

The Keys to Trusting Your Gut

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Gary Vaynerchuk, a prominent entrepreneur and digital marketing expert, transformed his family's liquor business from \$3 million to \$60 million in revenue through pioneering online marketing strategies
- Traditional Eastern European natural health practices have had a deep and lasting effect on his lifestyle and beliefs about the body's innate healing abilities
- Your body has a considerable capacity to maintain and repair itself, and much of what supports that capacity is within our control. Good metabolic health is associated with less chronic pain and more available energy
- Metabolically healthy people also tend to be perpetually curious. You need to have enough energy to be curious, and most people don't have enough energy because they're metabolically depleted. Optimism is another feature commonly found among healthy people
- Vaynerchuk's books, such as "Crush It!" and "Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook," reflect his expertise in leveraging social media to build personal and business brands

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In this video, I interview Gary Vaynerchuk about his family roots and how his upbringing contributed to his current success. Vaynerchuk, often known as Gary Vee, is a prominent entrepreneur, author, speaker, and internet personality.

He's best known for his work in digital marketing and social media, leading his own company VaynerMedia, a digital agency focused on social media-first approaches. He first gained prominence by revolutionizing his family's wine business through innovative online marketing, which included creating one of the first e-commerce platforms for alcohol and hosting a daily webcast called "Wine Library TV."

His efforts dramatically increased the business's annual revenue from \$3 million to \$60 million. Vaynerchuk has also authored several books, including "Crush It! Why NOW Is the Time to Cash in on Your Passion" and "Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World," which provide insights into leveraging social media to build personal brands and businesses.

He is also involved in venture capital, having invested in companies like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Uber early on. Through his personal brand and his company, he's become a leading influencer among marketing professionals and entrepreneurs.

Family, Faith, and Health

Vaynerchuk was born in Babruysk, Belarus, which was part of the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991. His family emigrated to the United States when he was 3 years old. His father opened a liquor store and Gary, even as a young boy, would help out, because that's how families in Belarus work. They work together.

Eastern Europeans also tend to have deep spiritual family values, which is relatively rare in the U.S. these days. I heard him on a few other podcasts and was intrigued by the fact that he was so tuned into the spiritual aspect of reality.

I'm not as interested in WHAT he does, as HOW he does it. Where does the passion come from? I'm also intrigued by how the love of one's parents can contribute to a person's success in life. Are the two connected? I believe so.

Natural Healing — Your Body Knows What to Do

Eastern Europeans also tend to be far savvier about natural health than many Americans. Vaynerchuk recounts the story of how his great grandmother would wake him and his sister up when she came to visit and make them go outside and walk on the grass in their bare feet. Today, this is known as “grounding” or “earthing.” One caveat worth adding for readers here: Grounding is not recommended on North American soil, which carries stray voltage from the electrical grid. Where that is a concern, contact with ocean water is the better route.

“I’m very affected by my upbringing,” he says. “It’s my framework. I was also taught to never go to the doctor, ever, for my whole life. And also, no foreign chemicals. If I take two Advil right now, I’m unconscious.

Whether it’s the foods, or the things you put into your body, or how you interact with nature. I also remember my family being weird — or so I thought as a kid in the 80s in America.

We’d go to Sandy Hook, the beach, and my family would immediately run in and grab sand from the bottom of the ocean and scrub their faces with it. The other thing, literally anytime I wasn’t feeling well, for the first 15 years of my life, my mom or my grandma would say ‘Drink some tea and go to sleep ...’

If you asked 18-year-old me in 1993, ‘Talk about medicine,’ my initial answers would be ‘ginger, cinnamon, mint, red beets.’ When I used to have a chest cold, my mom would put vodka on a rack and heat it up and put it on my chest. Not Vicks VapoRub. Just real ancient, historical ways of doing stuff ...

I just remembered something I haven’t thought about 30 years. I used to think of my body like a superhero. If the superhero character got their thumb cut off, the thumb would just grow back in. I literally grew up thinking that if I did nothing, that it would fix itself.

Three weeks ago, I jammed my thumb playing basketball very badly. My friends were like, ‘Let’s put some ice on it.’ It swelled up. I didn’t do it.

A week later, my trainer said, 'You know, it's interesting that you didn't do the ice thing, because I've been reading a lot about how the body naturally does it. It swells up to protect you. It's a natural cast.' It was just interesting the way he was talking about it. And he said, 'Some people are now debating that you're actually better off not icing it.'"

Two notes on the passage above. Whether to ice a minor soft-tissue injury is genuinely debated in sports medicine, and Vaynerchuk's account is a reasonable description of one side of it. A jammed thumb is also a low-stakes example. The principle does not scale: a fracture, a deep wound, a head injury or an infection needs assessment, and "the body will fix itself" is not a basis for skipping one.

On never seeing a doctor — that is Vaynerchuk describing how he was raised, not advice, and he returns to it himself later in this interview with a warning about friends who took it too far. That later passage is the one to read alongside this one.

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Your body has a considerable capacity to maintain and repair itself, and a good deal of what supports that capacity is within our control — what we eat, how we move, how much natural light we get. That is worth acting on. It is not the whole story: genetic conditions, infections, injuries, and cancers occur in people who do everything right. Good metabolic health is associated with less chronic pain and more energy, but that is a tendency rather than a guarantee. Chronic pain has many causes — injury, autoimmune disease, nerve damage, endometriosis, cancer among them — and living with it does not mean someone has failed to look after themselves.

Metabolically healthy people also tend to be perpetually curious. You need to have enough energy to be curious, and most people don't have enough energy because they're metabolically depleted. Like Vaynerchuk suggests, optimism is another feature commonly found among healthy people.

"I believe my optimistic point of view on everything has an incredible impact on my life," Vaynerchuk says. "So, it goes both ways. I grew up in my dad's liquor store, and so, I got into very bad habits and really hurt my back. My QL.

But I would say soft tissue and fascial work has given me a new lease on life. I've always felt healthy. But I definitely had aches and pains and mobility issues until I got serious about that seven, 10 years ago."

Foundational Basics Pay Off

The challenge most of us have is that our work doesn't in any way, shape, or form resemble the work of our ancestors, whose work forced them to move about all day long. We don't do that. Most people are stuck behind a desk most of the day. There are serious consequences of this, including aches and pains.

As noted by Vaynerchuk, when you violate your own inner wisdom, your body will communicate your mistake to you, frequently in the form of pain, discomfort, or fatigue.

For example, most people realize that they feel better after spending time outdoors in a natural setting. Just being in the sun has tremendous healing benefits, not only because it prompts vitamin D production but also because the near-infrared rays in sunlight nourish your body in other ways.

Sunlight interacts with light receptor proteins called chromophores in your body. When light hits the chromophores, they activate a variety of biological processes, including mitochondrial signaling, nitric oxide release, and ATP production — processes that researchers think may support DNA repair and cellular regeneration. Most of the Eastern European patients that I treated instinctively knew that the sun is a source of nutrition and were outside regularly.

The same thing goes for getting dirty, which helps strengthen your immune system. "I still have a very good relationship with germs," Vaynerchuk says. "It's incredible to me how infrequent I struggle with any kind of cold." Today, we know that as the hygiene

hypothesis, which suggests that if you're overly hygienic and too assiduous about cleaning with antiseptics, your immune system becomes weaker. The hypothesis has been refined since it was first proposed – current versions emphasize early and varied exposure to environmental microbes rather than cleanliness as such, and none of it argues against hand washing or normal hygiene.

Finding Balance

In the interview, we also talk about the role of media and how it's being used for propaganda, including health propaganda.

“One of the great things that happened to me was I was born in the Soviet Union, but I grew up in America. So, propaganda was something I thought about all the time. Like when Reagan was president, I could sense that he was doing a good PR job. At 10, I understood.

I was also very entrepreneurial, and very quickly, in my early 20s, I'm like ‘Everything is business.’ We now talk about Big Food, Big Pharma. It was very, very intuitive to me in my 20s. And so, I've lived my adult life taking everything with a grain of salt.

I feel like that's becoming a more modern conversation as people are trying to figure out east-west, historical versus modern. And you know, I do think people overcorrect the other way.

I've got personal [friends] who so have demonized modern medicine that they are no longer with us, because they didn't do some things that they should have that probably could have helped them. So, I think a lot about finding the middle.”

As mentioned, while not a health expert, Vaynerchuk's perspective on health tends to be intuitively spot-on, thanks to his upbringing. The passage just above is the most important thing he says in this interview, and it is worth sitting with: People he knew died because they rejected treatments that could have helped them. Ultimately, you'd want to trust your body to figure it out. It is not that you abandon rationality and data —

you certainly need to take that into consideration — but your own experience of your body belongs alongside expert advice rather than in place of it. Neither one on its own is enough.

On Marketing Well

Next, our conversation transitions into areas that Vaynerchuk is most known for, namely marketing and entrepreneurship. He comments:

"I think what I've done well is communicate to people about incredible truths [that] in marketing ... have been fruitful. I think people are getting a lot more alternative knowledge from the way the internet works and things of that nature. But I think I'm incredibly practical.

It's funny, I think about business and marketing the way that you and I are discussing health right now. If you're worried about your body, why on earth would you not listen to your body? I find something very interesting about the medical industry, which is they like to fight each other on who's right.

And I see it in marketing. I tell a lot of marketing ideological professors or pontificators who also write books like I do — 'Wait a minute, if you're so good at marketing, why doesn't your book sell?' I grew up learning marketing by trying to help my father's liquor store do more business, because that's what you do for your family business.

And so, since I was 6 years old, I've been obsessed with attention. Let me explain what I mean. What I find amazing about what you and I are doing right now is we couldn't do this 40 years ago. Humans that have passion or expertise for things couldn't get into the world. We needed to have a gatekeeper say that we'll interview you or will give you three minutes on this show.

But no one had platforms. And so, I've been focused on attention my whole life. And now, every platform allows for attention. That is a remarkable change in the world. So, for example, I believe that what I was doing at 6, which was paying attention to what the cars that were driving by my lemonade stand would most likely look at to see that my lemonade was 25 cents.

From that day on to today, I spend all of my time trying to understand where consumer attention is. What are they paying attention to? What do they look at? Which platforms? Is it direct mail? Is it Google? Is it YouTube? Is it TikTok? And so, my great passion is understanding where attention is and then communicating in practical, optimistic terms what we are talking about."

3 Keys to Marketing Success

In the early 2000s, Vaynerchuk broke out with a wine show on YouTube called Wine Library TV. He cites three reasons for the success of that show.

"One, I was deeply knowledgeable and passionate about wine at that point, and I spoke about wine in a way that no one had ever spoken about it before. Wine was put on a very elitist pedestal. And as you probably know, through your life, people are intimidated by wine, right? ...

So, I wanted to make it less intimidating. I spoke about it in very casual terms, and I would compare it to things that people knew. Instead of talking about a wine tasting like 'an esoteric cassis from the south of France,' I would say, 'You know that grape Jolly Rancher you loved as a kid?' I made it relatable.

And finally, I used a new medium. I was able to use YouTube when it first came out when nobody really knew how big it was going to be to reach a lot more people than, let's say, The New York Times' dining section.

I believe the framework that I started for wine is what I do now. I have a marketing company called VaynerMedia that works with the biggest companies in the world to do their marketing and social and traditional channels. But I feel passionate for the people that are listening that are entrepreneurial.

I just wrote a new book called 'Day Trading Attention,' which is really my thesis. I couldn't explain to everyone here how great of an opportunity everybody has to reach an audience for the first time, really, in the history of distribution, [in a way that's] immediate and creative.

For the first 15 years, it was email marketing. You would have to amass a lot of followers, and then you would post and a percentage of them would see it. We now live in a new era where it's really profound.

Every individual piece of content on LinkedIn, on YouTube, on Instagram, has the potential to reach a very broad audience based on the quality of the piece of content, not on how many followers you have.

This is a level of meritocracy of information and entertainment that we have never seen in the history of the world. And I could not recommend more for people to get very serious about organic social media, meaning you just post — you don't even have to run media ads on it — for you and your platform.”

The Hidden Connection Between Your Gut and Your Intuition

Vaynerchuk continues:

“I turned on Netflix the other night and saw a documentary about gut health trending in the top 10. I was happy to see that. I'm personally fascinated by intuition and the fact that — I believe — the gut is your primary brain, and your brain is second.”

He's, again, spot-on. Your gut is the primary way that you obtain health, and I would say the large majority of the public do not have good gut health. It correlates really strongly with metabolic flexibility, the ability to optimally generate cellular energy. They're

intimately related, and if you don't have good gut health, you can't connect to your gut, which is sort of a euphemistic way of saying you can't connect to your energy or your intuition.

AI Will Revolutionize Information Sharing yet Again

Of course, we now stand at the precipice of yet another revolution, in terms of information gathering and sharing. In the last several years, we've seen the rise of tremendous censorship, especially pertaining to natural or alternative health, which is in direct competition with Big Pharma.

For a time, after being deplatformed everywhere, I feared the knowledge I and many others have and share would eventually be lost forever. Now, I realize that's not the case.

Artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT is rapidly overtaking traditional search engines, and there's a tremendous opportunity in that. Just about anyone can create their own AI chatbots trained on the material YOU want it to know, and at present, there doesn't appear to be a way to put that genie back in the box.

More Information

To learn more, you can pick up any one of his books, listen to his [podcast](#), or follow him on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), or [TikTok](#).

In addition to "[Crush It! Why NOW Is the Time to Cash In on Your Passion](#)," "[Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World](#)" and "[Day Trading Attention: How to Actually Build Brand and Sales in the New Social Media World](#)," he's also coming out with a children's book called "Meet Me in the Middle." It's a story about a patient pig and an eager eagle.

"Patience is [among] my top five favorite traits in a human being," he says. "However ... a lot of people, when they hear me talking about patience, think that I'm talking about non-action, or that I'm talking about laziness. And I keep telling people, there's

a reason that there are separate words. Laziness and patience are not the same ...

I created V Friends, it's my Sesame Street-meets-Pokémon, to help kids and parents finally find the middle, because everything can be great and balanced, and most things aren't, really, where they're at."

This article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult a qualified healthcare provider before making changes to your health regimen.