



Training the Brain | Dr. Michael Gervais

[00:00:00] Podcast Intro

Darin: You are listening to the Darin Olien Show. I'm Darin. I spent the last 20 years devoted to improving health, protecting the environment, and finding ways to live a more sustainable life. In this podcast, I have honest conversations with people that inspire me. I hope that through their knowledge and unique perspectives they'll inspire you too. We talk about all kinds of topics, from amping up your diets to improving your well-being to the mind-blowing stories behind the human experience and the people that are striving to save us and our incredible planet. We even investigate some of life's fatal conveniences, those things that we are told might be good for us but totally aren't. So here's to making better choices in the small tweaks in your life that amount to big changes for you and the people around you and the planet. Let's do this. This is my show, the Darin Olien Show.

[00:01:11] Guest Intro - Dr. Michael Gervais

Darin: Hey, everybody, welcome to the show. This is Darin Olien. This is The Darin Olien Podcast. I am so stoked that Vivobarefoot is the sponsor of the show. I'm gonna get into that. You need to put your feet in better shoes. You need to liberate your feet to put them on the earth and get out of shoes that are hurting you, but I'm gonna get into that later. I am stoked for my next guest, Dr. Michael Gervais. Michael and I got connected to an athlete that we were both working with, an incredible guy. He actually linked us up and I knew about Michael. I have since done his podcast, Finding Mastery. You can check our interview on the other side and that incredible guest that he has on that show. I love this guy inside and out. What an incredible career he's had, an incredible human being. He is all heart. He is a performance psychologist, that's right. The top people in the world. He's worked with, leading experts, an elite performance for the last 20 years working with these world-class organizations, people, Olympians, figuring out the framework of mental skills and practices to allow people, athletes, corporation leaders, you as entrepreneurs to get through these pressure-packed moments of our lives now more than ever. He's figured out ways to do that. Again, an incredible program with Pete Carroll, the NFL Coach. The program's called competetocreate.net/findingmastery. You need to check that out. It's incredible. Gervais has worked with, like I said, Olympians from Tokyo, Rio, London, everywhere from volleyball to NFL. Like I said, he hosts The Finding Mastery podcast, it includes incredible psychological, where he explores the psychology of the world with the most extraordinary thinkers and doers. He's always analyzing. He is always receiving more information so they can better help to distill and create opportunities for people to excel in their life. In 2020, Gervais wrote in audible original Compete to Create, an approach to living and leading authentically with NFL Coach Pete Carroll. He also created a six-week online program. He brings those principles and practice of high-performance mindset training into business and home, so you want to check that out. He's a published and peer-reviewed author and nationally



recognized speaker of optimum human performance. He's been featured all over the place. Our conversation was intimate, powerful, and I love this guy, I really, really do. There are people that you meet and you just connect with and where he's coming from and his desire to take his knowledge, take his passion and transmute it into the lives of not only the top peak performing athletes and business people but also for you to perform at your best. Dare I say have a super life. This is another aspect and level that you can check out but enjoy our conversation with the incredible Michael Gervais.

[00:05:04] First Part of the Interview

Darin: Beautiful, dude. Thank you for letting me talk to you and interview you this time. I think if I were to have another lifetime, I would love to explore more of what you have dedicated your life to because it's always been a fascination of mine. I'm honored, number one, to talk to you and get to know you even more. Also, we can talk about athletes and talk about performance and flow states and all of that stuff but also that bridge between the people listening, and how you've been now dedicating a lot of that work to translating the skills, the psychology, the physiology, the nutrition to set up people to have greatness in their life.

Michael: Well, ditto because I've loved what you've done in the space you've created for, in the way you've done what you've done. I loved our conversation on Finding Mastery and so I'm stoked to be here with you, and let's see where we go.

Darin: I want to know, just out of curiosity, where it clicked for you in terms of really exploring possibility, potentiality and then focusing on this incredible, obviously, physiology is one thing and talents are one thing and all this stuff, but there's this immense possibility of mental imaging, visual acuity and the ability to access the brain and the quantum and all of this stuff? Where, for you, did that kind of click and to realize that you wanted to focus in on the state of achievement?

[00:06:43] Where it all began for Michael

Michael: I will sound corny for a minute, but I'll make it as fast as possible just to give some context here, is that my first sport that I loved was surfing. There are two types of surfing, there's free surfing, and then there's competitive surfing. I felt like I could do what I wanted to do on a wave in free surfing but then as soon as competitive surfing, as soon as there's a competition, I didn't have it. I knew my physical body didn't change, my technical skills didn't change. It felt like when I was out in the water in beautiful conditions and I remember a specific day, it was competition day. There were three people out in the water. It was about 8 AM in the morning, glass conditions about head high, which is a super playful type of wave. It's in front of a local beach break in Southern California. A gentleman that I surfed with all the time, he was a bit older than me and paddles by me during the competition in the heat, I was competing against him. He says, "Gervais, you got to stop," and he just looked at me. "You got to stop worrying about what other people are thinking about you." I was like, how does he know? He says, "You're focused on everything that could go wrong." Then he paddles off, like a good competitor. He leaves me even more disheveled. I thought for a moment to myself, one, how does he



know? Two, what am I doing with my head? I didn't know. I'm a 15-year-old kid at this time. I didn't know there was a field of psychology. Nobody in my family went and had a college education, let alone licensed as a professional. I just kind of made some stuff up in that heat. I was like, well, if I'm focusing on all the things that could go wrong, maybe I should focus on what could go right. Super simple, and it ends up kind of working. It's not like all of a sudden, it was magical, but it was better. It led me down this path from that point on at the age of 15 to say what is this thing, and it's complicated. The mind is complicated. It led me down a path professionally to get an undergrad in psychology, a Master's degree in sports science, a Ph.D. in Psychology with a specialization in sport and high performance, and then licensed as a psychologist, and then, fortunately, I have to work from there for the last 27 years with people that are hard-charging, changing the rhythm of the world based on their extreme talents. So that's where I've been. That's how it started.

Darin: That's beautiful. Again, those moments in life, the challenges present opportunity. How the hell this guy just pegged me, and then your ability to go whoa, and shift your attention because it's so easy, especially today with all of the changing world. I myself fall into that. People ask you every day all day, I'm sure people ask me every day all day of how do I have the best life ever? How do I achieve? How do I find purpose? How do I align with passion? How do I align my life with the life of a legacy that I want to create for my children, for the career that I want? Obviously, that is the holy grail of fulfillment. Listen, I think right now more than ever, we have a hell of an opportunity to create and reconstruct to create better systems in the world. I see failures. I see things that aren't working. I think even though in the face of it, this feels gross, this feels intense, all that stuff. That being said, I think this is an incredible opportunity for what you are doing. Let's dive into it because it's not just for the athlete that is visualizing the race ahead. How can we apply this visualization, this mental imagery?

[00:10:30] How to apply these principles even if you're not an athlete

Michael: Let's set the frame first. I'm nodding my head to everything you're saying about the opportunity ahead of us. I'm going to put a tall stake in the ground just because I've got an ear to what's happening on the frontier of elite sport and art. Then I've got an ear to the ground on what's happening in enterprise business. About six or seven years ago, I said, I got to do two things. One is I got to take the good science and the application of psychology, the psychology of excellence that's happening with the wealthy. I need to translate that in a way that the rest of us can understand and people that wouldn't have access to if they're not Olympians or professional athletes, or on tour filling stadiums, or CEOs of huge enterprise companies. So the ear to the ground is leading me to this statement, and then I want to oversimplify this beautiful science of psychology for a minute, and then drill down into imagery. The stake in the ground is that this is the decade of the mind. The reason I'm bullish on this idea is because if you follow the trend of elite sport over the last, let's call it 60 years. Sixty years ago, the head coach did everything. They were the chef, they were the technical coach, physical coach, psychologist, they were everything. Then strength and conditioning became a bit sophisticated. The avant-garde coaches were like, let's get our guys bigger, faster, and stronger. That worked. They're still in play now. Then they're getting bigger, faster, stronger, and then what came in?



Well, we need some better medical. We need some ATCs, PT, chiro, so we got some medical support in there, that's still happening. Then the progressive coaches 30 years ago are like, let's get some nutrition rolling. There you are, let's get some nutrition. So they're gassed up, they're fueled up better, they're stronger, faster, everything. Their bodies are more tuned. About probably 15 years ago, the avant-garde coaches were like, how about this thing of psychology, let's see if we can get an advantage there. So now it's in, it's happening. You just listened to the Olympics, and you saw what was happening there. World-class athletes are saying the mind really matters. It's always been that way but the science of psychology is invisible and it's complicated because of that. Our mind is our greatest asset. Our brain, which is different than our mind, if we just pull them apart for a moment, which is not totally fair, but if we pull them apart for the conversation, our brain is the tissue that sits in our skull. Our mind is the software that is kind of running that tissue and they work together in harmony, hopefully, and we can train that software. We can also train the brain. I'm invested in the psychology of training the software. If we're going to make the science simple, there's the self-discovery processes and then there's the psychological skills that you can train, just like you train sets and reps and anything that you want to get better at. So imagery is one of those skills, one of the many skills in psychology. It is not more complicated than having a disciplined approach to seeing the most beautiful movie that you're starring in working in a way that you'd like to understand better. So that doesn't mean it's always excellent and all the images that you would want it to be. Sometimes we need to purposely create images of us being in a compromised situation, us trying to figure out from being on our backs or being backed up, playing those scenes out as well. The most obvious question for folks is, is there a right, is there a wrong way to do it, how long do I do it, how often do I do it? That's part of the science and the art merging. But I will tell you that when you really care about something, Darin, and it's really important to you, you think about it. If you want to use the science of psychology, you take that thinking and put it into a movie, images of things playing out of where you want to get better at it. One of the fastest men alive, an athlete that I spend some time with a bit ago, he says, "Mike, my wife thinks I have a problem." We're talking about mental imagery. I go, "Why?" He goes, "Because I do imagery in the shower. She thinks that I'm doing something else in there that she's not invited in." It's all fun and games here. But the point is he is consumed with seeing himself figuring out difficult things in his chosen craft. You can use this for parenting, for business, preparing yourself for a business meeting, for being on stage, for whatever you might be doing. That's it. That's one of the many, many skills that the science is pretty clear about.

Darin: That's pretty amazing. I've played with this a few times. It's been interesting when I've known that I'm going to go into a meeting and I have some desire around it without a doubt. I kind of go and I attune to whatever that person. Maybe I haven't met them, but I at least kind of go in with the visualization that I'm meeting them, I'm connecting with them, and we're getting along and I see it, I feel it, dude, 99% of the time. Now, of course, this is end of one, I don't have another study. If it isn't going well, if I didn't do that, but it feels when I show up that there's a flow. It feels like I've already met them. So there's a synergy that inevitably is there because I'm now almost re-experiencing the sensation that I've already kind of visualized. Is that similar to what you're saying?



Michael: That is it. I'm going to say something, I'm going to deviate just a bit from science here, but it's an axiom that is hard to prove and unprove, but it's a principle, which makes it a difficult statement for me to introduce from a science standpoint, but the principle is really interesting. The principle is that our brain has a hard time of just differentiating what's real and what's imagined. Now, we can't prove that statement but I do know when I see something and I can feel it, that feeling is very familiar to me than when it actually happened in the past, or when it might happen in the future. So that's what you're trying to tap into when you do mental imagery is to create such vivid-like images that it feels as if you're actually experiencing it. Then what ends up happening is that neurons and parts of our brain and body that fire together wire together, you've heard that statement over and over again. So what you're doing in return is you're getting certain parts of your body and your brain and your emotional center, once you do some imagery, to wire together by firing together. Then when you actually are presented the opportunity when you're meeting the woman or the man that you're meeting with, that's like I can settle in a little bit because this seems so familiar. Part of the flow state, which is a scientific term as well, is the appropriate, the attuned balance between loving the challenge and believing you have the skills to meet that challenge. So that is the crosshairs for the flow state. There's a real challenge here, and I have the skills to meet that challenge. There are a couple of other levers that you could pull on, but that's the big one. If you can walk into the room, embracing the challenge and being like, I think I can do this now, I'm not totally sure because then you'd be bored, but I think I can do this now. Then you end up finding that sweet spot a little bit more often than maybe not.

[00:18:20] What is the flow state of mind?

Darin: That's a really good point and at the same time, I know people are gripped in fear all the time. They want to do X and there's sometimes this perception that it's a massive cataclysm or cliff or juncture between them achieving it. They can't even get there visually because of their fear, they're gripped in that fear. So let's break it down a little bit in terms of like, if someone has, I don't know if it's better to have an example, but if someone wants to go after a dream, or a business or try something new, but they feel paralyzed because they don't feel like they have anything of the skills to really pull it off. What are some of the steps to building that confidence and skill so that they can take those steps building on that and then put themselves in a further and deeper scenario to create those possibilities that potentially can open up?

Michael: It's a good question. Super thoughtful because you're talking about a couple of things. You're talking about self-confidence, and I'll do the science and the application of that. You're also talking about self-efficacy. That's a fancy phrase. Sounds so technical. But efficacy means like a sense of power, not power and control from a dominant standpoint, but a sense of like, I feel powerful in this bag of skin and it doesn't mean that I have muscle strength. It just means that I have a command of myself. So confidence is I think I can do that thing, I think I can get that done. So confidence is not I got this. Those are according to one of the Seattle Seahawks for about a decade and one of the defensive coaches, the coordinator says the most dangerous statement in sport are those three words, "I got this." He goes, you stop being a learner, you stop being excited, you've switched over from confidence to arrogance. He says are the most



dangerous words in sport, "I got this." So the opposite of that is, I think I can get this done. Are you with me because nobody does the extraordinary alone, by the way? Confidence sounds like that in people's heads but then how you train confidence is that what you say to yourself is the only place that confidence comes from. I grew up in the United States of America. We are not taught this that's why we're arrogant people. Internationally, we're quite arrogant.

Darin: I was just having that same. I've been in third-world countries. I'm like, the perception, we're like arrogant teenagers.

Michael: Yeah, adolescence, I was gonna say the same thing. So there's an entitlement. It's always been quite easy for people in our generation. Our grandparents had it a bit harder, the great generation. They understood the 1920s and the great depression and war. The baby boomers and younger, we've had it pretty good. Look what's happening right now, it's not pretty good. It's really hard. The pandemic is very hard. The global conversation about cultural equity, and people having dignity, independence or the color of their skin, or the region of the world that they live in. These are the right conversations, and the global pandemic has really rocked a lot of people and parts of the country and parts of the world. We're starting to get a taste of it and the world is split. We're splitting open right now about vaccine, no vaccine, mass, no mass. I don't know where you sit on that but that could be a fun conversation for the two of us to have. But all of that being said is confidence comes from what you save yourself and it has to be credible, which means you have to earn it. So the idea of fake it till you make it, it does not work. I would not trust anything fake on the frontier. I bet you would say the same. I would not want my surgeon to fake it till he makes it or she makes it.

Darin: And I wouldn't want a guy next to me who I've trained with, worked with just go, I'm just faking it until I make it. I'm like, wait a minute, I've been training all my life for this shit, I can't have you say that.

Michael: No, you need to be sturdy and reliable and flexible and honest. I talk about being an honest performer, and how important it is to really, again, nobody does it alone. So to have networks of people in relationships that hold you accountable, but more importantly, you need to first value the difficult process of being honest.

[00:22:56] Vivo Barefoot Ad

Darin: I hate shoes. My feet have been liberated and have been grounded back to the earth for a long time. I love running around barefoot, but I do have to wear shoes. So when I do, I want my feet to be free, and Vivobarefoot is my number one go-to. And they're also on a mission to make the most sustainable footwear, perfect for human movement, and planetary health. They're made from sustainably sourced, recycled material. Vivobarefoot's footwear is designed to help you fulfill your supernatural potential. Each shoe is made wide to provide stability, thin to enable you to feel more and flexible to help build your natural strength. And they have designs from adults, children, and every activity from hiking to training to everyday footwear, and 100 days of a free trial. And if you don't like them, you can send them back and get your money back. How incredible is that? So, if you're looking to upgrade your shoe game and want to buy



from a company with yours and the planet's best interest in mind, Vivo is my number one choice, period. I spent time with them. I have learned from them. And they're offering to all of you, my listeners, 20% off. If you head to vivobarefoot.com/darinolien and use the promo code, `darin20`, `D-A-R-I-N-2-0`, and you will get that 20% discount. We also will have this link in the show notes. So liberate your feet, Vivobarefoot.

[00:25:05] Honesty and confidence

Darin: I want to dive into honesty because I really, really value that radical honesty ability to have because the nurturing of relationships and everything. I definitely want to talk to you in depth about that.

Michael: Because it's directly related to confidence and if you can't fake it and be honest. The credible self talk comes from-- Let me give you an example but in a minute. Critical self talk comes from when you've done hard things, and you earn the right to say, I can do hard things and that's a true statement, that's an honest statement. Then we just need to be really clear that the language that we choose impacts our physiological state and our emotional state. So let's be great with the language that we choose that is anchored in hard things. That means if that's that's the case, just like if we have any goal, we got to back into it and say, what are the capabilities I need to do this hard goal? I need to kind of push myself into the uncomfortable edge on a regular basis and when it is hard, that's my opportunity to see if do I have the psychology to say I do hard things. Here's the example. I was working with a cage fighter in the UFC. He's already won a couple of championships. He's highly skilled. I said, "What does it sound like in your head when it's good?" He kind of pushes his chair back a little bit, and he looks at me and he's like, "There's nothing. There's nothing in there. It's just so fluid." I was like, "Okay, right. Flow state, the zone, right." He's like, "Yeah." I said, "Well, when you're right underneath of that, it's good to be in you. You're not in that kind of magical space. What's going on in your head?" And he says, "I'm a tough motherfucker." That's his quote, sorry for the cursing. So he says, "I'm a tough MF." I said, "Can you back it up?" He looks at me, his traps are coming out of his- you know.

Darin: You're about this close.

Michael: Now he's leaning forward. He's pulled backward and now he's leaning forward and he says, "I whoop my dad's ass when I was 14. I'm a tough MF-er dude. I go, okay. So I'm feeling kind of like, can we take it a step further, and I look at him and I go, "You got anything else?" He says, "My last fight. It was the endgame position. I was being choked out. I stayed in it. I broke the chokehold. I put him on my back. I dragged them across the cage. I dumped him and I finished him. Dude, I'm telling you, I was feeling really kind of courageous." And I said, "You got anything else?" He says, "If someone were to ask me one more fucking question, I might choke them out, too."

Darin: Wow.



Michael: So all intensity, all fun included in this but that's the idea, can you double click or triple click underneath any statement that you say to yourself and have it be true? A lot of people can single click, but then can you double and triple click to make it true? That's the practice. So if folks in your community want to get better at the way that they have a relationship with themselves, then what I'm about to suggest sounds so academic, it sounds so like a fifth grader's experience but I'm telling you, something happens when you do it this way, and there's good science that will support it. Do an index of the statements that you make that are epic, like I'm a tough MF-er was perfect for him, he's a cage fighter. What are the ones for you, like I'm graceful, I love people, I am an explorer, or whatever? You say some stuff that is true for you at your very best and then you write three things that give you the right to say that. Then you need to practice that so it becomes very familiar and very automatic. That is the practice of confidence. That's one of the practices of confidence.

Darin: Does that double-clicking, my senses, it has an ability to percolate up the genesis of where that's coming from, and do you find that you see compensatory actions that were maybe that is made up for a lack over here or an abuse that happened? Not to go too far down that but when someone may be other than him says, puffs his chest and go, I'm a strong motherfucker, you double click a couple of times, the next thing I know, he has zero confidence, he was crushed by his father, he's just built up this facade and maybe worked his ass off and done steroid, whatever the story is. Do you find that that is because obviously you're working with top-level people and they have to have a high level of confidence? Unpack that a little bit because maybe when people are double clicking, they aren't getting hit with like, is it real confidence or is this making up for a lack that I'm dealing with?

[00:30:00] Skills and self-discovery

Michael: I love this because this is where skills and self-discovery, those two basic frameworks we talked about earlier, start to work together, or maybe not if you don't really do the investigation here. Let's start at the top, which is the half of one-percenters. Those really rare frontier pushing individuals. I would even be sloppy to say something like the top, let's say, 3% to 5% would probably fall in this category is that there's something that they're working from that is usually not very healthy. I'll tell you another interesting story to summarize the dark side of being the best. It doesn't have to be this way. We didn't understand the intersection between high-performance/potential and wellness. We didn't understand it well enough over from a historical standpoint. We are understanding it now. It's the intersection that I love. I feel like I've got sometimes like two semi trucks pulling in opposite directions. It's the intersection I love being at because it is completely possible to be your very best, potentially be best, but your very best, and have a sense of deep wellness. That is possible. Here's the story. This was like really early in my career, a woman who had a young gymnasts. She was about nine years old, eight or nine years old, and she was one of the top gymnasts in America, which is a big deal. America's internationally very skilled with gymnastics. She comes in and she says, my daughter's having a hard time. The three of us sit down. We had a nice conversation, brilliant, beautiful, spirited, eight or nine-year-old girl. After about 15 minutes, I said, "Hey, honey, can you go out in the next room? Can you draw a quick little picture? I just needed some time with mom," because it was



obvious this kid has OCD. That's clear as can be. I said, "Hey, mom, this is pretty simple, actually. And I'm really excited because your daughter, it's very clear, I'd like to do some more testing but she's got OCD, obsessive-compulsive disorder." Mom goes, "Oh, okay." I said, "Here's the thing though. We can work from good science and help with OCD but she might not work as hard as she is now because part of her training is actually OCD. So if we take away the OCD, the volume and intensity of her training goes down by like 60%. So she's now going to train at the same volume as every normal nine year old." Mom goes, "Goodness, thank you so much," and she's packing up her bag. I said, "Well, wait. I want to spend a little bit more time." She's like, "No, no, I think we're okay." Listen, that kid, I don't know what happened but that is a heartbreaking story of the family dynamics that are often at play. Something like that about the dad that says to the tough guy like, don't be a weak, whatever, and embarrasses him until he finally says to himself at some point, I'll never show weakness. Well, let's talk about you at 35.

Darin: So there's a healthy way to deal because you know more than ever, more than anyone that when life presents struggle, challenges, pain, you can be a victim to that or that could be a hell of an opportunity, and or something in between. So there's a sense of like, what pops in my head is resiliency. So the skill of being hit with another challenge, that's life. Then developing that skill of overcoming and seeing what? You're either going to see that this is happening to me, and I'm being affected by it, and it's drawing me down, or I am understanding it as it presents this opportunity, and I'm extracting like a good tea with the hot liquid. I'm extracting the compounds that are ultimately benefiting me. I think for me over the years because I wasn't lacking love from my parents. I was definitely challenged as a kid. I developed a work ethic that when presented with challenges, I'm not going to hang out long like woe is me. I'm going to find the reason and the ability to click over and to use it to my benefit. I'm assuming that that can be developed.

Michael: You're talking about is a couple of things that are really deep actually. I'll get back to the surface of things, but the deep part of change is, it's a really deep question like what is changing? I would go so far to say that the part of you that was three, and I don't know how old you are, let's say 33, probably more like 43 or 53.

Darin: I'm 50.

Michael: Yeah, obviously, you look great. So what are we changing because the part of you that was always part of you is quite eternal. We don't know, then we fold in a belief system about what the inner life is really about from a spiritual standpoint. There's 11 world religions that are trying to sort out what the afterlife is and what the right code of conduct is while we're here. But when you really get deep to a meditative process, you go, what am I changing because that core part of me is the same bone. Then what I'm changing are things that are kind of external to me. Here's an easy example, you take a block of gold, and then you melt it and form it into a spoon, let's say or whatever, golden spoon, okay? That's for you, the golden spoon. So the form changed, but the essence of the material didn't change. That's like the essence of our soul. I've used that word with quotes around it, but the essence of our truest self is formless. So what are we changing? We're changing the way we think, and the way we behave, and the way we



interpret information, and the way we contort ourselves, or influence ourselves into particular environments. That's awesome. I think if you can get in a deep level about the beauty of your inner experience is something quite magical that even science and all 11 World Religions have a sense of, it's mystical. It's amazing. Part of the practice of mindfulness is to get down into that stuff, like who am I and what am I?

Darin: Obviously, this is super deep but the access point to this idea is I think one of the most valuable things that we can do because we're talking about self investigation. It's like all of the religions, people are pointing to it and they've always been pointing to it and can anyone ever really take you there? It's your spaceship, you got to figure it out. The only way to really figure it out is stopping and investigating the self because I think that the education of understanding self is unique.

Michael: Totally unique to you. Like you said, Darin, you can adopt some lessons from somebody else but then it's not quite pure. It's not quite honest unless you really deeply understand. This is like the Catholic church was speaking in Latin for so long, like so I didn't speak Latin, what am I really doing here? So we don't need to go down that kind of path there. But my point is that I want to bring it back to is being an honest human. It means investigate your spaceship, how does your spaceship work to mix metaphors here. Then the other idea that you were eloquently describing was about resilience. I'm actually more interested in agility than resilience. Resilience is being able to bounce back or bounce forward from a hard time. I love the concept of agility.

[00:38:20] How does your spaceship work?

Michael: Physical agility is like you can put your foot in the ground, pivot and adjust and keep moving forward. Psychological agility is the same thing. When there's something difficult to your point, like extracting from the challenge, I want to metaphorically put my foot in the ground. Psychologically, what that means is, I want to be fully present with the challenge. Then I want to work from an aikido standpoint with the challenge and be able to move forward towards my purpose, towards the either micro mission of that moment, or the larger purpose of my life. To do that, it requires some psychological skills. It also requires some clarity of what is my purpose. So we don't have purpose, we don't have a true north, it's really hard when the weather gets funky, and the tides leaving. I think what happened for the pandemic is the tide rolled out and psychologically, people were not wearing clothes.

Darin: Now more than ever. So let's double down. One could argue we're given this space we've never been given in all of humanity, at the same time, because we've had a stopping of a safety net or at least an understanding of reality that we've had for as long as we've been alive, and that level of comfort no longer is stable. So if you don't have any practice of investigating yourself, your own agility, you hardly have any agility, I can't imagine the mental health issues that are happening as a result of all of these things that are going on.

Michael: Darin, I don't know how, and I say this with the deepest humility and compassion. 25 years ago, when my mentor tapped me on the shoulder, he was like, "You need to sit down and



meditate, dude." I say this like I don't know what I would have done this last year if I didn't have a practice of being honest and exploring and enjoying how hard that exploring is so that I can be more present with people and more present when I'm not sitting down on the pillow so to speak. I have incredible compassion for how hard this has been for people. If your community is strong and if there are folks that are like skeptics, they're a bit fidgety, they're a little like, I don't know about this mumbo jumbo kind of meditation stuff, I see me in that narrative. I'm so stoked that I had somebody that kicked my ass a little bit when I was a bit younger and he said, "You want to figure some stuff out because you're not gonna figure it out the way you're doing it." There's an old saying in sport, which I know you're familiar with, is "what got you here is not going to get you there," so what are you gonna let go of?

Darin: It's the letting go or it's been stripped away and you have to acknowledge that it has in order to go, we need to develop new tools for a new world and/or we need to develop new tools for the world that we want to create as a result, the shaky world that's being shaken because that's the thing. Again, I think the opportunity here is, for me, I'll just say this, the way I'm getting through this, I'm getting hit just like everyone else. I'm trying to stay informed but if I stay too informed with all the crazy news that I'll be sucked down this world too. At the same time, I have awareness. I practice every day without fail since junior in college at four in the morning. It's unshakable. So that said, I'm always doing that, but I'm being shaken without a doubt. So for me, I go back to one of my skills is to be able to create, is to visualize, see it, feel it, and now I'm going after it with my blue collar Minnesota work ethic, athletic kind of mentality. I'm like, cool, who's gonna play with me? Who are my teammates? Who's gonna kick some ass?

Michael: Nobody does it alone, how about it?

Darin: Exactly.

Michael: Darin, what sport did you play?

Darin: I played college football and creating an injury so it was tough. I was a fullback. I was a 200-pound fullback, which is like 40 pounds under. I loved hitting, so I would beat guys out 40 pounds heavier than me because I could do certain things but I worked hard. I just kind of gave the coach no choice like, I got to put that guy in. But that that physics of hitting someone that hard and that big is just not gonna happen. I just did an Instagram Live with my goddaughter, she does some work with me and we're talking about habits. So she was like, I'm having a trouble. It's funny, everyone knows what to do. It's just that jumping into the action to create the new habits. What are your thoughts on that because that's a trillion dollar piano?

Michael: I think you're right on it. With the power of habits, it's actually quite simple. If you want to upgrade any kind of change in your life, then it's going to involve some sort of habit formation because there's no silver bullets. So understand the science of it is quite simple, and then putting into practice. Here are couple of ways that people can do it, and just for fun is that we built all of this habit formation stuff into-- we took all the best practices that we're doing on the frontier from a psychological perspective and put it into an eight-hour course. At least get the foundational stuff.



[00:44:04] The power of forming habits

Michael: We talked about it in the training is that, here's a couple of ways that you can get better at it. The first thing to do is be very clear about why you want to make these changes. Then write it down because it starts to kind of get weird in our heads and we remember things in different ways. So write it down and put it somewhere about why you're wanting to make this change. If you can frame it in a way that is positive, meaning that I don't want to look sloppy, and my clothes are negative. I want to feel healthy. I want to lift my kids into the car. I want to be able to whatever, whatever. It's what you want to do, not what you don't want to do. Then put that somewhere where it's a reminder and it has to be meaningful to you. It's a nice little kind of external cue that I'm doing this thing because of that. It's a moment to be honest again. Let's say that the thing you want to do is run more often, you want to get in shape and you're gonna use running as your thing. So when you take your shoes and you put them by the door the night before. This is like planning. There's a planning part of this. Now here's the part of the neurobiology of habit formation. You're just putting your shoes up, celebrate like a wild person. Look at me, I'm putting my shoes up, I'm gonna kick ass tomorrow, that right, 6 AM, here we go, 8 AM, I'm getting my stuff done, this is the night before still. My wife is so funny, she used to look at me like, there he goes again trying to get a new habit going, whatever it might be. Because then you're putting some good vibes together with the thing that you want to do and it's gonna carry a momentum when it's harder. So that is a simple little bit to do. Then when you're writing things down to keep track, that helps as well. There's more science to it, triggers, and rewards, and how to manipulate all those, but that's just the fun one. When you actually do anything that's getting you closer, celebrate.

Darin: That's a really good thing, easy for everyone. Literally, you have a habit right now, everyone's thinking of one. I really want to do this, let's do that. Everyone set yourself up, celebrate, sing, enjoy, and then get that new habit launched. So that's another one. Dude, I want to have you on again. We can go down so many rabbit holes. I want to do something with you too, by the way. I'm just gonna put that out there. I want you and I to do something in the world together.

Michael: It's too fun to hang with you. I appreciate how you move through the world, and I really love it, so I'd be honored to do something with you.

Darin: Thank you, man. We'll figure it out. We'll let it pop in. How can people follow you, find you, websites, all of that stuff.

Michael: The best hub is findingmastery.net and it's the name of our podcast, Finding Mastery. On the website, you can get a feel for just about everything. I'm enjoying social media, LinkedIn as well as Instagram, it's @michaelgervais and it's spelled G-E-R-V-A-I-S but you can find everything on findingmatery.net.

Darin: Such a pleasure, man.

Michael: Cool, very cool. Keep kicking ass.



Darin: You too, man. I can't wait until next time.

[00:47:18] Podcast Outro

Darin: What a fantastic episode. So tell me, what is one thing you got out of today's conversation? If this episode struck a chord with you and you want to dive a little deeper into my other conversations with incredible guests, you can head over to my website, darinolien.com for more episodes and in-depth articles. Keep diving my friends. Keep diving.