

Jaime Masters: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire. Today on the show, I am so excited. I have Ariel Garten. You should check her out at choosemuse.com. She is the co-founder. They sent this to me probably three or four years ago, and I gush about it to everybody. She also has a podcast called The Untangle Podcast and is a neuroscientist, innovator and mom. Thanks so much for coming on the show today.

Ariel Garten: Oh, my sincere pleasure. It's a joy to be here, Jaime.

Jaime Masters: You are so unique. When I was looking up all of your stuff, the story that you have of building \$18 million in funding before you even had really formal business experience, is ridiculously impressive. Can you tell us a little bit about that before we get into gushing about meditation?

Ariel Garten: Sure. My background story, entrepreneurship was in my blood. My mom was an artist, and my dad was a very small scale real estate entrepreneur; buy a house, renovate it, move into the next house. And I really learned from him the idea that you can just work for yourself, that there's no obligation to work for someone else or give up all of your labor and all of your time and energy to somebody else's visions. And so, for me, sorry, I just had a call come in, let me just kill my notifications here. My apologies.

Jaime Masters: We're real. We're real here.

Ariel Garten: And so, for me, it was really about what did I want to give to the world? What was it that I really wanted to do? And so, it took me a little time to find that. I was trained in neuroscience because I was fascinated by the brain. I always loved making things, so I actually had a clothing business prior to Muse because I love to physically create stuff. And so, I took my clothing from store to store seeing who wanted to have it in their store. And a few people said, yes, and then I was a clothing designer.

And in the creation of Muse, I was really looking for something that would help people really improve their life and really understand what went on inside their minds, how they could apply that information to improve their life and how they could move forward. In building Muse, I really didn't know a lot of the things I didn't know. I was building a massive business that was very complex. We had manufacturing, we had very hardcore neuroscience, which I understood, but a hardcore engineering,

which I didn't understand. And then a huge user experience component and a market building component.

And so, it was never about what I knew, but how I could acquire the skills very quickly, or engage people who actually knew what they were doing, to fulfill this business vision. So, there's –

Jaime Masters: Because it was early, also. Now, wearable is normal, but I feel like this was so many years ago when people were like, huh, what the heck is that random thing that you put on yourself? You've been doing it for a long time.

Ariel Garten: It was really early. We got lucky in that the time course of wearables really started when we did. When we were going and pitching this to investors, the Jawbone had just come out, and the NikeFuel was still alive and well, the very, very early wearables. And we could see that the trend of wearables was moving forward, that you had sensors that could track your steps or your sleep, but there was this massive piece missing; sensors that could track the brain.

And then, we were also early in the meditation trend, but just at the right moment. When we started pitching this, I'd would go into a VC office and I'd be like, "I have this amazing technology," and they would be like, "What's the killer app?" And I'm like, "Meditation." And they're like, "Yeah, right. See you later, weirdo." And it turns out many years later, meditation truly was the killer app. So, we really got lucky that we were able to take what was a foundation technology that we're working with and shape it and craft it to really hit two trends that were on a massive upward swing before we realized it.

Jaime Masters: Which is amazing. It's the future of technology sort of Moore's Law. And you're like, Oh, I'm going to be right here later. That's going to be great and backing up and then dealing with all the, I'm sure pain in the butt, of people telling you that it's not going to work over and over. How did you just mindset wise get through some of that stuff, knowing, I think meditation's important. Science says meditation is important. Come on, people. We can make a lot of money on this, too.

Ariel Garten: Mindset was probably the most important part. Some of it was blind ignorance, which was extremely helpful to me. I was just like, this is going to work. I can see that this is going to work. And I have the deep knowledge and belief that we can make this happen. And with my passion and belief, I was able to get other

people on board, to get them to see how this crazy thing was actually possible, that you could make a brain sensing headband that could read your brain and help you meditate.

Mindset is really key, because there are going to be a lot of naysayers, some of whom may be correct. In which case you have to listen and adapt and shift and change. When we first started, this was going to be a focus trainer, which ended up actually not being that helpful from a marketing perspective. It was before meditation was big. But as soon as meditation was on the upswing, we had a marketing person who was like, "No, we have to call this focus." And Trevor, one of my co-founders was like, "No, this is meditation. And we have to call this meditation because that's what really matters."

And so, there's a fine line between not listening to the people who are not correct and not serving you and not helping you, and being able to know inside yourself that what you're doing is good and right, and you can move forward. And then, being able to listen to the people who actually have guidance that's giving you feedback on the market. Guidance that's giving you feedback indicating where the customer is, indicating where the trends are and the hotspots.

And then be able to take what you're doing and shape it and form it so that it can fit. When we started working with the technology behind Muse, we were thinking that we were going to control computers with our minds. It turned out not a huge market for it, not a huge set of good that we can do with the world with this, not a lot of customers for it. And so, we really had to listen both to our intuition, our thoughts and the market.

The one thing you have to be aware of in the naysayers, is the biggest naysayer is going to be you. The biggest naysayer is going to be that voice inside your head that says, "Oh my god, this is awful. This is never going to work. This is so scary. I'm going to lose my life fortunate. Oh, no." And if you can't get over that naysayer, that's when you always just stay in the safe place, and you don't take the risks that are required to move you forward and actually do huge, great, fascinating things.

Jaime Masters: And I love that you said intuition, because when you said it's not correct, we can't predict the future, unfortunately, right now. It's just a gray area. There's never black and white. You can go, Oh,

this person who's really smart, says I should do this. And this person who's really smart. How did you actually pay attention to what thoughts or what intuition was accurate? Keep going, versus like you said, the naysayer thought that is also in the same being? And only keep aligning and not calling it focus. You'd be in a totally different place if you guys ended up calling it focus. But you didn't necessarily know that at the time. It was a really great guess. How do you navigate that?

Ariel Garten:

That's an incredibly difficult question. Fear has a particular sensation to it. And when you become really aware of what your fear triggers are, when you become aware of the stories that you tell yourself when you're triggered, the feelings that you have when you're triggered, the sensations in your body, it becomes much easier to understand what is me just being afraid right now? Versus what is me like deeply knowing something and seeing something?

In me, I had this incredibly clear vision that this is what it could be. The company needs to happen. We can do this, we will achieve. And so, that feeling for me rests in my gut. And then there are all the little voices that spin in your head that are like, "This is crazy, this isn't going to work. This is blah, blah, blah, blah," that are clearly a different voice that is the inner critic. That is a voice that is I now know not serving me. And then there's the sensations that you have in your body that that voice creates or that the environment creates, the feeling of fear, the feeling of pulling away.

And when you are able to actually be able to observe yourself, and understand your drivers, and understand your goals, and how your body reacts to what's in the way, what's the trauma for your reaction. What's the – I just feel crappy about this because my voice is making me feel uncomfortable about myself. What is the thing I really want to do? That those things are difficult to tease out, but if you listen quietly enough, you can actually start to understand your own drives.

Jaime Masters:

The sensitivity to that is exactly why we need meditation, because otherwise we're just – I mean, the world that we live in, especially with kids and I have ADD, it's just a million times thrown at you. And then we don't actually have that peace and inner quiet at all. The reason why I started meditating over 10 years ago is because my kids were so colicky and screamy that I was like, "I – "I felt like I was going crazy, right? "Mama just needs five minutes, okay? Five minutes." And now they're older, but that practice has come a really long way just in the sensitivity that I have

comparatively to before. And that's sort of what it sounds like you're saying, like we need to up that skill set first, before we can even fine-tune it.

Ariel Garten:

Absolutely. That's precisely what I'm saying. So, we all have voices inside of our head, thoughts inside of our head that are telling us different things. And most us just go through the world listening to the things our head is telling us and that's just what it is. It's only once you start the practice of actually observing what your brain is telling you, what your mind is telling you, and being able to sort through and tease through. "Okay, these things are helpful, these things are the repetitive things I hear over and over again that are like just what my mother told me and probably aren't really helpful."

Then you do the same process in your body. Like I feel when this person comes towards me, I feel a sense of fear, why? Because he's my boss and I'm afraid he's going to say something yucky about me. Is this actually true? No. Has he said yucky things before? Yes. Did it actually matter? No. Do I need this reaction? Actually, no.

Once you're able to actually observe your own movements and reactions to the world, you can start to gain a whole lot of information that can help you either navigate yourself in ways that don't take you to uncomfortable places or, and this is what's been key for me, helping you understand that when your body gets uncomfortable for a moment, you don't need to run away. Just because your body's getting uncomfortable and giving you that fear response doesn't mean you should just get up and go eat something in the fridge instead of working hard on the thing that's difficult in front of you.

Jaime Masters:

I like that. That is the epitome of human evolution to me, sitting in our feelings which is very difficult in general, for me especially. It makes me think of the Matrix, right? Where they slow down time so that way they can be curious about what's going on in our head instead of reacting to it like you're saying. So, I felt like before – And I'm not great at it. I'm good, not great. I'm still working on it. The amount of time I have in between where I can have curiosity in to that versus not has been a little bit widened. So, that way I can have at least a little bit more of a sense of inner-self before I go – right? Before the habitual neuro-programming that I've been like my mother for this many years or whatever is there.

Especially because you're a neuroscientist, how long does that really take to start to slow that down? Because I want to make sure that people know that it's a practice and a skillset that gets better, like running. Not like, "Oh, well I suck at it, so there's no point," which is sort of where everybody starts.

Ariel Garten:

Totally. Everybody starts in the, "Oh my god, this is hard. I suck at it. I don't like doing things that I suck at, therefore I don't really feel like doing it." Which is very much like running, which is why a lot of people never start running. Because you go half a block and you're tired and it feels unpleasant. And that's where the advice of like, "Things can feel unpleasant, but then they get really rewarding afterwards."

So, with meditation it takes time, but that's okay. The only reason the act of meditation feels unpleasant is because we feel we're not good at it, but actually a basic core of meditation is to teach the skill of non-judgment. It totally doesn't matter that you're sitting there and your mind is racing and it's jumping all over the place. That's okay. Our brains do that. The practice of meditation is one of observing what's going on and then subtly and slowly starting to make different choices that change your relationship to your thoughts.

In order to change habits or patterns you need to do things consistently. The idea of 21 days is kind of garbage, but if you can mediate each day for three to 10 minutes a day at a consistent time, likely by three weeks or so you'll feel comfortable continuing on this habit and continuing to build and make change. Just like going to the gym or just like running, over time you recognize like, "Wow, I can lift the couch or I can sprint after my kid and feel totally comfortable." Like these things that were hard before are much easier and much more comfortable now.

That's what you discover in meditation. You discover this sort of sense of space that you were talking about. You discover the ability to observe internally and observe the world around you. And you discover a whole host more skills that we can dive into.

Jaime Masters:

Oh, so many things. Okay, so I was actually grinning from ear to ear, because I was talking to a friend about just this. I'm going to be sending him this so that way he can hear it from you who have a degree in neuroscience so he will believe me, right? Because his sort of premise was, "I used to mediate because I could get clear very quickly. And now I don't because I'm feeling more anxious."

And I'm like, "That's not really the point."

So, exactly what you said, that the point of sitting is not to judge yourself about how anxious you're being or if it is, you can sort of work with that also and that still counts, quote, unquote, as an entrepreneur would judge themselves on what counts versus what doesn't count as far as time goes. Can you sort of unpack, especially for busy entrepreneurs, because I know you work with a lot of entrepreneurs also. You've done a lot of amazing things promoting women. How do we sort of untangle what is productive, quote, unquote, or not? Because that self-judgment, when it comes to meditation on a good sitting, on a bad sitting, gets in the way very often for people.

Ariel Garten: Yes. So, what is productive is the act of sitting and getting through whatever happens in those three, five, 10, 20 minutes. That is productive. So, for some people you might start to sit and then you feel a sense of discomfort like you need to just get up and do something. And the ability to simply sit through that, observe that your body's having that sensation of discomfort but continue to sit there, that is incredibly productive. If you've just moved through that sensation, that's extraordinary. Because that then allows you to rewire the habits and the internal programming that your body has had. In that moment of saying, "My body wants to get up and check my email, but I'm just going to keep sitting," you are completely rewiring your habit in that moment. It's amazing. And then that gives you the strength and the insight to continue to rewire habits as they arrive, to observe what your body wants to do and then say – They know I'm going to make a different choice here.

Jaime Masters: Preach, yes, thank you. Go ahead.

Ariel Garten: All parts of the just sitting are really helpful if you're, so let's talk about basic focused attention meditation for people who aren't familiar. How you do it, you focus your attention on your breath, your mind wanders away from your breath at some point, like all our minds do, then you notice that your mind has wandered and you choose to bring your attention back to your breath. So, it's this very, very simple cycle. Notice your mind wanders. Don't follow the wandering mind. If you do, that's okay. Once you notice that you're following the wandering mind, choose to bring your attention back to the breath. So, most people go, oh my God, my mind wandered therefore I'm not good at meditation. Therefore,

this sucks; runaway. But it's completely okay that your mind has wandered because one of the things that we're working on here is the metacognition. So, that is the ability to observe your own thoughts.

So, if you're sitting there and you say, oh my God, my mind is wandering all over the place. That's fantastic. You have just won; you have just won noticing and observing in metacognition. Those are amazing skills that you are building in that moment. And then when you choose to take your mind off your wandering thought and bring it back to your breath, that is another extraordinary win. You have just chosen in that moment to change the relationship to your thoughts, because most of us go through the world, just stuck in our thoughts and our minds just think, and we think the thoughts that are in our head and they're negative and repetitive and frustrating, and that's just what's in our brain.

And the moment you say, hey, I can take my mind off this thought about the grocery list or the person that annoyed me or the pretty flower or whatever, and bring it back to your breath, you have just fundamentally changed that relationship and said, I don't need to be subject to the crap that is in my mind all the time. I can choose where I want my mind and attention to go.

Jaime Masters:

Business owners come on. We need this so much because we're either in the past or we're in the future. And neither of those things can be helpful potentially depending on what you're thinking about. But I get a lot of people and me also, that have ADD, they go well, but I have ADD, or well, I have this thing that makes it so that I can't be like most people that are like this. But I know you have research on ADD and how this will actually help with some of it. So, can you explain a little bit of that?

Ariel Garten:

Sure. So, meditation is essentially particularly focused attention meditation is attention training. So, you're training your prefrontal cortex. That's the part of your brain on the front. And you're training it to be able to maintain its attention on a thing that is frankly, very boring at times: your breath. It's also very enlivening and amazing and wonderful, your breath. And so, when your mind wanders away from something and you say, nope, I'm going to bring my attention back to my breath and keep it here, that is extraordinary training.

So, it allows somebody who has something like ADHD to be able to, first of all, observe when their brain goes from place to place and then have the opportunity to make a choice. So, rather than

your brain just bouncing all over the place, and you're thinking about this and this and this. With meditation, what you're able to do is be like, oh, hey, my brain just bounced here. And then you can make the choice. Do I like where it bounced, and I want to keep following it because this is fun, and I love, want it to bounce to the next thing? Cool.

Or am I trying to do something else that actually requires my attention and I really want to get through this document or I really want to like stay focused to this person that I'm talking with? In which case you can say, nope, brain, come on back, stick with you. And just in the same way that you train a puppy over and over again in the same way that you train any behavior. When you reinforce yourself for maintaining your attention on something. In the meditation practice, it's your breath. When you reinforce yourself from maintaining your attention on something, over time, you get better and better and better at keeping your attention there.

And when you look from a neural perspective, as we age our prefrontal cortex then, see the prefrontal cortex is one of the main parts of your brain associated with attention and involved in the act of attending. But with the long-term meditation practice, it's been demonstrated that you can actually maintain the thickness of your prefrontal cortex, even as you age. So, you are literally exercising the muscle of your attention, both from a psychological perspective, what's going on in the brain while I attend. And a real like neuroanatomical perspective. You're strengthening the parts of your brain associated with attention. So, it can have amazing benefit and relatively quickly and allows you to make the processes that have been sort of driving you internally, obvious, visible, and far more under your own control.

Jaime Masters:

I'm so grateful that the science is sort of catching up that working out the body really important, working out, the brain also really important. But even the distinction between social media and like TikTok, making my attention span even shorter. Like I can tell when I'm looking at TikTok, I go even faster than Instagram or something like that. So, my poor 11 year old daughter, she has ADHD also. The amount of attention span that she has, that she's used to getting from social is crazy. And we're training ourselves to do that and not training ourselves in the other way to actually sit and actually make our brains listen to what we want to do instead of what marketers or other business owners want us to do.

Ariel Garten: Yeah. We have to train ourselves again in being in control of ourself and being aware of where we're going, and being able to make better choices about how we use our brains. And a process like meditation is great for that. And also just becoming aware, like you are aware of what TikTok is doing to you, and that allows you to make choices.

Jaime Masters: And a lot of children don't know that right now. So, hopefully there's hope for the future. We've got the Social Dilemma coming out. So, hopefully people will start watching some of that stuff. But when I work with clients, one of the main things I try and get them to do is figure out where they're in flow more because they're more creative. What are your thoughts about being in flow, and especially sort of clearing all those crazy thoughts out of your brain in order to be more creative and have more ability to have more flow?

Ariel Garten: Flow is amazing. I mean, flow is like, it's the drug. It is the best state that you can be in, one of them, I mean, there are other amazing states that humans get into. But like flow is that extraordinary state where you are working at your highest, where you're incredibly creative, where all of the things are just coming to you. Now flow and meditation are not the same state. That's a question I'm often asked. From a neuropsychological perspective, they look different and the experience of them is slightly different, but meditation can be a fantastic tool to get you into flow. So, to get into flow, you want to be able to be focused on your work and sort of zero into it and hone into it, and a meditation practice beforehand, that lets you really quiet your mind, get into a position where you're ready to commit to working where your body is calm. And then you can dive in is really great.

And I interviewed a neuroscientist who looks specifically at flow and how you get somebody into it. And her recommendation was to do both a meditation practice that can center you and do something that opens your mind creatively and starts you to sort of think in all of these grander generalizations. So, you might even want to do just like a creative thinking task where you say, I'm going to look around my office and look at all these objects and think of five different uses for each object. Piece of paper, it can be a hat, it can be a fan, I can write on it, it can be a paper airplane. Just things that start to get your mind generating while at the same time, calming you down, allowing you to focus in on the work in front of you.

Jaime Masters: What do you feel, so whenever I work with clients and they're

overwhelmed or they've got like a million things. I have them do a brain dump, right? To try and sort of get everything that's in their head out. Is that helpful? Do you know the neuroscience behind that, and why that actually makes them feel like it's gone out of their head? Because I feel like, in order to get into flow, it's usually like, okay, Jamie's thinking of a million things. Let's just write those down, put them somewhere else, right?

Meditate for a little bit, and then I have a whole regimen of putting on headphones because I get distracted and all these other things just to try and sort of attempt every time to be in flow. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't work, but what do you think the neuroscience on that piece of it is?

Ariel Garten:

I would approach that more from a psychological perspective than a neuroscience perspective. So, the psychology there is that our minds think that we need to be thinking about things. So, they'll constantly be representing information that it has tagged as important.

So, when a concept in your brain is tagged as like, this is something that is meaningful to my life, or my furthering or my safety, it will just get you to think about it over and over and over again, and it thinks that it's doing a favor for you by reminding you what's on the grocery list, reminding you the tire might be flat on your car and your husband might be mad. Whatever it is for you that is a trigger, and so when you are able to write that information down, you're basically telling your brain, "Okay, I got it. I know it's important. It's here in a place where I can look at it. You don't have to keep reminding me," because basically what it's doing is it's bringing it back up into working memory, because your brain is afraid that this stuff is going to get lost.

So, because our memories are actually quite delicate, in order to work with the thing in front of you, it brings it into working memory. So, rather than it having to constantly represent it so that you don't forget it, it's like when somebody tells you a phone number and you rehearse the number over and over and over again until you can sit down and dial it. You see the infomercial, "Call 178-2578," and you're like, "178-2578, 178-2578," to get my three easy installments of –

Your brain is basically doing the same thing with the things that it thinks are relevant or important. So, when you write it down, it's

like, "Oh, I wrote it down. It's in a safe place. I can look at it. I don't need to keep remembering it. You don't have to keep telling me," and that lets you let go.

Jaime Masters: Because otherwise my meditation is crappy. No, no judgment. Yeah, because otherwise it pops up over and over, even when I'm in meditation and I'm like, "Oh, I need to write that down," but I thought beforehand, I shouldn't break out of my meditative state to write it down, and I've realized, for me personally, if I write it down, it's a million times more helpful.

I don't even care if it's during meditation, just so that way I can actually let it go, because putting it in a cloud, blowing away, doesn't work because it'll come right back in like five more minutes.

Ariel Garten: Yeah. So, if writing it down works for you, fantastic. It's great. The next evolution of that in meditation, or a future evolution of that meditation is the recognition that these things actually aren't important. So, there might be a part of your brain that tells you that it is important, but there's another part of your brain that's actually able to see, "You know what? This really isn't important for me right now." I'm off meditation, I'm into different kind of psychology here, but that part of your brain can talk to the part of the brain that thinks it is important, to understand why it thinks it's important, help it solve why it needs to keep re-presenting that information. Let it come to the realization that, "Oh, right. It's not actually that important," and then totally let it go. So, I sometimes find processes like that allow you to get to the next level of, "Oh, all this crap that my brain is constantly giving me, I actually don't need. It feels important, but it's not."

Jaime Masters: So, many questions on this, because you were a practicing, was it a therapist or psychotherapist, or something like that –

Ariel Garten: Yeah, psychotherapist.

Jaime Masters: – for 10 years. 10 years. So, you have so much information just around that anyway, because when you were saying safety issues, right? I'm thinking of clients that have had trauma in the past, and there's hyper-vigilance, right?

Ariel Garten: Mm-hmm.

Jaime Masters: And it's like, that's not true and not even helpful, potentially, what those thoughts are, but it keeps coming back up. So, how do you

get rid of those?

Ariel Garten: So, I mean, if this is trauma, you work with a therapist for months or years on end to overcome your trauma, because it's big and it's deep and our bodies react and respond.

In general, there's lots of different ways, but one way to approach it is to understand why it is that you're feeling unsafe, and then to give your mind and body what it needs in order to feel safe. Most people feel a general amount of unloved, unsafe and unworthy at most times, and in reality, most of us really are quite loved, even if we don't feel it. We really are pretty fundamentally safe, despite all the crap that's going on in the world right now that might make us feel otherwise and, frankly, we are all worthy, even though when you ask somebody they'll feel like they're not. So, there is a certain amount of an emotional bucket to be filled, because we carry around these senses of deficits, and then the thoughts that we play in our head over and over again are meant to make us aware of the deficits and the threat that these deficits might cause in our life.

So, if you're a business owner that has been once-burnt, or you're a business owner that comes from parents who were burnt, you may always have this dialogue inside of your head around that, that keeps you from moving forward. So, when you're able to really sit down and listen to what your own shtick is, what your own fears are, and then dig back a little bit further and say, "What do I need to be able to overcome this? What do I need to understand about myself and the world now? What do I need to feel to know that this is okay and I'm okay? When you're able to do that process, you can start to fill up the whose emptiness just causes this thought to play on rewind.

Jaime Masters: I so appreciate this, and the fact that you're talking about business owners, because it's almost that whatever they are personally is how their business looks also, right? So, I've worked with tons of different entrepreneurs and they all have different flavors of what's going on, but you can see the repercussions of their thought process in the business. So, if you put somebody else as the CEO, you're like, "Oh, they would do it totally different."

So, one of the things I tell clients is to take a millionaire that you love, that I've interviewed, and put them in your business, and they're like, "Oh, yeah, they wouldn't have the issue with risk that I have, or they wouldn't have the issues with this that I would have."

So, that clarity is helpful, but it's hard to figure that out for yourself. Do you have any tactics or tips for writing, or how do we get that out if you're not necessarily working with someone that will push you?

Ariel Garten:

So, it really is hard to figure it out yourself. It's truly, truly hard. So, I highly recommend spending the time to work with a business coach or a therapist or whatever flavor you want to put it in. Meditation is extremely helpful in helping us listen to these thoughts, because what meditation allows you to do is to non-judgmentally observe what's going on in your brain, and if you're used to having a thought and just acting on it, or having a thought, and you feel a way because you've had that thought, and then you just go down that trail, it's really hard to get outside of it.

What meditation allows you to do is to float above yourself, in a sense, and observe the process that's going on, and it gives you the emotional resource to be able to move through whatever the emotional response is, to observe the thoughts, and then you can actually see the cycle. So, a lot of people, in the process of their meditation, go from realization number one, which is, "I don't need to be subject to the thoughts in my head," to number two, which is, "I am not my thoughts, and therefore the things that they've been telling me about me maybe are not true," to number three. All the things that I've learned from my past I can now see rather than be driven by, and I can make different choices around.

So, meditation is great. Journaling is also great. It's a great way to be able to confront the stuff in your head from a different direction and look at it more objectively. Then, having a trusted friend who you can actually talk to, who will actually give you feedback about you, is also really helpful, but those are sometimes very hard to find, few and far between, but amazing when we've got them.

Jaime Masters:

Definitely, and sometimes they don't listen to you even when you're trying to help them. That's why they – I was just joking, because my – I'm sending – Billy, I'm sending this to you now. So, what's the difference though, conscious thought versus not conscious thought. So, when we look at-

Ariel Garten:

I'm going to – Hold on. I'm going to back up one more second, because I have one more thing to add in this, as you referenced your friend who didn't listen. The ego is everything as we discuss these things, and it is the ego that wants us to not be hurt by seeing what could be wrong, or seeing that in some way we might be wrong, or the things that we've been doing may not serve us. When

you're willing to come to the realization that it is okay to be wrong, that it is okay to have done things wrong in the past, that it's okay to be doing things that are wrong, it doesn't mean that you are a bad person, that you're unloved, that you're unlovable, or you're unworthy. When you're willing to actually just look at and be like, "Oh, okay, that happened. That's weird. Okay. Let's change that. Oh, I did that. Yeah, I guess that might've hurt somebody when I said that. That sucked. Okay, let's change that."

When you're able to get to that point of non-attachment to who you might be if you were wrong then all of this can open up. Then you can hear other people's insights when they're like, "Hey, when you do this thing, it doesn't feel very good." You can actually start to have a dialogue with yourself and shift and change. For a lot of people that is one of the first steps. We don't want to see ourselves as bad and wrong, and that very same system that signals danger in the world signals danger when we might be seeing ourselves as bad and wrong. That's why it's so scary. You get like, literally, an amygdala, like limbic system, fear response when somebody might perceive us as wrong, or we might perceive ourselves as wrong. So, the process of being able to sit with stuff that's hard, not react to your fear, not react to your fear about you being wrong, or some ego bruising, that is a key part of the process to being able to change your habits and your behaviors.

Jaime Masters:

Thank you. Well, thank you for saying that. We are very complex. We have a very complex inner world so give yourself a break if it doesn't feel like it's right or perfect, because it's not going to be no matter what navigation path we sort of go through, which I think is huge. I just want to highlight what you're sort of saying about having friends, because I feel like because it's kind of unconscious for some things to have friends that actually hold you accountable to who you want to be, like you're saying to be like, "Hey, that's kind of incongruent to who you say you really want to be," is so helpful. Not that I can hear it all the time either, so I can't say anything.

To be able to have friends that are able to have hard conversations with you is really, really, I think, a new evolution of where I used to know like friends on the playground used to be like. Now I'm telling my kids this and going, Hopefully the future is going to be bright for them to sort of unpack what is behind a lot of this stuff, and the patterns that they, unfortunately, probably got from their mom. I'm like, sorry kids. That's me, you can let that one go if you

really want to. To sort of own it and have that self-responsibility on that, too, hopefully. Fingers crossed.

Ariel Garten: I think when we look at our partners, our business partners or our life partners, we often find ourselves in the same pattern where they might see something as wrong. They will give you information. You will then defend and think that they are wrong, and then you fight, and then you end up with the same pattern over and over again. So, that's a pretty great hint, if you end up in the same cycle, that there is something that you're not willing to hear about yourself, or something you're not willing to receive, and that by simply stopping, and receiving, and hearing, and not defending. or pushing back, or being afraid that it might mean something about you that you don't want somebody to see, that's when we're able to make change.

Jaime Masters: So, question on that, because there's a great book called *Wired For Love* that I actually love that talks about the neuroscience of the fighting side. When you're in it, aren't you in a little bit more fight or flight? I used to have to write everything down and then come back at it later because A, I wouldn't remember what I said, but B, I'd be like, Oh, now I understand what you were saying. I couldn't hear it in the state that I was in because it was this reflexive mode that I was in. Does that –

Ariel Garten: Yeah, you were triggered.

Jaime Masters: – Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So, but it takes a real, I'd have to go meditate, or I'd have to go do something to come back around to even be open to that. So, can we change ourselves in that moment if we're triggered or?

Ariel Garten: Absolutely. When you notice that you're triggered you then have a choice. So, you can be triggered and not notice and run with it and just feel totally overwhelmed, which is okay. I mean, we're human, totally happens all the time, happens to me. Or you can be triggered and you can say, "Hey, I start to notice, I'm noticing that like that feeling of like heat rising in me is happening, and I kind of feel like I want to kill you in this moment, and my chest is tightening, and I can tell that I'm being triggered. So, why is this triggering me? Let me calm down, let me back away, let me not escalate, and let me open myself to actually hearing what's happening. Not assume the other person is wrong, not assume they're being an idiot by whatever it is they're saying, let me actually listen. While I might notice I'm feeling triggered, let me try to bring myself back down so that I can then move forward and

make this productive, and share my point of view and listen to the other person's perspective.

So, you absolutely can take yourself down from a trigger. The question is, how early do you see it, and do you have the tools to bring yourself down? Again, that's what meditation trains.

Jaime Masters: Yes. It all comes back. So, are there different levels, though, of triggers? I'm just thinking about people working with employees and realizing like, Oh, it's not a significant other sort of push, but there are other like micro triggers almost where you're like, Oh, the hair stands up, but it's not like a full-fledged fight, or anything like that. So, are there different levels, or is it like you're triggered and you're already in fight and flight and that's it?

Ariel Garten: Oh, there's a wide spectrum of triggers. There are tiny little triggers to people who have trauma. If you hit a trauma trigger and you haven't learned to work with your trauma it's just like your body is freaking out. You are having all of the emotional reactions. You are feeling it, and that's very, very difficult to intervene in. But, over time the first step is like, Oh, I'm being triggered, I observe that this stuff is happening in my body. Then you choose to not ramp it forward, you choose to not be confused by what's happening, upset that this is happening. It's just like, Okay, there's a bunch of stuff happening in my body now, it's a trigger. I understand that this happens when X, Y, and Z.

So, that's how slowly you can learn to defray your triggers, to know what's happening, to understand what it is, to choose not to create stories around it, not ramp it forward. You can ride through the physiology of it, and then calmly come back and talk about what's going on. I used to work with patients with panic attacks and the first time you have a panic attack you feel like you're going to die, and then the 30th time you have a panic attack you're still feeling like, "Oh my God, this is a panic attack. Oh no, am I going to die? My heart is racing," and you start to build all of these stories.

What if people see me having a panic attack and, and, and, and, and. But the truth of the matter is, panic attacks, by your 30th panic attack, it's kind of the same every time. Your heart is racing, this thing is happening. And it's like, I know what this is. I don't need to make a big deal about it. I know this is what happens with me. I know I'll be fine afterwards. Let's just sit here, observe its process

and not make a big deal about it.

Jaime Masters: Practice, a skill set. Right? Which is meditate, which is – Over and over and over is how we're going to do it. Unfortunately, we can't just snap a finger and have it be done. And I think that's, what's so hard. Not only that it is a skill set that you have to learn, but also that there could be a bazillion triggers that you have also. Do you know of anything, and I'm just curious, I don't know if you do or not, but that maps some of these triggers? Because you know how when you look at like archetypes or something, you're like, ooh, they've got this sort of thing or they've got this, and you can sort of see what would potentially poke the bear if they react to certain things. So, is there any way that we can map that stuff, or no?

Ariel Garten: That's a really cool question. I'm sure there are resources out there and people who've written both fluffy novels and PhDs on this topic, but I don't know what it is off-hand.

Jaime Masters: I feel like it's– I've been trying to do a lot of research in regards to it and I haven't found anything that's as close as what I'm looking for. And so, I didn't know if you might've had. Because I feel like, what you were saying beforehand, ooh, I have the acknowledgement that this exists, right? And I have a lot of things written down about what triggers me, micro-trigger or not. But there's so many of them, even like small things where I'm like, huh. It's just not that I need to fix it all as I'm a fixer, as you couldn't tell, but trying to make sure that I can know when I'm making progress because I feel like that's the other piece. And this is why I like the muse so much, is that there was gamification in it instead of it being this intangible mess of like, I think I'm getting better. But it's squishy. Right? You can't put a metric on it. And that's what I love.

Can you tell a little bit about the sort of gamification side of the app and what makes you realize that you're getting a little bit better?

Ariel Garten: Sure. So, has the audience heard about what Muse is and how it works?

[Crosstalk]

Ariel Garten: Should we start from there?

Jaime Masters: Yes, but please tell them.

Ariel Garten: Okay. So, what Muse does, it's a brain sensing headband that gives you real-time feedback on your brain during meditation. So, it actually changes the sound of your mind, whether you're focused or your mind is wandering, into audio. So, you actually hear what's going on in your mind. And when you're in focused attention, you hear the sound being quiet. When your mind wanders onto a topic, you hear the sounds pick up. And there are many elements of gamification that we've built so that you understand your progress.

So, the first is just the audio. So, when your mind is wandering onto those thoughts, you hear the sound of a storm pickup. That is then your cue to come back to your focused attention. So, it very quickly cues you, mind wandering, come back home, come back home. And then when you're able to remain in focused attention, we have little birds that chirp. So, when you're sitting in focused attention, it is rewarding your brain for staying there, for staying in that meditation zone.

And then at the end of your meditation, you can actually see a graph of everything that your brain was doing moment by moment. So, you get to really reflect and learn. And then you also have points and scores and badges. You can see how many birds you have. And that's what people get really engaged in. Like, "I got 200 birds today." People come up to me on the street and tell me how many birds they had. But it's a reflection of how long they were able to stay in that state.

Jaime Masters: Which is huge. And I was telling you earlier, my son was better than me. And I was like, "No. Birds, come on." We were so focused on the birds and every time I'd go, "Ooh, I got birds," it'd go back to the storm, right? And I think having that reflection is huge so you know what you're doing, because it's hard to tangibly go, oh I am over there and then come back. So, the feedback is so important. But yeah, tell us a little bit more about the app also, because I know you've changed for Muse 2, because I had Muse 1 and I went through and I downloaded a bunch. So, you have guided meditations and a bunch of other things though on it.

Ariel Garten: Yeah. So, Muse 1 was kind of our original concept that gave you real time feedback on your brain. With Muse 2, we added additional sensors for the brain – Sorry. With Muse 2, we added additional sensors for the heart, the breath and the body; so that as you are meditating with your brain meditation, you can actually get – We edit this, right?

Jaime Masters: Yeah. Yes we can delete it.

Ariel Garten: I'm just going to start back again.

Jaime Masters: Sure.

Ariel Garten: So, Muse 1, we gave you real time feedback on your brain while you meditated. And with Muse 2, what we were able to do was add additional sensors for the heart, the breath and the body. So, you're actually able to do exercises where you hear the beating of your heart, like the beating of a drum, where you're able to find stillness in your body, and breathing exercises that guide you into different breath patterns to either energize you or relax you.

So, we added additional sensors because meditation yes, goes on in your brain, but meditation is also about the different systems in your body and how you can use these systems to help you calm down. And then we also added guided meditation. So, there's a subscription for hundreds of guided meditations, for anything that comes up in your life. We literally have a two minute meditation if you're frustrated standing in line. We have an entire workplace collection, a whole sleep collection. We have stress collections, calm collections, college collections, kids collections and on and on.

Jaime Masters: I just want to highlight, because I also have HeartMath, and I remember having two cell phones back in the day, so that way I could get all of my weird things attached to me. But I'm so grateful that you're up-leveling this, so that way you have all of the things, because we're not just brain and we're not just heart. We're not just any of those things. And I don't think that people even understand that meditation can actually give you so much energy. Usually people are like, "Oh no, you're relaxed and calm." And it's not like that at all. I mean, at least for me, depending on what type of guided meditation, sometimes I can actually get so much energy when I'm focusing on that. Is that what you guys— Can you tell me a little bit more about the difference between those?

Ariel Garten: Totally. So, there's many different meditation types for whatever it is that you need at the moment. So, in the guided meditation collection, if you wake up feeling crappy, we have meditations for morning joy that gave you energy and get you inspired to move on and have an amazing day. If you're feeling overly restless, we have meditations to help you find calm. We also have a very deep calm collection that can get you to almost catatonic. Or performance

collections that can get you ready to do whatever work is in front of you.

So, really we use the basic concept of meditation teaching to then guide you in different directions and to give you the inspiration and the content to help you really deal with whatever is in front of you that day.

Jaime Masters: A lot of people, gurus, are like "Change your state." Yeah, but how do I change my state? I can pose, but I feel like I need more. And that's to me; I have five gigs of guided meditations on my Dropbox because I have different things for different things. And so, it was so awesome looking at it and going, "Oh, you guys now have all of that stuff too in one place." And I actually, I'm not an affiliate of you guys, but I know you have a link for the listeners to get a discount also.

Ariel Garten: We do. So, if you go to choosemuse.com/welcome, you can use the discount code, `choosemuse, C-H-O-O-S-E-M-U-S-E`.

Jaime Masters: So, if anybody thinks that they suck at meditation, go get this because you will get better. And if you commit to it, not only will you be better, your business will be better. And probably your children if you have those too, will be better also. One of the reasons why I started meditating is going, I need to be better for the kids for later so that way they're not as screwed up as I got, right? Because knowing in that self-awareness is a hard thing and it takes a while to actually practice it. So, I have a meditation closet and the kids are like, "Mom's meditating again." I'm like, "Yes, I have a place where my children do not bug me, that they know, it's a place that's only mine." Whereas you have a kiddo, you know your life is a little crazy and having one spot that can just be yours, where you can sort of regenerate, is huge.

Ariel Garten: It is heaven. And yeah, meditation gives you both the spot, the excuse, because your kids aren't going to bug you when you're meditating, it's like "Mom's meditating." Also, mom usually comes out nicer after meditating so they really want that to happen. And it's also the space in your brain. It's a physical space and this is the space in my brain that's just for me.

Jaime Masters: I joke, because my kids go, whenever I'm cranky, they're like, "Mom, did you meditate today?" And half of the time, it's like, you got me. I really did, I skipped it today. And you know, it totally

works everybody. So, I know we have to start wrapping up, so what is one action listeners can take this week to help –

Ariel Garten: Oh yeah. Before we go to the wrap up, I would love to talk about muse S because we haven't talked about sleep.

Jaime Masters: – Oh, tell me more.

Ariel Garten: So, we have a new device that we just came out with called Muse S and it actually helps you fall asleep, it's amazing. So, it's a soft, comfortable version of Muse that you can wear while you're falling asleep. And it gives you all of the same meditations that you get with Muse and all the same content and sensor feedback, but it also gives you guided meditations that lull you into sleep along with a soundtrack that's actually built from your body. So, you're literally listening to the sound of your heart and your own breathing, but as nature sounds, and then as you start to fall asleep, as you start to relax, it starts to entrain your body even more deeply into relaxation in a way that's designed to help you fall asleep faster. And then we also have amazing tracking that's going to be coming out soon so you can actually see what your brain and body were doing throughout the whole night.

Jaime Masters: So, I listened to sleep talk downs every night, I don't know, that's sort of our hypnosis and I can feel when I start to fall asleep. So, now I'm really excited, I haven't been able to use any of the oral rings or anything, I'm not a huge fan, but I am very excited for this. Thank you for pausing and making sure that we do that. Because when you were saying beforehand, I was about to say, "I use sleep talk downs all the time, but the Muse in the middle of the night does not sound like that, like moving around would be a bit of a pain in the butt, so that's awesome. Is that already out?"

Ariel Garten: It's already out and yet super comfy, you can fall asleep in it. If you wake up in the middle of the night, you can just use it again.

Jaime Masters: Love it. All right, so my last question then, one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward towards their goal of a million.

Ariel Garten: I'm going to think about this for a second, through the magic of editing. It's also hard to bring it down to just one.

Jaime Masters: Oh yeah.

Ariel Garten: Okay. I'll pretend you just ask me the question.

Jaime Masters: Perfect.

Ariel Garten: Okay, so in the theme of what we've been talking about, the obvious answer is start meditating, but I want to get more specific than that. And that is start observing the things that make you afraid. And when that little bit of fear or that voice inside you is holding you back from doing something that's actually going to move you forward. It's holding you back from sending out an email to a contact, it's holding you back from going to ask for a line of credit, it's holding you back because you are too afraid. So, listen to your mind, listen to your body and start identifying what is just fear and where that fear is no longer serving you.

Jaime Masters: I love it, and meditate, and make sure you meditate. Thanks so much for coming on the show today. I know you have a personal website; also, you have Ted talks, where can we find more about you?

Ariel Garten: So, you can find me at choosemuse.com/welcome. And there you'll find links to all the stuff you'd want to discover, including more cool facts about the neuroscience of meditation.

Jaime Masters: Awesome. Thank you so much for coming on the show today, I appreciate it.

Ariel Garten: My pleasure. Thank you, this is so much fun.

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Duration: 52 minutes