

Rebellious Wellness ^{over} 50

Ben Ahrens



Episode 40: How to Retrain Your Brain to Free You from Brain Fog, Pain, and More... with Ben Ahrens

[00:00:00]

[00:00:00] **Gregory Anne:** Welcome back everybody, today, we're going to geek out on the brain and all the great new hopeful things that Ben Ahrens, my guest today, is going to bring our way when it comes to neuroplasticity. I love those kinds of words, and he's going to tell us what that means.

[00:00:16] Ben welcome. Thank you so much for being with us.

[00:00:19] **Ben Ahrens:** Yeah, thank you so much for having me. It's a real pleasure to be here. And like you mentioned today, we're going to talk about neuroplasticity and I guess I'll start with just giving you a little definition of what

that is, and then we can get into, I guess, my, my sort of inroad, how I got involved in it. Neuroplasticity is essentially the brain's ability to adapt its structure and its function,

[00:00:41] to continuously change itself. And this is something that was really groundbreaking in the last decade, because prior to the 1970s and even eighties, it was thought that the brain was kind of set from birth, wired up in a certain way and was just declining from there. We had a set number of brain cells and we would use them up as we went through our lives. And what this discovery of neuroplasticity

[00:01:08] really showed. Was that not only is that completely false, not only are we actually generating new brain cells all throughout our lives, but we're also creating and forming new synaptic connections. And in retrospect, I'll say, this is actually in some ways, obvious to think about because we have the ability to learn new skills.

[00:01:28] We can learn to juggle. We can learn to ride a bike and we can learn to do things at any age in life. And the acquisition of any new skill requires new connections to be formed in the brain. So when we talk about neuroplasticity, we're really talking about this process. It's a two-fold process where old neuropathways can be pruned away and new ones can be formed.

[00:01:53] So this would be akin to breaking old habits, breaking old responses, breaking old patterns, and even ways [00:02:00] of thinking and feeling in the body and then forming new ones that are more advantageous to health or anything that we ultimately want to accomplish.

[00:02:09] **Gregory Anne:** That was a great definition. You clearly know your subject

[00:02:11] well. And I want to take that a little bit further, so it's not just about habits. It's about our health. . And I want to tell the audience in a minute why you know so much about this, but also learning to be more adaptable to change things going on in the brain can actually make a difference in how we feel every day in long-term suffering from conditions and things yeah?

[00:02:34] **Ben Ahrens:** Absolutely. And it's interesting that you mentioned habits because this is a field that I've studied very much in depth. When I lived in Manhattan, I was a group organizer for a group called Habit Design and Quantified Self, which are these organizations that have really grown over the years. But they're all about looking at our day-to-day habits and the deeper I got into studying this, the more I realized that

[00:02:57] habits are not just those things that we do consciously, right? Those things that we do, like going to the gym or not going to the gym or eating healthy or not eating healthy. This concept of a habit can also spread out to include subconscious behaviors and responses that happen in the body.

[00:03:16] So an example would be that if you encounter a challenging situation say, a difficult conversation, now you might be in the habit of holding your breath or even holding subtle tension in your muscles. Now that's not necessarily something that we typically think of as a habit, but it really is a bodily response.

[00:03:35] So habits are really a wide spectrum. To get at the point that you just made, these kinds of habits or responses or reactions, can take place and form in the body. And they're actually learned throughout our lifetime. Some of these habits, like the one I mentioned, for example, holding tension in the muscles or breathing shallow, one could

[00:03:56] Imagine how, if this went on for a long period of time, and this [00:04:00] became a default state, that that could lead to secondary issues, tension, elevation of inflammation from holding onto that tension, inability or difficulty to release tension and to relax the body. We know that relaxed state is a regenerative state.

[00:04:15] So you can see how these simple things can have these cascading effects that impact how we feel and function on so many different levels.

[00:04:24] **Gregory Anne:** How did you come to be such an expert on neuroplasticity and how to heal yourself by knowing more about your brain?

[00:04:33] **Ben Ahrens:** Yeah, well, I was always really fascinated with the body, the human mind, how the body could change. Even right from high school, as kind of a scrawny kid,

[00:04:42] I got fascinated with this idea of lifting weights and being able to go from having an idea in my head to taking some physical actions like exercising, and then being able to get a actual response in my body to see my body change. And this was something that I carried with me through college. I worked as a trainer and a physical therapist helping athletes on the football team.

[00:05:05] And beyond that I was starting to form this career for myself in health and wellness. And then possibly the most embarrassing thing happened for anyone who is trying to go out and advocate health: I completely lost my health. As I mentioned to you, Greg, when we just started this conversation, I grew up on the east end of long island, which is a place where

[00:05:26] unfortunately ridden with ticks and Lyme disease is a common issue out here. And at age 25, I found my health just spiraling down and it was an unfortunately common scenario for a lot of late stage Lyme patients where they're experiencing all of these different symptoms. So for me, it was brain fog, migrating pains, fibromyalgia, arthritis, uh, that was actually measured.

[00:05:51] I had bone on bone arthritis in my knees and elbows. Uh,

[00:05:56] **Gregory Anne:** twenty-five years old. Bone on bone.

[00:05:58] **Ben Ahrens:** Yeah, not the place I want it to be at age [00:06:00] 25. This physical and cognitive decline without an apparent answer and without a clear cause was not only confusing, disheartening, frightening, but also in its own way, a little bit fascinating.

[00:06:14] So I launched deep into this world to figure out what was really causing this. And what I came to realize is that, in modern medicine, we tend to think that there is an external cause. So for instance, an infection comes into the body or we come in contact with something negative in the environment and it has a certain effect on us and that's just the way it is.

[00:06:40] And then we tend to treat according to that. So if it's a bacterial infection, Antibiotics is the answer, kill the bacteria and then the symptoms should go away. But of course we know that that's not the case and it certainly wasn't the case for me. I was on antibiotics for about three years and just kept declining and it really actually didn't change the symptoms. If anything, I was getting worse. So I turned to some additional research to figure out not just what might be causing this, but why my body is responding in these ways. And in the process of this research, I found that. There are many people out there who get Lyme, but don't necessarily get Lyme disease.

[00:07:20] That's to say they don't necessarily get as sick as I did. The same way that there are many people out there who can walk through a perfume aisle and not experience any symptoms. And yet someone with multiple chemical sensitivities can experience extreme symptoms from that. Or the same way that someone can be allergic to peanuts.

[00:07:38] And another person can eat the exact same peanuts from the same source and be fine. So it started to kind of awaken this new question in my mind. It can't just be as simple as what's coming at us from the environment, there has to be this other component to health and to healing, which is how and why our body responds.

[00:07:57] And as it turns out, [00:08:00] that is really regulated by the brain and the nervous system. And particularly this region of the brain known as the limbic system. And that's something I can get into a little bit more. Yeah.

[00:08:11] **Gregory Anne:** Is the limbic system where the people refer to the reptilian brain, the prehistoric part of our brain?

[00:08:17] **Ben Ahrens:** Exactly. So the limbic system sits on top of the brainstem and it's surrounded by the cortex, which is that, you know, more bulbous part of the brain that is responsible for rational decision-making, but there's limbic system, one of the first parts of the brain to form. It is essentially formed to do one thing really well and that's protect you.

[00:08:38] So its main job is to detect threats and then to alert your body to those threats. Now as I started to go down this journey myself, the key thing that I learned is that along with this idea of neuroplasticity and the brain, you know, being able to change. Neuroplasticity really works in two ways. On the downside

[00:09:01] it can change and it can, what we call, maladapt. Meaning it can adapt to something that's actually not necessarily life-threatening but it can respond in ways or prompt your body to respond in ways as if that thing is life threatening. So this is where peanut allergy or sensitivity to chemical or wifi would be a good example.

[00:09:22] It's not to say that the aggressor isn't real and doesn't potentially have downsides. Absolutely. You know, some things do, but sometimes our brain and body can mount a response that's disproportional, that's no longer appropriate given the level of threat.

[00:09:41] **Gregory Anne:** That's so interesting.

[00:09:42] What I'm fascinated too about is there are so many more of these over responses, right? The whole auto-immune process is more and more common, and this must be a result of what you're talking about. The body, for some reason, a heightened sense of [00:10:00] stimulation.

[00:10:00] Stress makes it more vulnerable to this kind of switch in the brain. Would that be accurate?

[00:10:07] **Ben Ahrens:** That's exactly right. Yeah. The brain can essentially become almost stuck in this fight or flight mode. And like you mentioned, with auto-immune conditions where the body is mounting antibodies and producing a

lot of inflammation, in reference to its own tissue in some instances. This is really happening because of this elevated threat detection and response.

[00:10:28] And essentially when it comes back to neuroplasticity, what's happened in the brain, is that this region called the limbic system has taken certain things classified them as threatening when in fact they're benign. And so it's not just that we have to rid ourselves or rid our environments of these potential aggressors, although that might not be a bad idea for a short period of time.

[00:10:52] We certainly want to reduce and lighten the load of things that are triggering us, but ultimately in order to not just perpetually manage the condition that we're in, but to actually heal from it. I've found that almost essential for most people to reset and retune this limbic system to turn down that stress response and to retrain the brain effectively,

[00:11:15] so that, that limbic system starts to reclassify those things from threatening to actually non-threatening. Then the body never mounts the inflammatory response in the first place. Last thing I'll say here. So many times and so much energy and time is spent chasing symptoms, right? Chasing the effects of inflammation in the body.

[00:11:37] When, imagine if we could actually undo the root cause. There's this great quote from Einstein that I love, he says, it's not about finding a solution, but undoing the basis of the problem. And I think that really sums it up, what we're doing here on this fundamental level, when we're retraining the brain and tuning down the limbic response is that it's not about [00:12:00] finding the solution to address every symptom and thing that we experienced in that way.

[00:12:05] It's much more about undoing the basis of the problem so that those symptoms never arise in the first place.

[00:12:13] **Gregory Anne:** And you discovered through your research and you started, you took one breath. I remember one of your Ted talks, you said it started with one breath. You developed a system for yourself, which now has become a program that other people can participate in.

[00:12:29] Is that right?

[00:12:31] **Ben Ahrens:** Correct.

[00:12:31] Yeah. So as I was learning about this neuroplasticity and I turned to some research in neurocognitive rehab. I took a course at the time. I was so brain

fogged I couldn't even read. So I turned to, podcasts were sort of just coming of age and UC Berkeley was putting 100 and 200 level courses of theirs on podcasts.

[00:12:49] And I took a course in neuro-cognitive rehab and I listened to all of these inspiring stories about how stroke victims and people who had suffered brain injuries were regaining the use of limbs that they had lost and regaining certain functions that had seemed to go away. And that was happening because the brain was actually rewiring itself to reconnect with these different parts of the body.

[00:13:13] And so. I didn't know exactly what I was doing, but I sort of threw the kitchen sink at it. I tried a lot of different things. I tried breaking routines, patterns. And the one thing that I found consistently worked was to just create a pause and change my response in the most subtle ways. So like I mentioned in my Ted talk that I gave the simplest thing that I could think of, that I still had access to in that fatigued state was my breath.

[00:13:40] And of course this isn't unique to me. This is what a lot of meditators talk about and people now with breath work, talk about, but that breath is something that we always have with us. And whenever I found myself in this elevated flustered state, I would simply make an agreement with myself that I would take a pause and I would [00:14:00] take one deep breath, just one conscious deep breath.

[00:14:03] And like I said, if there was nothing else that I could do during the day, this would be that one thing. And we know from very famous psychologist Victor Frankl says that between stimulus and response, there's a space. And if we can get in that space and choose a new response, and all we need is a split second, then we can actually start to retrain the brain.

[00:14:27] We can start to retrain the body. And so I didn't realize that this is what I was doing at the time, but by simply taking that breath instead of continuing that flustered state, continuing to perpetuate that inflammation throughout my body, by taking that breath and taking a step back, I was retraining my nervous system to actually start to calm down.

[00:14:47] And that gave me a little bit of hope that this was working. I started to actually experience some neurocognitive benefits, a little bit of decline in brain fog, a little bit more energy now in my body because there wasn't so much of that energy that was being applied to just fight or flight. So I started to expand that out to a small morning routine.

[00:15:08] And I can share with you these kind of three fundamentals that I learned that apply. So we've now expanded it into this five step process. And this program

that you mentioned that really helps people apply this on a daily basis. And I very much do view this as exercise to retrain the brain, but the basic three things that need to happen are number one, become aware of when you may be in this triggered fight or flight.

[00:15:33] Number two is to interrupt the pattern. Now that's what I did with the one deep breath. We have even a little bit more sophisticated ways of doing it now that involve the body and the somatic experience of it. And then the third one is to reinforce a new neural pathway. So it's to choose and insert a new response.

[00:15:53] And then finally, when I say reinforce it, I mean to actually do something to celebrate the fact that you [00:16:00] caught yourself and changed it, which is huge. It might seem incredibly insignificant to do something like take one deep breath or do one small thing. But it's actually huge because you've retrained this response mechanism.

[00:16:14] And I like to say that every time you do this little thing or do something different than you previously have, it's like casting a vote for the new person that you are. And this is not just something that we have to get right one time or we fail at it. It's step-by-step process. And every time you do it, you can fail it at a hundred times a day.

[00:16:35] I still do myself, but if you get it right a little bit more often, if you cast more votes for that future self, that healthier self, that calmer self, then that will become the new default state. It's not a question of if, it's just a matter of time and conditioning.

[00:16:53] **Gregory Anne:** Let's talk about who this rewiring of the brain could be for.

[00:16:58] You're talking to an audience of women who are at midlife or beyond. You're a younger man. You don't have to have Lyme disease. You don't have to have had anything. You talk about post COVID syndrome, states of emotional wellbeing or not from COVID and from all kinds of life. So who is this? Who should be interested in this idea of rewiring the brain?

[00:17:23] **Ben Ahrens:** Yeah, really good question. So, first thing I'll say is that the really inspiring thing about neuro-plasticity is that it does not distinguish or discriminate between age or gender or really anything or condition. , The brain and every individual is absolutely primed for adaptation and for change

[00:17:41] at any age. We have a neuroscientist on our team who likes to say that the brain is indefatigably plastic, meaning they have yet to have found any limit to

how the brain can change. So, to answer your question of who this might be for. I really think that it's for anyone [00:18:00] who is trying to get back to that feeling like themselves again. Now there's any number of different things in, in life.

[00:18:07] And certainly in our present day circumstances that can, what I call, throw us for a loop or pull us off of that feeling like, you know, I just don't feel like myself anymore. Or I certainly remember that feeling myself. I felt like kind of a shadow of myself where I saw myself, felt myself at a distance and

[00:18:25] the thing about the neuro-plasticity training that we do is that it's really about systematically just identifying these negative neural feedback loops that are taking place and then removing them. So that health, which I really view as the natural state, can resume. I met this wise doctor, he used to say that the goal of a doctor should not be to perpetually manage their patients, but rather to restore their own ability to self-manage.

[00:18:55] And so with this type of approach, really what we're doing here is restoring. Self-management, restoring that feeling like you again. I really believe that that is the natural state. So whether it's a persistent anxiety or depression or an infection like Lyme disease or COVID, or something that's gone on beyond that, like a post viral fatigue syndrome, something persisted beyond just the initial infection. These are all things that have in some way, thrown us for a loop. Effectively what's happening in the brain or what we think is happening, what research now suggests is happening in the limbic system, is that these two different factors can couple together to form a neurological association.

[00:19:40] So for instance, with me, Lyme disease, many people in the Northeast get Lyme disease. One Dr. Thomas Raul mentioned that as many as 40% of people in some regions of the Northeast, like Rhode Island, Massachusetts, get the Lyme bacteria, have exposure to Lyme, but less than 2% of them has what he would call Lyme [00:20:00] disease.

[00:20:00] That's to say where they become actually symptomatic. So when there is this persistent fatigue or this persistence in symptoms, whether from COVID or Lyme disease, there's now really research to suggest that when time of infection coincides with a stressful period in life, where perhaps the limbic system is already on high alert.

[00:20:24] And now this infection comes in, these two things combine to create a conditioned association in the brain where in the future, if you become stressed out, all of a sudden the body and the brain are going to return to that pre-programmed way. For instance, if you know, you can create these associations yourself, if you, let's say have a certain sense memory is a good example. If you

had a bad experience at a day camp or something, and every time you smell this Cedar wood, where it was like the smell of that bunk, and you remember the kid being mean to you or something, you might get this triggering of emotions and tension in the system because of that sense memory.

[00:21:03] So the same thing is happening here. If you become stressed out or return to that state that you were in, when you initially got the infection, the brain and the body can have this memory well, where they will actually trigger the release of inflammatory cytokines and a lot of the same symptoms that you experienced when you were initially ill.

[00:21:22] And of course this can actually lead to secondary ailments or the immune system sort of pulling resources away from things like regeneration. So that the Lyme and things like that, bacteria, or even COVID, it essentially makes it a more hospitable environment for these pathogens, for these bacterias and viruses and a slightly less hospitable environment for ourselves.

[00:21:48] **Gregory Anne:** Did you find in all of your research that lifestyle habits can exacerbate the negative and or help with rewiring the brain?

[00:21:56] **Ben Ahrens:** Absolutely. Yeah. So this is where I really agree with [00:22:00] the kind of European biological model of health, which is for anyone that doesn't know this is sort of the barrel analogy.

[00:22:06] And have you heard of this yourself?

[00:22:08] **Gregory Anne:** I have not

[00:22:10] **Ben Ahrens:** Okay. So the idea is that you think of a barrel, right? This barrel is a certain capacity that we all have capacity for, for trauma, for toxins, for the school of hard knocks, for life experience, you name it. This barrel can start to fill up and that's all well and good because we also have mechanisms in place for letting go, for detoxification, for regeneration. But essentially,

[00:22:37] This barrel can get filled with sorta like the lifestyle things you're talking about. We can handle a certain amount. We, we're designed, our bodies are very resilient. And one of the things that we talked about in the program is how we all have this notion that stress is deleterious, stress is

[00:22:53] negative. Stress in and of itself is not necessarily a bad thing. Stress is actually something that can strengthen us. There's a great book by Nassim Nicholas Taleb called Anti Fragile, where he talks about how the human body and human

organism, animals as well, are actually one of these rare things on the planet that gain from disorder, that gain from stress.

[00:23:16] So when we're exposed to stress in these small doses it can actually make us stronger, fitter healthier. It's only when that level of stress exceeds that sort of barrel that we have, exceeds our current capabilities, that we find ourselves in distress. So according to that barrel analogy, it would be like if all of these different things, toxins from food, negative thoughts, stress, traumas, get to a certain point

[00:23:42] that level of liquid will start to overflow the top of the barrel. And that's where we experience symptoms. So the way that we want to deal with that, is mitigation is a huge thing. You know, like you mentioned, these lifestyle factors is becoming aware of [00:24:00] what these things are for us that fill up our barrel.

[00:24:02] And it really is different for different people. Some people can eat tons of processed foods and really feel nothing from it, but maybe they haven't had the stressors or the childhood traumas or the other things that are filling up someone else's barrel. So really knowing ourselves and knowing kind of how full that that level is, is one side of the equation.

[00:24:22] And the other side is I believe getting us back to that state of sympathetic or parasympathetic response, which is our rest and digest place where we can recover, where our bodies are naturally primed for detoxification. And we can start to reduce and eliminate that burden that may have built up through different lifestyle factors over time.

[00:24:44] **Gregory Anne:** So interesting. Now, do you do any work with children? Have you tried this program with them?

[00:24:48] **Ben Ahrens:** No, we haven't done work with children, although, just in my own experience, working with a lot of kids, in the past, I used to run a surf camp out here in Long Island, I will say that I think that children are going to be very receptive to this type of stuff because they have great imaginations.

[00:25:06] They can let things go much quicker than we do. They don't have the same level of metacognition, of narrative and story creation that can sometimes lock certain energies and reactions in place. I would venture to guess that they would be even that much more receptive in the same way that their brains are in a way more receptive to learning languages, things like that.

[00:25:27] **Gregory Anne:** Let's focus on my brain-foggy midlife women and past midlife, brain fog seems to come with some people, not all it doesn't necessarily

result from something we can pinpoint. Hormones yes, when they're in flux, same as when we were, you know, kids, teenagers that kind of hormone does things in the brain. But this brain fog may seem like it's just what happens.

[00:25:53] And you've read my website, you know, I hate when people say at your age, this is what happens at your age. So I don't want to say that there's any age that brain fog [00:26:00] should occur or does occur for everybody, but is it possible that working to retrain the brain could eliminate some of this brain fog?

[00:26:08] **Ben Ahrens:** Absolutely it can for sure. Just to your point, I remember when I was 29 and still seeing some doctors, getting my health back, I would get responses like, well, you're not getting any younger when it came to asking questions about why are my joints feeling so creaky?

[00:26:23] Why is my brain so fogged? You know? Yeah. Doctors at that age would say you're not getting younger. It's just something that you kind of have to refuse to believe. And I'm with you 100% that aging is a natural process but these things that we've kind of chalked up to and written off as the human condition, I think are not even close to that. I think our natural state is to age gracefully, to be clear, to be physically active, and to be healthy. And when it comes to these, you know, like you said, and kind of like we described with that barrel analogy, the challenge can sometimes be tracing these strange symptoms, like brain fog, back to any root cause.

[00:27:06] And I believe that's because there may not be a physical cause that's still present. I think it has much more to do with the processing of the brain and how the brain processes information. And I think the very first step to starting to change that, is number one, believing that you can, knowing this is not the absolute state.

[00:27:30] This is actually an altered state that when you're experiencing ill health brain fog at any age, these are altered states of being and altered states of consciousness. The real state, the default state is clarity, hope. It's optimism. It's feeling healthy inside and out.

[00:27:49] **Gregory Anne:** Thank you for that. We all have now a reason to celebrate the possibility of not feeling so foggy. The name of your company. It's the name of your website and your program is [00:28:00] re R E dash origin. Why that name?

[00:28:04] **Ben Ahrens:** Yeah. So with that name Re-Origin we're really trying to evoke this feeling that, like I said, in the beginning, I myself was trying to get back to myself to return to this, this essence, this sort of immovable sense of self that's always there, but we just sometimes lose connection with it.

[00:28:26] I think this is kind of the through line of this conversation here and something that's so fundamental to human beings is that again, our natural state is to be calm, it's to be happy, it's to be healthy. Health, happiness, clarity of thought, clarity of mind. These are not things that we have to go out and gather and impose or force on the brain and on the body or through coercion or manipulation.

[00:28:53] The natural states that we will return to that I believe every human on the planet has the capacity to resume and experience when the conditions permit. And what will allow for those conditions to flourish is the elimination of these old pathways that have been pulling us off path, what we call these old negative loops or vicious cycles that can self perpetuate.

[00:29:17] But when we can identify these loops, not even necessarily what caused them or the exact factors, but just what's taking place in the brain in the body. And we have a strategy for intervening. Then the place that we naturally settle too, is that place that I just like to think of as myself again.

[00:29:37] So with Re-Origin, it's really about returning to the sense of self that's always been there, but that just like the clouds cover the sun, we sometimes lose touch with it.

[00:29:49] **Gregory Anne:** Re origin. Now the course Re-Origin is available all the time. Or do you run it at certain times?

[00:29:56] **Ben Ahrens:** Good question. Yeah. So Re-Origing really consists of [00:30:00] these three components.

[00:30:01] One of them is the training course. This is an online video program that's streaming, it's always available. People can sign up anytime and get access to it right away. It just takes about one to two weeks to go through, to learn how to do these brain training exercises. And then it's about 30 minutes of practice per day for three to six months to retrain the limbic system to a point where it holds that wiring. Again, it's about undoing the basis of the problem. So unlike, you know, physical exercise, the kind of cool thing here is that this does not require a continuous management.

[00:30:38] Once homeostasis has been re-established in the body then one can move on from these exercises. So it's kind of in a way that the exercises that are meant to be forgotten once you get the benefits from it. Now, the second portion is the community itself. So this is where we're creating a really uplifting, empowering community. It's the thing that I really wanted or wished that I had when I was going through my own healing journey and I found myself in support groups and chats and forums online that for a moment were alleviating in that I could

commiserate with others who got it, who got what I was going through, but I sort of got to a point where I realized that what's going to get me to the next step is not staring back at the problem or trying to go deeper into figuring out what caused it.

[00:31:24] It's really going to be moving toward the solution. And so what we're doing here is really creating a community of uplifting people people who have gone through this themselves who are doing it, who are getting results, sharing their wins and really inspiring one another to keep moving forward. And then the third component is we do have weekly coaching calls that people can opt into.

[00:31:45] And this is something that we've found to be incredibly valuable and helpful for people to stay motivated. Stay on track, answer any questions about how to implement these, these exercises and basically get the best.

[00:31:57] **Gregory Anne:** That's great. And we hear on this [00:32:00] podcast over and over again about the importance of community, whether it's for healing, grieving, staying accountable, right.

[00:32:06] We have to have the right kind of community. And I love what you said, not staring back at the problem, but looking forward to what is ahead because it's easy. There's some of those online groups are just easy to, as you said, sit there and commiserate, oh, I feel bad. Or I feel worse. I had this happen. All this happened to me.

[00:32:23] And like you said, it feels good in the moment, but I've never thought that that's a really healthy place to spend much time because then you're just staying in it. Well, Ben, this has been super interesting, super fascinating. I'm very excited that anybody could benefit from rewiring their brain.

[00:32:42] We all probably have heard about neuro-plasticity and re wiring our brain. What does it mean? You have brought it back to a practical application and understanding for me and I'm sure for the listeners, what would you leave people with? What would you like to say to people who might be struggling with symptoms or feelings of anxiety and sadness or leftover something?

[00:33:05] **Ben Ahrens:** Yeah. I just want to let everyone know that change is your nature. I know what it feels like from my own experience. I really know what it feels like to feel stuck in these loops or in this place where it's difficult to see the light, it's difficult to see and experience another way.

[00:33:22] And I want to encourage people to challenge those thoughts. One of the sayings that we have in Re-Origin is it's not me. It's my brain. It's not psychological. It's neurological. I want to invite people when they're feeling that

way. When they're feeling stuck to actually consider for a moment that perhaps these thoughts are merely chemicals in the brain and body.

[00:33:47] They're not absolute truth. And in fact, the thing that is the absolute truth is that the body and the brain are always changing. There's that saying change is the only constant. [00:34:00] For me, what's interesting is that what's most important is the direction into which that change proceeds. Are we regenerating or are we degenerating?

[00:34:09] And fortunately the biggest lesson that I've learned and the biggest takeaway I hope anyone can leave here today with is that the direction of that transformation is completely in our hands. If we know what we're doing and we can have the right tools and methods and community to work with, we can start to intervene and create the change in the direction that we want.

[00:34:32] And we can create this regeneration and return to, to that full health and sense of self that we know is not gone, it's just always been there.

[00:34:42] **Gregory Anne:** Excellent. Perfect way to end the conversation. People that are listening. Ben does have a TEDx talk. Your TEDx talk is on your website, right on your homepage.

[00:34:51] I think if you want to really see what was going on for the three years that this guy struggled with a doctor not knowing what was wrong with them, it's amazing, even more so, to see where he was to here now where he is. And I thank you, Ben, for all the work you've put into helping yourself and then taking it out into the marketplace for the rest of us.

[00:35:09] Appreciate you.

[00:35:11] **Ben Ahrens:** Well, thank you Gregory. I appreciate you too. And you giving me the opportunity to have this conversation today. Yeah.

[00:35:16] **Gregory Anne:** Really happy to have you and peeps. We will be back next week with another awesome guest be well till next time.