Introduction and Guest Background

This is Dr. Greg Hall once again with Better Black Health brought to you by Genetic Sequence Multivitamins. Still, the only multivitamin made specifically to address the unique nutritional needs of African Americans, and that includes widespread vitamin D deficiency in places like Cleveland and Chicago and New York, but maybe not so much in Mississippi and Texas.

Maybe not so much vitamin D deficiency there, and replacing the zinc, magnesium, potassium that most African Americans need. Today, we're talking about life coaches, and we've got Coach Ed Bradley.

He's got 20 years of experience in coaching education and leadership, and he tries to empower students and adults to embrace change, find direction, and reach their full potential.

Don't we need to reach our full potential, right? From the basketball court to the classroom, and now as a transitional life coach, Mr. Bradley is known for his ability to deeply connect, uplift, and guide others through life's biggest transitions.

He works with high school students preparing for the real world as well as adults navigating career shifts and personal reinvention, which we're going to talk about that a little bit too.

Through empathy and structure and value-based coaching, Coach Ed provides tools for transformation built on real-life experience and emotional intelligence.

So emotional intelligence. Welcome. Welcome coach, Ed Bradley. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Hoffman having me on. Um, uh, we definitely don't have to worry about the vitamin D deficiency here, but, uh, we could probably use some of those vitamins anyway.

So I'll have to look into that. Absolutely. Mississippi is hot. It's, it's hot right now there, right? Absolutely. Absolutely. Outside right now. Um, right now it is about 1130 and the temperature is 87 degrees at the moment.

Yes. So it has not even, you know, the sun's not completely up and it's already 87 degrees. Wow. Wow. That's great. Great. So what, what, um, you know, what made you think, um, you know, I want to be a life coach or that people need life coaches.

What was that? What was that moment like? Well, as you read my bio, I started out I was a high school teacher and basketball coach for 20 plus years, working with young minds, young kids, high school kids, you know, A lot of people those of your listeners who are in education will know that so much about education is about building relationships.

And we spend 90% of our time helping kids navigate who they are as people. And maybe 10% of that time is actual educating. You know, actually doing the actual education part, you know, it's really about helping them navigate life and becoming the people that they want to become, going from becoming young kids to becoming productive adults and navigating the world.

From Teaching and Coaching to Life Coaching

And probably during the COVID years, especially. uh is when it really kind of hit me just how hard it was for our young people because they were experiencing such a a it's just such a uh i don't even know how to put it into words uh what they went through especially when the schools were closed you know as much as the kids complain about being at school you begin to realize how much they needed that being in that building and the relationships that was built with those kids and how much direction they gained from being around the adults in the building.

And it really, it really hit home for me, especially considering You know, 20 some years in the business and even now I still have former students who again were sitting in my classroom or on the on my basketball team 20 some years ago who still reach out to say, hey, coach, how are you doing?

Hey, coach, can I get some advice on this? So as I was. in the classroom, on the court, I began to realize my career in education was starting to wind down.

But my desire to help people, my desire to continue to build those relationships had not changed. So it was just kind of a natural progression. Because in all honesty, I'm still doing the same job.

It's just not in a classroom or on a basketball court. Yeah, no. And the truth is, And it's true in medicine as well. People don't know, doctors don't know that the majority of what they should be doing is establishing relationships with their patient.

We're not just prescribing medication, but you have to develop a relationship in order to get off of home base, you know what I mean? And before you get the first, you know.

Exactly. And that's so true in people that are teachers. And there's a lot of teachers that don't know that, isn't there? Very true, very true. Some of my former assistant coaches, as we transitioned towards the latter part of my career, we actually started focusing on building professional developments to try to help some of the younger teachers that were getting into the business, younger educators.

In fact, I'm in the process now of creating a mentoring program for educators of color who are entering the business and to try to offer advice, try to offer support, and kind of talk about these things when it comes to developing those relationships with our students and how to leverage those relationships to better gain performance from our students.

The old adage of how they don't care what you know until they know how much you care is a very true thing. yeah in the classroom right you know again you know one of the biggest things that you know i think i think it it saved me on some of my lean years where we didn't or the winds didn't exactly pile up as my administrators knew that there were kids on that campus even if they weren't in my classroom then that i was able to reach you know you'd be amazed how many times a student would come to me with an issue And I didn't even know who that student was.

But because they were friends with another one of my students, they knew Coach Bradley is somebody that I can go talk to. Right, right. And that was way more important than what I was teaching that day.

Right, right, right. No, I get it. I get it. And so when you say I'm Coach Ed Bradley, I mean, do you use coach, not therapist, not life changer? I mean, is coach something that's like better for boys and men or I mean, is that Is it less intimidating?

You know, I'm not going to a therapist. I'm going to see Coach Bradley. You know what I'm saying, right? Right. Right. Right. Yeah. You know, I haven't really given that a lot of thought, but I think there is some truth to that because that was one of the things that we have discussed recently.

We've done some things on social media discussing kind of changing the narrative when it comes to mental health for men, especially within our community.

Right. Because we don't have a history of really prioritizing our mental health, especially for Black men. Right. But yeah, I think the term using saying you're going to see Coach Bradley as opposed to seeing a therapist or life coach or whatever the case may be.

It may make it a little bit easier because it changes that connotation of who you're actually talking to. But that's one of the things that I am trying to do within my practice is create a safe space that is more culturally competent for our people.

Building Relationships in Education and Mentorship

uh, especially for, for black men, where we can really kind of focus and hone in on changing the narrative when it comes to our mental health and our approach to, to our lifestyles.

Makes perfect sense. So tell me this, and what's the biggest difference between talking to a black boy versus talking to a 35 year old black man? Is there, is there like, is there a difference in how you come at it or, or how you approach it or how you think about it?

Well, I don't know necessarily if there is a difference. I think probably the biggest, I guess I would say advantage for myself and maybe others, especially having been in the education world for so long and having come across so many types of people so many different people from different backgrounds and different areas is understanding how to approach it without any without number one without judgment.

That's the first thing and then understanding the cultural aspect of where some of our people are coming from and some of the experiences that they've had and how it can shape our perceptions of how we see people and how we see different events and how, you know, how my background may affect how I see a certain situation as opposed to your background may affect how you see that same situation.

And if we can gain some clarity and how we see how those things impact, how we see those things and have some better understanding, then we're able to find some middle ground and better able to address whatever that situation might be.

Right. That's really interesting. So is there, do you prefer working with teens or children versus adults? I mean, you don't really have a preference one way or the other.

I don't necessarily have any preference, but you know, again, because I spent so many years in the classroom and as a basketball coach, high school basketball coach, I do enjoy working with the, with adolescents.

Um, and that's, that was kind of, you know, I've told someone this before, you know, when my 25 years as a teacher and a coach was not a job. You know, I went to work every day, but I didn't work.

Right. Right. It was it was a calling. Right. I enjoyed every minute of it. And I'm even I'm even now working with a mentoring group who works with with with with incoming seniors their senior year and I really enjoy just being around people that age but now in general I just enjoy helping people so all ages all sizes all backgrounds you know if there's a way I can help well that that's a good way to be so now I've talked to a number of educators and you know, in different positions in the school system, high up and, you know, in the trenches every day.

And they all say the same thing. The problem, I'll tell you what they say the problem is. I'll ask you to take one guess on what all of those people say the real problem is.

What's the real problem, Coach Ed? in education, real problem education. I would say, um, don't give me your answer because you're going to give me the politically correct answer and I'm going to tell you that, that they, they say, I'll never say this in public.

I'll never say this in public, but the problem is the parents. That was where I was headed. I'm retired. I'm retired from education, so I can say it. Good point.

Everyone uniformly says the problem is not the kids. Absolutely. The problem is the parents. Absolutely. But I won't say that out loud. I won't say that on Channel 5. I won't say that at the Board of Education.

You know what I mean. But the problem is the parents. What does that say to you as someone, as a life coach and you have, I've had teachers tell me, I work with a student and by Friday, I got them three quarters the way where they need to be.

And they come on Monday and they all screwed up again. You know what I mean? Just like, yes, exactly. And so how do you approach that? So a big part of that, again, I kind of goes back to that, as I was mentioning, create we were a group of educators and I work together, create some professional development programs to try to leverage relationships.

And a big part of that was. creating relationships between myself and the student. And even as a coach, because that's one area where, and if you talk to a lot of athletic coaches, they'll tell you this too, parents are a big issue because they try to live through, relive their athletic days through their child.

And so a lot of their talking, enjoying, and a lot of what they have to say and how they think things should go has a big impact on how their child performs.

And it's the same way in the classroom sometimes. And on many occasions, I've had to pull a kid to the side and say, look, I don't coach your parents.

I coach you. So what we do in this gym is between you and I. You know, we have to come up with a plan that's going to work best for you and I, so that you can be successful and our team can be successful.

And I kind of had to take that approach and translate it into the classroom.

Parents, Coaching, and Student Accountability

So we had to develop a plan that worked so that we can have a system of accountability between myself and the student. so that you don't want not to say that the parent is not important because obviously the parent is very important and we're never going to tell a child not to listen to their parent right but we have to develop a relationship of trust with that student so they understand i care about you just as much as your parents do and you have to understand that i have a level of expertise that your parents may not have You know, in this particular, in this classroom, there's a certain level of expertise that I have and I need you to trust me on.

Right. Right. Right. And I need you to buy in and do what I'm asking you to do in this classroom. Right. Right. Well, you know, what's funny is, um, you know, I'm in Cleveland and so we've got the Cleveland Cavaliers and we've got them Browns.

And so they, they, you know, people say, well, the coach, they got rid of Bickerstaff and then they brought in this new guy and, and he took them further, but not really.

And, um, and you know, it's like coaching, um, can be the key to getting, to getting over, but all of my patients who watch the Cavaliers have a different take on why they weren't successful.

know what I'm saying? And so people will come with thinking they know basketball because I watch basketball all day, which I don't, you know what I'm saying?

But and so I know the answer all these pundits that talk talking like they know what the hell they're talking about. When you know, it's like, you've never played basketball, I can look at you and see you've never played basketball.

Right, right. So it's it's everyone has an opinion. And now that there's Google, you know, I have Dr. Google to contend with everything I do is double checked with Dr.

Google. And so they then think they have, they know something about medicine when I'm just sick in my head, like you couldn't be any further off from the answer to your health.

And so How do you convince the students that you, you know, that you should disregard their parent who has a very high, not disregard, or you don't have them disregarded, but how do you tell them that, you know, your parents mean well, but you really need to, you really need to listen to what I'm saying.

Right. Well, and that is a, that's a good point. And you tie it in well with the cat Cleveland Cavaliers, because this is, it brings me to an actual story of a young man.

So being the head coach after every game, especially home games, I'm nine times out of 10, I'm going to be the last person to lead the gym. You know, when we go in after the game, you know, we get, there's a whole process of shutting the gym down.

If it's a home game, uh, getting the players out of the locker room. You know, that kind of stuff. And the last thing I usually do is I'm sitting in my office.

You know, we have a video system that we use, which have to upload it so we can share with other coaches and this, that other stuff. That's usually the last thing I go ahead and start the upload process.

So when I come in next morning, I can watch film. Right. And then before I leave, I go in, walk through the locker room, make sure it's shut down, locked up, and then Gary leave the gym.

Well, this particular night, we had a tough loss game we probably should have won. You know, I think it's like a one point loss at the buzzer type of deal.

So, you know, we're all a little disappointed. Everybody left. I probably stayed a little longer and actually watched some of the film where usually I'd wait till the next day and just kind of trying to reevaluate what decisions that I've made differently.

So as I'm getting ready to leave, I go in, I'm like, okay, let me go shut down the locker room. I walk the locker room and my starting point guard is just sitting there.

And he's not supposed to be in here. Like everybody should be going. And I'm like, hey, you know, what are you doing? And he's like, Coach, I just, I don't want to go home.

I don't want to hear it. I'm like, what do you mean? Yeah, I don't want to hear it because they're going to tell me all the things I did wrong and this that and other and this.

I'm like, I just don't want to hear it. I'm like, I said, I said, number one, you have to understand your parents meet well. They love you. They want what's best for you.

But number two, at the end of the day, you play for me. Right. Yeah. Yeah. There's only one person whose opinion is going to matter. Right. And that's mine.

Right, right, right. Because as much as your parents love you and as much as their input means something, at the end of the day, I'm the guy that's going to determine if you're still the starting point guard tomorrow.

Right. I'm the one who's going to determine how much playing time you're going to get. You're like, whatever they say doesn't really mean a whole lot.

Right. Yeah. And I said, so what you have to learn how to do with your parents, when it comes to something like this, you have to understand that they mean well as your parents, they always mean well.

There's no manual to being a great parent. Right. You know, so there's no how to, there's never, there's no right or wrong. So when they talk to you about these things, the best thing you can do is just listen.

Listen to what they're saying. Take it all in. And then when you come back in the gym, let it go. Right. Right. Whatever they say. Doesn't matter a lot when you come to this gym.

And they get extra emotional and you should have done this and you should have done that. You can't have all these conflicting instructions. My dad said, I need to be more aggressive on defense.

But the coach said, I need to take three point shots. You know what I'm saying? Who do you listen to? Exactly. Your answer is listen to me. Don't listen to you.

Please don't. That means well, but he's not the ultimate authority because here's what people miss about, especially with with with athletics and even in the classroom.

There are certain things we all know, right? I mean, when you watch the game, okay, I saw so-and-so miss this shot, or when it comes to academics, you know, two plus two is four.

Yeah, there are certain things that we all know. That's a given. But there is an element that only those who are involved know about. And when it comes to a team, it's what goes on in practice.

If you're not there every day, you have no idea what goes on in practice. There's a reason why this particular player is getting more opportunities to shoot the ball.

Because in practice, this is the one making all the shots. And you don't get to see that. Right, unless you're one of those patients. You find that what the patients, and this I'm kind of segued into what you talked about in terms of emotional intelligence, what the parents miss sometimes in their parenting is their emotional intelligence.

And so give us an idea. What is emotional intelligence and, and why do we need it? How's that? Let's talk about that. Okay. OK, well, so emotional intelligence is really all about how we approach certain situations.

Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health

You know, when we are put in a stressful situation, how do we find a way to react? The natural reaction, you know, kind of like the old fight or flight type of thing.

You know, when we are in conflicting situations, our argument with our parents, significant other, whatever the case may be, for men especially, we have been so, it has been so ingrained in us to not have any emotion, right?

To not show emotion, you know, just to kind of put our heads down and be a man and don't show emotion, don't ask for help. You know, asking for help is a weakness type of thing.

And that's just kind of historically been a thing. And that extends, you know, this is where my history being a history teacher comes in. That extends all the way back to to to slavery when it comes to African American men.

We were always taught that that we can't show emotions and those type of things. And it is it is something it's a trauma that has been passed down for generation to generation.

And so What it has done, it has created an emotional isolation, it has strained relationships, it has created a fear of vulnerability. Emotional intelligence is finding a way to move past those traditional traumas and being able to approach these situations as a human.

Being able to, you know, express our emotions in a healthy manner, right? Uh, being able to talk about our feelings in a healthy manner, not shutting off in a, in a stressful situation, being able to talk to our significant others about this is how I feel.

I feel this way. And this is why. So, but what does it do for that person? Say, you know, I know how I feel and I think I know how I feel, but, but sharing that what, what does that do for me?

Okay. So first off, let's talk about what happens when you don't do that. Uh, when you bottle those emotions up in the moment, you may think you were doing the right thing because again, you have been taught to do that for a long time that again, that's something we have been taught to do forever, but by masking and holding those emotions in, and you know, this just from a medical standpoint, that can lead to stress, that can lead to a lot of health issues, that can lead to depression, that can lead to anxiety, there's a ton of things that we traditionally,

especially in our community, high blood pressure, those things, a lot of those can be attributed to the fact that we don't have a healthy regulation of our emotions, and it has an effect on our overall health.

Right, right. And that's our No, I think you're right. And I think that that's that's and that we there are studies that show the increased cortisol release is sort of associated with this fight or flight response, a sympathetic response drives up blood pressure releases releases blood sugar into your body and you know, causes, we call it weathering, the weathering process, premature aging and all that can be attributed to the suppression of a lot of stuff.

You know, I mean, it's the things that are, the things that, you know, sort of, like you say, are the healthy sort of expressions of what's going on internally.

And so what you do is, What try to, to try to, I mean, what's the, what's the appropriate, like if we've been suppressing this all so long, how do we even know what we're suppressing?

That's a good question. That's a really good question. So a big part of that is I think number one, uh, and again, this is the conversation I've had with several people is we, we start out by creating a safe space or for everyone to kind of.

kind of decompressed, so to speak. Let's create a space where we can actually acknowledge the fact that number one, we're human too. We're allowed to express our feelings when we feel a certain way.

We should be able to, number one, recognize what happens when we don't. As we just mentioned, these are things that are good. These affect our health when we don't have conversations about our feelings.

These things can negatively affect our health. Not only can they negatively affect our health, but they also affect our relationships. We have a history of straining relationships within our communities because we have a history of not communicating it in a healthy manner because we've been taught not to do so.

Right. And so here is a way to rebuild those relationships. Let's take some time. Let's have open communication. And you'd be surprised how well the number one how much that's going to affect our overall health.

Number two, how that's going to help rebuild our relationships within our own communities and make us stronger as a whole. One of the things we try to do within my practice is try to create a no judgment space, a place where we're not going to judge you for having your feelings.

There's not going to be any assumptions based on a stereotype. You're not the angry black man or woman. You're a human being. Right. Your feelings count, right?

Exactly. Your feelings matter. People suppress a lot. I've had a couple different things I'd like to talk about real quick. The people that are in relationships are not getting married.

I've got a guy who's got a 12-year-old and another four-year-old. He's been with her for 15 years. I ask, why aren't you married? And he just gets this look on his face.

And I tell you, are you planning on leaving him? No, I gotta make sure I finish raising my kids. So why not get married? Why are so many, and I'm putting it on black men, maybe it's both men and women, but why aren't black people getting married like they used to?

Values, Relationships, and Contact Information

You know, that again, I think that is a big part of that emotional trauma that we have experienced traditionally. I can't speak to everyone, but I think traditionally when you look at that, there is a huge fear of commitment, even though this particular couple has made a commitment.

They've been together for 15 years, so obviously they've already made that commitment. But for whatever reason, the idea of this little piece of paper telling them they have to be together forever has prevented them from doing so.

It's really mind-boggling, you know, when you look, when you think about it in that term, because in all honesty, they really have made the commitment of being married, even though they haven't actually signed this little piece of paper saying they are.

Right, right, right. But I was asking him, one of his kids is a daughter. It's like, what is that? Do you want your daughter to be in the same type of relationship that you're in?

And he was like, oh, no. So what we model should be what we expect, right? Exactly. Absolutely. And I think that's, again, that goes to kind of what I'm trying to do within my practice, especially with Black men, by trying to re-evaluate and re-teach what we consider to be a man and what manhood really is about.

It's not necessarily about this whole bravado and, you know, being a man doesn't include feelings and doesn't include, you know, feelings. And like you said, what we want, what we expect, and what we want to see for our kids should be what we model.

And if he wants his daughter to have a healthy relationship, it starts with having my own healthy relationship. Yeah, modeling that. You talk about aligning your work with your values.

And this is, this is really it. I mean, and then the guy clearly his values was one of in monogamy, raising his kids was his I knew, you know, I know, I'm not well enough to know that that was his values.

But he his work was not aligned with that he I'm not married. You know, But nobody's ever been married in my family or, or whatever, you know what I'm saying.

And I think, but, uh, but, and that's, that's kind of at the core of what you like to do. Isn't that right? Absolutely. Absolutely. And like you're saying, like he, his, his values are saying one thing, but his actions are, are, are modeling something else.

And so there is something there that has blocked him from actually living in that truth. And so what we would have to do with this person, let's sit down and let's really talk about what your values are.

Because your actions so far, the way you have lived your life, shows me that you truly believe in, in marriage. You actually believe in making that commitment.

You've said, I want to raise my kids. I want my kids to have this healthy relationship. Right. But at the end of the day, you haven't actually done that.

So let's go back and let's see. Number one, you've already mentioned that the model that you saw was not a healthy one because no one in my family has been married.

Right. So let's evaluate that. Let's talk about why it is that no one in your family has been married. Right. And let's understand why you feel like that is.

And what's keeping you from being the person to take that next step and being the first one in your family. So kind of bridging that gap. Right. Right.

No, that's great. That's great. So now what you do is you, you do that online. I mean, you can do that kind of tell a, I don't know if it's the medicine, but you can, you can, so how would people catch up with you if they're interested in having you coach them or, or their kids?

Well, you can, you can go to my website, which is coachedbradley.com. Um, you can also find me on, on social media, again, coach a Bradley, um, on Tik TOK I'm on Instagram, um, LinkedIn and, uh, YouTube as well.

Uh, but we are, we are kind of slowly building this thing up, getting out there as much as we can. Um, But yeah, any way we can help, we're definitely out there trying to help people.

Well, that's great. Well, listen, we really appreciate you having you on and we hope to have you back for some time in the future to see what's going on.

So let's go to coachedbradley.com to see if you want interested in learning more and see if you want to. connect with Coach Bradley right here. What was it like having the guy on 60 Minutes with the same Ed Bradley?

Did you ever hear about that coming up a lot? Oh my gosh. As a kid, that's all I ever heard. Ed Bradley. You mean like the guy on 60 Minutes? Oh man. At that point, I just got to the point when people would ask my name.

Yes, I'm Ed Bradley. I think I owe him 60 minutes. Right, right. At least they remember, right? Yeah, exactly. Well, sounds good. Well, listen, thanks so much, Coach Bradley.

It's great to see you, great to have you, and you take care. Absolutely. Thank you.