Celebrity Wellness Expert Reveals What Really Matters After Nearly Dying | OZ Garcia | Ep. 147 Transcript

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Oz Garciau2019s Background and Introduction

I thought I was a rock star before COVID brought me to my knees. I had COVID pneumonia. 70% of my lungs were filled with what the doctor said were hundreds of thousands, if not millions of microclots.

That experience started to give me a sense of what's really valuable in life. Would you say that was the turning point for you? Yes. Let's say more broadly, Sammy.

Today, we have Oz Garcia. Thank you, Samy. Oz Garcia is a globally recognized healthy aging expert, author and wellness consultant known for guiding elite clients through nutrition, recovery and human optimization.

Through books like After COVID, his mission is to help people extend health span, restore vitality and live stronger at every age. There was a survey that was done recently on 62% of people interviewed were asked if they could have more money or peace.

Which would they pick? And 62 percent picked peace over getting more. So I think that… So talking about genes, would you say that ageing is more biological?

Biological, but psychological can speed it up. If you're not the master of your brain over what's going on in your head, your brains can come up with some pretty ugly scenarios.

But some people can get… Now when you look at overall today versus back then, how much has it changed? Okay. So let's say welcome to another episode of a healthy point of view podcast.

I'm your host Sam Sahara. And as usual, we're bringing experts from all over the world to talk about health, wellness, beauty, and mindset today's guests.

This guy here, you've seen him. He's the wellness consultant for the Who's Who. Very well recognized globally in helping people optimize their health.

But throughout the years, longevity science has changed tremendously. What we've done, well, I'm gonna let him explain. Today, we have Oz Garcia. Thank you, Sammy.

Happy to be here. Amazing. Hey, pleasure to have you here. I was on a Healthy Point of View podcast. Yes. All the way from New York. That's right. Just to be with you, Sammy.

It's been a couple of days in Fort Lauderdale. Yeah, but you're not just a New Yorker. You're a South Florida guy as well, too. Miami, right? Yeah, well, being born in Cuba and leaving very early when I was a kid, I spent a lot of time obviously in New York City where my parents went first and then went to first grade, kindergarten, first-grade and second grade in Miami.

Okay. I went the kindergarten in Arthur Godfrey Road, bro. Wow. Did you ever, you lived down here in Mammy during your adulthood? Yeah, well, actually, my parents did.

We helped them get a home after my dad retired in West Kendall, southwest of the airport in Miami. And it's where you have a lot of Cubans that came here and retired and have their kids and live in that neighborhood.

It's a wonderful part of Miami, right? So, you know, before we get into, the meat and potatoes of the podcast, I want the viewers and listeners to get to know you a little bit better, right?

I wanna go like way back, like you were like five years old, your upbringing, because you didn't come from a family that was necessarily in the longevity space, at all.

This is something that you grew into it. And even your your first profession wasn't the longevity space. That's correct. I know you were telling me you're doing fashion photography and stuff, which is pretty cool, you know, especially going way back because you said you've been in this longevity phase for over four decades.

At least 40 years, that's right. I'm sorry I am putting your age out there like that, you know, because obviously you take good care of your health and you don't look like you even could be doing this for four decades.

Thanks, Tammy. But I try to take my own advice. And so far as everything that we now know about what it takes to live a good, long, healthy life, there's a lot that will be discussing so that you can maintain yourself and make sure that your body operates well at just about any age.

Absolutely. So what does it look like back when you were five years old? What were you at? I was five-years-old Jesus. I already in Miami And we lived in, not too far from Lincoln Place, Lincoln Road, excuse me, as I best recall.

And those were among the best years of my life. All my friends, all my, that some I still know now, living in an area where you had a lot of Cubans that had left Cuba to live in Miami.

many of them were supporting the Cuban Revolution before Castro had gone to the evil side.

Early Life in Cuba, Miami, and New York

And so I learned to swim. I played in the beaches. Miami was everything for me before we went to New York City. So that was life at about five years old.

The thing that I loved the most back then was swimming. Swimming. Yes. Yeah. Okay. the Upper West Side of New York. That's in the upper west side of Manhattan in New a city of neighborhoods, and I've discussed this often with different friends.

You know, no matter where you go, if you just keep walking through Manhattan, you're always amazed at what you see. I grew up on 105th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus.

And I, I grow up there when we got back from Cuba the second time. So we were a very poor family. Yeah. So it was a tough upbringing. Those were very tough years.

My father put great emphasis on education. So although he came from a very poor background himself, he knew that the only way to make it anywhere, certainly in America, was to get a good education, so God forbid I'd come home from school with a B on my report card.

You know, the bell came off and you didn't get to B again, and for that I'm very grateful. It's amazing, amazing. So throughout the years, you go through school, grade school.

You graduate high school and you decide to go into what? Well, I went to high in Manhattan. I was already sketching and drawing and painting. And I took after my mother in that regard.

performing arts, where that movie Fame was kind of based around, and the High School of Art and Design. So I made them all, I went to Art & Design, because it had escalators, it was super modern.

And I thought, this is gonna be great. It was the mod era, so the fashion just completely blew me away, the way that kids thought about music back in that era.

From there I graduated. I went to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Um, I majored in art history and art education and I, believe it or not, from there, instead of getting into a career in Art History, um, wanted to do photography.

And I was a very, very good darkroom assistant, so that meant that I could go into dark room, make really good black and white pictures for whoever hired me, the photographers.

Yeah, because I gotta pause for a second because photography back then is not the photography that we see today. Oh, not at all. This is like real photography.

You got to actually develop film. That's correct. You worked in a dark room with chemicals. No ventilation, no filtration. I mean, everything today is done.

you and I both know on computers and you use, you know, AGI and create phenomenal images. But back then you had to really work at it. And I kind of cut my teeth in fashion photography for most of the 1970s.

And what kind of brands were you working with when you're doing fashion? Oh, I worked for a very well-known fashion photographer. Actually, more accurately, a beauty photographer, so that's where they do the faces.

And the accounts were primarily Revlon, Avon, Burlington. There was a period, Sam, which is fascinating. We worked with Clive Davis, and we did a lot of the album covers for, I forget his record company.

And through working with clive davis, we got to meet some of most remarkable artists of that era. So for me, it was wonderful world. Then come 10, 11 o'clock at night, shut down the studio and head over to Studio 54. So it was the studio days.

And when I think back, I'm like, how many lives did I have? But that was one of the best ones. I can only imagine, man. That had to be fun back then, though, because you didn't have all of these other type of distractions, these different technologies, social media.

It's like you really had the ability to live in the present. That's correct. And you're young and you are ambitious and have the whole world in front of you.

I really thought that what I was going to do was jump off the shoulders of Gary Gross and open up my own studio. As we'll discuss, things went completely different.

You reinvented yourself. You went from being in this art world to, I would say, a whole different type of art. The art of longevity. How did that happen?

What was that all about? Tammy, there were a couple of things that were going on with me. This is like the origin story almost. I used to get migraine headaches.

Pretty vicious migraines headaches and they were inheritable. And no matter what I did, they weren't getting better. Now, this is in the years that I began to actually do beauty and fashion photography.

And it would cost me a lot. There were days where I had to miss work and so on. So rather than taking medications, I started to explore. I wanted to look at other options.

The first thing that i looked at was my diet. Could six, seven cups of coffee a day with sugar possibly be affecting me and creating these headaches? Could eating McDonald's every day, with my friends and the studio staff, possibly being a contributing factor?

So, I kind of started there, started looking at the things that we ate. Strangely enough, a friend of mine gave me a book called The Miracle of Fasting by Paul Bragg.

Some of you still know Paul bragg, or at least his products, like, you know, BraGG aminos, braGG apple cider vinegar. And I read the book front to back.

And I just started eliminating more stuff. I eliminated meat from my diet, a whole bunch of processed food, and lo

and behold, my headache started to clear up.

So from there, I started doing days of fasting where I would do water or carrot juice all day long. And the effects were really quite profound. The second month where I look back and I hadn't had a migraine headache.

It was two months at that a migrant where, I used to get two migraines a week. I'd had to lock myself in a room. Had to be a dark room, ice packs on my head.

And here I am. When I'm thinking, if you could do this with food, what else could you do? Right. Right? That's life changing. You know, two, my grains a weak to having no migains for two.

That correct. So then what from there? If I get rid of my migraines, it doesn't necessarily mean that I want to get into longevity. But I'm very curious and my curiosity got triggered.

I wanted to know, what does this mean? Could it be that the diet that my parents have had for all these years has been a contributing factor? typical Cuban diet, a lot of what we already know as ultra-processed food in the diet.

And so the next thing that I looked at was exercise. Now, an article appeared in the Daily News in New York City and it was a cover article on a bunch of people that ran Central Park, I think four times, four and a half times up to equal a marathon.

And the daily news said, you know, how crazy could these people be? And I looked at it and I said I want to do one of those. It had to have been 74, 75. And that began the next step, which is go to Central Park and start running the reservoir, a little bit less, about a mile and a quarter mile.

And we were still smoking. I used to smoke a pack, two packs a day of Marlboro Reds. So you would do your run. And then at the end you'd meet all your runner friends.

You'd all light up a Marleboro. That was a great run, wasn't it? You know, just put it out. You know, so then that got me questioning, could this be affecting my running?

Well, if you're doing that in the run club, in those types of run clubs, I can't only imagine everybody smoking cigarettes at the end of the week. That'd be crazy.

Oh, also Central Park was closed, was open to traffic back then. So now it's permanently closed to traffic, so you would run in traffic. Wow. And little did we know.

But it was different things, Sammy, along the way. The next step was eliminate the cigarettes. I literally did it from one day to the other. I don't know how, I didn't think I had the willpower, but I have the thoughtfulness to attach that to, if you want to really run, you got to give this up.

Art School and Fashion Photography Career

So I came from that kind of background where I was just like everybody else and kind-of like flipping one domino down after the other. Did you know that you would feel a difference in your performance for running by stopping cigarettes?

I didn't. There was no evidence at that point. Remember, this is pre-internet. If you wanted to get any information at all, you went to the public library.

I mean, these were the years that when some conventional doctors actually recommended cigarettes for people to reduce stress. Yeah. A lot of TV commercials, you had cardiologists promoting cigarettes as a means of increasing energy.

You know, and this traded as a very cool currency. You couldn't watch a TV show without people smoking.

Everybody could smoke in a restaurant. So it was as part of the culture as is part your life and mine.

Now, there were two books that came out back then too, Sammy. One was called Sugar Blues by William Duffy. And I don't know, I do not know why I read it, but it was a condemnation of sugar.

The book had to have been written in 72, 73, 74. After I wrote that book, it's like I can't use sugar anymore. And so that got my brain moving. Another one was Virgin Spring.

I can recall the author's name now, but it was a very strong argument. Oh, excuse me, it wasn't Virgin spring. It was Die for a Small Planet by Francis Morlopet.

And it a strong for vegetarianism. That really flipped me around. Coming from a Cuban background, a Cuba diet, the number one Cuban food is fried pork.

To give it up was was a big deal to start giving up meat in all its forms. So that was the beginning of an era where I moved into being vegetarian, not vegan, but but vegetarian.

Yeah. Okay. Are, are like your friends and family, or are they starting to notice a change? Yes. And, and they thought I was losing my, my fucking marbles.

You know, like, what are you doing? What do you mean you're not eating meat? You're fasting. What's that? Running? What's running? So there had to be a point in time though that people were seeing something positive out of it where they started crying like, hey, can you help me out with that?

Can you share some of that information? Well, it started to happen, weirdly enough. Out of nowhere it occurred to me one day, Sammy, to put together a course on nutrition for runners.

Myself and a buddy of mine was also a good runner. And these are the days of photocopier machines where you're making a lot of photo copies and you go in all over the city and taping them to lampposts.

And the course is called Nutrition for Runners. Come learn how to be a better runner through your diet. 100 people showed up to the course. 100? 100 showed to to course and my partner and I don't know what to talk about.

We had a blender, we had juicer, um we have fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and apparently it went across really well. The vice president of New York Roadrunners Club was sitting in the audience and she invited me to come give a talk at New And that really was the beginning of like, okay, I think I can see another way that I, can make a difference in the world.

Wow. That had to be a very powerful feeling internally. Very much so. And, and, um, again, being young, thinking I knew something and I didn't know anything.

Would you say that that was deturning point for you? Yes. Let's say more broadly, Sammy, running was the turning point for me. Running itself. As my diet changed, as my personal habits changed.

Everything focused around running. The effects, never mind on my body, but the impact on I remember to this day, the first time that I completed my first six mile run, and I was so clear headed, I had no anxiety.

I just felt like I'd never felt in my life. Like I didn't have a worry at all about anything. This is before people understood all the chemicals that are released when you run.

But there I wasn't in a runner's high. and I needed to keep chasing that and chasing it. So running was the pivotal point for everything. And then how many, uh, marathons and stuff did he do from that point?

Well, my first marathon was New York in 1980. And, um, that was a spiritual experience. I didn't think I could do it. What got into me to do. Um, but I did it and you know, I've been sharing with your staff, what we talked about a few

days ago, and I think, yeah, did my.

First marathon in three 19, excuse me, 309. And subsequent to that, I've done two other New York City marathons. I don't know how many half maratons I'd done, probably several dozen.

And that's always been the thing that brought me back to center. So my office is on Central Park West and 74th and it's there and I got it there several decades ago so that any time that I could, would change and go right into the park and run.

Have you been able to motivate other people to run a lot of your clients? Yeah, over the years, absolutely. For a long time, I was very involved with the original founders of Equinox, Equinox Fitness Clubs.

One of them, Danny Errico, who was the main thrust behind Equinex and I became very dear friends, and he was a runner. And between me and Danny, we must have enrolled dozens of people into the world of running.

And I can't underline enough the benefits of running in terms of having a very stable life. You and I would both agree, anything that's going to increase aerobic capacity within your body.

And this is in no way to say that anaerobic is critical. And I got to do my upper body work also. But for me, being the way that I'm built, this skinny kid and so on, running was the most fulfilling experience.

Now that i'm older, I can say in many ways it was a spiritual experience for My former partner and girlfriend was with me for well over 10 years. She got into running in the first year that we were together and she's continued to run for a well of 20 years now.

Do you still run? Now I cycle competitively. I've got two new hips and I have a titanium plate on my neck from running for 40 years. So it's not the smartest thing for me to be doing.

If I could run, I'd run an heartbeat. Really? Yeah. But now I know how to get the runners high on the bike. So for a lot of these, uh, younger runners, right.

Um, you know, now there's all kinds of new technology, shoes and all types of therapies that people can do to recover. What would you recommend for these younger.

Runners so they don't end up with the two new hips and the titanium in their neck. Correct. If I was to do it over, I'd do over in some of the ways that I'm gonna bring up.

I think stretching is critical. And never stretch at all. Taking time off is important. Body work is also important, making sure that you get body work to release a lot of micro tears within your muscles, your muscle filaments.

The shoes that your wear are critical, When I started running and racing, the only shoes that were around as best as I recall were the really thin-soled Adidas and the Tiger sneakers that Phil Knight had bought over from, I think, China.

So you really didn't have much support for your foot and that's where you get hurt. I think stretching and doing back strengthening exercises are critical.

And I would never do that. Um, and I was also not predisposed to doing upper body strength. So I just a hardcore balls out runner. In review, I recognize that just these few things that I'm telling you are incredibly important and taking time off.

so that your back can recover. I think diagnostics these days are, you and I both know, it's a Star Wars universe.

Migraines, Diet Changes, and the Start of Wellness

So that if you're getting lower back pain, meeting with a really good orthopedic surgeon, orthopaedic doctor, looking at your bag, getting a good MRI done so you can see what the structure of your backpack is and not accrue damage.

So diagnostics in so far as your lower back is concerned or your neck are critical. Yeah. That's, um, I think that's very helpful, that message for a lot of these younger runners.

The, when it comes to a of the pain that you were having at that point in time, were there any kind of specialty treatments that she were doing to alleviate that pain?

No, we were really old school. We would chew. I swear to God we chewed two, three aspirins and a few cigarettes. Once I quit smoking, since we would all go out and we'd race like maniacs, the cure was, there were these forms of aspirin, I don't think they're on the market anymore, one is called excedrin, another one's called buffrin.

But they are really strong anti-inflammatories, you wouldn't even bother swallowing them before a run. You would chew two or three, drink your coffee, And if you had, let's say, an injury in your knee, you would just tape it and go out the door.

So we did it old school. That's an old-school method, for sure. And then finally, finally we found the Russian bathhouses. There was one on 10th Street, right off 1st Avenue.

and it had a gigantic cold-plunge pool. It had the big schvitz, the sauna box that was set at about 200 degrees, and you could go flying into that, into the cold plunge.

But that's when I discovered the relief that you can get from being in a really cold pool for a while. Cold plunges are critical, I think, for anybody that is a younger athlete.

They make a terrific impact on reducing inflammation. To this day, I won't do less than three cold plunges a week. Oh, really? Yeah. You have a cold plunge at home?

I go either to Econox or if I'm going to do it in my apartment, remember I live in a townhouse. So what I'll do is I buy 40, 50 pounds of ice. Sounds like a lot.

It is a lots. I fill my tub, in goes the ice and I going right behind it. Okay. So so okay, so i'm hearing all of this stuff that you've done for yourself, but how how did you get?

With the who's whose of taking care of the whose whose Well, when did that happen? There was a point in time where uh Where did these people come from?

Why did they come to you as the wellness consultant? It was a convergence of a number of things coming together. One was my background in fashion and beauty photography.

A lot of individuals from that community followed me. They were very interested in my work. I got a really great break in 1985, I was a kid, around 34, about to turn 35, and there was this very famous magazine called Interview Magazine, which was published by Andy Warhol.

And I had the privilege at that time to work with his publisher, the publisher of Interview Magazine. And through him, I got to meet Warhol on a number of occasions.

To my surprise, they decided to do a full-page article on me. And that, along with my background, the fact that I was lecturing a lot for New York Roadrunners, all of a sudden propelled me into outer space.

I don't think I handled it as well as I would today, but it really allowed us to work within a certain community. So many ways my art kind of followed me along, and it's allowed me to with a very unique clientele.

Oh, that's like the old school influence. Yes. No, very much the Instagram and the Facebook. Yeah. This is the day of magazines. You know, like you would buy interview magazine and there was this full cover.

I mean, there's this whole page article about me and everybody on Earth was trying to contact me to get appointments with me. So pretty much I'd say my career took off in the mid 80s and I've never looked back.

And what were people coming to you for? Originally, most people wanted to come to be better athletes. So lecturing at New York Roadrunners, for instance.

Around what year was this? This had to have been late 70s to the mid 80s. Which obesity wasn't such a big thing. Oh, it was huge. It was? Oh it's huge, yeah.

In fact, let me hit on that for you. Then I started to branch out. Let's say runners were my initial clients. And then as I started to get better known and I start to understand how food worked better, then I starting to speak and lecture more about how you could manage your weight, lose weight and build a better body through managing your dietary habits.

Now, this is before we understood that genetics may play, obviously genetics plays a big role in what you may weigh. Certainly if you're obese, if your having problems with heart disease, but I was very young, people were very very and it was believed that being overweight or being obese was a problem of lack of discipline and control.

And there were several doctors back then that became very, very famous. Robert Atkins was one. I'll think of the other Joe Pritikin, and they were both on opposite sides of this spectrum.

Atkin's was very big into eating a lot of meat and a lotta protein, no vegetables, not fruit to lose weight. And Pritikin was all about hardly any protein at all, maybe some fish.

The only fats that he supported was olive oil. So both of them began to redefine the whole field of how to lose weight. And in there, you still had a lot of mainstream organizations like Weight Watchers and so on that people would join.

But the movement to deal with being overweight was driven primarily, I'd say, by these two very powerful medical voices. And then we came in to fill the gap.

But all these decades later, when I think about it, I see how wrong we were in many ways. The relationship between food and even exercise and trying to lose weight is very tenacious.

It's not that strong. There are many things that come into the picture when you're dealing with weight problems. If you are obese, if you've got diabetes and so now we deal with that complexity.

But back then it was, you know, are you working out? Are you sticking to your diet? And that was very unfortunate. You know it's so interesting, hearing you name a lot of these These names that most people in today's world that just get into the world of biohacking, they just know them based off of a product.

You know, Atkins, the frozen foods. Correct. They have the pre-packaged meals. The bars. Pritikin, you know the facility, The Retreat facility down in Miami.

Yeah. And the Trump and Durrell, I believe it is. So it's like, but when you go way back, right? That's not what they were. Right. And even how you said the Bragg's, uh, you know, the braggs, amino, yeah, aminos, apple cider vinegar, all of that stuff.

You know that, that's the products that they weren't able to commercialize that made them really big and very well known, but going way, back. It was completely different.

These individuals. They were the gods so anybody That wanted to find out about weight loss would go to if they

had the money to either Pritikin Prittikine centers His books were really terrific Same thing I'd say for Atkins Atkin's was on to something but now if you look at the Atkyn's meals, it's a horrible ultra process completely horrible You know, but then a lot of us came in there, which put great emphasis on, on exercise.

I thought that you could save the world by running, right? If I can get you to start running. This goes back to your earlier point. Now that I think about it, I got a of people running a lotta friends, uh, to do marathons and half maratons, I thought that the way there really, really was get control over your food, but you got to start exercising.

You got start running. Which that is important. Critical. Yeah. Definitely is a hundred percent. And, um, so, you start working with these individuals, who start helping them optimize their health.

What do you say, uh, back then, because you're saying that obesity was a big problem, right? Um, that people were more focused on taking care of the health more for a vanity related reasons versus actually survival.

Running, Fasting, and Early Health Experiments

That's a good question. Back then there wasn't a lot of the kind of attention that you have now on taking care of yourself. Excuse me. When you think about the tremendous interest that younger people have, you know, Gen X, gen Z, on so many things that have to do with well-being, that was not prevalent in my culture, in time, and my era, so to say.

Smoking was still a big thing. Vaping took over for a number of years. But still, now people are driven to actually take really good care of themselves.

Back then, vanity, for sure. It wasn't the vanity of going to the gym, doing a great workout, regulating the amount of alcohol that you drank. People still smoked a lot.

Think about this. There were three health food stores in New York in the 1970s. I think I still remember their names. Brownies, Planet Earth, and everything natural.

And they were all downtown. This is decades before Whole Foods took over the city. So there wasn't a lot of access to thinking about health as an option, a way to live.

You know, what does what I eat in the morning do to my body? What does What I Eat in The Afternoon do To My Body? what's the time that I should cut off my meals so that i could sleep well?

There was a point, and I don't know how much it's changed, where statistically, I think in the 90s, mid-90s into the early 2000s and maybe even now, the average 65-year-old American may still be using upwards of six prescription drugs a day.

And if you come from parts of the United States where people don't have access to medical care the way that we do, they suffer. They suffer a lot more because of poverty or not earning enough income and the access of medication isn't there.

There are hospital deserts where you can't get some place to actually get the attention required. You and I both know, if you're a black male, 71 years old, living in Louisiana, your chances of living as long as you and will live are close to zero.

So the movement's got to get all the way out there. And we're very fortunate that we have access and that it occurred to me at a young age to start making changes out of nowhere, thank God.

Now, when you look at health, right, overall health today versus back then, how much has it changed your perspective on it? How much hasn't changed? Okay.

So let's say. that there have been changes everywhere. I think medicine has evolved beyond anything at all that

medicine was when I was younger. There was a time when doctors would actually come to your home.

Think about that. If my mother wasn't well, you could make a call and a doctor could come and do a home visit. The amount of concern that doctors had to spend time with you in an office visit could sometimes go on for 20 minutes, half an hour to an hours.

Average time that you spend with the doctor now can be from three to six minutes. So let's just say that that's a little tiny thing. I think the vast amount of medications and drugs that are on the market now that many doctors are unfamiliar with are in the tens of thousands that were not on market in 70s, 80s and 90s in nearly 2000s.

And so you have what's called a PDR. That's reference. You know, when my business partner, who's an MD, would get his PDR, it was like that thick. It was a big giant book.

Now, of course, you can have access to the PTR online. So I would say that the vast reliance By the way, I'm not putting medicine down at all, but to your point, in other words, it's moved in that direction.

There are much many more drugs to leverage on. I think that That being maybe on the bad side because we know that many of these medications have unwanted side effects.

So funny, I was watching CNN last night. I don't have a TV in my home in the city. Not because I'm a goody goodie, right? I'll watch my shows on my iPad.

But, so I put on CNN. And it's like, you know, this marvelous television comes on and I'm watching the news and every time there's a commercial break is for a car, a vehicle, and two or three medications.

And then you get the list of all the side effects. So if you don't die from the side effects, does the drug work? And I'm well aware of this being a problem, the high dependence on pharmaceuticals.

Now that being said, much of the diagnostic technology that's available in the market now is remarkable. Everything from full body scans to many of the tests that can be done in so far as testing your genetics, for instance, which are remarkable.

Biomarker testing, the amount of data that you can now gather about somebody when you put together their blood work, their biomarkers, they're full-body scans, your gene testing and many other tests are going to come out on the market.

so that you can get a really good idea as to what's going on with your body, a good one, and hardly miss any details at all. I think that that's critical, that we've gotten to that point.

Surgical advances are beyond belief, neuroscientific advances, the role of AI as AGI evolves itself, And it will shape the future of medicine and make the delivery of what doctors require, I would say more detailed, more granular.

There's a brilliant doctor named Eric Sobel. And he just wrote a book entitled, he didn't just write it, wrote it a couple of books years ago, entitled The Future of Medicine, Where AI Has Taken Us.

And when I read the book, it sounds like not anything that you and I would be familiar with. So there's that. The phenomenal advances in medicine at the same time, the liabilities that are occurring within medicine, at same the time too, as you have such a reliance on pharmaceuticals.

Then you have people like us, where we're taking matters into our own hands often. We become citizen doctors, citizen scientists, and there may be risk involved, but at a certain point, you just knew that something wasn't working.

A medicine that you were given wasn't working, a medicine you're given backfired on you. And bit by bit that started to really push forward alternative medicine, which is what it was called back then, holistic medicine.

Now here we are in the world of biohacking and what's going to come ahead of that? What's post bio hacking going be, right? Right, right. Uh, it is going to be interesting, uh, what there is to come because obviously you've seen so many changes throughout the, yes, over four decades.

Now, when it comes to health, I want your, your personal and professional opinion on this. When it come to help is longevity truly what we should be chasing.

No. Why? No, no. I think This could make a great show just on its own. I think we need to be chasing our health, right? What I would call health spanning.

Gene Falarca, who's probably one of the most sophisticated biohackers in the world, he's based out of Miami, can do things with his body that very few people can.

He coined the term life-spanning. Between life-spanning and health- spanning, you've got two distinct things that you want to pursue. I would say that what you wanna pursue is being in the best condition that can possibly be in so long as you're alive.

What I call infirmity compression. So that, You can push off all the bad stuff alll the way to the end. You know, hopefully you can make it into your 90s, beyond your late 90's, maybe you make into 100 more or less.

And then everything goes wrong at the end, and then you die. So rather than a long, slow death, which many people do experience, I saw that with my mother.

My mom made it to 92 years of age.

From Runner to Wellness Consultant

Her brain was intact, her body was destroyed, And she had a basket with more than A dozen and a half different medications given to her by different doctors over the years.

And so there was never any emphasis on moving her body, looking at what she ate, getting outdoors and getting sunlight. Getting massage, some of these things.

And she lived a long life, but she suffered a lot in the last years of her life. So what you want to put your emphasis is on how to maintain the best you possible.

And I don't want it to sound like a corn bowl cliche, but you got to put the work in. I say no acquisitive effort, no acquired result. So you gotta do the You know, and you do it, you get up, You do what you got to do.

You, do your workouts. you regulate your diet, regulate what's going on in your mind. And, so long as you're doing that and a couple of other things that we'll discuss, then what your doing is your pursuing health, health spanning.

make your health last as long as possible, almost so that you can live outside of time. So I think that in a decade from now, I don't think my health is going to be all that much different than it is now.

Probably better. Wow. That's really powerful information for a lot of people in the biohacking and longevity space that they need to recognize. Yeah, and Sammy, let me add one point, too.

You know, the advances in genetics, what they'll be able to do in terms of messing with your gene sequences for the better, we hope, right? With the advent of what's called CRISPR technology, where you could snip off little parts of gene sequence to improve who that person could possibly be, but it'll something that'll incorporated in you while you're living.

So if you're losing your vision, let's say to macular degeneration, that they can find the gene sequences, tweak them and clear out the macula degeneration.

That's up ahead. Who knows? Five years, 10 years. But genetics is going to play a huge role in the future of medicine. So talking about genes, right? Would you say that aging is more biological or psychological?

It's biological, but psychological can speed it up. It can feed it If you're not a mindful human being, if you are not on top of what's going on in your brain, If your not the master of your brains over what is going in you head, Your brain can come up with some pretty ugly scenarios.

And everybody is dealing with different kinds of problems. Much of the trauma that we've sustained in our life, Some people remain bitter. They remain victims.

Some I can understand. But some people can get, in fact most people, can escape velocity from their traumas. And they can learn different practices. You can a great app.

A dozen great apps on meditation. There are many courses available. I love Joe Dispenza. You know, he's awesome. I've done four, seven day retreats at Joe.

And they're like my vacation. If you got me sitting on a beach, I'm like, oh man, this is like I gotta do something. But if you go to Joe, you've got seven days that are filled with, sounds like i'm plugging Joe Dispense here, but I am plugging meditation.

You know, it's like, I need a break from me. And so you go do a retreat and you spend seven days dealing with you, with 2,000 other students from all over the world.

You have this energy and your getting control every day a little bit more over what's going on inside your brain, your mind, the thoughts that you choose to entertain.

So you gotta do some of that almost every time. Otherwise it can kill you. We already know through science that Much of of how people think can actually hasten their demise So so talking about that because you've worked with some very very successful people throughout the globe What are some of the destructive habits that a lot of these successful?

That you saw that really plagued their health Oh, you just nailed me on one. have a client, no bragging, not braging rights. Gentleman is worth billions.

And during the depression meltdown, was it 2007, 2008, he came in to get an IV. His fortune had dropped by several billion. But I think he was worth something like 20 billion at the time.

And he came and he sat down in our clinic for his usual IV and the guy was like sweating through his suit. And with no irony, swear to God, said to me, how you doing?

And I was a little puzzled. I said, I'm doing good. You know, we're doing well. He said well, is any of this affecting you? And, no, not really. In fact, more people were coming in for IVs.

More people wanted to consult with us to deal with the stress of what was going on. And this gentleman was having a meltdown. and had no ability to regulate his emotions over the loss of a fraction of his fortune.

I don't know, 4%, 5%, 6%. And so what that taught me right then and there was that people that are celebrities, very well known, extremely wealthy, they suffer like the rest of us.

They suffer like the rest of us, and it isn't that you shouldn't pursue your ambitions, it is that, you should not accumulate wealth. I think that should be part of a healthy life, but it shouldn' be the purpose of your life.

And if the purposes of life is to accumulate money, all you need to do is read all the papers and you can see the lives that are wrecked, among the wealthy and the people that work for them and so on, because they didn't develop the emotional intelligence.

I can be great at accumulating money and making more, but that doesn't mean that I've accumulated the strength of character, the character building skills, and the manner of interacting with people so that i don't hurt them.

If you're at that point and you haven't come up in terms of your emotional intelligence, you don' t have an understanding really of what boundaries are.

And so you can cross them and cause damage. So I think that whoever you are and whatever category of work that you do, having a well-developed sense of ethics and emotional intelligence is critical.

Right. Right? Yeah. You know, I've been hearing a lot more talk about emotional intelligence, emotional regulation and the importance behind that and tapping into that.

Um, you know. Speaking on that topic, especially with a of these successful people, right? Um. And I say successful more on, uh, the status that people are chasing.

They're chasing a certain status, um, versus peace. Yes. Right. So, so you've seen a lot of this, right? So. And we all can fall into that. Even myself was aware of that, um, when you're chasing the status, not just money, but you you chasing like, you know, You're an entrepreneur, going after it.

You want a little bit of the fame and the awareness behind who you are. But a of people that are doing that they're not at peace. They're naughty at piece here.

Yeah, we call that, um, unbridled ambition, right? So in, in men, especially younger men it's driven often by very, very high amounts of testosterone, uh, genetics that actually push them to behave in ways where they may cut corners, not, be ethical all the time.

You know, ethical ambition will win the day all the time because you're at peace. What are the three most important things that come to mind when you think about what do you really want in life?

You want serenity, you want peace of mind, and you need tranquility. And if you get those, then it doesn't matter if got several hundred bucks in the bank or billions in bank.

The whole point is to move your efforts so that you're at peace under the circumstances that find yourself in relationship, at work, in pursuits of the things that interest you.

But you've got to come to that. It doesn't just like fall out of the sky and you go, oh, you know, I got to pursue peace.

Healthspan vs. Longevity and the Role of Mindset

It's like, Oh, II need another X amount of money in my bank account, or I need to be on another podcast. So I That's called being on a hedonic treadmill, on hedonistic treadmill where it's like an imaginary treadmill and you're running on it and everything in front of you at the end is what should give you happiness.

And you have two options. You can either increase the incline, see if you can get closer to it that way, or increase its speed. But just like an oasis that's in the desert and you're dying of thirst and keep going closer the oases and it keeps moving further away, same thing with happiness in that regard.

If you are pursuing the items themselves, rather than understanding that, you've got to get to peace first. And then if I get the great car, if i get money, or if get home and so on.

These are things that add to levels of tranquility. We now know two things based on deep science. That you need to be caught up in awe. that things around you move you, that you're moved by your life, but that that move by the life around, you that your move, by a walk that, your moved, my things that actually touch your heart.

And you can get into that by being in a flow state, when you work out at the end of it, how you feel you are in awe of this living experience, right? And we already know about gratitude.

We talk about that forever. But there was a survey that was done recently, and I think your staff may want to track it down, on 62% of people interviewed or asked if they could have more money or peace, which would they pick?

And 62 percent picked peace over getting more, having more of the bank. Wow. That's powerful. So so you know, this is um, one thing that i've i's noticed though, especially here in south florida It it kind of reminds me of um You know back in my earlier 20s when when I had friends that Would uh drink all night right and then snort a little coke sure to boost themselves up like You're making yourself worse.

Yes, you, know even though you're feeling better, uh, because you don't feel as drunk. Yeah, but our people avoiding actual deeper healing by doing a lot of these different wellness hacks or they're not going deep enough to actually heal and have that piece.

Yes, you're right. So you and I could put together the most phenomenal biohacking destination in the world, right? Hyperbaric tank, IV clinic, high altitude simulators, different kind of devices all over the place, OVCAD, cryotherapy, infrared sauna, whatever, just keep putting it all out.

They don't do anything to shape character. They didn't anything do to deepen that state of mind that you and I are addressing right now. So they go out and they feel better, but come another day or two, they're back to wanting more, wanting of something.

And given the culture that we're in, the cultures in saying, and certainly from school, when you're a little kid, That you need to learn how to have peace of mind.

You need learn to be comfortable with yourself, with your own company. That your need be appreciative of the things that you are. David Lynch, one of world's most famous filmmakers, created an organization where they bought meditation into the inner cities.

I forget the name of that foundation. But that was one the main things in his life. He's the guy that did the original Dune, became remarkably famous off of that.

So the effort is to get individuals to be at peace in their bodies, that they don't fly off the handle, have angry outbursts, because that's what they see their parents doing, they other people doing.

And as you get control over that, as he said before, over emotional intelligence, you just understand that losing your shit has no merit to it. You know, and growing up in a Cuban family, you know the shift gears a little bit here.

Sure. You have this book here that you put together after COVID. you had a big health and life shift yourself. Yes. After COVID So I want to talk a bit about the book.

I wanna talk about, you know, what you went through because it's very relative to what we're talking about. Having peace of mind and looking at things a little bit differently.

You know the toxic world that we live in. That is correct. So, I wanted to tap into some of this really quick so the viewers and listeners can really understand some other things that later on you've experienced after.

And my life before it. In January of 2021, right after the lockdown, you could get elective surgery for any number of things. It was thought that COVID was over.

And I went in to get a titanium plate put in my neck, part of rebuilding my body so I could I can get back into sports, Sammy. To my great misfortune, I picked up COVID in the recovery room from the gentleman that I was sharing the room with.

That's a whole other story. I went home and for about two weeks I kept getting sicker and sickier and to the point where I hurdled over, I thought the surgery had gone wrong.

And I went back to Mount Sinai. They took one look at me, threw me up on a gurney, ran a PET scan on my right leg, found one clot, two clots, three clot.

That was it. But they took me to emergency right away. Right away, and I spent six weeks in COVID Gulag. I don't know how else to say it. Now that was a transformative experience.

COVID GULAG. They didn't have hospital rooms, they had storage rooms because they'd run out of where to put people. And so I spent most of the time that I was there in two, three different storage rooms, uh, when they would move you around.

So I didn't get to see most the world. I did get see the word for, for that period of time, I went from 150 to under a hundred pounds in that time. It was life changing.

You know, we could elaborate on that and so on. And the whole horror stories in the book. But when I got out. Everything was different. I mean, of course, physically I was.

But something in my thinking started to germinate that took me through several years of re-evaluating everything. Got rid of my Jaguar, my Sahara black four door with a Mercedes engine, got rid off the 3000 square foot condo, um, get rid a lot of art.

And my value system was that of a New Yorker. The more you have, the more your win at the end of the game. But when you're confronted with the fact that you could be dead any second, and I mean literally any seconds in a hospital room, where if you push on the button to get somebody to come in, you're lucky if somebody had come into the room once every two hours, right?

Because they would have to change their suits and, we put on suits, and come and then they leave the rooms and do that. Do that for everybody in the floor.

So I learned little by little that my companion, for at least that first year, all of 2021 was going to be patients. And I had no patients at all about anything.

You know, so the patients to crawl from my bed to the bathroom and to call from the back, the patient to crawled to living room, patients learn how to breathe again.

I have COVID pneumonia. 70% of my lungs are filled with what the doctor said were hundreds of thousands, if not millions of microclots. So here I was being, you know, super duper runner to, I can't walk from, one room, 15 feet, without having to get on my knees.

So it literally brought me to my knee. And that experience started to give me a sense of what's really valuable in life. It began by getting rid of a lot of stuff.

I downsized everything. And, and I certainly downsized who I thought I was. It was like, you know what? You're going to die. And that's okay. No. You are going find out certain things right now.

Well, I'm finding out things about what's valuable in life besides the fact that accumulation was the whole point. So once you start getting those things out of the way, you started wondering about really, as lame as it sounds, like the meaning of life, the meeting of my life.

You know, was I a victim?

COVID Pneumonia, Recovery, and Reframing Life

Was this supposed to happen so that I could learn a better way of living and making a difference in this world? And the latter part is what occurred. So not that, I don't like good things in life but they're not the things that run me now.

And it was completely the reverse. So what is life supposed to be? Wow, that's a big one. I think the next book, I address it better, but I got to tell you at root, the humility of it all, right?

And to be in the face of humility, of gratitude, many of the things that actually bring you, I would say, stillness and peace of mind. I don't say that there's a meaning to life. I'm in there with everybody else.

So I'm reading Michael Pollan's latest book on the origins of conscience. And books like that fascinate me. I want to know why you and I think, and why and you think about the things we think.

And what brought us into this world? And is there something on the other side? So all of these are things that now take up my attention. Do you believe in aliens?

Do I believe an alien? In Joseph Spencer, I saw something. Let's put it that way. Did he give you any chocolates? Then I would have believed for sure.

What I do believe now is that there's much, much much more. And there is a lot more than our five senses, six senses catch. When you're open, when you are an open vessel, you do the work, and you find the entry point for what's going to make you a more mindful human being, Then questions like that get answered in small ways.

But to walk through the world in awe is, I think, one of the main drivers of what makes life meaningful. So what is that mindset that creates that rock star at 100? Okay, so that was a play on words there.

You know, I wanted to get your approval, too. I didn't want the next book to be about, hey, you got to do cold plunges. you gotta do saunas. You know, it was like this book's been done a thousand times and I'd already put in about six months after COVID was complete on just that.

Like I wanted to, Ben Greenfield, you know I want to you, know Ben did this incredible encyclopedia on biohacking. I'm gonna really do it, but I wanna do for the masses so that people can pick up my book and they're gonna know like hey, if I do A, B, C, and D, I'm gonna get this biohacking result.

And by about month six I trashed the whole thing. Because by then I knew that my conscience had changed so much. So what I wanted, making it simple it was, If you do make it to 100 or 120, what do you wanna have on your mind?

How do ya make life meaningful as you get older? And I think that those are central to the next book. This book's also a workbook. Half the book tells you a lot of what I did to actually get out of being a long hauler.

How I built my body back, what were the peptides, the supplements, with the foods, you name it, I put it in there. A lot I didn't put in. But I did want that to be the jumping point, Sammy, for the next book.

What I wanted was to first define the conditions that we all live in, including the environment. And you and I had a discussion about this, you know, what Daniel Schmattenberger calls the poly crisis, the meta crisis.

The conditions at the world finds itself in wants to 120 of Miami Beach is gone. Right. So the attention that you and I need to put into so many of the things that we consume, the thing that's we throw away, what contributes to an environment that is collapsing.

The collapse of species, of glaciers, and the rapid deterioration of agriculture and crop culture right now, not only in the United States but worldwide.

So I think part of being interested in health spanning and life spanning is to have your attention on what's going on in the world around you too. And seeing where you're contributing.

Can you cut back a little bit? Back getting back not easy for everybody. No, it's not so Oz. We're gonna have a little fun here, please So one of my favorite podcasters Steven burlet with the diary of a CEO.

He came out with these conversation cards So I'm gonna had to grab that. Okay, you'll take that sleeve off and you go ahead and um Grab grab two random cards from the center somewhere in there.

Oh and you'll read the card and answer it. Okay, so let's see what I got. Is there a time in your childhood when you could look back and think, this is the reason why I'm sitting here and why?

Let me repeat that to myself. I'm going to say it out loud. Is there a time in your childhood when you could look back and think, this is the reason why I am sitting here and why?

The answer is yes. What is it? When I lived in Cuba, it's a beautiful part of Cuba called Siboney. Sivoney was on the eastern southern shore of cuba and it was a beach town.

My aunt and uncle lived there and they had a house there. And my days, I would spend summers there, my day were filled with fishing, hunting birds, going to the beaches, and as best as I recall, those were the most meaningful times of my life.

I didn't know it in an eight, nine-year-old mind, but the deep sense of joy that that gave me, being in that nature. And I keep that in a little silver box on a shelf in my memory banks.

Wow. What do you get for the other card? Let's take a look. If you could be part of any brand or company, past or present, which would it be and why? Wow.

if you. Could be. Part of. Any brand. Or company. Past or. Present. Which would. It be? And why. Um.

Meaning, Wisdom, and Closing Advice

a couple of things come up. I would have loved to have been a journalist. Would have love to been at the Washington post in its early days. You know, when, you had those two really brilliant journalists that wrote all the president's men, right?

That, That, to me, would have been phenomenal. I would've loved to have worked for a great journalistic enterprise and been involved in events in the world where things like the term itself, fake news, didn't exist.

where you could count on what you saw, you can count what on you read, and you knew that for the most part, this was believable. This is what's happening in the world.

And too many people now will never have that experience. We're all too cynical. Well, you know, to get to be post cynical would mean that everything would have to change.

And that means very specifically social media. So the world of the Washington Post back in the 60s, 70s and 80s. That's what I would've loved to have done, when Nixon fell.

Wow. That would be pretty cool. That's a, I could see. I can see you doing something like that. Yeah. Thank you. Awesome. So as, as we wrap up here, man, um, we've had some really great conversations sitting and talking about different things, that are extremely important to implement in your life.

If there's someone listening or viewing the podcast and you can leave them off with one last thing. Okay, tell me that one more time, Sam, so I can answer exactly like I think I should answer.

Absolutely. If there's someone listening or viewing this podcast who really resonates with today's message that you shared, what is the last thing you can leave them all with?

Oh, wow. You know, gather wisdom. I mean, for me, I grew up worshiping books, and I still consume books at a rapid pace, but for they were an escape. They were escape from my family and in this world, the demand right now for you in terms of your health, your heath concerns, The work that you have, work you may have.

The quality of relationships. There's just so much to know that if you read a book a week, you'd never get ahead to the point where I think you should.

But boy, would you be so fucking smarter in a year. You know, take a, book, a month, start there. So I, think accruing wisdom in today's world is invaluable.

And I hope it really makes a difference in that regard. I love that. Oz, this was a fantastic podcast, very informative. I want to thank you for coming on a healthy point of view podcast.

And if people want find you, where can they find? You go to my website, www Oz Garcia dot com. Everything's up there. That's the easiest way on Instagram.

On Oz Wellness. Awesome. Which will include all those links down below. Thank you. This podcast? So this is great. Amazing. This is terrific. Guys, you heard Oz.

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