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Week 48

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Dr. Daniel Amen

“Better Brain Health”

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by friends of Life Outreach International.

ANNOUNCER: Do you want to increase your brain health but don't know where to start? Dr. Daniel Amen is here to help.

DANIEL AMEN: Well, the easiest way to do it is ask yourself this one question: Is what I'm doing now good for my brain or bad for it? And does it make the world better? If you can just answer that with good information and love, you're just gonna start making better decisions.

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RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today", I'm Randy Robison. Blynda Lane is with me.

BLYNDA LANE: Hello, Randy.

RANDY: How's your brain?

BLYNDA: I mean, I wish I could actually see a picture of it, but it would be--it's doing like a happy dance.

RANDY: Oh, you know, that's an interesting question you raised there, because we have someone who takes pictures of brains.

BLYNDA: And not only somebody, but he's got the best name as well, I love--I would--.

RANDY: Okay, go ahead.

BLYNDA: His name is Dr. Amen. Amen, Amen!

RANDY: Dr. Daniel Amen, welcome to "Life Today."

DANIEL: Thank you so much.

RANDY: We do have a book on set that we wanna let people know about called "Change Your Brain Every Day", and we'll mention more about that, but we really wanna get into--I wanna hear kind of what you're doing, for those who are not familiar with your practice, because you're doing some things that are different, that are fascinating, and make a lot of sense, to my brain anyway. So tell us what you do.

DANIEL: So I'm a psychiatrist. As we were talking, I went to medical school at Oral Roberts University, so I got to learn medicine in the context of my faith. And when I decided to be a psychiatrist, we're the only medical specialty that never looks at the organ it treats, and I knew it was wrong, and I knew it would change.

I just had no idea I'd be part of pushing that change. So for the last 35 years at Amen Clinics, we have 11 clinics around the United States, we do a study called brain SPECT imaging. SPECT is a nuclear medicine study that looks at blood flow and activity, it looks at how your brain works.

And we've done almost 300,000 scans on people from 9 months old to 105, from 155 countries, so I have more experience, I think, looking at the brain than almost anyone in human history. And what it taught us is you're not stuck with the brain you have. You can make it better, and I can prove it.

So we did the big NFL study when the NFL was sort of not telling the truth about traumatic brain injury in football. High levels of damage, but 80% of our players got better when we put them on a rehabilitation program. So if your brain is struggling, you've probably not been as bad to your brain as professional football players, but it can be better, and I'm working with the White House Faith Office on the Decade of Brain Health, really trying to get this message out, stop calling people mental-- I hate the term "mental illness"-- and help people want to have a better brain.

BLYNDA: I want a better brain, I do.

RANDY: I want you to have a better brain.

BLYNDA: Thank you, everybody probably does. Okay, so hearing that though, the hope that I hear there is whatever someone has at the point that they're hearing this message--in fact, your book says you can change your brain every day.

Is that something-- is it like an easy five-point steps that I can take? Like, how does somebody change their brain every day?

DANIEL: Well, the easiest way to do it is ask yourself this one question every day, and this is really the question of the Decade of Brain Health. Is what I'm doing now, talking to you, good for my brain, or bad for it, and does it make the world better?

If you can just answer that with good information and love, love of yourself, love of your family, love of the reason God put you on earth, you're just gonna start making better decisions. And if you want a better memory tomorrow, go to bed a half an hour early tonight, because when you sleep, your brain cleans and washes itself, and that's good for you, but if you're hooked on a Netflix series, like, "No, let me just watch one more," that's very bad for your brain.

RANDY: Interesting, okay, you mentioned some of your thoughts and as well as some practices. Your WHOLE-4 system looks at four areas. Walk us through some of that so we can get an understanding of the things that actually impact our brains.

DANIEL: So both of us went to ORU, and the first week of medical school, Syd Garrett, who was our dean, came into our classroom and said, "Never think of your patients by their diagnosis. Always think of them in these four big circles." And America is in a WHOLE-4 crisis, and the first circle is your brain and body, it's your biology. So in America, we're sicker than we've ever been.

Half the population is diabetic or pre-diabetic. Seventy-five percent of us are overweight or obese. I published 3 studies on 33,000 people that showed as your weight went up, the actual physical size and function of your brain goes down.

It should scare the fat off anyone. And it's like, no, we have to be serious, being underweight is not good for your brain, being overweight is really bad for your brain. And Alzheimer's is expected to double in the next 30 years.

This is not good, we're in a biological crisis. Seventy-seven percent of young people do not qualify for military service because they're unhealthy. This is a national security crisis.

We're in a mental health crisis. So Dr. Garrett wrote biology, then he wrote psychology, which is your mind. We now have epidemics of anxiety, depression, ADHD, autism, and addiction.

Depression is the number one most expensive illness worldwide. Fifty-seven percent of young females report being persistently sad. We've never experienced anything like this.

So biological, psychological, social. Fifty-eight percent of young people report being persistently lonely, and loneliness has the same negative health consequences as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. So we're more connected online, but we have fewer friends.

We actually have 40% fewer friends than people in 1990. So biological, psychological, social, spiritual. Fifty-eight percent of young people lack a sense of meaning and purpose.

Church attendance is down, and if you don't believe in God, it actually triples your risk of depression. But I believe the answer to these epidemics is not to see them as separate disorders but as different expressions of the same unhealthy lifestyle and toxic exposures, that have the same cure. And I developed a program called the Amen WHOLE-4, which, I'm very excited because we just finished 100 pilots in 7 countries, and it's a 6-week foundational program, it's a small group program, 12-week mastery program.

And the people at the end of six weeks, dramatically better. Better in hope, better in positivity, better memory, better energy, better quality of life. I'm really excited.

The church can be a place of illness, or a place of healing. And I don't know if you remember the Daniel Plan out of Saddleback Church and Rick Warren, well, I wrote that.

RANDY: Were you the Daniel in the Daniel Plan?

DANIEL: I was not the Daniel, that was the Daniel in the Old Testament. But it was Pastor Rick Warren and me and Dr. Mark Hyman. And the Daniel Plan came out of a prayer.

I went to my church in Southern California, and as I watched the donuts, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, ice cream festival, I'm like, "I'm going to get my soul fed. These people are trying to kill me." And I prayed God would use me to change the culture of food at church. And then two weeks later, Rick called me and said, "I'm fat, my church is fat, will you help me?"

BLYNDA: Wow, okay, so that's actually a question I had about the brain and brain health, and thinking about these kind of four quadrants. How much of your brain health is lifestyle versus genetics versus even spiritual? Like, how much--you know, am I predisposed, because of my genetics, that I'm gonna have a harder time having good brain health, or do we all have a clean slate?

DANIEL: No, genes matter. I have an acronym I like a lot, I talk about it in the book, called BRIGHT MINDS. You want to keep your brain healthy or rescue it, you have to prevent or treat the 11 major risk factors, and we've already talked about two of them.

BRIGHT MINDS, the D is diabesity, having high blood sugar, being overweight, the S is sleep. But the G is genetics, and if you have one of the APOE4 genes, that increases your risk of Alzheimer's disease. But genes load the gun.

It's what you do that often pulls the trigger. So if I had two copies of those genes--so I do a show on my Instagram called "Scan My Brain", and we recently scanned Tim Tebow, and Tim had two of the E4 genes, and he played football, so the H in BRIGHT MINDS is head trauma. I'm like, "Buddy, you need to be super serious about this."

So I want everyone--what do you have in your family? I have obesity and heart disease. I don't have heart disease, I'm not overweight, why?

I know my risk, and I'm on an obesity heart disease prevention program every day of my life. We adopted our two nieces because both their parents had substance abuse issues, and I tell them all the time, "You need to be on an addiction prevention program every day."

Because some people go, "Well, I'm an alcoholic because it runs in my family," but a whole bunch of other people go, "I don't drink because this runs in my family," right? That's the wiser--.

RANDY: Do we all basically have the same kind of brain, or are there different types of brains?

DANIEL: Oh, any of us that went to kindergarten know there are different types of brains. They went to--in fact, in the book I talk about "know your brain type", and there's five primary types. Are you balanced, you know, life is just pretty easy for you?

Are you spontaneous? That's my ADD group, creative, restless, impulsive, distracted, always waiting until the last minute. Or the persistent group, they like things a certain way, and if things don't go that way, they get upset.

There's this sensitive group, they're deeply empathic, but can get sad easily. And there's the cautious group. They're ten minutes early because they're always thinking in their head, "Well, if I got a flat tire, I would take this time."

And then there are combinations of those groups, and so I think everybody should take a multiple vitamin, everybody should take an omega-3 fatty acid supplement, everybody should know their vitamin D level and optimize it, and then whatever supplements you take should be directed to your type. And if you tend to be sensitive, saffron, I'm a huge fan of saffron.

If you tend to be cautious, I like theanine. So I like to target the treatment to your brain, not one treatment fits everyone, right?

BLYNDA: Okay, so this is gonna exclude him, because he's male. But, so, for females who are watching, and I have a thyroid issue, and I have, you know, hormonal, postmenopausal things-sorry, I know, TMI, sorry, Randy.

RANDY: It's okay, it's okay.

BLYNDA: So the brain fog idea kind of fits in a lot of categories. Is that my thyroid, or is it my hormones? So are you saying that--of course, with supplements and those sorts of things, but there's actually practices I can do that can help alleviate the brain fog?

DANIEL: Oh, absolutely, and if you're--.

RANDY: Personal session here, all right?

DANIEL: Well, if you're postmenopausal, right, I mean, almost everybody over 50--.

BLYNDA: We're just getting really, really comfortable.

DANIEL: I think it's-- the N in BRIGHT MINDS is neurohormones. And so, is your thyroid optimized? Are you on hormone replacement?

Marty Makary, the FDA commissioner, just came out and said, "The nonsense about women shouldn't be taking hormones is nonsense," because you know why our hormones drop with age? It's the planet's way of getting rid of you.

BLYNDA: Yeah, it feels that way.

DANIEL: And I'm not okay with the plan. I'm like, not okay with the plan.

And so, there's some supplements that can support it, like ashwagandha, for example, decreases cortisol but also increases testosterone, and testosterone is just as important for women as it is for men. We think of it as virility and muscle tone, but it's also mood and memory.

BLYNDA: Yes, it's the memory and the brain fog.

RANDY: And the mood, we wanna work on the mood.

BLYNDA: I'm always in a good mood, Randy.

RANDY: You are, that's great. Okay, so in just the title, I have two questions because "Change Your Brain Every Day" implies a couple of things. First of all, it implies that you can change your brain, which we've discussed, but is that true for everyone, would be the question, or is there a point where you're just stuck with what you got?

Because I think a lot of people think, "Oh, I mean, that's great for you, but for me, it's not gonna change." And the second question would be, does it have to be every day, or can I just get it fixed and then go on with my life?

DANIEL: No, it has to be every day. I mean, it just depends how many of your brain cells you actually wanna keep. It's like what they say with flossing, only floss the teeth you want to actually keep, right?

Every day your brain produces about 700 new baby stem cells. So there's an area of the hippocampus involved with mood and memory, and the hippocampus is Greek for "seahorse", and so every day your brain is producing about 700 baby seahorses, and your habits determine whether or not they grow, or whether you murder them. So one of my really well-known patients who I love, I couldn't get her to stop smoking pot.

And then I'm like, "She's an animal lover," so I told her about the baby seahorses, and I'm like, "The marijuana is killing the seahorses." She goes, "Dr. Amen, that's so unfair, you know I love animals." I'm like, "You're a criminal when it comes to your seahorses."

BLYNDA: Well, I don't wanna be a murderer. I want them all to live.

DANIEL: Less alcohol, less marijuana, more sleep, better supplementation, walk like you're late, 45 minutes, 4 times a week.

BLYNDA: How much water should we have?

DANIEL: About half your weight in ounces. So if I'm 150 pounds, I should have about 75 ounces every day, so hydration is important.

Your brain is about 80% water. Your brain is also about 60% fat, so low-fat diets are bad for the health of your brain.

BLYNDA: And isn't that interesting, we grew up in the '80s, I did, it was all low fat, low fat, low fat.

DANIEL: High sugar, and you saw the incidence of diabetes and obesity skyrocket.

RANDY: Yep, okay, but I can--everyone has hope. We can have a better brain.

DANIEL: Well, if NFL players who've been hit in the head thousands of times and have really terrible-looking brains can get better, your brain can be better, and it literally can be better tomorrow if you do the right things today.

RANDY: I love that, and that's why I want people to get "Change Your Brain Every Day," and we would love to send that to you today. And the way we're gonna do it today is we're gonna ask you to be involved in something that is critical where people are malnourished because they don't have food, literally sometimes no food, and we wanna step in and--hey, we care about your health, we care about the health of others.

Let's get together and let's do something about it. So watch this, and you'll see how together we can help improve the health of other people and improve your health today, watch this.

ANNOUNCER: This is a clinic for mothers whose children are suffering from the effects of malnutrition. Kiera Pretorius, daughter of Isak Pretorius, is seeing for the first time Angolan children struggling to survive the consequences of not having enough food to keep them alive.

ISAK PRETORIUS: So you can see the other signs, I mean, you can see how his ribs are just sticking out, you see. I mean, look how little his arms are. I mean, his arms are like the size of my thumb, you know?

KIERA PRETORIUS: And it's just skin, there's no muscle.

ISAK: No, it's just skin and bone really, because that's the state at which its nutrition is at. It's so weak and so malnourished that literally the body starts to shut down.

KIERA: Do you think you'll recover?

ISAK: Chances are that he will survive, that we will be able to save his life, but there are also many children in this state that don't leave clinics like this. Just do it. It's okay to cry, it's okay.

KIERA: I've grown up knowing many of these stories and seeing the photos and hearing, you know, the heart-wrenching stories of young mothers with their young children that I want to do the best for them, but genuinely just don't have the resources. Every time I see or hear these stories and being here today, it affects me and it deeply hurts my heart.

So I'm asking you to not let it become normal to you. Don't let it become something you become immune to.

ISAK: I ask you to hear that appeal from a 19-year-old girl who knows what happens if you look away, who knows what happens when this starts to become normal, when we shut our hearts down, when we try to think through this with our heads instead of just listening to our hearts. And so I'm asking you today to listen to your heart, listen to the heart of Kiera, listen to my heart, listen to your heart, because our heart's cry is the same as this mother's, and I believe yours is too. And that is to do everything that we can do to save this little boy, everything that we can do to give this mother what she needs for her child.

RANDY: It's hard to watch.

BLYNDA: It's very hard to watch, and actually, Randy, I recently got to walk in that malnutrition clinic, the same one that Kiera was at, and I got to see these mothers holding on to the children who look like it's their last breath, and it's so painful to watch those stories, and now I've been there and I've seen it. And yet Isak was saying it's--our heart becomes the heart of the mother, but I believe our heart becomes God's heart. He has a heart for these children to be saved, to be freed, to live full, and when I capture what God's heart is, Randy, I want to do what I can to be the hands and feet of Jesus, because I know it's reflective of his love for them.

RANDY: Yeah, yeah, well said. Let me tell you how we're doing that right now. The Mission Feeding program is such a beautiful program, and it's one that has been proven for many years now.

The only reason Isak would say that odds are this child will make it is because Mission Feeding was there that day, and there are places where Mission Feeding is working, but there are also places where it does not exist, and we want to take it there. We want you to be a part of taking it there. How does that look?

Let me tell you real quick. On average, it's about 11 cents per meal to deliver that life-giving bowl of--we call it soup, it's thicker, there's more to it than that, it's vitamin-enriched. That nourishment, is what it is, is given to a child every day for about 11 cents per meal.

That means your gift of $44 today would provide 400 meals. Imagine, when one meal will save a life, what 400 would do. Some of you could give $77 to provide 700 meals.

$110 would provide 1000 meals. You can do so much, some of you could give $1100. That would actually help provide 10,000 meals.

Our goal right now is to provide 20 million meals, because there are that many children that need a meal, not just once, but every day. Will you join Mission Feeding right now?

Will you be that hope for a mother, that nourishment for a child, that expression of God, his heart? I hope you'll go online, go to the phone, make the best gift that you can.

ANNOUNCER: This holiday season, many families will gather around tables filled with food, but for mothers in impoverished communities, simply finding enough food to feed their children can be a daily struggle. Through Life's Christmas Meals Blessing, your generosity can help provide 20 million nutritious meals for hungry children. One meal, one child, and one precious life at a time.

Eleven cents, that's all it takes to provide a life-saving, nourishing meal. Your gift of $44 today can help provide 400 meals, $77 will provide 700 meals, and $110 will help provide 1000 meals for children in desperate need. And with any gift, you may request James Robison's final book, "A Life Proclaiming Freedom," as a thank-you for your support.

Discover the freedom James found in Jesus and how you can experience it too. With your gift of $110 or more, request the "Fruitful and Flourishing" bundle, a beautiful collection of daily encouragement to remind you of God's faithful care and his promise of guidance from Isaiah chapter 58, verse 11.

Finally, with your gift of $1100 or more, you will help provide 10,000 meals for children in need, and can request Life's beautiful bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd". So please call, write, or make your gift online today.

BLYNDA: We're here in Lobito, Angola, and as you can see, the children are lined up for their daily Mission Feeding, and this is made possible because of friends like you. And I want to tell you, on behalf of Betty and Randy and all of the Life Outreach International team, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. This was made possible because of you, but we still need your help.

There are other villages that are in desperate need of a Mission Feeding program, and it cannot happen without you. So would you continue to give, would you search your heart and be generous and say yes to this, because without you, it can't happen. Thank you and God bless you.

RANDY: We hope to hear from you today, and when you do, again, request Dr. Amen's book "Change Your Brain Every Day", I know it'll help people.

BLYNDA: It's going to help people, I mean, what hope in the title? I love it, it's so much hope.

"Change Your Brain Every Day". Thank you so much, Dr. Amen.

RANDY: Your websites, for people that want to follow up?

DANIEL: So Amen, like the last word in a prayer, clinics.com. Or amenwhole4 to learn about how they can bring that program to their church.

RANDY: Great, thank you for bringing this to us today and to our audience. We appreciate you guys being here, we'll see you again next time on "Life Today".

BLYNDA: Bye.

♪♪♪

♪ You can't hear me cry ♪

♪ See my dreams all die ♪

♪ From where you're standing ♪

ANNOUNCER: At Life Outreach, we believe in making a lasting impact on your life and the lives of others. Through Life Planning Services, we offer estate planning and giving solutions that provide tax advantages, income, and the satisfaction of supporting a cause close to your heart.

With options like bequests, charitable gift annuities, and IRA rollovers, you can chart a purposeful path, creating a legacy of love and hope for future generations. Call or visit Life Planning Services today.

KIRT SCHNEIDER: They look at their next door neighbor that doesn't believe in God, but they seem to be such a nice person, and they think, "Would God really send that person to hell?"

ANNOUNCER: Next week.

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