



**Episode #139:**

**Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman on Redefining Giftedness and Intelligence**

January 8, 2019

Debbie: Hey Scott, welcome to the podcast.

Scott: Hey Debbie, thanks for having me on. I'm so glad I could finally be on the show.

Debbie: I know. I remember when I first reached out to you, I don't know if one of your TED Talks had just blown up or something, but you were like, I'm not accepting any interview requests. And I was like, uh, okay. So I just, I've been kind of gently pestering you for a little bit, so I appreciate that this is happening. So you and I had a chance to talk this summer at my book stop in New York. We did an awesome panel with Marcus Soutra from Eye to Eye and in that conversation you shared your story. You know, I know that the work that you do is really personal for you and that and that's how you got into the work and your work encompasses so many different facets now. So I would never pigeonhole you, but I would love to know a little bit about your own journey, who you were as a young child and a student to where to where you are today and how you went through that transition.

Scott: Okay. So I was always a very creative, quirky kid, I guess you could say. I used to have a treasure chest of, that my mom, my mom's friends made me of all sorts of different costumes and capes from different superheroes. And I would, without thinking that it was inappropriate wear them to school. Um, I just was in ravenously curious and interested in everything. And I also, uh, on top of that, I mean I had an auditory learning disability which was, it made it very difficult for me to process things in real time. So I really resorted to my imagination. I had a really rich fantasy life, but no one could see that of course. And I really kind of checked out and it creates quite a cycle because the more I checked out, the more they'd tell my parents I think something's really wrong with your son. And then the more that they would tell my parents that there's something really wrong with your son, the more wrong I would suddenly be perceived to be by everyone.

It's fascinating how that works. And I just was just really creative in my own room doing all sorts of things, acting out soap operas, writing stories, creative writing. I was really into creative writing. But, uh, my, my parents did let me have some creative outlets like I went to a performing arts summer camp that I really loved. Um, but I was in Special Ed and was taking remedial classes for my auditory processing disability as well as um, my high anxiety. And uh, I'd say like I was just unquestioningly kept in that system until ninth grade when a Special Ed teacher took me aside. And she was actually a sub. She was the covering for the regular teacher that day. I'd never seen her before. And she took me aside after class and said, you know, I know this is like the first time that I've been here, but like, you know, it just is very clear to me that you're yearning for something more.

You know, like, why are you still here in this classroom? And I was so taken back because no one ever asked me that question before and it never dawned on me to ask myself that question. And maybe because of my personality, but as soon as I asked myself the question, why am I here? It really quickly turned into like,

yeah, why am I here? Like I'm getting out! You know I always had this, like, I always had this really rebellious side of me that uh, I've just always had it, like it's just an undeniable part of my DNA or something, you know? And I remember that moment, like someone empowering me to be rebellious. Like that's all I need. That's all it takes for me. It's all. This does a little bit of a nudge to be rebellious. But it took nine grades for even that little nudge, I mean, all it was

I mean, you think about it, oh, how simple and easy was that for a teacher to just take a student aside and, but no one had dawned on doing that in my nine grades. You get, you just get caught up in the system, these kids, poor kids, just get these labels and then just unquestioningly, um, are given the same low challenging material without it, without ever questioning whether that wouldn't grow or change as humans. You know, it's like you're not allowed to grow with that label, you know? It's like what do you mean I'm not allowed to grow with that label, like that's ridiculous. Anyway, so long story short because I don't want to like just go on and on with the story, but I did take myself out of Special Ed in ninth grade and signed up for mainstream classes to see what I was capable of achieving.

And I literally did not realize that before this moment that I actually enjoyed learning. I was like, you know, like I, I didn't just have to have this private fantasy creative world that like no one knew about that was secret, but I'm allowed to actually show intelligence, you know, like, I don't know, it was just such an eyeopening moment for me. Um, I was like, wow, I'm voraciously curious about everything. I signed up for Latin. I signed up for advanced English classes, history. I've had history class, you know, I had to catch up on, I wasn't college bound in ninth grade and I was like, wow, I could actually be college bound. Like that was, that was really news to me as well. So. So yeah, long story short, I mean I really found that once I really looked to see what I was capable of and people supported me in my decision to do that, it, things just took off.

Debbie: Yeah. I was just curious about, you know, you mentioned that you were feeling like you were wrong, you know, that you had been pigeon holed, you'd been labeled in this space. And that's something I hear a lot from and I talk a lot about how our kids kind of grow up feeling that they're broken, they're wrong, they need to be fixed and you know, or that some part of who they inherently are isn't okay. And it sounds like you were in that space too. I'm just wondering, just, I'm wondering if in those years before the teacher pulled you aside and said, hey, I think, you know, there's a lot there, there's other things. You don't really belong here anymore. Had you, yourself felt like, wait a minute. I think everybody else is getting this wrong, you know?

Scott: No, I did not actually question it. Um, I, I, I knew in my bones that something was wrong. I knew that there was a mismatch between people's expectations of me and I could feel it in my intuition, but I did not have thoughts of grit. I mean, here's something that you might find interesting because we found this looking at my old papers. At each time, you know, they asked like, what do you want to be when you grow up? And I have it saved, it said academic PhD Psychologist.

Debbie: Seriously? Wow.

Scott: Yeah, yeah. So I feel like, and my mom said that one of the school psychologists said to her that they thought I had what's called delusions of grandeur because I told the, and I remember them, I remember what I said to that psychologist. I actually remember that moment because they had me see a psychologist, they said, you know what, you know, what are you, what do you want to do some someday?

I remember looking at his door and saying, I want to be a psychologist, I want to be like you someday. I think from that they told my parents that. So I guess to answer your question, I, it's not like I necessarily. I did have ambitions, uh, but I did, I did feel too timid, I guess, too shy to like question the way things were and I kind of accepted it until. But there's obviously a part of me that really was just waiting for someone to say to me like, hey, you're not, you're not so, you're not so bad. To this day by the way, to this day I am super sensitive to expectations. I wonder, I think in my studies of twice exceptional children or just kids with learning disabilities or as you say, you know, as the great Debbie Reber says differently wired. Anyone who's differently wired, I think there's a common thing there where they grow up just being hyper, hyper sensitive to how the person is perceiving them. And I can't completely kick that, even to this day. I can spiral downward really fast, but I can also spiral upward really fast, you know, like I'm really in tune with like the resonance or frequency of the person I'm talking to. And yeah. I don't know if you resonate with all of this or the kids you've worked with.

Debbie: Yeah, I think. I think it's, it's interesting and, and incredible to hear with what you've accomplished that still comes, comes up for you. Um, and I also think it makes sense. You know, if you, if you kind of grow up always feeling as if you're not being understood or people aren't really seeing you for who you are, then it makes sense that there would be a, just an awareness that at any given time people may still not be seeing you for who you are.

Scott: Yeah, I think that's exactly right, that's exactly what it is. But even people who are just normal, what's the opposite of differently wired? What, what's the rest of the pop-?

Debbie: Well, the common word is NTs for neuro typicals.

Scott: You know noone's a neuro typical. Every brain has their own unique wiring.

Debbie: More typically developing, I guess.

Scott: Yeah, I think this, for all of us, I think that it's really important for teachers to look deeper than some of the superficial sort of academic content or indicators of potential. This has been a big mission of mine is to, well I studied traditional markers of intelligence, that's how I started off in my career. Because I knew that if I ever was going to make a change to the system, I would have to start with the as traditional as possible. I came to realize just how much these tests lack fundamental humanity of an individual. And you know, some scientists might cringe at what I just said, you know, like, oh, that's a really like nonscientific airy

fairly sort of thing to say, but I have scientifically shown throughout my career that that is the case, you know, like I've studied extra dimensions of what it means to be a human and have tried to systematically show how much we're missing out on those things. Especially imagination, you know, that was a big research interest of mine that is not captured by an IQ test.

Debbie: Yeah. I liked, I want to talk about your book *Ungifted* and and your work that you've done in that space. I know again that you've done many more things since that time, but the idea of how intelligence is measured is something that comes up a lot in my community. You know, a lot of parents have kids who are twice exceptional or 2e, so their kids were either late in being identified as gifted or you know, they aren't able to tap into the services for them. Then there's the gifted word in general that is so controversial. Yeah. Loaded. And then there are so many, you know, differently wired kids who do come with these incredible gifts and sensitivities and talents to share with the world and they're completely overlooked. So can you talk a little bit about what you, you know, maybe a little more in depth about what you see that's wrong with the way students are currently being identified and categorized.

Scott: Oh, where do we start?

Debbie: How much time do we have here? Yeah.

Scott: The whole problem is that we're so desperate to categorize. That's one of the problems. Yeah, that's one of the major problems. There is this, we feel like there's this need to know right away what is, what are they going to do, what's their potential, what, where are they at? Are they autistic, are they, you know, are they, are they typically wired, are they ADHD? There's such a focus in most training programs in educational psychology to answer that question and not enough attention in educational psychology training programs on asking the question, what are the highest strengths of these kids that we're serving? You know, when you come to the table, when the kid is referred, and comes to the table. I mean, the first, the first thing you should do is well smile at the child, assess their character strengths, you know, like have them take the character strength survey, see where their top three strengths are, and then do, sure do your whole work up, your battery.

Don't focus on the global IQ score. Um, and there are a lot of, it's really moving that trend in educational psychology to really look at the individual scatter of sub test scores, but don't just look at the sub test scores on an IQ test. Like gain information about that child's personal goals, their classes that they're more or less engaged in. Their, um, uh, their social situation, whether or not they're bullied, um, whether or not they have anxiety. See, here's the interesting thing is that it was put in my IEP you know, he needs to forever be in special education because he's an anxious person. Well, that's one way of viewing the situation, but another way of viewing the situation is this kid is anxious because we told him he's learning disabled. As any normal human being it's a natural reaction. Any normal human being saying that you're not capable of doing anything in your life. Therefore what we need to do, our task, is to reduce his anxiety by showing him his highest strengths. Now that's a whole different way of framing the whole IEP,

the whole purpose of education of that child than the way that it normally is treated.

Debbie: Absolutely. So first of all, I, you know, just to go back to that idea of categorization. This is something I've been thinking a lot about, this need to label and identify, and based on your expertise, is that a natural instinct that we have as humans to categorize? I mean is that -

Scott: It absolutely is. I mean that's why there's prejudice, you know, it is a, it serves us well in a lot of instances. Can you imagine going through the world where you couldn't categorize anything into any category, you would be sitting on people instead of chairs. Do you know what I mean? Like all confused. So clearly that's not, it did serve us well in the course of human evolution, but it leads us astray and it, especially in a school system where the categorization purpose is to, is to really target certain level of challenge, level of content based on a paucity of information about the child. That's very problematic because you're setting up self fulfilling prophecies without you even realizing it. You know? And then, you know, it's like I stayed in remedial classes to eighth grade and then I say, hey, you know, I'm still in remedial classes. They're like, aha we told you. It's like but you're the one who put me in remedial classes for eight grades.

Debbie: You know, it's interesting. I'm just thinking of the Dutch education system, you know that I just moved back to the US from the Netherlands and Asher was not in that system. I have many friends whose kids are in that system. My Dutch teacher explained it to me in great detail, um, how it works and it's very, it's probably typical of a lot of European countries, but it is a system in which pretty early on maybe by fifth grade, sixth grade you are assessed and it's determined whether or not you're going to college or not and you know, if you're going to be more of a, what we would call low tech here in the US. And, and that's it, you know, once you're in one of these three systems, some really high performing, kind of medium, and then the low performing and that's your future all laid out for you. And it's very hard to change that once you've gone down that path. So that's the context for this question about education. If you were to create a school, the Scott Barry Kaufman school -

Scott: The SBK school.

Debbie: Oh yeah. SBK I like that. The SBK school, what would that look like? You know, because I love this idea strength space. I mean that's what I believe so deeply as well. What would a school look like?

Scott: It would look like a school that already exists called Bridges Academy.

Debbie: Oh yeah, yes.

Scott: Um, I visited them and they just started a training program for twice exceptional and there's early faculty members, one of their first faculty members and they really get those kids. You know, I, I feel like when people ask me to design a school, you know, I feel like it takes a lot of hubris to say you know the right way to design a school. I never really liked that question and I don't really like people

who answer that question too readily. I'm always suspicious, you know, the, you know, there's people in the, education writers, you know, who think they know the answer. I think that a lot of what I would do is have it be student driven, you know, like sort of let them tell us to a certain degree what they need and be like, how did my favorite psychologist Abraham Maslow put it? He said we should be the role of horticulturists, like really trying to get in shape what's already there.

And I always liked that metaphor with the horticulturist, you know, that was sort of like this taoistic helper from Buddhist philosophy. Um, I like the idea of teachers as taoistic helpers, you know, guiding the learning process but not forcing, cramming memorization down, you know, down their throat, uh, not, not, not allowing them to change and grow, you know. So, so part of the school system would involve constant, constant check ins, check ins with the students. Uh, you know, what, are you ready for more challenges, you know, like every year, right, for next grade. Do you want to take it up to the next level? You know, do you want to take it down a level? What are your personal goals? Well, if your goal is to go to Harvard, maybe you should take that up a level, you know, but working with their personal goals, you know, it would be really grounded. The SBK school would be very much grounded in my theory of personal intelligence, which I have been trying to apply to the twice exceptional population. Um, I, I think like grounding that in, in, in personal intelligence, which I define as the dynamic interplay of ability and engagement in the pursuit of personal goals is a good form of intelligence that we can get out of kids.

Debbie: So can we talk a little bit about potential then to tie into that? Um, you've said that the things that we typically think of as the best predictors of potential aren't actually that great. Um, and that we have to recognize that potential's a moving target. So can you tell us what you mean by that?

Scott: Well, potential by potential being a moving target, you know, like what does potential mean? It means at any given moment in time, it's the probabilistic, a probability that your likelihood of actualizing 'x'. But if we don't recognize that probability constantly is shifting. You know, it's like my cholesterol levels, here's a personal example. I'm trying to lower my cholesterol levels. My potential cholesterol levels can be at one moment in time very predictive of heart disease and then let's say I do this huge diet regimen and I, I lose a lot of weight and I do all this stuff and then I lower the numbers to the normal range. Suddenly my potential is much greater for, for, for I guess living longer. So that's, that's what I mean by moving target, you know, we really need to recognize that in a lot of ways we create, we create and shape potential. But we don't realize that.

Debbie: Well, and also as you're saying that, I'm thinking of mindset too, and that we've talked a lot on this podcast about growth mindset versus fixed mindset and you know, and how important it is to help our kids develop growth mindsets. But I think so many of us adults in these kids lives actually have fixed mindsets about their potential, like pretty early on.

Scott: Sure. And the teachers do too.

- Debbie: It's absolutely true. And I know that there's plenty of research saying that, you know, teachers, if kids come in and they have an idea in their mind of whether they're gifted or they're un-gifted to use your term, then that's how they will actually, those kids will live up to those labels and the teachers will, what they expect is what they're going to get. Right.
- Scott: Yeah. I think the field of gifted education is deeply, deeply fixed mindset approach to identification and cultivation of those kids.
- Debbie: Do you see it changing? I mean -
- Scott: I see some people. I meet some amazing gifted education teachers from time to time and I'm like, wow, you're awesome. I don't know about system wide change.
- Debbie: It's challenging. I think, you know, for a lot of parents, again, in my community, we're always having to advocate and figure out new ways to understand who our kids are so we can best support them and tap into their strengths because a lot of traditional systems or testing doesn't give us that information. So. Yeah. And I agree with you, Bridges is doing it right. We've, uh, I'm actually going to be speaking there this spring, which I'm super excited to check out that school in person myself. But I just wonder if, if, if maybe the question is do you see a willingness to, among schools in general, just again in your, with your knowledge of this field, to start looking at multiple intelligences, or different ways of looking at kids that expand the definition of intelligence and giftedness?
- Scott: That's what I've been working on, sort of been trying to do my whole career. But I don't go, look at it through a multiple intelligences lens really. I look at it as a multiple manifestations of intelligence lens, so subtle difference. I don't deny that there's something called general intelligence that people differ on, you know, some people in education are like horrified to admit that IQ matters at all. And I'm not that person. I mean people want to slot me into that because I have these more nuanced views and I wrote a book called Ungifted and then so they automatically think that I'm therefore a multiple intelligences guy. But I, I'm, I'm for like, almost in a sense, maybe I'm into like unlimited intelligence because I think like, who are we to say that like, oh, these seven are the intelligences, you know, what if you're not good at any of those seven? And so then you're up a creek, whatever they, I'm bad at my metaphors, but um -
- Debbie: Without a paddle, yeah.
- Scott: Up some creek without a paddle and that's not good. But um, the students, you know can tell us what their first, what are the key, the key level announcer is not what is your ability. It's, the whole ability question is so between person. It's so competitive. It's so, like hierarchical. The whole idea of multiple intelligence if you really think about it, it's like, what are you really excellent at, you know. It's like, okay, everybody calm down about excellence. Like, just calm down. I'm all about self actualization is what I'm about, you know, like what do you, what does this kid want to actualize? I don't care if they're, if they're, if that's more of their intelligences, maybe it's not their intelligence, but they still want to develop and

actualize it. Then give them the resources. Who are we to prevent them from actualizing a potentiality or a motivation that's within them. So I get very passionate about this stuff because I think we need to stay within the realm of science.

I think science definitely shows that there is something called general intelligence that um, a lot of kids who get in gifted education programs, they have very high G score, which means that there are very quick learners across a and make connections very quickly. That is a thing, you know, like we don't need to like sweep that under the rug. You know, some multiple intelligence people say, oh, that doesn't, that doesn't matter, all that matters are your dance ability or your art ability. Well, no, it does matter. It does matter a lot. It's one slice of human cognition that we, you know, we shouldn't have those kids falling between the cracks either. You know, like when I've studied the breadth of human potential, I don't want to neglect those who are off the charts on IQ tests because that is predictive of, of something that they need help with actually. So I'm not anti that, but I'm, I'm infinite. Infinite. Not Intelligences, but infinite goals that a child has that we should listen to.

Debbie: I love that. So I'm just wondering if you have any, you know, for parents who are listening to this, I think hopefully there's some paradigm shifting happening. You know, one of my biggest goals in this podcast and through Tilt Parenting is to help parents lean into who their kids are and a lot of that means shedding the expectations we have of who they'd be, what their journey will look like, what's possible for them, and instead meet them where they are and help them become the best version of themselves they can be. So -

Scott: Yes, I have some quote, my favorite quotes of yours, I have written down "allow our children to fully realize their best selves and let their gifts flourish". I really like that one. Yeah.

Debbie: That's awesome. Thank you. Um, do you have thoughts on, you know, just based on what you experienced when you were younger, were there things that for parents who have kids who are maybe in the position you were in, you were in back then, you know, what can parents do from your perspective to help them tap into their, their strengths?

Scott: Yeah. I know that your book is very focused on empowering parents, which is a population that is really neglected in the education system. It's often that the parent is the last person to know of an education decision, which is crazy, you know, like the um, you know, the teacher knows first, then the principal and then the whole IEP team. But I don't know, like, so the thing with the parent is like they know their child more than anyone and it's like really important to advocate for your child's needs and teach your child, empower your child to advocate for themselves when they're in the school system and they're away from their parents. They're also, I think it's important to to make sure that the kid is not too dependent on the parents. This is something that I, um, I guess a pet peeve of mine is, you know, some of the most well meaning parents of differently wired children create a codependency with their child or their child calls them from school all the time. And it's like the child doesn't realize that they have the coping

capacities within themselves. Like the parent immediately jumps in and says, I'll take care of this, you know. I think there needs to be a healthy balance there where, you know, the parent like encourages the child to really self advocate, you know, self advocate for themselves when they're not around because they're going to have to do that the rest of their lives.

Debbie: Absolutely. You know, I just spoke with Julie Lythcott-Haims yesterday who wrote *How To Raise An Adult* and we had this exact conversation. She said it in a way I'd never heard it before, that parents of atypical kids can sometimes actually become our child's executive functioning. We can become their, you know, we can take over for them in that realm and in the advocacy realm and it's so important for these kids to learn those skills. I'm wondering about your advocacy. So I know that when you that when you had that aha moment in ninth grade and you said, you know what, I want to take Latin, I want to do these things. To what do you attribute your ability to, to advocate for yourself in the way that you did?

Scott: Well, we can't ignore the role of genes in uh, in some of this. So it'd be very easy for me to say my mom taught me by example what it means to have grit and to be a tough lady, but don't forget I got a lot of her genes as well. So I feel like she, she is very like "I'm not accepting that", you know, nobody does that to my Scotty, you know, rolls up her sleeves, you know, going to like superwoman. And I think that there is a part of me, that's within me as well a little bit. Um, so the more that like people were really having low expectations of me the more it did kind of fire me up to want to disprove them. Which I don't think is healthy, but I think that is what that was at that time in my life. And that is probably what got me through. You know a lot of the things that aren't healthy in the long run, a lot of our defence mechanisms that aren't healthy for growth in the long run, can still be immensely helpful in the short term for getting us out of really horrible, traumatic situations, you know. Like people who are abused in various ways, their brain literally shuts down, um, so they can cope with their reality. Now that not healthy in the long term and have your brain shut down but in the short term it's healthy. So I think I had some of these defence mechanisms that almost ironically, these defence mechanisms are what propelled me to work harder to practice more in the school orchestra. My grandfather, I asked my grandfather to teach me how to play cello and I was so determined to show my school that I can do something, I can play cello. And I practiced nine hours a day. Um, I didn't go to the lunch room, not a great way of making friends, but you know, I was so determined. So that's my answer.

Debbie: That's awesome. So I'm going to ask you one last question and then I'd love if you could tell us a little bit about what you're up to now, which I know, again, is a moving target, you're one of the most prolific writers that I know. I'm constantly amazed by your productivity. But I think a lot of parents like me, we get caught up in this comparison trap of thinking, you know, of chasing this successful using air quotes here, successful future for our kids. Um, what would you say are the most important qualities that we should be focusing on helping our kids develop in order for them to be self actualized and fulfilled adults?

Scott: Oh wow. I just created a scale of self actualization, a new test.

Debbie: Do tell.

Scott: I believe those 10 facets answer your question. Go to [selfactualizationtest.com](http://selfactualizationtest.com). But the, uh, characteristics include things like developing your purpose, focusing on that. Not getting stuck in the muck. All the other pressures and things, staying in your lane. Don't worry if you've got the multiple intelligences or not, just do it. Authenticity, which is related to that of course. Having integrity is a really important thing to develop in your life. Grit is an important one, but I like to think of it as equanimity, which is more Buddhist and it's a more gentle loving form of grit. Uh, having, cultivating your creative spirit and spontaneous childlike sense of wonder and awe, um, is something that I think is very underrated in our school system. I think I was in awe once in seventh grade and I was sent to detention. That wasn't good. You know and acceptance, self acceptance, oh boy, that one is so huge. But so is other acceptance, you know, accepting others as well. Um -

Debbie: It's interesting that a lot of differently wired kids I think end up having more of the traits that you've just talked about because they often work on, you know, maybe they don't naturally have the social skills and so they're doing the work on it and they end up being much more emotionally intelligent and evolved than their same age peers who, who aren't focusing on these traits at all.

Scott: No, they really aren't. The more the, from a neurological perspective, the more that you focus on the attentional control of the child, like the executive attention to brain network it's called, the less you're able to develop the human imagination. They're toggling with each other, these two brain networks. So, and it really is a use it or lose it sort of thing. You know, we literally build brain tissue the more that we exercise or engage. It doesn't stop with these amazing pecs that I have here. It doesn't stop there, you know. It happens in the brain as well. You know, you gotta like work that out and if we don't give kids the opportunity we're creating a, a school of zombies with no imagination, quote me on that.

Debbie: That's a good quote. Yeah. So interesting. Okay, so now I'm like, as soon as we get off, I want to go check out this, uh, the, the test and listeners it's [selfactualizedtest.com](http://selfactualizedtest.com). Is that correct? [Selfactualizationtest.com](http://Selfactualizationtest.com). I'll have links of course in the show notes pages to, to that and to Scott's website and podcasts and books and Scientific American articles. So, there's so much we could talk about, but if, to kind of wrap this up, would you tell us a little bit about maybe where your work is taking you now? I'm just curious where your focus is.

Scott: Well, I've really gone lately into humanistic psychology, which is, um, was popular in the fifties and sixties. The hippies really liked humanistic psychology, but I think in the world that we live in today, it's more important than ever these principles. And I've been trying to little by little bring and introduce some of these ideas back. They haven't really been in the public consciousness since the fifties or sixties, but there was a small group of psychologists who really were interested in understanding the whole person and understanding, uh, what it means to focus on self actualization and growth versus happiness or even achievement. You know. Um, we live in such an achievement and happiness

focused society and I don't think either of those two things should be our literal focus. Like you see these type A people who they're like to do list, to do list, goal goal. It's like goal, be happy. It's like calm down. Okay. Like you're never going to be happy if that's on your, if happiness is on your to do list. You don't get it though. They don't get it. So, um, and then what, let's say you did, let's say you can cross that off your list. Do you think you're going to be happy for the rest of your life?

Debbie: It's an emotion, not a condition.

Scott: Five minutes later you're going to have to put it back on your list. So I just want to, my own personal journey and purpose right now is to teach these ideas. So I am teaching a course I created, um, at Columbia University next semester called The Science Of Living Well was the name of the course and it's grounded in humanistic psychology and the latest science of wellbeing. And I'm, and I'm teaching a course, the 92Y starting in March, April for the general public. So I'm really excited about that. So yeah, I'm just like kind of focusing on bringing some human elements back to education and society.

Debbie: Fantastic. Well, Scott, I'm gonna let you get, get some rest, get on with your day.

Scott: Just so you know she's saying that because I'm a little under the weather today.

Scott: I always need rest, but. Uh, thank you. Thank you. This was really energizing for me. The thing is like, I was really exhausted before this interview. Not sure whether I could do it. And the second you get me talking about this topic, can you tell? Can you tell?

Debbie: Absolutely. You light up.

Scott: Oh man, it's like I forget that I'm sick, you know, like I'll be on my deathbed someday or something and we'll bring up the topic of twice exceptional children, I'll just like spring up.

Debbie: Well you know, I just personally am so grateful for the work that you're doing in the world, for how you show up and just who you are. Like I just think you're so inspiring for so many of us, so it's an honor to have you on the show, so thank you. Thanks so much for doing this.

Scott: The feeling is mutual as well. Thank you.

**RESOURCES MENTIONED:**

- [Scott Barry Kaufman's website](#)
- [Scott at Scientific American Magazine](#)
- Scott's podcast, [The Psychology Podcast](#)
- [Ungifted: Intelligence Redefined](#) by Scott Barry Kaufman
- [Wired to Create: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Creative Mind](#) by Scott Barry Kaufman
- [Twice Exceptional: Supporting and Educating Bright and Creative Students with Learning Difficulties](#) by Scott Barry Kaufman
- [Scott's TEDxZumbroRiver Talk: A New Theory of Human Intelligence](#)
- [Eye to Eye National / Marcus Soutra](#)
- [Bridges Academy](#)
- Scott's new [Characteristics of Self-Actualization Scale](#)