

Bryan Johnson

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I made an algorithm that takes better care of me than I can myself.

the game I'm trying to play in life is how to be respected by the 25th century.

Scarlett 2i2 USB-6: This is 20 VC with me, Harry Stebbings and state is a show. Unlike any others. We welcome the man who is at war with death. The man who spends millions per year to reverse his own aging. Yes, there's not many options in terms of who this one could be. I'm thrilled to welcome Brian Johnson before mastering life and death.

Brian was the founder of Braintree, which he sold to PayPal for \$800 million. And he's also the founder of OSTP. Fund a fund where he invested a hundred million dollars of his own money into genomics, synthetic biology and complex systems. And now, as I said, this is a show unlike any we've done [00:01:00] before.

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Scarlett 2i2 USB: But before we dive into this incredible discussion.

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You have now arrived at your destination.

Harry: Brian, I mean, last time we spoke it was seven years ago. I look withered and old, you look like my 20 year old self when we last spoke, so it's lovely to see you again.

Bryan: It's wonderful to be here. Nice to see you.

Harry: Now, I would love to start, we were just saying beforehand, you've done many interviews, you've been asked many questions. My first one was, what are you not asked about that you would like to be asked about?

Bryan: Probably how to process new ideas. a lot of what I talk about are new frames. There are new ways of thinking and they challenge the status quo. And I

make a rule for myself that [00:04:00] whenever I encounter a new idea, I try to set up an alert in my brain that says, alert, new idea has landed.

And when a new idea lands, the rule is I can't say anything or think anything to form conclusions for some duration of time. Because the challenge is when a new idea lands, your knee jerk reaction fills the open space and it crams down your existing biases and beliefs and understanding, and it crushes the space for a new idea to breathe.

what I've noticed is it's a human tendency that we all have, and it takes a lot of work to develop this habit because impulse to crush new ideas is so strong.

Harry: I just kind of dive in there? So you have a new idea alert. What does that post alert look like? Do you then solicit feedback? Do you just ruminate on it? What does that kind of process look like post alerting?

Bryan: I try to watch what happens to My internal processes [00:05:00] when the idea lands. So typically we are threat response and usually new ideas are a threat, to existing things. And so I watched my own self respond in all the ways where I feel threatened, will this require change from me? Will this require that I do a new habit?

Will it require that I have to overcome some existing belief system? What is it going to ask of me? And those things feel threatening. And in response to the threat, the body's like, we're going to shut this fucker down so we don't have to deal with the unpleasantness that's just who we are and what we do.

And so I just watched my internal processes and it gives me clues, which version of me is trying to shut this down and why, and so that to me is more interesting. So for me, what's interesting, the new idea itself is interesting. And then the second layer of interestingness is. What's provoking inside of me that gives me clues on who's talking within me.

Harry: Are there commonalities in the who's talking [00:06:00] within you in terms of the mindsets, the personas that you have that it comes up?

Bryan: I built this off of the idea of the evening, Brian concept where he over ate and he couldn't control himself and that I separated myself into different versions of me. And I've really taken that to all areas of life Let's say a person is, dedicated to a life of martyrdom.

Like they're going to sacrifice themselves. Let's just say they're, a soldier in an army that's willing to give their life for country. And then a new idea comes up and says that this idea of nation states or countries, Maybe lessening in its status in life, like maybe it's not worth giving life for this thing because it's changing that eliminates the entire game.

Somebody is playing. if you're already get up and say, I'm valuable in society because I'm doing this heroic act. If you remove the underlying layer, it's no longer heroic and valuable. And so it removes all of their [00:07:00] identity. And so your knee jerk response would be to fight back and to justify what you're trying to do.

But those are the kinds of things that give whiplash to people. in the most significant ways that are most important to,

Harry: when you think back to the alerting system, what was the most recent idea that caused an alert, and can you share it?

Bryan: the most significant one

was when I was personally challenged with the religion I was born into may not be. The explanation of reality. And that was so uncomfortable because my entire existence had, I was born into a religion that's all I understood reality to be. And then I started thinking maybe it wasn't true. Like maybe this wasn't the explainer of reality.

And that is the most uncomfortable thing I had ever encountered in my life because Every single bit of my reality, my family and my children and my community and my identity and my ambitions, everything was built upon that thing. And to encounter that, you have to [00:08:00] basically size up and say, I have to redo myself entirely, and that's so much work.

It's you like almost wanted to bury your head back in the thing and be like, I'm just going to avoid this because it's so uncomfortable to think about all this change, like you have to like. Get a divorce. Become a divorced dad. You've got to be in different living conditions. it's so unpleasant to contemplate that change.

It's just easier to duck your head back in. And that's what most of us do in life we encounter something that is so unpleasant. We'd rather not deal with it. We just go back into the habit. I

Harry: Can I ask a weird one? Is it worth dealing with, when you think about the divorce there, the being, you know, a divorced father, for the awareness that actually it may not be the answers for the realities of life, Can you actually just get comfortable with that and recognize it, but not actually deal with the unpleasantness that comes with it?

Bryan: mean, change is hard. I mean, I think we all maybe try to do our best to make change fun and rewarding. me, it just feels like so much of life is inevitable pain and [00:09:00] suffering. it's not a negative. It's just a different experience. I don't know if I would even try to minimize it. I'd probably just say it's just part of the journey. Yeah,

Harry: change to go through, if you don't mind me asking?

Bryan: I was leaving my religion.

Harry: Do you worry about being liked? Leaving religion, it's leaving social security as well, it's leaving friendship groups, it's leaving communities. Do you worry about being liked?

Bryan: when I left the religion, I, I had to go through this process. And rethink every aspect of my existence. And one of those things was the idea of being liked, because in the religious setting, you're constantly vying for the approval of those in the community. You want to be liked, you want to be respected, you want to obey the rules so that you have status.

And with that status, you get certain privileges in the tribe. And so I wanted to confront the idea head on and say, what if I didn't desire to be liked, what would that [00:10:00] do now in some scenarios, being liked is a necessity of life. If you go into work each day and you're an awful human and no one likes you, that's not going to do you any favors, you need to have some kind of baseline likeability to cooperate in society.

Um, But there's also a different place to play in where if you play for likeability in, for example, the new ideas space, that's a path for conformity because likeability is conformity and new ideas oftentimes disrupt that. And the liberation for me was flipping it and saying that I care about being liked by the 25th century and specifically do not care about being liked by the people in this time and place.

That to me was the most liberating thought experiment of my life. Because then I could say no longer limited to the approval of my peers. I can explore the

imagination space of what the 25th century might respect. it feels good to [00:11:00] be respected by in time and place.

It feels good to have status among peers. And I was willing to forego that that game to me. It was so much more exciting than pandering to whatever is the current zeitgeist of people's, approval systems, uh,

Harry: As a vc, I constantly pander to founders and to LPs. So this is a whole new concept for me, Brian, but, uh, I'm learning. Can I go back to the idea process though? Because you ruminate on it. You sit with it and understand the different personas and how they interact with it. What then determines whether you act upon an idea and really pursue it versus disregard it and put it to one side?

Bryan: So there's the idea as the information in itself, and then there's all the things around the idea that can't be seen. And so when I look at the idea, I don't try to identify what can be seen. I try to identify everything that can't be seen. And those are basically the unknown, unknown, those like the zero principle [00:12:00] concepts.

And so for me, new ideas are not something to accept or reject. New ideas are something to excavate, and you're trying to fill this thing out as broadly as possible, because yeah, new idea may be just the tip of the iceberg, it may be something much, much more expansive.

And so to me, it's the possibility of finding new primitives to work with.

Harry: What's the most challenging part of that? Because the challenging part to me is, the unknown unknowns are infinite, and so it could be this never ending quest that actually leads to inactivity. Do you worry about that, and what's the most challenging part of that segment?

Bryan: Yeah, I pressure test with a few questions. If a new idea lands. I can pose a question. what must be true for this to be true? What must remain true for this to be true? And then, what would change which would make this untrue? moving horizontally and vertically through time and space, pressure testing it.

So you can say a given [00:13:00] thing that may be true in this moment, But it may be entirely untrue in three years from now. And so, for example, I was talking to a friend last night, and I was explaining to him, the concept of don't

die. And he's a smart person, and he predictably said, well, I disagree with blank because I think superintelligence is blank, and ML models are blank.

And so he, basically put forward the argument of the skepticism around whether or not we will achieve superintelligence. I wanted to reframe, because I, I understand his arguments. They're legitimate. They're well reasoned. I understand them. Fine. I said, cool. What I'm trying to do is I'm trying to reframe the problem and say, if you look at our moment from the 25th century, that's the framework, which invites how to think about what to do in this moment, because if you can say, are we going to develop super intelligence?

You're going to have thousands of different opinions about where algorithmic progress is, whether we have enough data, whether the algorithms can do this or that, like you, it's just going to fracture [00:14:00] into no one knows. If you look at it from the 25th century, assuming that we still exist around then, it's reasonable assume that on some timescale, computational intelligence is going to improve.

do is we need to figure out how to improve our overview substantially faster than we can imagine. And if you say that's OK, that's reasonable that you give that kind of time scale. So then you come back to the moment. You say, OK, given that we can make that general conclusion that it's going to improve at some rate and probably be unfathomable to us in many ways.

What thing do we do right now? And that framework opened him up to say, ah, I understand why don't die. It might be relevant to this moment because you're trying to basically nail the philosophical, economic, political, social underpinnings of reality on a multi hundred year timescale, but it takes that finesse to get the clarity of thought.

Otherwise. You're buried in that moment. unless you ask those three questions of what must be true, what, must remain true and what would [00:15:00] change to make that entirely untrue, you don't pressure test the idea as well enough. And you're stuck in this very narrow band of thought. you have to go through those thought processes.

Otherwise you're rendered in the bubble of this moment, which just makes you up against a wall of fog.

Harry: How do you retain intellectual purity? And what I mean by that is like, what must be true? What must remain true? You can have biases towards what you want to really be true, but maybe not be true. It could be religion that makes

one bias in terms of their perspective. There are many different things that can bias how you feel about what those three answers are.

How do you retain that purity to be objective?

Bryan: begins by. Being skeptical of all things. And I learned this when I left the religion, you know, I had this authority structure saying this is how reality is. And then I learned about behavioral psychology and about biases and 188 proven scientific biases of how my brain distorts reality to help me understand a complicated world.

Now it's, doing me a favor because [00:16:00] the world is extraordinarily complex. And my bias has helped me understand the reality at the same time, I'm hypocritical. uh, I'm blinded to certain things. I'm a disaster of cognition. So when I found out that my own mind was just as deceptive and unreliable as other authorities in my life, and then I kind of walked to society and every source of authority or truth I thought might be durable is not including myself.

And so I enter all things with this deep skepticism of anything trying to the ultimate truth. And so if you accept that as the opening bid, then you walk into the contemplation in a much more humble way to hold things very lightly. so then you're trying to say, we can probably know immediate things with high certainty, and we can probably know long term things with reasonable certainty.

But in the middle, we just have fog and everyone plays in the middle of fog. And so when you're trying to make these big decisions on the future of the species, you've got to figure out some way to navigate those thought processes to come up [00:17:00] with some kind of clarity. And so if you say, what could we say about the 25th century, that it may be different than what we do now, you could say general things like will have probably figured out how to be more energy efficient.

We'll probably have figured out, you know, computationally to be much more robust than we have now. It will, you can make these general statements, assuming some rule of progress and, excluding annihilation type scenarios. And if you just play those general rules, you can start, walking back into, okay, then what might that mean for this moment?

But it's really a game of trying to of thought above all.

Harry: Do you accept anything today as an endurable truth? Given the skepticism you bring naturally to everything to get that purity, is anything an endurable truth?

Bryan: This is why I arrived at Don't Die. It is the only thing in existence. That I know is there an afterlife I don't know, when death is [00:18:00] inevitable, then you really can maintain any opinion you want, because we're all going to die. So it's like, doesn't matter, if death is not inevitable, then you have to reconsider all of your existential scaffolding.

if you use a frame, like live long, live great, be great, explore the stars, like whatever you want to say, people hear that. And they're like, yeah, I'm doing it. If you say, don't die, the person has to reconcile what's existence from zero. Because if you don't die, you're not going to die, or you're going to live in some unknown time horizon, every game you're playing in existence, maybe called into question all of your beliefs, all of your assumptions, all of your endeavors, everything about you may be called into question.

Harry: Can I ask a weird one, but it's like, and this is as meta as I've ever bloody asked a question, Brian. Life isn't about existence, is it? What is the meaning of life to you?

Is it about existence? Or is it about fulfillment? Or is it about love?

Bryan: That question yields no truth. That question [00:19:00] yields a mirror of time and place. So if we had a recording of people being asked that question for the past 500 years, every year that that question is asked of, you know, 50 people in society, you would see it evolve over that time period into unrecognizable stories.

None of it's truth. And this is the thing, we don't know what the meaning of life is. We just run our mouths and we run our mouths to try to fill the space that the question creates. we aren't discerning. Is this a question meant to create social cohesion or is this a question to establish truth?

It's not truth. It's to establish social cohesion, that people are trying to get along, trying to exchange views. They're trying to be human, understand reality. They're dealing with their own stuff internally. you know, how do you reduce the pain you're experiencing in this moment? the meaning of life to me is this, that when intelligence reaches a certain level of capability, which is right now, like after 4.

5 billion years on [00:20:00] this earth, in the past few years, We have reached a critical point after 4.5 billion years for the first time where intelligence can say the only thing intelligence cares about is continued existence not through the process of having babies, not through work, you know, the immortality of work or contribution, but through actual existence.

And this is why this moment is so critical. And so the meaning of life is. continued existence as it's the first moment we've achieved that ability.

Harry: Given it being the first moment we've achieved that ability, as specific as possible, what is it that we've achieved? as specifically as possible that has allowed human intelligence to be at this specific juncture.

Bryan: do we have the intelligence

to eliminate disruption of our existence. then you say, okay, what would. Possibly be required to do that, but we are biological systems. We're each about 35 trillion cells, but you know, like we can swap in and swap out, you can print an organ or get an organ from, you know, a pig and I put a [00:21:00] new organ in your body.

There's two things, there's things you can do to replenish your system, we can now reliably engineer atoms and molecules and organisms. We have the ability, we have the source code for life. We can engineer the source code for life. We have the computational tools that have exceeded our native intelligence and abilities.

So we actually have every primary piece of technology required to continue existence that do we know how to do it yet? We're making progress. The answer is no. From a first principles perspective, we have everything necessary to figure it out.

Harry: How do you think about the core underlying threats to human existence, climate change being worse than ever, bad global actors with nuclear weapons threatening in ways that we haven't seen in many years? Are those not questioning our continued existence in a way that makes this challenging?

Bryan: I'm fundamentally proposing that the human race is no longer qualified to manage our [00:22:00] affairs. I started with myself. I said that I, Brian Johnson, am not qualified to manage my own wellbeing. I do things that lessen my life. I overeat, I eat bad foods, you know, I'll make bad decisions.

Now I do these things that threaten my existence. that is an inferior form of intelligence that would inflict upon itself harm. Now our minds create these really pretty stories of like live, Fast, die, young, we're all going to die, so what does it matter? that is a compensation for what is inherently an inferior form of intelligence.

Doing something to itself that shortens its conscious existence. No matter how we want to say in the story. Now as a species, we're doing that to planet Earth. We're doing that to each other. we have these really pretty stories about we're competing for dominance, for ideology of nation state.

We're doing this for, capital improvements. We're doing it for progress for humanity, but we're a species that is self destructive. And now that we're bringing online new tools of competition [00:23:00] intelligence, it's this. Possibility to bridge ourselves to a new form of intelligence that is not self destructive.

And so don't die is don't die individually, don't kill each other, don't kill the earth, align AI with don't die. And so if you stitch this together from the 25th century, what do they see? They say, God, those sapiens were self destructive. They were idiots. They did these things that shortened their conscious existence and how, how insanely precious is conscious existence.

And they told stories about why they're doing it to live their best life and how all the experiences they're going to look at us like cavemen. It's going to be so ridiculous that we would do that, that we would take this precious conscience we have and be so flippant with it.

Harry: if we're no longer capable of managing our own affairs, and you said there you took yourself as the first test case, who do you hand your affairs over to? And, I'm a big follower of David Goggins, who obviously talks about mental discipline a lot. The ability to do the [00:24:00] uncomfortable even when your body screams another thing.

Bryan: Yeah.

Harry: You are still human, Brian. There are things that just require intense discipline. How do you think about who you hand over to, and how to manage discipline in the hardest of times?

Bryan: I made an algorithm that takes better care of me than I can myself. I measured every organ of my body. And I then referenced scientific literature

and we made an algorithm that determines what I eat, when I eat, when I go to bed, and I can't deviate from that. And so I've agreed, now this is an analog version.

This is not like I've got computational systems inside my body making the decisions for me. So I'm saying yes to this algorithm, but I'm explicitly saying no to myself.

Harry: How do you know the algorithm isn't based on imperfect data? Scientific literature changes over time too. If we look at it in 20, the 25th century compared to the 18th century, it'll be vastly different. Smoking used to be good for you as soon as 100 years ago. How do you think about imperfectness of literature that guides your algorithm?

Bryan: we referenced truth. Based upon [00:25:00] hundreds of biomarkers of using the best science that the human race has generated that contributes to health span and lifespan. And we use those data markers to say, is this protocol working or not? Could it be wrong? Yes. Is it wrong? Likely. Is it better than me and what I was doing before?

Yes. basically, is it saying, is the algorithm saying, you know what? You've had a tough week, curl up on the couch, get those two bags of potato chips and your favorite cookies, and then some ice cream and watch your favorite show until three in the morning. That's something the algorithm is not yet suggesting that maybe it will.

It hasn't yet, but it's definitely, steered me away from self destructive behaviors and tuned my body where I've become the most measured person in history, and the data is pretty interesting.

Harry: have so many questions to ask. My first is like, I get all of that, submit to the algorithm, But you are a cognitive functioning human, Brian, and you still have feelings. And so when the feelings [00:26:00] arise of, I am tired, I don't want to fucking do this. What do you say? Like, how do you overcome and computerize your mind?

Bryan: that is an idea that is introduced to me of you are hungry and you should eat. And so I, the same with a new idea. I watched the idea land. I watch who responds and I just witnessed and observed the whole thing.

Harry: I'm a disciplined guy, but fuck, I don't. Um, the most surprising truth you revealed in this exploration of yourself as the first true algorithmic guinea pig, respectfully?

Bryan: that I individually, and that we as a species are transitioning from being stewards of knowledge, to not knowing anything, or rather moving into a frontier where we are no longer in that role, where AI is going to be a much better steward of knowledge.

It's going to know all things, all things that have been discovered. AI will know it. And AI is also going to do a new discovery. And it's going to do so at a speed that we will be [00:27:00] unable to keep up in that scenario. AI is knowledge of record. So it's no longer that a person maintains the superior knowledge.

And so that calls into question, everything you understand about being human is you're going from knowing to not knowing

Harry: How do you think about the core element of permission? You know, you willingly gave yourself over to this algorithm, believing that it manages yourself better than you do and humanity does. Is there a point where humans don't have the permission to do so, and if not, how do you think about tipping points of human acceptance of algorithms as the primary?

Bryan: we already do this. a lot of people listening to this, uh, their knee jerk reactions are going to be something like this guy's nuts. is dystopic, the majority of people listening will have those thoughts even though we've talked about the process of new ideas, landing and trying to be open minded and not do it, even though that's the entry point for our conversation, people are going to want to hate on these ideas so fast because they've threatened everything [00:28:00] about our existence.

having said that the opportunity is to see the response, breathe into it, and then explore it.

Harry: Brian, what scares you today when you look at everything that we have in front of us, when you look at the data that you have on your own body, and you lie in bed at night, I'm sure you go to sleep pretty quickly because I don't imagine your scores go down at all, but what does scare you?

Bryan: I really don't want to die. And I'm here on this planet with a bunch of people who do,

Harry: Does that stop you doing everything? I was thinking about this, you know, before this. I was like, you know what, Brian, I have so much respect for you. But like, dude, a car could come. You can't get on a plane. The house could set on fire. The negative externalities are infinite.

Bryan: this is what I'm talking about. When you look at this from both ends of the timeframe. So let's just say, what do we know immediately? We can make the observation that life is fragile and it may be taken from us at any moment. And then people will say that and [00:29:00] say, well, if your life can be taken at any moment for any random reason, it doesn't make sense to do anything other than to live life to its fullest, live fast, die young. And so you're in that, right? That's the immediate alteration of like, that's concrete. We know that. And it leads to a very rapid conclusion. If you go out to the far end of the spectrum of the 21st century. You get clarity again, where it's not that we homo sapiens don't have the risk of death. It's getting the gist right in the larger context.

Okay. After 4.5 billion years of earth's existence, we're baby steps away from super intelligence. The only thing that matters in this moment is our continued existence into this future. Nothing else matters. But do you see how, even your question, comes at this thing, rejecting the idea of don't die, filling it with the moment of, well, if life can be taken at any moment, we might as well.

And so then you eliminate all the open space for the new idea. And this is primarily has been happening, uh, to me over the past few years is, People [00:30:00] dunk on me so hard, but they're actually not able to reach outside of this, very narrow moment of time and to understand this larger context in which we exist now to give you a framework that will make this much more tangible travel back in time.

We're hanging out. Has an axe in their hand, and we say, where's food, where's shelter, where's danger? We listen. If we say, homo erectus, tell us the future of the species, we laugh. So we, in this moment, are homo erectus. We know where there's danger, we know where there's food, and we know where there's shelter.

We know nothing about the future of our existence. We don't know what we're going to care about. We don't know what life is going to be like. We don't know what our values are going to be. We're just as blind, if not more so, than homo erectus. And this is the humility that we're invited to have in this moment.

And this is why it's so challenging for all of us because we fill the air with our opinions before we have any time to breathe in the new idea, which is what we shut them down so fast.

Harry: how does [00:31:00] the willingness to submit in this way impact your parenting? You obviously have a son, how does that change in this enlightened Brian?

Bryan: I think my children and my friends and family would say, this is the best version of me I've ever achieved. I'm more sober minded. have better clarity of thought, my emotions are much more stable. I've never been a better human than I am right now in every characteristic. And so I think that they appreciate that.

I worked very hard on myself to try to be the best form of a human I can.

Harry: Do you impose it on them?

Bryan: No,

Harry: Why?

Bryan: I've been very clear with them. Um, That I will teach through example, I'll offer my perspective, but it is their choice on what they do, you know, on a moment to moment basis.

Harry: Does it hurt when you believe in the right path, and you see them choose a different path, which is natural, [00:32:00] especially as you grow up and you learn yourself. Does that hurt you as a father?

Bryan: I'm happy that they get a go at this specialness of conscious existence. And the way I frame this with them is I say, I'm going to act in the role of your future self. So for my son Talmadge, I'll say, if you ever want to talk to your future self, if you want to talk to your 46 year old self or 42 year old, I'll fill in for that role.

And we'll do role play. And we'll talk about, what do you value for decisions made in college? And how would you think about the following things? And it's a way for him to have this dialogue, because if you think about right now,

one of the most sacred belief we have about existence is that. We, that you or I in this moment, get to decide what we do, how we do it, and why we do it at any

moment. So if you set your alarm for six in the morning at 10 at night, and you wake up at six in the morning, you want to snooze, 6 a. m. You gets exactly what they want.

They get to hit the snooze [00:33:00] button. present you always has the authority to do whatever it wants, no matter what it said in the past. And no matter what future you would say, present you dominates. So imagine a future where you present you is one vote among thousands of future yous.

You're like a democracy of sort for yourself. Now that of course challenges some of the things we consider most sacred about our existence. But why is that idea not feasible or even a good idea? I certainly have a relationship with my 20 year old self and the decisions that he made in that time and place.

And I would definitely change many things about my former self, but I'm now dealing with the consequences of that.

Harry: sorry to be personal and do say if it's too personal. Do you have a partner now?

Bryan: I don't.

Harry: Do you get lonely in this existence? Because it is, you know, you mentioned the pushback that you get online. I see it and I'm like, I always think it's a reflection of other people. You just make them feel shit because you do things that they probably wouldn't be willing to do.

It's why people hate on people when they post about like running marathons. It's like, dude, it's just because you didn't do it. So like, fine. But like, do you get [00:34:00] lonely

Bryan: uh, no, I don't, I've recreated my social life, my community. I've, growing up in a religion, community is solved for you. Everyone is there for you. They're all similar. You all have the same beliefs. It's easy to have friends. It's easy to get along. So it's just solved for you. if you leave that community, you have to basically create community of your own.

And so I've gotten really good at that over the past few years and I feel satiated.

Harry: Do you not think in many ways humanity needs religion? It's To form social cohesion, to form bond, to form companionship in a way that really, maybe artificial agreed, but it's needed to form those social bonds.

Bryan: If you look at the data, I think it might be fair to observe that religion has been the most powerful and effective and durable technology in all of history. It has outlasted nation states, it's outlasted technological trends, it's outlasted form of human organization. It's the most durable technology in the species.

Harry: Does religion [00:35:00] outlast AI?

Bryan: it's so hard to tell, I mean, at this point where we're up against a wall of not knowing, uh, I don't know.

Harry: How do you think about the statement that's often said, we will always overestimate usage or adoption in the short term and underestimate it in the long term. When you think about implementation, progression, adoption of AI, how do you think about timescales associated? It's a shit question, so forgive me for it, but the timescales associated and whether we are overestimating or underestimating in one or the other.

Bryan: Yeah. This is a question that again, triggers thoughts of the moment. And to me, it just creates a fog for everybody. Because then if you're a genuinely interested person about this question, you hear. Dozens of the top experts in the world all express different opinions and for good reasons.

Like they all have well reasoned arguments. And so then you say, how do I discern who's correct and who's incorrect and in what ways? It's impossible. And that's when I say, okay, [00:36:00] if I can't discern truth in this moment, I have to fast forward a few hundred years because otherwise I can't deduce truth in any way.

If you try to basically generate coherence of thought, because the question is basically inviting an answer of what do we do now, because presumably knowing whether we're one year away from superintelligence or 10 or 20 or never. It informs something about reality, like somehow it informs the next step we have in this present moment.

So by playing on these time scales, you can work with yourself to create coherence of thought. that's ultimately the best tool we have an individual, is overcoming the noise of the moment and finding signal.

Harry: What's the biggest enemy to the coherence of your thought still today?

Bryan: my own mind. And I'd say my own mind, but like more significantly, whether or not I slept well last night,

Harry:

do you ever sleep badly? Because I saw the tweets of yours a while ago and yours were like four months of perfect scores and I was [00:37:00] like, God, does this guy never have a siren that goes off or a plane that goes overhead? talk to me about that.

Bryan: two nights ago, I had a terrible night's sleep. I just started a peptide and I took it before bed. I did an injection and it wrecked my sleep and I woke up the next morning feeling absolutely awful. And the entire day I was ornery and foggy and I was, um, I was more emotional. it was just like the worst day.

And last night I had a spectacular night of sleep and now I feel like I can do anything. after doing this for years, when you sleep poorly, you do normalize to it, but you're normalized to a blurred state of reality. You don't remember what the clarity of good sleep feels like. And so what's my biggest enemy?

Poor sleep and a bad diet and no exercise that creates cloudiness that remains invisible because you can no longer see it as

lethal.

Harry: sleep condition wise. What is that for you in terms of hot room, cold room, light, dark, pillows, duvets, [00:38:00] travel, you name it.

Bryan: Yeah. My life is engineered around sleep entirely the game I'm trying to play in life is how to be respected by the 25th century. that game to me means clarity of thought, because when I go through history and I read biographies. It was those who had clarity of thought who could see the inevitable things and then did those things, which I admire.

And to do that, you've got to play game. You've got to be your best self. You can't be getting four hours of sleep a night and having a poor diet and exercise. You, you're going to render yourself. You can't overcome that level of intoxication. You're legitimately intoxicated by mind and you're just impaired.

Harry: What do you say to people who say, It's too late for me. It's too late for me to submit myself to this. I've already done the damage of drinking, of smoking, of being overweight. Is there ever too late? How do you respond

Bryan: Yeah. I just say give up. Yeah. No, [00:39:00] my dad, my dad is 71, his life expectancy based upon how he's lived his life is 68. He's been obese and he's done hard, uh, hard drugs. I've been working with him on project, keep dad alive. And he's been doing all the advanced therapies. I have, he's on blueprint. We talk, you know, I work with him very closely.

We're trying to keep him alive until the next thing comes along. But his ferociousness of wanting life is so inspiring to me. He wakes up every day and he appreciates his consciousness with a fire that I find infectious. And, you know, like you, you take somebody who's like 20 thirties and they're healthy and they're just like, yeah, we're all going to die.

But you say that when your body fills nothing of the ravages of aging, you start losing function. awful. And you get there, you know, like no one's talking, no one's running, running the same lines there.

Harry: I was struggling the other day with something and my friend said, you know what? A healthy man [00:40:00] has a hundred wishes, but a sick man has only one. And that struck me. Final quickfire. How do you think about the societal, um, breakages that happen with Do Not Die. Don't laugh, but pensions are relatively upholding of large nations.

Suddenly you have overpopulation, you have pensions breaking, you have an inequality of age distribution. Does society not need to fundamentally reshape to structure to Do Not Die as an existence?

Bryan: It does. I mean, don't die is the most played game in existence. there's no game on planet earth that intelligence, all intelligence plays more than don't die. Every second of every day. All of us are playing don't die, and it's played even more than capitalism played more than any religion.

Don't die is the number one most played game. And so in that context, once you say don't die, and you step one layer above it, then we fracture into a billion different games. Some of us try to make money, some pursue religion, [00:41:00] some pursue, you know, a monk life, like people go down a different path, but they're all based upon a don't die disposition towards reality.

when democracy was a new form of governance, it was this basic idea that you have these new representation structures that replace a monarch, and you have these new processes on deciding what to do. And once you establish that basic idea, like, Hey, this is a better thing than a monarch, you've got thousands of questions.

So we're now 200 years into the process of figuring out how to do democracy. The same is true with don't die. If you just get that basic concept, right? You've got an infinite number of follow on questions of what about, and so this is not the case of, this is meant to solve everything. It's meant to say, if we solve for the primary operating system of existence, Then we can get at the game of solving the thousands of questions that then follow after.

But right now, bringing super intelligence into the world. And we're doing it in the games we play now, which is go to [00:42:00] war, become more effective at killing people, acquire more wealth. Like we're playing games of violence and death. And if we do that, we're probably increasing the odds that we annihilate ourselves.

Harry: Does the only way to succeed though not mean everyone agrees? Because you can have one nation that doesn't agree to this and goes, Fuck you, and presses a button. is not a world of entire conformity or none of it works.

Bryan: I think to generate, try to generate clarity of thought. I see the future as a computational mesh of goal alignment. And so, for example, previously the analog version of Brian would look at a menu, order something and eat it. Now this algorithm runs me where it's measuring me, look at the evidence and then the protocol is in place.

I can imagine that systems are inside my body and outside of my body. And they run like a stock market. You're looking at transactions with my DNA and my proteins In the second timeframe, it's just running [00:43:00] without my awareness. And so I'm an autonomous human and everything's just running.

Now that autonomous reconciliation of how to keep Brian to not die is running in you as well and everyone else. And then also with the planet and also with AI that these systems are going to run faster than our minds, the more efficient than our minds, they'll have more data than our minds. So the future is us in this autonomous network of computational goal alignment among all intelligence.

Now that sounds unfathomable to us. It's also inevitable. give me an argument, like tell me where we won't inevitably do this. Now, an example is Ozembek is an algorithm. If people are overweight and they're having problems with, overeating, you take a pill and it turns off hunger. Now, like let's put side effects aside for a moment.

Okay. It is an algorithm that changes your hunger profile and it gets you this desired outcome of having less weight on your body.

Harry: do you like Azambic? Because you've shown ultimate discipline. The ability to just eat less [00:44:00] is discipline.

Bryan: I wouldn't do Ozempic myself. I'm also not 350 pounds and I know what it feels like to be overweight. So I'm pretty soft on this. Like there are some serious side effects, but man, like being overweight and overeating is a miserable existence. So I'm very soft. Like I understand why somebody would want to take Ozempic.

I understand that they just can't stop themselves. But it's an algorithm. And so this future is inevitable and the faster we can reconcile with it and overcome ourselves. But this is why these ideas are, provocative. They invite you to understand, to reassess everything about your own existence.

Harry: I could talk to you all day, but I'm aware that you probably have windows that you need to observe, so I want to do a couple of quickfire questions. is that okay?

Bryan: Sure.

Harry: What's been the most expensive test that you've run on your body? And how much was it?

Bryan: Probably MRI. I get a lot of MRIs. They're each one is like a thousand or 2, 000, somewhere in that range. it's not like one test is like a hundred thousand dollars. I do hundreds of tests and they're all some amount, which stacks up.

Harry: Sorry to ask. Is [00:45:00] sex better?

Bryan: Yes,

Harry: How so?

Bryan: okay. So one day we were talking and we, we'd quantified my organs. Like we will look at my heart and say, how do you quantify the function and anatomy of the heart to bio agent. And one day I asked my team, I said, what would it take for me to have the most quantified penis in the world?

And then after we quantify my penis and my sexual function, I said, How do you rejuvenate the penis? so one marker we looked at was nighttime erections. It's a significant indicator of, physiological, cardiovascular and sexual health.

And my baseline measurement was two hours and 12 minutes. I did all the baseline measurements.

I did some therapies and then I achieved just under three hours, which is better than the average 18 year old. So in that regard, I've quantitatively improved my sexual function.

Harry: Wow. Good for you, Brian. Jesus Christ. You make three hours, dude. You could watch Titanic in that time. What is You're taking some Lucozade, aren't you? My word. Sorry. I've never done a [00:46:00] show like this before. This is too much fun. Is there anything that you would not be willing to do if the algorithm said it?

Bryan: It's a new idea. I'm open.

Harry: Do you get hurt by the critique that you see online?

Bryan: No, it makes me endlessly happy.

Harry: do you ever do holidays?

Bryan: I do. Yeah. My son and I went to Singapore over the break. We went to New Zealand last year. uh, we have to Utah and rode bikes around the desert for a week. So yeah, we do a lot of outdoor adventure.

Harry: For someone listening today that wants to improve their sleep, what one piece of advice would you give them?

Bryan: Reframe your identity that you are a professional sleeper. So in the same way that each one of us every day shows up to our meetings on time, if we're two minutes late, we apologize. So set your bedtime and show up on time and if you're two minutes late Apologize, but respect yourself as much as you respect others for being on time.

Harry: What seemingly healthy thing is actually [00:47:00] bullshit?

Bryan: debauchery the stories that people tell of their favorite vice, you know, it's like the glass of wine and the Um, they treat all of pasta with friends late at night, talking about blankety blank, as their most special moments. They treat it as though that's the only way that state can be achieved.

And it's the only way it can be configured and they just justify the debauchery, as you know, healthy. they're masquerading that as healthy.

Harry: Penultimate one for you, who do you most look up to and respect?

Bryan: People in the past. I'm so fluent in biographies. I can at will have a dialogue with them in my mind.

Harry: Which is the best biography or the most revisited in your mind?

Bryan: they're all unique political figures, scientific inventors, philosophical, religious, they're such a variety. I enjoy all of them. And there's no one that, you know, be as dominant in my mind. It's just this fluid conversation

Harry: final one, blueprints in ten years. [00:48:00] Where do you want it to be then, when we revisit this in ten years? Where is blueprints?

Bryan: I just did a photo shoot where I posed as the, Da Vinci's Vitruvian man, you know, arms out, and I'm going to share that on social media and I'm going to call it the autonomous man. And so in that moment, Da Vinci was charting new territory with art of the dimensions and sketch of the human body.

And he did it with this level of perfection that nobody had done it before. And if you take that and you say, if you were to redo that now, what would be the modern interpretation? And I'm suggesting that is the autonomous man, which is where we're walking towards this future where what we do primarily as humans today will be automated by our algorithms.

And we are going to love it. And we're going to comment that we can't believe that we humans ever existed. In the current state we're in,

Harry: Brian, I've done 700 interviews. I mean, this has been 10 years. I've never done an interview quite like this. I mean, A, I had a schedule, and then I just asked the first question, and that was the only question [00:49:00] that we really got to, which is fantastic, by the way. But thank you so much for joining me.

I so appreciate this, I want to say I, I have so much respect for you. I think it's incredible, and the discipline is immense and inspiring.

Bryan: I appreciate you

walking with me. as an interviewer, I know it's hard because you have preconceived ideas about what you want to talk about and to go in flow is challenging. And you did it. So thank you for the fun dialogue.

Scarlett 2i2 USB: My word. I mean, that was just one of the funnest shows I think I've ever done. If you want to see the full video of that interview, then you can check it out on YouTube by searching for two zero VC. That's 20 VC on YouTube.

Scarlett 2i2 USB-4: But before we leave you today,

Scarlett 2i2 USB-1: There's no shortage of helpful AI tools out there, but using the mean switching back and forth between yet another digital tool, what was supposed to simplify your workflow? Just made it way more complicated and less, of course, you're in notion, in notion you can automate the tedious tasks like summarizing meeting notes or finding that steps really freeing you [00:50:00] up to do the deep work that we all want to do.

And that's why notion is used by over 50%, 50% of fortune 500 companies and teams that use notion San last emails cancel more meetings and reduce spending on tools. Try notion for free. When you go to [notion.com](https://www.notion.com). Com slash two zero VC.

Scarlett 2i2 USB: Um, speaking of amazing products, like notion that I'd like to talk to you about a company called Digitas, they're a full service AI accounting company. And if you're in need of an accountant or looking switch, there's no better solution than digits starting at just \$350 a month, which is less than half of what you'd pay.

A traditional firm. Digits is the most accurate, most efficient solution on the market. They've developed proprietary AI technology that automates tedious financial tasks and delivers reports. So the actual close of the month, not two to three weeks later as always. And they also allow you to keep track of key metrics like revenue, burn, cashflow, and runway, and an incredible live dashboard.

The best part of all of it. [00:51:00] This is vetted and signed off by their in-house CPAs. If you're interested, visit [digits.com](https://www.digits.com) forward slash 20 VC to claim your special offer today. That's [digits.com](https://www.digits.com) forward slash two zero VC.

And finally, travel and expense and never associated with cost savings, but now you can reduce costs up to 30% and actually reward your employees how well Navan rewards your employees with. personal travel credit every time they save their company money when booking business travel under company policy.

Does that sound too good to be true? Well, Navan is so confident you'll move to their game changing all in one travel corporate card and expense super app that they'll give you 250 in personal travel credit just for taking a quick demo.
navan. com forward slash two zero VC.

Scarlett 2i2 USB-5: As always, I so appreciate all your support now stay tuned.

Scarlett 2i2 USB-3: We have one of the nerdiest shows we've ever done coming out on Monday with one of the world's leading fund of fund investors. That means they invest in [00:52:00] venture capital funds, such an exceptional show with David Clark at van cap on Monday.