob ever comes for people, you know, people whom you consider friends stand up and say, No, you're wrong. Be honorable and courageous when bullies move in, speak up for what you know to be true, even if it makes you a social pariah. And finally, apropos the discussion of diminishing returns curves, which we don't have a picture of here, but we do in the final chapter of the book, learn to jump curves. diminishing returns are a factor for every complex phenomenon. So learn to jump curves, put another way, consider learning a new thing rather than being a perfectionist and trying to get ever better, or whatever you're already really, really good at. We will speak to this more in the final chapter. And therefore we'll speak to that more here in a couple of weeks. Are we there?

**Bret** 1:27:00

I think we are for the week.

**Heather** 1:27:01

All right. And we thank you for joining us. And if you are here with us live right now. Stay tuned, we will be back in as close to 15 minutes as the tech allows us. With the q&a. You can ask questions at Dark Horse submissions calm. consider joining one or both of our Patreon tomorrow at my patreon at 11am. Pacific on Sunday, August 29. Is this month's private q&a for two hours. You can find shirts at stored at Dark Horse podcast.org. You can email logistical but not questions for the q&a logistical questions Darkhorse moderator@gmail.com and please consider subscribing to all four of our channels. We've got two here on YouTube Brett Weinstein's main channel and the Dark Horse podcast clips channel and identically named channels on Odyssey. Anything you want to say before, take us out?

**Bret** 1:27:55

I think I said it make vitamin D while the sun shines, make tea

**Heather** 1:27:59

while the sun shines and be good to the ones you love. eat good food and get outside.

**Bret** 1:28:05

We will everyone