

Caspar ([00:00](#)):

The history of alcohol dates back to at least 30,000 years and arguably even a hundred thousand years. Yet we're learning more and more about its effect on the human body. And some like neuroscience scientist Andrew Huberman have argued that even minimal amounts are unhealthy. We're going to explore the subject today with our guest. He's a coach, author, entrepreneur, and former ESPN SportsCenter anchor. He embarked on his own path to sobriety nearly 25 years ago, and is dedicated to empowering others to reclaim control over their drinking habits and unlock their full potential. This is the Story of an Alcohol-Free Lifestyle with James Swanwick. James, so glad to have you on.

James Swanwick ([00:43](#)):

Well, thank you very much. It's wonderful to be here.

Caspar ([00:46](#)):

You know, one of the first things I feel like you always need to establish when you're gonna do any change of habit or lifestyle, like giving up drinking, is understand the why. Because like I said, a hundred thousand year history, it's like, well, for a hundred thousand years we've kind of done this thing and we're still here. Right? <laugh>, you know. You could argue about how well we're doing, but we're still here. So this isn't something new that's come along like some synthetic drug that is ravishing our health. So maybe start with your own why you decided to be sober and live an alcohol-free lifestyle.

James Swanwick ([01:23](#)):

Well, I was a socially acceptable drinker in my native country of Australia growing up in the sense that I would have two or three standard drinks most nights of the week. And on weekends I would drink heavier and sometimes I would get drunk. To be clear, I never got arrested. I didn't get a DUI, I didn't hit rock bottom. I wasn't an alcoholic. But 20 years of consistent drinking habits finally caught up with me in my mid thirties when I was in Austin, Texas. I was at that year's south by Southwest Annual Festival. Mm-Hmm. I had two Bombay Sapphire gin and tonics at a industry party on a Friday night. And when I woke up the next morning, I just felt blah. And by blah, I mean, I'd put on about 30, 35 pounds. I wasn't sleeping great. My relationships weren't great. I was irritable, foggy, distracted, procrastinating on many things in my life.

James Swanwick ([02:18](#)):

I would say I was operating at about a six out of 10, and I felt like I was a six out of 10. And so on that morning in a hotel outside of Austin, Texas, I looked in the mirror and I said, James, enough, take a 30 day break just to see how it feels, because it's gotta be better than this. And so I did. I took 30 days off. I lost 13 pounds. I slept better, I looked better. I had an opportunity to audition to become a SportsCenter anchor on ESPN and to, my bewilderment they gave me the job and I thought, this alcohol-free lifestyle is actually seems pretty good. And so I just kept going and going and going. And it's been since 2010 now since I last picked up a drink.

Caspar ([03:01](#)):

That's amazing. And, and it really is a testament to what, even a small, you could say, change, because a lot of people, that's not everything. There's so many different things in our lifestyle, but obviously not an easy change can do for you. Now, for a lot of people, I think what, what I've heard there also is you kind of normalize not feeling so well. I know this in, in kind of the medical world. People come in, oh, I'm okay. I just don't sleep well. I don't eat well. I'm overweight, I'm you're not. Okay. <laugh> You know, the normalization of the fatigue, the brain fog is just part of aging is a little bit crazy. You know, I, I feel like we need to establish these, these kind of things of what is alcohol doing to us? 'Cause again, we go to

a sports game, you drink some alcohol, you know, if you're hungover, but even a few drinks it's doing something to us. So can you go a little bit into what you've seen in, in your understanding of how alcohol is impacting us? Even if you're not blackout like college frat boy drunk every weekend.

James Swanwick ([04:02](#)):

There was a study that came out in 2022 out of the UK and they looked at 35,000 middle aged adults who drank one seemingly innocent drink per night. So to be clear, seven standard drinks a week. And what they found was that even that, let's call it modest amount of consumption, was still enough to destroy the white and gray matter in our brain. The bumper sticker is even one drink a night can cause some level of brain degeneration. Now, that's frightening. I mean, that should be frightening. The fact that even just one seemingly innocent glass of what I refer to as attractively packaged poison is enough to compromise your brain function. Now, some people might say, oh, it's no big deal. I've been fine, a couple of drinks here or there, live life a little. I'm like, okay, live life a little. But just know that if you are having anything around seven drinks per week, it's still compromising your life.

James Swanwick ([05:08](#)):

It's still compromising your health. So that's just something that I think should be a wake up call for all of us. The challenge is, of course, is rewiring society's mindset around alcohol because it's just something that we've accepted. It's something that we glorify, it's something that we bow down at the altar and, and acknowledge as like this amazing, joyful thing that connects us, that creates romance that we use for celebration, that we use for stress and anxiety. That cultural conditioning is real, but it's changing. It's changing. As we have new studies, new research, new neuroscience that's coming out, and we are understanding the actual consequences of digesting this poison. People's attitudes towards alcohol are certainly changing.

Caspar ([05:56](#)):

The younger generation, surely are. It's that non-alcoholic industry now is growing year over year. What is it? I had it here, 20.6% year over year. And, and kind of, you know, you know, those like Budweiser's and all those are kind of going after young people and they're yawning and saying, we, we don't need the alcohol. What do you think that is? Because that's kind of an interesting thing that, that we, we are you, you're coming in on this at the right time, at least with young people to get that message across. What do you think that is?

James Swanwick ([06:25](#)):

Yes, to that point, a study from 2020 found that the portion of college aged Americans who are completely alcohol-free had risen from 20 to 28% in a decade. I mean, that is a huge jump. Huge. And then during the, the pandemic generation Z Australians from my native country, they were found to be the most likely to have decreased their alcohol consumption with 44% of generation Z Australians drinking less, which is more than double the rate for, for any other generation. So certainly the younger people, I think now that we we're closer to, or we have more access to education because of the internet, because of social media, because of the medical advancements in recent years, younger people are really understanding from a very early age the consequences of alcohol consumptions alcohol consumption, and the benefit from not drinking. So I, I would submit that, you know, just a, an access to more information and education and a commitment from that younger generation to live healthier lives. Because they probably see their parents and grandparents not being as healthy as they could be from drinking alcohol. That's really had this compounding effect where now younger people are increasingly just being alcohol-free, never even choosing to drink alcohol in the first place.

Caspar ([07:49](#)):

Do you feel like we're, we're getting to that kind of precipice where alcohol may go the way of tobacco, where people like finally caught up to like everything that's truly, you know, wrong about it? And again, I'm not gonna say like tobacco itself, nicotine has benefits right there, there are some neurological, it's, it's the abuse of, it's the constant use. It was the toxins they threw in with it. All these things that really made it so bad. And it was the marketing saying it would be healthy. It's not that bad for so many years. The lies that finally when they unraveled, now you have that kind of shift away from smoking cigarettes. Do you feel alcohol's gonna go the same way?

James Swanwick ([08:27](#)):

Yes. I've been saying for about two years now that my hypothesis is that in at least two decades, I think it'll still take another 20 years. I, I, my hypothesis is that we will look at alcohol with the same level of disdain that we currently do cigarettes, and people think I'm crazy because alcohol's so embedded in the culture, which it is undoubtedly. But this can happen quickly. Like society can change very, very fast. I mean, look back to 2007, that was when the iPhone was launched, right? Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, another way of saying it, that's when smartphones were launched. I mean, that was, as we're recording this 17 years ago, look how the world has changed from the invention of a device that sits in our pocket that has more power in it than the power needed to send astronauts to the moon back in the 1960s.

James Swanwick ([09:24](#)):

I mean, we have a spaceship in our pocket that we carry around with this. And that's fundamentally changed how we live. It's changed our focus, distraction. It's given us an ability to live remotely. People are now long, no longer feel like they have to work in an office, in a location-based business. It's allowed us to roam the world and change. So it's changed society in just 17 years. And my hypothesis again as it relates to alcohol, is that as this younger generation comes up, as the oldest generation passes through and as people's education increases and as medical sophistication increases, we're gonna see a huge tidal wave of change where people are demanding alcohol-free alternatives. And I don't think that these nightclubs, I mean, already in the UK you're seeing nightclubs are shutting down because the younger generation just aren't going to, to as many nightclubs anymore. Saw an article in the British press only a month ago that that nightclubs across the UK are shutting down because the younger generation who traditionally go to nightclubs are, are not going there anymore. Or they are going, but they're just not buying the big profit maximizers, which is the alcohol.

Caspar ([10:42](#)):

Yeah. The margins on alcohol kind of sustain a lot of the nightclub industry and also sometimes the restaurant, of course, the bar industry. Do you think that though the, the vice will just change, right? Tobacco went way down. Vaping came around. Right. You know, if alcohol goes out the window, usually people kind of switch their vices. Now, there is a counterpoint, I maybe this is your point as well, that we are in a need to be hyper productive and well optimized machines. In this day and age, we're kind of fighting against AI and all these other things. And we have gotten to a point where so many are, are working at this level where information it's information age. Our brains need to work on different levels than they did during industrial times, let's say. Whereas about muscle power and just technical things. So which one do you think it is? Do you think we will be just switching vices and we'll continue as humans to do what we always do? It's just replace one thing for another that may be worse. Or are we going to actually embrace this sort of information age, be healthier beings, and go into this optimal state?

James Swanwick ([11:52](#)):

I think we'll probably continue to have the same proportion of people just switch to a different vice. Yeah. Because humans are humans, humans. Unless we can really promote personal development, conscious communication and really help build human beings up from the ground in terms of let's get you feeling

joyful, happy, calm. So you don't feel the need to reach for a vice. Because the only thing that a vice is, is something to distract us from the discomfort of being us. Yes. That's all alcohol is. It's just, it's our discomfort just being us. Because think about it, we're stressed, we're anxious. I need something to break the stress and anxiety. Right? I'm gonna reach for this poison. Or for someone else that might be they turn to shopping for someone else that might be love addiction. For other people, it might be porn. For other people, it's food.

James Swanwick ([12:52](#)):

Alcohol is not unique in the sense that it is still a vice that people turn to amongst other things, to distract them from the discomfort of just being themselves. And so a lot of what we do in our alcohol-free lifestyle program, we have a 90 day stop drinking program and process. The University of Washington did a scientific study on our process in 2023. And, and the results were a 98% reduction in drinking from the, the scientific study participants. And what we do is we don't just spend 90 days coaching people how to stop drinking alcohol. We spend 90 days getting them comfortable being themselves, not reaching for anything that would numb the pain of them being themselves. Because if you've got a happy human, or at least a happier human, the need for alcohol or porn or shopping Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> or love decreases, just, it just, it evaporates. And now we're just free to be in what I would submit is our natural state, which is just calm, joyous, peaceful, happy, then everything's golden.

Caspar ([14:05](#)):

Absolutely. And I think that's, that's a big part of what you see when you see disease in general and dysregulation of a person. You usually see someone in a fight or flight where their sympathetic nervous system is just fried. It's always on. They're always in a fight, stress related reaction. And when you don't have a balanced autonomic nervous system, things start to go. Whether that's hormonal, adrenal, organ related, you know, immune system, they all start to break down because of that. Yes. But we live in a day and age right now where news is fear-based. We know this, you know Yes. Fear sells where, you know technology is addictive. And it kind of, you know, it makes people depressed, of course. And it stresses them out. The pings are stress related. Usually emails are suddenly, oh my goodness, I'm getting so much. How, how do we, because it seems like the authentic side is one thing, but the modern day living and the the place we are right now is a stressful place. You know, how do we break free of that? Because so much of, I feel of what people go through and use alcohol as a crutch relates to, man, it's just so stressful. I need a drink after today. Right? Mm-Hmm. Is it that we have to maybe change and break free of the societal norms, which are, shouldn't be normal at all, and are just filled with stress?

James Swanwick ([15:25](#)):

I would submit that society can feel a stressful place. What you said was, society is a stressful place. Mm-Hmm.

James Swanwick ([15:36](#)):

And so a lot of what we coach our clients on is self-awareness. Right. It's being aware, it's challenging these absolutes that society is hard or life is hard, or there's just so many distractions. And so we, we, we challenge those notions and we go, yes, life at times can feel stressful, but life actually is not stressful. Life is just life. And so our actions and behaviors and thoughts are deciding that it's stressful, are deciding that society is hard, are deciding that, oh, there's just so many distractions here in the world. So once we're aware of that and we realize that we are 100%, a hundred percent responsible for how we experience the world, for example, if someone says, oh, life is hard, then probably life is going to always seem hard for that person. No matter the circumstances. If someone says life is a gift, then that person's gonna be walking through life just seeing everything as a gift.

James Swanwick ([16:37](#)):

Yes. So I, I hope that somewhat answers your your question because I think, you know, a lot of us, myself included, I'm I'm sure you at times as well, we are walking around living our life as if things are hard or things are certain ways, or this person's mean, or this person's selfish or this person's rude, et cetera. Whereas really that person is just that person. And it's our perception that they're the rude or the ignorant or the, or the et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And I think once we have that self-awareness, then we have the power to control our devices, to, to manipulate the world around us in a way that serves us. It's not the phone and the distractions that's the problem. It's just our inability to be self-aware. And once we are self-aware and we can just do whatever the heck we want, we can just change life and manipulate life and move life however we choose.

Caspar ([17:44](#)):

Yeah. I mean, so much of it is a shift in perspective and your level of consciousness, if you're in those lower states of conscious of guilt, fear, shame, apathy, whatever it is, that's gonna be very difficult for you to go through life without needing crutches, without needing things that dull you down to who you could truly be. But it's that shift to the upper evolution of even neutrality and just seeing things in a different light. 'Cause you're very right. Listen, we look around right now, we could complain like anyone can, but if you even go back a hundred years, you know, 100 years in our existence, I said, we've had alcohol for a hundred thousand years. You know, historians say maybe a hundred years ago, it's like, you know, no running wa no, no ac no. We lived a much harder life then, right? Like, we live pretty good right now.

James Swanwick ([18:33](#)):

A hundred years ago, a hot shower was not the norm.

Caspar ([18:36](#)):

Right.

James Swanwick ([18:37](#)):

Now, we go inside and go into our shower, we turn on the faucet, and we get a hot shower. Up until a hundred years ago, for a hundred thousand years, people were having mostly cold showers. Now we just take that for granted. And if we go into a place like a hotel and the hot water's not working, we're like, ah, hot water's not working. This is an outrage. Let me go onto the Google Review and just give them one star. This is terrible. Yes. And also, you, you and your listeners might, might be surprised to know that despite wars and conflicts going on in the world right now, an example might be Russia and Ukraine might be Palestinian Israeli conflict. This is still the most peaceful time in human history. Absolutely. And yes, we walk around and go, oh, isn't it terrible what's going on in the world right now?

James Swanwick ([19:27](#)):

I'm just so down about the, about life in the world right now. I'm so worried for life. And that's not to diminish what's going on in Russia and the UK and the Israeli Palestinian conflict. But the, but the reality is that, look, I, I have read Lessons of History by Will and Ariel Durant and, and the Durant's were husband and wife, a couple that died in the late seventies, early eighties. And they are renowned for being probably the greatest historians that ever lived. And in their book, Lessons of History, they were very clear, life is war and life has always been war. And there have always been battles. And the world has always been a dangerous place. We live in the most peaceful time, arguably in human history. And so if we just start to kind of understand that and challenge the belief that it's the most dangerous time in history, or that everything is terrible, then we can start to challenge all areas of our life. I'll give you one more anecdote. Lemme just ask you a question, Casper. Yep. Have you ever seen a sunrise?

Caspar (20:32):

Oh. Absolutely.

James Swanwick (20:34):

Okay. Would you be shocked to know that the sun does not rise? There's no such thing as a sunrise. It doesn't exist. The sun doesn't rise. The sun is circulating. Right? And the earth is up there in space. There, there's no such thing as a sunrise. And yet, we humans, we have created this word called the sunrise because we have the perception that the sun rises each morning. Now, if we accept that, we accept that a sunrise doesn't actually exist, it's just our perception that it does. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> then surely everything is up for question, including our dogma and our stubborn beliefs around whatever political affiliation we have, about our boss who said something, about our partner who possibly doesn't love us the way we want 'em to love us around, that we need alcohol to reduce our stress and anxiety, and we have to have alcohol to create romance. We must get some champagne to celebrate. I submit it's time to challenge all of these belief systems.

Caspar (21:38):

Oh, I agree. And I, I think you know what we're talking about here. I really appreciate 'cause It's challenging status quo, and it's something I truly believe we need to do for healthcare as a whole. Medicine as a whole, you know, move beyond this idea of reliance and management as the of disease, as we suffer and really come into this idea that we can all live optimally healthy lives if we kind of, you know, move away from a lot of those pieces like, you know, pharmaceutical drugs and medications that people are told to rely on for, for their health. And meanwhile, they just deteriorate their health. And I think alcohol's in that same framework, it's, it's a little bit of you're told, you know, not a problem. You know, have it with friends, family. I mean, the Europeans, you start early, right? The French give there, the young teenagers drinks at the table and everything, and it's not a big deal. And, you know, and, and here's the thing though, like some smokers out there, some people you know that drink alcohol may truly enjoy it, may know their moderation and may live long. But aren't those the outliers? And we can't really use them as an example. What would be your, you know, your, your rebuttal to someone that said, Hey, my French grandfather, who's 95 drinks fine French wine, you know, with his meal every day and, and is living, you know, still happily at that old age.

James Swanwick (22:56):

There are many factors that go into it, including the fact that depending on someone's duration of life and their quality of life, a lot of times the biggest single factor is the quality of the relationships in their life. So it may not actually be the fact that they would drinking red wine every single night for 50 years, and they lived till 98, but the fact that they were connected to their family or friends, or their wife or their husband, and that they had a feeling of purpose and joy and comfort in their life. And so maybe that was a significant factor in them living a longer life. Look, let, let me try and dispel this myth right now that's that I can give you the origins of, which is that a glass of red wine, a night, is good for your heart health. Right?

James Swanwick (23:48):

Now, in 1991, the American TV News Show 60 Minutes did a very famous, I would call it infamous news piece, where they interviewed a French scientist who coincidentally also had a vineyard and came from a, a family of wine producers. And this French scientist submitted that a glass of wine per day is good for the heart. Now, there was no evidence for this at all. It was all anecdotal, right? But nevertheless, 60 Minutes ran this piece. And at the end of the news story, the journalist who was doing the piece was a very famous US journalist from 60 Minutes called Morley Schafer. He had a glass of red wine, and he



toasted, excuse me, the 33 million Americans who were watching the program that night with a glass of red wine, he says, so the secret to good life might lie in this glass of wine.

James Swanwick (24:48):

Cheers. And then it cut to the, you know, the famous 60 minutes, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, and went to a commercial break. The next day, there were reports that US airlines ran out of red wine because so many people were ordering red wine. In the month following that 60 minutes piece, airing red wine sales spiked by 48%. And over the next two years, sales went up in the 30% percentile. And Americans never looked back. That was where that myth was born. And Americans loved it. They latched onto it. They started drinking red wine. Go, oh, red wine's good for your health. Oh yeah, red, red Wine's good for your heart. Yeah, a glass of wine. They, I saw this. Yeah, it's good for your red wine. Producers loved it. They just kept pushing this, this myth. There was only one big problem, though it was fundamentally wrong.

James Swanwick (25:42):

It was just plain wrong. Now, I'm not suggesting that the French scientist deliberately misled 33 million Americans. He may have actually believed that, but that was 1991 we're now in 2024, with the benefit of medical science studies three decades, you know, since that moment, we now know there is zero amount of the alcohol that is good for you. The World Health Organization, American Cancer Society all of these associations now say the safest amount of alcohol to drink is zero mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, right? So let's just get this myth. 'cause Squash it right now, it is preposterous. And I know some of your listeners, that's devastating news because you think that you love this glass of wine, or you need this wine to create romance, or you need it as part of your nighttime ritual. You don't need it. You just get to wind down at the end of the day and reduce your stress and anxiety with other measures, natural measures.

Caspar (26:46):

Yeah. I, I break my audience's heart quite a bit with things I

Caspar (26:50):

<Laugh>. I bet you do. I think they'll be used to this. You know, when I tell 'em that if you're going through treatment, no alcohol, no coffee, no. You know, they bug out over that <laugh>. And again, I, I think that's because habitually we're told about these things, and a lot of the times it does start with marketing. It does start with money that goes into it, right? We know this in the medical community that, you know, scientific studies, suddenly you find out years later, we're not actually accurate. 'Cause there's tons of money in that. There's tons of money in all these things. And everyone's vying for everyone to become habitually using something over and over that they normalize. Meanwhile, they get sicker and sicker. And, you know, I, I understand you have this P 90 program that really helps people go through you know, living in an alcohol-free life. Can you tell us about that? Even the starting points with it, if someone's interested in saying, I'd really like to change, but I'm around people. I go to events that always do it. It's something I know so well. How, because breaking a habit is hard. Let's be honest. No matter what the habit is, even if it's really bad for you, you know it. So what is the, your system that you created and how does that work?

James Swanwick (28:00):

Thank you for asking. So we use neuroscience to help people rewire their mindset around alcohol. So they have power over alcohol. Alcohol no longer has power over them. My organization is called alcohol-free Lifestyle. We help mostly executives and business owners who are well educated in most cases. They're affluent, they're successful, they're peak performers in maybe their financial life and their business life, their executive life. But they drink too much. They know they drink too much. And their attempts to stop drinking over the years have been ineffective. They've tried brute willpower. They've

gone to an AA meeting. They hated that they've thought about rehab, but they, their drinking's not nearly that bad to warrant going to rehab. They've done 30 day challenges like dry July and dry January, and they quit for a while and they feel really good, but then they say, oh, I'll just have one or two.

James Swanwick ([29:05](#)):

And then the slippery slope gets them, and then all of a sudden they're back drinking again. Most of our clients, I'm sorry, all of our clients, none of them are what I would deem alcoholics. They're very successful people, mostly in their late forties and and mid fifties who just drink too much. And it's, the consequences of that are marital strain, high blood pressure, as you referenced before. They're on anti-anxiety medication, prescription drugs. In many cases, they're probably 15, 20, 25 pounds overweight. They know they could lose that. They, they have low energy. Their sleep is compromised at best, woeful at worst. And they're not present with their children. They're foggy, they're irritable, they're distracted, and they can't seem to break the chain of habit around drinking alcohol at the end of the day to help them cope with that. To speak to your other point regarding the social aspect of it, our clients, when they come to us, also have a belief that they need alcohol to do a business deal and network and entertain clients that they need alcohol to celebrate at the end of the week after a hard day's or a hard week's work, that there are corporate golf days they have to go to where there's open bars, where there's events that they need to attend to, where they need to be seen to be socializing.

James Swanwick ([30:30](#)):

And not just consuming alcohol, but making alcohol available to their colleagues or their staff or their clients. When they come to us, they're like, I've gotta do something. Like, I can't go on, like, that's this, because I just feel so bad. And so what we do is we introduce the latest neuroscience, we show them the latest nutrition, we show them how to have fun without alcohol. We show them how to have conflict resolution without reacting, rather responding. We educate them on the difference between reacting and and responding. We show them how to have healing conversations with their wife or husband or their children. We show them how to just get their body moving again and be mobile. We show them how to reduce stress and anxiety so the cravings for alcohol diminish. And we do that inside of a 90 day program with other executives and entrepreneur clients.

James Swanwick ([31:29](#)):

We we, we have a zoom group coaching call daily. Participants just need to be on two of those per week, but they can be on, you know, seven a week if they want. And then we send them a prerecorded training video each day for the 90 days that they're with us, which has a neuroscience based learning around rewiring the mindset around alcohol. To be clear, we are not AA, we are not a 12 step program. We're not religious, although we have religious people who go through our process, we're not surrendering to a higher power and all of that kind of stuff, which is what AA does. We're the exact opposite of that, right? And rather than us helping people to quit alcohol, we help them choose an alcohol-free lifestyle. We don't use terms like sobriety, sober, recovery, because we think that they're nonsensical words. Recovery?

James Swanwick ([32:29](#)):

No one has to recover from anything. Everyone is just everyone. You are just who you are. And rather than what I submit is an ineffective methodology for trying to stop drinking, which is, I gotta stop. I need to stop. I gotta be sober. I'm sober, I'm gonna recovery, which is got getting you focused on the drink and the problem. We introduce neuroscience and positive habits and mindset where we are having you choose to be alcohol-free. They've done a lot of studies that show it's a lot easier to complete a task if you tell it what to do versus if you tell yourself what not to do. The anecdotal example of that is if you're skiing on the ski slopes and you're going down the hill and you're saying, don't crash, don't fall over, don't go into the trees. A lot of times we just tend to suddenly fall over crash and go into the trees.



James Swanwick (33:23):

But why? Because we've been telling ourselves on the way down, don't do that. Don't do that, don't do that. Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>. And then we end up doing that. And it's the same with alcohol. Don't drink. I shouldn't drink. I've gotta quit. I have to quit. I'm sober. I've gotta practice sobriety. I gotta do recovery. Then we end up just drinking more. Whereas this way, it's like more of a, a fun, positive, uplifting experience where we get to level up and choose our lifestyle with self-awareness and conscious communication and healthy habits. So that's what we do. That's how we are different from, say the traditional modalities out there. And it seems to work. The University of Washington study showed a 98% reduction in drinking from all those who went through that process.

Caspar (34:08):

Amazing. When you just shift that, again, that's the shift in perspective. We were talking about this holistic approach to it, and it's very similar to what I believe is what medicine should be doing is not that we're treating the disease, giving you a diagnosis, a label, I am a cancer patient, focus on cancer. It's how do we optimize you to heal yourself? How do we put you in the environment that the disease no longer can persist? And we don't focus on that diagnosis, that label of who you are, but we focus on making you the best person day by day, improving to where you are no longer in any dis-ease. You know? Yes. So that, that, that seems to be the approach you've taken. And it is one that, that is using this kind of like neurolinguistic programming, a pro, all these different things to set yourself up for long-term success. Yes.

James Swanwick (34:59):

Yes.

Caspar (34:59):

And set this short term, you know, as you said, sobriety of things and alcohol-free and everything. It's just, you're, you're just living an optimal life. Yes. And for, for the people that go through the P 90 program, is there a time that you say it's okay, let's say you're at a, you know, event once a year and you have one drink, you know, not to bash yourself with guilt. You know, is that part of the lifestyle or is it really just, hey, never touch that thing again?

James Swanwick (35:28):

We don't invite people to declare they will never touch this thing again. many just do as a consequence of going through this process, what we say to folks is, you must commit to at least 90 consecutive days alcohol-free, doing our process. And then at the end of the 90 days, you'll be free to choose. It's not up to me to say never drink again, do moderation, only drink on weekends. The person who's going through the pro process, it's up to them. Now, what I can tell you anecdotally is that almost everyone who attempts our process gets to at least 90 consecutive days alcohol-free. Most of the people who get there choose to remain alcohol-free because they just love it. They just go, wow, I am loving the energy, the great sleep, the better skin, just a warning. You do get better looking when you go alcohol-free <laugh>.

James Swanwick (36:30):

They just choose to remain alcohol-free. Now, some candidly have told us over the years that they have returned to drinking, but they've returned to a modest amount of consumption compared to before they joined our program, which led them to our program in the first place. Right? And then, you know, again, candidly, there are a few, like rarely, but there are a few who return to the same level of drinking, and then they come back to us and say, can I go through it again? And then we do Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>. So that seems to be what happens. That that's like a good kind of gist or feel of, of what happens. We

never say never drink again. But I'll tell you what the clients say, the clients tell us that moderation is a myth. Mm-Hmm. Moderation is a myth. And what they say is, is that those who've gone through the process and then they go and attempt moderation, the slippery slope gets them and they very quickly end up at the point where they want to come back again.

James Swanwick (37:38):

Now again, everyone's different. People have got different reasons, different genetic makeups, different appetites, different thirst, different things. So I can't say a blanket statement and say what our clients say, which is moderation is a myth. That's what most of our clients say. But what I would say is this, why is anyone still wanting to have a drink on a special occasion as if implying that drinking attractively packaged poison is worthy of being referred to as a special occasion, right? And so, if, if people have gone through our process are then still going, oh, I'll just have a drink at Christmas or a wedding. I feel like I've failed them because they're still worshipping at this altar of alcohol. In my view, the special occasion is every single day that you have outstanding health with clarity and focus, and you're connected and you are not seeking something like alcohol to get out of the discomfort of being you. So if someone's saying, oh, I'll just do moderation, I'll just have a drink on a special occasion, I'm like, okay, I think you, you just haven't got it. And I've failed you. Because again, I know I'm repeating myself, but I think it's worthy of, of repeating yes.

James Swanwick (38:59):

Why the hell are you even still thinking that any amount of alcohol consumption is fun or joyous or pleasant? Do you really enjoy the taste of it that much? No.

James Swanwick (39:15):

No, you don't.

James Swanwick (39:16):

It's just cultural conditioning and the way you've grown up. You've just always associated drinking alcohol with someone having a smile on their face, right? Without champagne, with celebration or red wine with romance. Let me tell you, I haven't drunk since 2010. I've celebrated a bunch of times and I haven't needed champagne. And I've had romantic evenings with my lovely partner Lara, and we haven't needed wine to create the romance. Yes. And I've gone and hung out and watched the Super Bowl in the NFL playoffs and the basketball with my mates in a bar where a lot of them are drinking Bud Lights and Coors or whatever. And I'm drinking soda, water, ice, and a piece of lime. None of them would ever accuse me of being dull. And I have a wonderful, fabulous time. So just gives you a few little anecdotal things there.

Caspar (40:06):

Absolutely. I mean, genetics, of course, is a factor in this because I even had a researcher, Dr. James DiNicolantonio on this, saying that, you know, gen genetics play that part in a lot of things, not just alcohol in your sugar consumption. Some people can have a little and not trigger as much of that addictive kind of influence that you'll have there. But then there's the other part that does it matter if it's a poison? If you're literally saying, Hey, I I'm not that addicted to like this poison, this rat poison here. So it's not that bad. It's still a poison, right? It's still at the end of the day. And that's where I feel people need to come to the realization that it is incredibly toxic. You know, it, it, it is a toxin and we already have so much. And perhaps this is also James, something that we have to think about.

Caspar (40:56):

Many years ago, our grandfather's, great-grandfathers weren't living in a as toxic of an environment. It still wasn't a good thing. But now we have, you know, 80,000 chemicals in our food supply. We have toxins in the air, we have toxins in the water. And then if you're ingesting a known toxin, which is alcohol, I mean, that's the whole reason. It's kind of, you know, getting your liver to not work properly and then kind of making you drunk in that sense and lose all inhibition. And then the next day you're gonna feel like crap 'cause that was the poison, and that's really what it's doing to you. But if we, if we change the frame set to, hey, let's remove poisons and toxins from our life and live a very happy way, I think you'll have a better chance of, of going through with it, not worrying about, well, am I genetically predisposed? Can I have a drink here or there? Because no one is going to, you know, cheers rat poison at the special event. Right?

James Swanwick ([41:54](#)):

Well said, well said. Yes. I mean, look, here's the, here's the facts. An alcoholic beverage is a drink that contains ethanol. Yeah. And that's a type of alcohol that acts as a drug and is produced by the fermentation of grains, fruits or other sources of sugar. Right? Now, would you drink the same substance that goes into the gasoline that fuels your car?

Caspar ([42:20](#)):

No. <laugh>, I would hope not.

James Swanwick ([42:22](#)):

No. But that's what you are drinking every time you choose to drink alcohol, because alcohol contains ethanol, which we put in gasoline. Now, the idea of drinking gasoline from a gasoline gas station pump is ridiculous, preposterous, and yet, albeit in smaller, less harmful quantities, that's what we are doing when we're drinking alcohol. That's what we're doing. We're choosing that. It's preposterous. I mean, we've got it all backwards and thankfully we're waking up to this. I mean, here's the reality. Even if you say, well, I get that it's poison and I'm choosing to consume this poison, what you're effectively saying is, yeah, I get it's poison and I'm choosing to have higher blood pressure, increase my propensity for heart disease, stroke, liver disease, digestive problems. I get that it increases the likelihood that I'll get cancer of the breast, mouth, throat, esophagus, voice box, liver, colon, and rectum.

James Swanwick ([43:31](#)):

I get that. It weakens my immune system increasing the chances of getting sick. I get that it affects my learning and memory and increases the likelihood that I'll have dementia in old age. I get all that. I'm still choosing it. Okay. Right. I can't, I can't. What else can I do? That's fine. But that's what you're choosing. That is what you are choosing. And now your listeners might be saying, I don't have a problem. This is a very interesting conversation between James and Casper. It's fine, but I'm not an alcoholic. I don't have a problem. I'm just a social drinker. Okay? You're just a social drinker. Even seemingly innocent glass of wine per night, seven standard drinks a week is enough to cause some level of brain degeneration. Okay?

Caspar ([44:22](#)):

And, and again, as I know you know, this audience is really about health first. This has to be part of it. You can't just like dismiss some things as, oh, I'll take in the unhealthy there, but, you know, be really healthy here. If you wanna live a healthy lifestyle, you gotta live a healthy lifestyle. You gotta live it through. You can make those mistakes here and there. And again, to me, it's, if you are living in this day and age you are already going to be up against things that, that are going to be detrimental to your health. So why add anything else? You know, why, why go through with that? Why make the conscious choice to add something on top of it? It's the reason that I try and avoid, you know, everything from the airport scanners at times and all these things and avoid stressors and, you know, and wear the wired head buds

instead of any EMF reduction. It, it's the reason I do these things because I understand that that will provide me with longevity, more happiness, more, you know, vitality, all of these things. So I, I would imagine it's, it's again, if you shift your perspective to just, it's just one glass of alcohol, not a big deal to, it's a poison regardless of the amount that you'll start to see, maybe I shouldn't do this and I can live a very healthy and happy life without it.

James Swanwick (45:45):

I think if you just logically asked anyone, do you want to feel healthier and feel more joy and be more present with your kids? Do you want to get off your prescription medication? Mm. And feel the way that nature intended you to feel? Would you like to improve your sleep? Would you like to save your marriage? Would you like to walk through life seeing opportunities rather than closed doors? Would you like to solve problems and challenges in a positive and enthusiastic way? Or would you like to keep lamenting all of the problems and challenges and get frustrated and irritated by them. Most human beings, I would submit 99% would say, yeah, I'll, I'll, yes, I would like all of that.

Caspar (46:35):

Yeah, okay.

James Swanwick (46:36):

Okay, great. Well, the simplest path that I know of is just stop drinking alcohol. That is the first domino. It's the domino that then goes, which knocks over the other dominoes. And the other dominoes are, okay, great, now I stop drinking alcohol. Oh, now my sleep is better. Okay, now I'm sleeping better. Oh, now I'm exercising more regularly. Oh, now I've got that other smaller domino off. Oh, now I'm focusing on my nutrition a bit more. Or I'm noticing I'm less irritable and stressed with my wife and husband. Wow, I'm having a better relationship. Oh, my kids are now seeing I'm having a better relationship with my partner. And so now they're happier and they're less irritable and so forth and so forth and so forth. If you can just knock that one big domino over, I promise you it opens up a cascade of beautiful, healthy habits and joyous living.

Caspar (47:35):

Yeah. Have you witnessed that, James, where you saw people that went through the program or even heard about the, you know, people that have given up alcohol and gone alcohol-free lifestyle and been able to get off drugs? I can imagine sleeping pills is a drug, right? Mm-Hmm, <affirmative> that absolutely you wouldn't need if you didn't have the disrupted and poor quality sleep. That alcohol usually, you know, initiates especially over time. But have you heard other stories of that? I can, you know, just yes, picture, there's gotta be some, there's

James Swanwick (48:03):

A gentleman who's very comfortable with me sharing his name publicly. His name is Evan Melcher. He's a 48-year-old married father of, of one lives out in Atlanta, Georgia. He works in financial services for a very well-known financial management company. And when he joined us three years ago when he was 45, he had been on 10 years of anti-anxiety medication and acid reflux medications. 10 years, a decade. And despite popping these pills, hadn't solved the problem because he was still drinking. Now he wasn't an alcoholic, he was just a socially acceptable drinker. He then came and joined our program. He stopped drinking for 90 days. He was wearing an Oura ring during the process, and he was tracking his health metrics during the process. He took a screenshot of his sleep score and sleep quality just before he started stopping drinking. And then again, at 30 days, 60 days and 90 days, I mean, his sleep scores just absolutely and noticeably transformed so quickly.

James Swanwick ([49:17](#)):

He got off the prescription medication, he got off the prescription medication entirely. He lost 30 pounds. He felt more connected to his wife, he shared with us. Her name is Jennifer. And this is a, a slightly jarring story, but again, he shared this publicly so it's fine to share. His son, three-year-old name was Ezra was actually drowning in a pool. And because he was conscious and not drinking, he had the clarity to jump in and save his son. His son actually did drown and he had to be resuscitated and he survived, thank goodness, and is in perfect health. But he says that if he had been living his life the way he always used to live his life, he probably would've had a couple drinks in him as his son was swimming in that pool. But on that particular day, because he was alcohol-free, he was observant enough to see what had happened, to quickly act to quickly go and save his son's life.

James Swanwick ([50:19](#)):

Now, for your listener who'd like to just see him share that in his own words, you can just go to alcohol-free lifestyle.com/evan1 and one is the number 1. And there'll be a 30 minute video there where you can see Evan Melcher share that exact story. And we actually in B roll, as, as he's sharing the story, we show the, the the Oura ring score where you can see he sleep scores just dramatically improve. And he shares about his resting heart rate, his blood pressure dropping, and he's just flying now. I mean, he is so happy, so engaged, so vibrant. He's been on our podcast now three times 'cause he's just singing the tune of, of an alcohol-free Life. Our podcast is the alcohol-free Lifestyle Podcast. It's an Apple podcast and Spotify, you can just find him. Evan Melcher again is his name. And you know, that's, that's one just one of dozens, hundreds of similar stories of people who've completely transformed their lives because they've knocked over that big domino of alcohol, which has opened up all of these other beautiful, healthy habits.

Caspar ([51:27](#)):

Yeah, it's an amazing story and it really goes to show, listen, I feel like a lot of people understand that alcohol disrupts sleep. There's of course the correlation as you mentioned to heart, but there's a correlation to everything including the gut and your stomach. And you just said heartburn, GERD. And you know, that acid reflux reaction is so correlated to this acidic drink that's terrible for the gut lining that causes a lot of issues can go into these chronic issues. So I, I think there isn't a single system within the body, of course the brain we know, you know, that won't improve with removing that poison from it, even though we may not correlate all the systems to drinking alcohol in this kind of social setting.

James Swanwick ([52:10](#)):

Yes, I agree with you and I think especially in the US the knee jerk reaction when someone presents themselves to a doctor is for the doctor to prescribe medication, go and solve this acid reflux, go and solve this, your anxiety with this anti-anxiety medication. Right? 10 years he was on that stuff. 10 years, and then he stopped drinking alcohol. Guess what? His anxiety went away. His acid reflux went away, his blood pressure dropped, his resting heart rate dropped. He actually said he, he he saved 5 million heartbeats per year by stopping drinking alcohol. So his heart when he was drinking was going at a, let's say, if not a rapid pace, a faster pace than what would be perfectly healthy. And then he stopped drinking alcohol. I'm just tapping my heart here. Yeah. And it slowed down. The resting heart rate slowed down to the way nature intended it to be. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And he said he can track definitively through his Oura ring and the metrics that he saved 5 million heartbeats per year because he stopped drinking alcohol.

Caspar ([53:27](#)):

That's phenomenal. You know, that, that's where you quantify it, right? You could tell people you'll feel better, you'll do this. It's amazing to hear that 5 million heartbeats, which is, you know, how many years probably saving. 'cause the more your heartbeats at that resting rate, the shorter lifespan, we know that.

Yes. Like hummingbirds that have to beat thousands of times. Right. And they have very short lifespans because of that. So if you could get that, and that's the number one cause of disease of death in the US is heart related. So of course that's a huge issue if you wanna live healthy. James, what's next for you? You got the podcast, you have the James Swanwick like show, you've got P 90 framework. Is there anything on the horizon or you just focusing on those things?

James Swanwick ([54:11](#)):

We've been helping individual folks who come to us, putting 'em through our Project 90 process. What we're pivoting to towards is going into corporate America, into organizations and businesses who have hundreds, if not thousands of staff and introducing an alcohol-free lifestyle to them. I can tell you that again, anecdotally executives have gone through our program and stopped drinking, have very quickly got a promotion and just perform better in their job. Business owners very quickly seem to generate hundreds of thousands of dollars, in some cases, millions of dollars in additional revenue because they've got clarity and focus and strategic direction. There's a big problem in corporate America and organizations around sick days. People who who drink tend to take an average of nine additional sick days per year from things that they claim to be flu or food poisoning and things like that.

James Swanwick ([55:15](#)):

I mean, a lot of times it could be, it actually could be the flu because their immune system is just so worn down from the drinking, right? Maybe they don't make the correlation between, oh, my drinking has weakened my immune system, which has allowed me to catch the flu or this cold, which has got me sick. They can just say, oh, I caught something from someone. Yeah. So if you can at least reduce an employee's consumption or a team member's consumption, that company, that organization is just naturally going to perform better. And by performing better, that can mean millions of dollars of, of additional revenue Absolutely generated, or millions of, of of dollars saved because of, you know, you no longer have this high staff turnover. Look, let me tell you, when there's alcohol present at corporate functions, especially human resources, complaints go up, sexual harassment, conflict resolution, people irritated, stress, they hate their boss, they quit.

James Swanwick ([56:17](#)):

Very costly for an organization to have high turnover of staff. 'cause you gotta keep hiring and firing and training and doing payouts and redundancies and I mean, it's a mess. So you asked me what's next, what's next for us is to keep helping our individual clients who are mostly executives and entrepreneurs who come to us, but then move into the corporate scene in the US and really start to help organizations as a whole. And that would transform their, their team performance and then would, would transform the impact that, that, you know, organizations and individuals are able to have in the world.

Caspar ([56:53](#)):

Yeah, I always said, if you wanna be more productive, make more money, live happier, focus on health. And absolutely alcohol is a big portion of that. And living healthy and removing that. Anything that's gonna, you know, not be in in the right frame of getting you to your healthiest spot is just, you need to remove it if you want to do all those other things and live a, what most people would say is a successful life. So James, thank you so much. Where can people learn more about you? How do they get start working with you?

James Swanwick ([57:22](#)):

AlcoholFreeLifestyle.com. You'll find everything you need there. The alcohol-free Lifestyle Podcast is on Spotify and in Apple Podcasts. And I'm quite active on my social media on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and you could find me at, @JamesSwanick.



Caspar ([57:40](#)):

Amazing. Well, thank you so much and keep spreading your message. It's a really important one.

James Swanwick ([57:44](#)):

You're welcome. Thank you so much for having me. You ask great questions and I appreciate you giving me the platform here.

Caspar ([57:50](#)):

I appreciate that too. And be sure to visit [alcoholfreelifestyle.com](http://alcoholfreelifestyle.com) for more information about James' services and listen to his podcast, alcohol-free Lifestyle Podcast on Apple Podcasts. Until next time, continue writing your own healing story.