

Put on Some Weight for Better Sleep and Less Stress – Baloo Living with Dave Asprey – #759

Announcer:

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Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today, we're going to talk about sleep, and we're talking about stress. It's probably not what you think, because today's guest is someone who didn't know that she would start out looking at either one of those things. After 15 years of grinding it out in politics and publishing and finance and all this stuff, Elizabeth Grojean detected that she was really not that happy about things. So she did what any thoughtful, entrepreneurial type minded person would do. She ran away to Bali. There, she spent time getting in touch with stress. If this sounds familiar to you guys, I kind of did the same thing. After I got my MBA, I went off to Nepal and Tibet because there's this certain point where I'm done. But she went into meditation and yoga and healing and figured out what was going on and said, "All right. How do I do something right?"

Dave:

Something that's going to improve sleep. She came out with the first and only non-toxic weighted blanket, which is what we're going to talk about today, which is about stress and sleep and the path of becoming an entrepreneur and a lot of things that you can use for your own knowledge around sleep. Yes, before we get going, I actually sleep underneath a Baloo blanket every night, because well, you can measure that it works, which is something I like, and that's a bar for anyone to come on to the show like this. Elizabeth, thank you for being here.

Elizabeth Grojean:

Thank you so much, Dave, for having me. I'm really excited to be here.

Dave:

I'm planning to pick your brain a little bit about your entrepreneurial side of things, but really, I want to know what you know about weighted blankets and sleep too. Let's get started with that. Then I want you to tell me how you got into this, but first the meat for listeners who are saying, "All right. Weighted blankets. What the heck?" So let's just jump right in. Weighted blankets. If people haven't heard of them, what's the deal?

Elizabeth:

Yes. So a weighted blanket is quite literally a blanket that's weighted to provide an extra feeling of pressure to your body while you're sleeping. So you'll see them in the market anywhere from 10 to 30 pounds, they're usually quilted. There's some kind of filling inside, and you use it at night while you're sleeping, and people rave about them. They make going to sleep faster. They make sleeping deeper, getting higher quality sleep more easy, and that's it in a nutshell.

Dave:

I first heard about weighted blankets maybe eight years ago from the autism community. I looked kind of long and hard, and I found some websites somewhere, where someone was making them some sort of weird plastic fill. I don't actually know what's in there. Before that people would make them with

metal plates and then little metal discs. I did buy one. I thought this is kind of useful, but it's very lumpy. I noticed some differences in sleep, but it wasn't something that I felt like I wanted to sleep. So I did it for a few months, said, "There is a difference here, but I don't like it." Then knowing what it did to calm people, I said, "Hey, Anna. My daughter must have been... Geez. That was long. I don't know, seven or something."

Dave:

Said, "Do you want to try this?" She tried and was like, "Daddy, I really liked that." So then what I found is the kids, my son too, would steal the weighted blanket because they were feeling something, even though I'm like, "I don't really know what's in there, and there's plastic pellets or whatever." That was what got me interested, and I thought, "Well, I'm probably not going to do this because I don't want hunks on metal, and I don't want whatever. I don't even know what's in there."

Dave:

So when you came out in 2018 and said, "I have these non-toxic things," I'm like, "I'm really interested." So roots in autism, for sure, but I don't have autism or Asperger's, at least not anymore. My kids don't have it. But it still changes sleep. What changes in sleep do people see from weighted blankets?

Elizabeth:

The changes in sleep that people see are it becomes faster and easier to go to sleep. So oftentimes, if you put this on, there's a very subtle but sudden physical, physiological response that happens. So the body immediately starts to just relax and let go. So there's something happening in there with the fight or flight reflex that trigger that so often we're really holding onto, and it's active all day long. The pressure on the body is letting you know that it's safe to relax that fight or flight response.

Elizabeth:

So it's this sort of overwhelming yet subtle, gentle relaxation response that happens, and people will report that they slip into sleep. It's this effortless slipping into sleep very quickly. So there's that aspect of it. However, we also get feedback from customers that used to wake up two, three, four, five times a night either to go to the bathroom, or they just toss and turn. They're now sleeping solid through the night without waking up at all. So you're sleeping more deeply through the night while you sleep. So it's faster going to sleep and deeper sleep and higher quality sleep.

Dave:

The way I look at it is that there's all these different systems with different goals in the body and the emergent behavior at the end of the day is, okay, our body works. But there's micro-movements that happen all the time that we're not even aware of, and they take energy. But it's systems within the body, unconscious systems that are sort of saying, "What can I do? What should I do? What can I get away with?" Eventually, we noticed something maybe. But I think that it's a similar effect to a squirming puppy, and anyone who's listening has ever held a puppy, a really young puppy, you pick it up, and it's just like a ball of wiggles, and then you just hold it. After maybe a minute, you hold it from, it goes... It just melts. Then you can rub it's tummy, and it's tongues hang out, and it's like in this altered state, kind of.

Dave:

I think that we're doing that to these subtle movement systems in the body that are making us toss and turn. There's no use to it. But the body's always doing an energy equation, and it's like, "Hey, you know what? I would have to expend a lot of energy and move now. It's not worth moving now. Therefore, I'll shut down this system in the way that it should be shut down anyway." So you're getting sort of a cleaner, I'm asleep perspective on it. I now every night, at least when I'm not traveling, which is always thank you endemic response.

Dave:

In that case, I always sleep under the Baloo, and I really noticed that same thing. It's faster go to sleep. Now, it takes me two and a half minutes, not three minutes. I don't have a problem going to sleep, but you put it on it. You slow down. Have you done any studies on deep sleep percentages versus REM or anything like that?

Elizabeth:

Actually, no, we haven't done studies with the blanket. I'd love to. I was talking to a doctor in USC about doing it with some biometric feedback devices. But we haven't gotten there.

Dave:

Interesting. There might be something we could do with Upgrade Labs or 40 years of Zen or something. I just thought of that. Because we have all kinds of interesting gear for that. But even with just an Oura ring, I think you could probably pull together something. Oh, I know. I-

Elizabeth:

And be great at storytelling. Yeah.

Dave:

I have some ideas for you. Maybe I did the sleep challenge recently. We had thousands of people over a couple weeks teaching them how to sleep. I bet that we could get some people from the challenge to get a blanket and report their scores with them with and without. Because sleep onset, I know you guys have that hacked. I feel like my deep sleep is deeper, but I haven't done statistical analysis, and I'm just one Guinea pig. So how would we really know?

Elizabeth:

Right.

Dave:

But for anyone listening, you know that I care about ROI, which is not based on how much you spend. It's how much energy does something take, right? How much do you get back, and how much does it take to do it? If you can swap something out to make a one-time behavior change, so you don't have to every day remind yourself. Doing squats every day is high energy because you have to remember to do it every day, and it's a pain, right? But you'll still do it because it's worth it. But if you could change shoes and the new pair of shoes automatically did squats for you, you would change the shoes and never think about squats again.

Dave:

I feel like with weighted blankets, you change the blanket, and you don't have to think about it anymore, and you just get the added sleep benefits. So to me, it's a very high ROI perspective. Talk to me about toxins in weighted blankets. So you're non-toxic, and I know there's all kinds of garbage embedding that I'm concerned about. But what is present in a lot of blankets and a lot of weighted blankets that you don't have in your blanket?

Elizabeth:

Well, when we first launched when I looked around the landscape at what was being offered to people for something that I thought was a very beautiful and personal experience, and obviously, you're taking this blanket to bed with you, and like any bedding, you're spending hours in bed touching it. I saw a lot of synthetic materials. They're calling it Minky now. So it's just polyester type fabrics, and the [crosstalk 00:09:09]-

Dave:

They're calling it a what? A Minky.

Elizabeth:

Minky. I think the Chinese factories made up this word, Minky, and it's now in use sort of in the American vernacular for weighted blankets. Then the most common fill that I saw at the time was these plastic poly pellets. So the idea of doing something good for yourself by using a bag of plastic felt so negative to me in terms of the environmental aspect of that. Energetically, I just didn't like the idea of that at all.

Elizabeth:

So we launched by using pure cotton, which is certified by OEKO-TEX standard, which means it's been lab tested a post-production to be free from... It used to be the 100, but now it's over 300 of the most commonly found chemicals and toxins that are used in textile production, and we're using glass microbeads and always have. In my experience, they're a better feel. They're very fine, and they contour the body in this sort of more significant, more intimate way than the plastic poly pellets ever did. So it's a better experience for the customer as well.

Dave:

There's something else that I noticed, because I tried the plastic poly pellet one. Glass is dense. So what I am sleeping with, with the Baloo, it looks like a blanket, and it's heavy. But the other ones look like a puffed sleeping bag, I know, because they have this big channels with these big plastic pellets. So my bed looks like a bed. Well, mostly like a bed. I am a bio-hacker. So that was one thing, but there's something about the blanket being the right thickness that mattered to me and glasses and nerd. But plastic pellets, especially lots of them together, they build up a giant static charge. For listeners who know about what's happening even with synthetics rubbing is your skin, you have microcurrents that run across your body, and I'm not convinced that it's a really good idea to be sleeping under synthetics and building up a big static charge. That's why we practice earthing and grounding ourselves and things like that.

Dave:

So do I want to sleep with an inert basically silica based glass? Or do I want to sleep with plastic pellets? I think I know, and there's also plastic pellets melt, not that my bed catches on fire that often, but I still

think that just it's a good thing to be a little bit more civilized about it. Where are your glasses that are recycled?

Elizabeth:

It's not recycled, as far as I know. I know. There's always something to do. We're just continuing to improve. We have eliminated all of the plastic from our packaging, and we have a lot of other environmental initiatives that we work on.

Dave:

To be perfectly honest, if I was to cut my Baloo blanket open and pour it in my garden, and my garden by the way is an organic farm that feeds my community, and also, it's not just a little hobby garden, it would do nothing but do the same thing as sand.

Elizabeth:

Exactly. It's just sand.

Dave:

I've never seen any leaking out because these are microbeads, but they're not super tiny, at least I've never had.

Elizabeth:

They're larger than sand. They're slightly larger than sand. They're actually quite beautiful. They're these round soft roly beads. If you put it on a counter, it will roll and never stop. So you want them to stay in the blanket because they become a bit like glitter when they get out. They stick on everything. But they stay in their place.

Dave:

Okay. Cool. So I've never seen one leak out, but what are the...

Elizabeth:

No. Yeah.

Dave:

Okay. So I am a believer, and I have tried other weighted blankets, and it's one of those things where maybe you could do every step right, and you'd get a better result, and I think that's why I wanted you on the show. Now, you also went to Bali. I was in Tibet, and I had... People have heard me talk about it if they're longtime listeners. I'm on the side of Mount Kailash, drinking yak butter tea going, "Wait, why do I feel so good?" Did you have a message from above saying, "Thou shalt make a weighted blanket"? How did that come about?

Elizabeth:

Two things. So one was I definitely had profound moments of shifting and changing that I felt in my body while I was in Bali. That came as a direct reaction from just being in this magical place. So there was that. Then the second was all of these experiences that sort of led me one foot in front of the other to knowing that I wanted to start a business. They're searching for the right product in the market to

getting a sample of a weighted blanket, bringing it back from the factory to my Villa in Bali and trying it for the first time, and the experience of putting it on myself, I will never forget, it was a spiritual experience. I mean, it felt so good to me, and it was so surprisingly good, and I was already living this extremely relaxed existence in the jungle, waking up with the sunlight and nature sounds every day. I didn't really think it could get any better.

Elizabeth:

But it was this feeling of being relaxed down to my toenails, which I didn't expect. So that for me was a really profound moment, where it went from me sort of searching in the market for a product that I thought I would like to offer to people, to having something that I want to share with the world, that this is a beautiful experience, this is something that can help you reconnect mind and body in a really natural way, support sleep, support mental health, and help you have a better life because you can wake up being a better version of yourself.

Elizabeth:

So that's why I say that the product is the vehicle for the message that I want to communicate to the world because there's so many things happening through just the simple experience of using a weighted blanket.

Dave:

Are you still in Bali? How does that work? Are you one of those, I live on the beach and run my company of people?

Elizabeth:

I really would have loved to be one of those people. I tried to make it work. I was there for a year and a half. We launched the product while I was living there, and I'd say until about six months in, I was living in Bali. But at a certain point, when it starts to become a real business for me anyway, I was a lot more comfortable being in the United States because of the time zones and our warehouses, our team, everyone's US-based. So I'm happy to be back. I'm back in New York City.

Dave:

It can be a challenge to run a company remotely. I actually do live on an island, and I have for 10 years now. But it's an Island with an international airport in the same time zone and an hour from Seattle where my headquarters is. So that's a little bit different than Bali, which sounds idyllic, but I wouldn't want to be in those time zones. So this is your first entrepreneurial effort, wasn't it?

Elizabeth:

Yes. I've always done things in the past. I was an Airbnb host on this side. I would sell things on eBay on the side. I worked for a venture backed startup as the assistant to the CEO for a couple of years. So I got a lot of appreciation and insight into early stage business building by being on her desk. But this was the first time I ever did anything on my own. I did not ever set out to become a CEO or launch a business, per se. This was an idea that I loved that I wanted to test, and it's gone step by step and grown much faster than I ever expected.

Dave:

It's really interesting. A good number of entrepreneurs, I'm trying to figure out exactly who it is. I thought it was a founder of Lulu, but I don't think so. It was a co-founder, but they spent time as executive assistants for CEOs of startups and just sort of watching how the game is played. So you had a pretty good look under the covers, see what I did there, about how to do it. So how many years in are you now? You're about two years, two and a half years in to starting?

Elizabeth:

Yeah. Two and a half. Yeah.

Dave:

Okay. Do you like being an entrepreneur?

Elizabeth:

I love it. I actually think it's the reason why I struggled so much in all of my jobs before, working for other people.

Dave:

Okay. Some people were meant to be entrepreneurs, and some people try to do it because it's cool, but they're not wired for it. So you think you were wired for it anyway?

Elizabeth:

I think I was meant to be doing this. Yeah.

Dave:

Okay. Very cool. Now, what was it like when you first said, "Okay. I'm going to do this"? How did you fund yourself?

Elizabeth:

Yeah. There's a whole story there. So actually, at that point, I hadn't run out of money because I'd taken all my savings and gone to live in Bali for as long as I felt like I needed to get my head right, and I got my head right. I was in this amazing place. I saw this product. I was really excited about the brand, the launch, what it could do for people, but I had no money. I actually wasn't fazed by that. I thought, "Okay. Well, I just need a little bit to get started, and I know people that I can get funding from." My dad offered right away. I said no right away, because I'm independent child. I want to do it myself and definitely not accept help from my parents.

Elizabeth:

We grew up very middle class. Definitely didn't ever have a lot of extra money around. So I think it was a point of pride for me that I actually wanted to be able to bring something back to the family instead of take from the family. I had a session with the healer in Bali, someone from California. It's a feta healing session. It involves a lot of circular breathing and meditation. I don't really know the mechanics of it, but I know I had this experience of meeting my dad on another plane, and we were communicating with each other, and I got this message of pure love from my father that he just wanted to give to me.

Elizabeth:

The greatest gift I could give to my dad would be to accept his offer. So I came from that, and long story short, I got a loan from my dad. That's where I started the business. But there was a lot of healing that went into accepting that money and then him becoming part of this entrepreneurial journey, and he also has a small business and has been an entrepreneur for most of his career. So we relate to each other in this new way that we didn't have before, and he's really excited to be part of the business and seeing it grow. Because I used to send him these investor updates, would get really excited and sent him five bullet points, what happened this week or this month, and he'd write back, "Okay, good for you. What is this internet thing? I don't understand, but as long as you're happy."

Dave:

Wow. So were there plant medicines involved in Bali? It seems like there usually are.

Elizabeth:

Yeah. There are many options. Yeah. I had a very wonderful ayahuasca experience there. It wasn't the first time I had tried ayahuasca, but it was by far the most meaningful experience that I've had. So that was I think a part of what felt like for me for the brand a download. It was this brand, the brand name, everything that the look and feel of it, the name Baloo. Baloo is named after The Jungle Book character from Rudyard Kipling, Baloo. I just always thought it was a beautiful name and had been saving it in my back pocket for maybe a dog or a child. I don't know.

Elizabeth:

When I needed a business name, I just pulled it out and did a trademark search, and it was available, which I feel like that's the easiest naming story I've ever heard of [crosstalk 00:20:30]-

Dave:

Yeah. When you were saving, that was still available. That's cool.

Elizabeth:

So all of these things kind of fell into a place where it never was me whiteboarding. I never was saying, "Okay. What's our customer avatar, and let's come up with a brand that customers will connect with." It was a fluid expression of the experience that I was having that I wanted to share with people. I think a really big part of that was the ayahuasca journey, but also just the Island of Bali itself, I don't know if you've spent time there before.

Dave:

Not yet.

Elizabeth:

No.

Dave:

I was planning to, but someone shut down all the-

Elizabeth:

So I was in Ubud, which is considered to be the spiritual heart of the island. The legend sort of tells you that the inhabitants of Bali came from another island in Indonesia, which was under attack. So the royals of that island took their entire court and all their artists and artisans with them and settled in Bali. So everyone in Bali has this heritage of being descended either from royalty artists or court [inaudible 00:21:31]. So you have a really strong artistic and legal culture there, and you have this fertile jungle with so much vegetation and animals and birds. There's a volcano and tons of prayer meditation that's been going on there for centuries. I feel it physically in my body when I'm in that space, I can just start to feel a purge.

Elizabeth:

Usually, a purge happens when I arrived in Bali. Either there's something that's out of alignment that I've been tolerating or been blind to either a relationship or something like that that will within days come to a head and get resolved by being there.

Dave:

Right. I've come to believe that certain places have more power than others, and I've been to some of the most spiritual places on the planet, and I'm fortunate to have done that. But yeah. It's hard to put words to it, but you feel different there, and there's a different energy there. To an engineer like me, admitting that I was noticing that took a little bit of soul searching early on, because I'm like all places are supposed to be the same. That message in my head was like, "Well, that's not how it is, even though that's how it's supposed to be."

Dave:

So I had a lot of that, that programming that says that can't be, therefore it isn't. So I'd say, "Well, it was random that I was feeling different every time I came to this place." Like, "Wait, if it happens every time, it's not random. You can go through that." Did you grow up with that kind of a spiritual perspective on things? Or did you stumble into that on your journey?

Elizabeth:

No. I was always very curious about psychology and spirituality, and my mom always has been as well. She's a social work background, and now she's a certified life coach. So our bookshelf was always filled with looking back on itself, help books. But as a kid, I was curious. So I would pick them up and read them. I was raised in the Episcopal Church. So I would go to church camp, and I'm not a religious person now. But I think that growing up with a framework for religion and spirituality was also really informative for me and gave me a space to, to ask questions about things that are beyond the literal world that we can see, touch, and feel.

Dave:

That makes sense. So you're open to the experience. You had something profound happened with your dad there that I think would be of benefit to listeners to go into a little bit deeper if you're okay with it.

Elizabeth:

I'd love to talk about it.

Dave:

I look back on my early entrepreneurial experiences, and I can draw from that to draw parallels, and I had a real hard time accepting help. Right? Because I had this idea that any time I would accept help from someone, I would owe them, and I don't want to be in debt. Right? So I was like, "I'll just do this all by myself." Largely, the number of billion dollar early internet opportunities that I missed because I was afraid to accept, help, I can't even go into the numbers and the times. I recognize now that that was my own limitation.

Dave:

In your mind, though, you're sort of seeing money as a control thing. Right? You're saying, "I'm not at home anymore. I don't need the control thing." Then you realize, "Wait, it's actually a helping thing, and I want you to succeed thing." You did that in an altered state. Did your altered state there change your ability or willingness to accept help from other people as an entrepreneur?

Elizabeth:

I don't know if I can give credit to that specific altered state for being what changed it. But I know that my relationship to accepting help, my relationship to money as energy, and my relationship to the world not being fixed and set around me as being something that's fluid and dynamic has shifted. I think partly, the experience of accepting help from my dad and then having success with his trust that he placed in me was a very big growth experience. I have since that time been able to accept and receive loans from friends, which I've paid back and help from other people in a way now where I almost expect the help that I need to come to me before I know how it's going to come.

Elizabeth:

So I think it's less about trying to control life with this sense of, what is it that I with my analytical mind can understand, see, or predict and more about feeling into, on a deeper level energies and being open and receptive to allow something to come in that I couldn't have predicted at the time.

Dave:

It's interesting because Lisa Nichols or Jack Canfield or John Gray, a lot of the leaders in personal development who've come on the show have all mentioned that manifesting or making things happen. But it's not a forced thing. Like I said, it's like, "Oh yeah, it'll be there when I need it mindset." That enrages some entrepreneurs. How dare you? Do you feel nervous that sometime maybe it won't be there?

Elizabeth:

No. I'll say that the reason I don't think that's an issue for me is because my motivation in business is not to achieve wealth or to do something from my ego. I didn't want to become an entrepreneur because it looked cool. It just happened because I wanted to do this thing, and that's how you do a thing is you become an entrepreneur to get it done.

Dave:

If you want to buy something that doesn't exist, what else are you going to do? Right.

Elizabeth:

Yeah. You got to make it and then offer it to people, and that's how you become an entrepreneur. That's one way that I know of to do it. So this question of sort of success or failure as a CEO or as an entrepreneur to me is an interesting question because how do you define success or failure? I mean, I've missed a lot of opportunities and could have made a lot more money in my two and a half years in business so far. I could tell you about things, mistakes that I've made. But I wouldn't say that any of them were failures, per se, because my metric is not necessarily only about, how do I make the most money? It's about, how am I learning as I go? How am I developing myself as a leader, as a person, as an entrepreneur, and are we having fun?

Dave:

What percentage of your time, every day or every week, do you spend doing stuff that you hate as an entrepreneur?

Elizabeth:

I mean, never. I'll have to give you a more accurate answer. There are things that I hate doing. But in the background of that, the context is that there's nothing I would rather be doing. There's no one making me do it. I'm doing it because it's part of this framework of something that I'm building, that I love, that I care for, and it's being done for a purpose. It's not being done to please somebody else.

Dave:

Okay. So you're willing to do the stuff that you don't like because it's worth it. Okay. Then what percentage of the time do you spend doing stuff that's kind of neutral? Like, "Yeah, I could do that. It doesn't give me energy, but it's okay."

Elizabeth:

I would say the majority of the time is neutral.

Dave:

What percentage of the time are you doing things like, "Yes, this gives me energy. This is what I want to be doing"?

Elizabeth:

I'd say like 10% of the time.

Dave:

Okay. So only 10% of your time is-

Elizabeth:

So far, we work on this [crosstalk 00:29:14].

Dave:

Okay. So 10% is recharging, 80% is, yeah, I could do that, and 10% is blah.

Elizabeth:

I'd say that's about right.

Dave:

All right. Does that make you sad that you spend 80% of your time doing things that don't make you happy?

Elizabeth:

I think that there is... I've been asking myself the same question. I'm trying to understand myself because there's something about the stubborn satisfaction of getting things done and making progress. So I love to work. I've always worked hard. Some people don't love to work hard, and they find other ways to exist. I have friends that never work, and they're great. They're always having fun. I've always worked hard, and I continue to work hard. I think it's something about the way that I'm programmed, and I actually have so much satisfaction, even if it's not the most enlivening task. This stuff I love is like new product development or photo shoots or creative concept building.

Elizabeth:

Most of my time is spent though in the day-to-day running of the business because we're still a pretty small team. But even though I would call it fun, I really feel happy when I'm doing it.

Dave:

That's good. So you can have a sense of gratitude when you're doing those things. But the questions I'm asking you are straight out of Dan Sullivan's work. Dan's been on the show. He runs a program called strategic coach. I met him through another guy's been on the show, Joe Polish. I did about a year of coaching with Dan, where he made me think about those things as an entrepreneur. I'm going to shift that needle so my goal is 30% stuff that's okay, 70% of stuff that gives me energy, and 0% stuff that I hate.

Elizabeth:

Nice. I need to listen to that episode.

Dave:

Yeah, definitely. Dan Sullivan. I don't know the number S-U-L-L-I-V-A-N. His company's called Strategic Coach. It's probably on his website. But the reason I was asking that is because you're only two and a half years in, and you've also been an administrative or executive assistant on the administrative side, where you're all about getting stuff done. It's really interesting to watch as entrepreneurs grow and evolve to realize, "Well, wait, I like to work, but I'm doing, and I'm doing, and I'm doing." Versus the strategy work. I mean, do you have a product plan? Are there a bunch of new sleepy things coming out, or they're different weights of blankets or-

Elizabeth:

We have all kinds of new things coming, yes, and things that we didn't get to this year that are on the roadmap for next year, so-

Dave:

Okay. So you're still growing and evolving new product lines?

Elizabeth:

Yeah.

Dave:

What about different weights? I should've ask you that earlier when we were going deep on sleep, but what's the ideal weight for a blanket?

Elizabeth:

Yeah. So there is a very common rule of thumb, which I think is a great metric. It's 10% of your body weight. So if you weigh 150, pick a 15 pound blanket. That's really simple math. I would say though, it's not a science. You could weigh a hundred or more or less and still use a 15-pound blanket and feel great. It's such a difference of personal preference. I will say that we get more returns on our heavier blankets. So we have 12, 15, 20, and 25 pounds. We get the most returns on the 20 and 25.

Dave:

Interesting. I just take a couple of Olympic plates. I put them on top of my blanket. I'm just so good to go.

Elizabeth:

All good. Then we get people saying, will you make a 40-pound blanket, please? So you can't please everyone yet, but-

Dave:

Well, couldn't they just take two 20-pound blankets and just be okay with that?

Elizabeth:

That's what we told them. Really could buy another one.

Dave:

Okay. What about kids? I mean, my kids use... I have the 20-pound blanket, but I'm 200 and whatever, 210 pounds thereabouts, depending on the day of the week. So that's about 10% for me. But my kids borrow it, and they're 100 pounds.

Elizabeth:

Yeah. It's not a problem. If you think about it a little further besides of the blanket, it's a size-to-weight ratio also. So you have a 20-pound blanket, but it's pretty large. So their body's not that big. They're just going to feel the weight of the part that covers them.

Dave:

Okay. I definitely am to the point now where I am ordering blankets for the kids, because they really do come and steal mine.

Elizabeth:

Yeah. Kids are so receptive and so open, especially weighted blankets. I feel like kids really benefit from them. We're launching children's in December or January. It's a work in progress. But what we wanted to come out with was obviously not white. Our line is white weighted blankets, because I love the white serene bedroom look. But kids are not doing white.

Dave:

They just look like blankets.

Elizabeth:

We're doing vegetable dye colors for kids. So we're coming out in a soft, a sandstone pink of green and a blue for kids.

Dave:

You're one of the type of entrepreneurs, type of person who just looks at all the details, and I'm the same way, where maybe people don't really care about how long it took to truck the coffee bean when it was still inside a cherry, but I did because I thought it mattered. So you optimize. So you're going, "Okay, vegetable dye, not synthetic dye, glass not plastic and all these things." But you also decided from day one that you were going to be carbon neutral, and you had a different way of doing it. Can you tell me about how you go about being carbon neutral?

Elizabeth:

Yeah. So carbon neutral means that, well, every action that we do as a company from producing our products, to shipping them to our operations, from our team travel office expenses, et cetera, has an energy cost and emits carbon into the environment. So I wanted to at least do no harm when I was building a business, and creating a product, shipping it has a lot of impact in the world. So we partnered with initially a company called carbonfund.org to invest in environmental projects, primarily reforestation and education.

Elizabeth:

So projects that would sequester carbon from the air, meaning produce a positive benefit to the carbon levels in the atmosphere. But I've recently become in contact with a company called SeaTrees, an organization or a nonprofit called SeaTrees based in California. This is actually a cohort of scientists and surfers. It's really cool. So what SeaTrees is doing is focusing on blue ocean strategies. So the ocean actually contains and captures 90% of the carbon that's in the carbon life cycle on the planet. They found that these projects that are done at the edge of land and sea can have the biggest impact in terms of sequestering carbon.

Elizabeth:

So the projects that we're investing in are mangrove forest planting and kelp forests. One of their projects is in Southern California in Los Angeles County. There's a kelp forest project going on there, and there's mangrove forest replanting in Biak Island in Indonesia, where they've replanted 250,000 mangrove trees to repopulate the forest. So this is a project that we're involved in now. So we support them by calculating all of the carbon that we produce just by existing as a company through manufacturing, shipping, et cetera, and we invest that back into these projects. They say to wipe out the surf term, our carbon footprint.

Dave:

Nice.

Elizabeth:

Yeah. So it's really inspiring to hear this organization speak because they're so strong, I think on storytelling, and I think giving hope back to people that there are positive things that we can do to mitigate what the actions that we're taking as humans in the environment.

Dave:

Well, I love it that you're looking at every detail for what you can do in order to make a clean product, and I think what you've done really stands out. It's relatively easy to take a bunch of shredded recycled plastic of questionable origin and throw it in a synthetic blanket and put it out there for really dirt cheap. But you can tell... you can't tell the Baloo blanket when you look at it. It just looks like a blanket. But when you pick it up, what's going on here. So it's a very different experience for me, one that I appreciate just knowing all the thought that goes into it. Tell me about the science of the Baloo weighted blanket? What's it actually doing for sleep?

Elizabeth:

The way the weighted blankets work is through deep pressure touch. There's been multiple studies that show that the pressure touch stimulates serotonin in the body, which is a neurotransmitter involved in the regulation of sleep that has a calming effect. Serotonin is directly related to melatonin, which is the hormone that triggers your body's sleep-wake cycles, your circadian rhythm and is what tells you that it's time to go to sleep. So similar to being held or hugged, like when we're babies and being swaddled, the nervous system calms down these hormones and neurotransmitters are generated, and the body slips into deep sleep.

Elizabeth:

There's actually a recent study was done in Sweden, specifically on weighted blankets. It was a smaller sample size. So it's more anecdotal versus scientific. But they took a population of people struggling with insomnia, depression, and other mental health issues. The control group slept with an 18-pound blanket. Their blanket was made of chain mail, similar to the one you said you found eight years ago. But in any case, it was an 18-pound blanket.

Dave:

At least it wasn't plastic, like most of those blankets.

Elizabeth:

It wasn't plastic. The control group got a three-pound plastic blanket, actually. In the study, 42% of the weighted blanket participants were considered to be in remission from insomnia after the study, versus only 3.6% from the control group.

Dave:

The Baloo blanket is made with glass, which is way better than plastic and probably better than chain mail too, at least I think so.

Elizabeth:

In many ways, better than chain mail. So the scientists said that the likelihood of having a 50% reduction of your sleep issues was nearly 26 times greater in the weighted blanket group versus the control group.

Dave:

Well, there you go. There's an argument for weighted blankets and an argument for having weighted blankets made out of high quality, clean materials, because who wants to sleep underneath junk. What about sleepers during the pandemic specifically? People are sleeping alone. People are having COVID dreams. They're all stressed. Have you seen any results from weighted blankets?

Elizabeth:

Yeah. When we looked at the data, actually, we saw an increase of 47% in searches on Google related to insomnia and sleep. So people are definitely struggling with sleep right now. I'm sorry. That was a 47% increase in search volume in March and April year over year.

Dave:

So people are worried then they're not sleeping well, so they're looking for ways to improve their sleep quality.

Elizabeth:

Right.

Dave:

The good news is there's a lot of hacks, and some of them require more attention than others, and I just think weighted blankets are a slam dunk because you can just put it on your bed, and you never think about it again. You go to bed. Except for one time. I kind of hesitate to ask you this, but what the heck? What is the impact of weighted blankets on sexual relations?

Elizabeth:

Yeah. You know what I've heard from my friends? Most often, what happens is that the blanket can end up taking up space between two people, and it can become like a wall. So it gets harder to get to the other side of the wall if you're sleeping in bed with a partner.

Dave:

If you bunch it up between you anyway.

Elizabeth:

Yeah. If you bunch it up between you, that can happen. But on the other hand, if you're better rested, you're more likely to be in the mood.

Dave:

It's totally true. Better sleep will raise testosterone in both partners. It will raise growth hormone and all that. I was just thinking about having a heavy thing on top of you wouldn't be that ideal. I guess the obvious answer is-

Elizabeth:

Take it off.

Dave:

But then again, a normal blanket. If you throw blankets between partners, because one's a hot sleeper, one's a cold sleeper.

Elizabeth:

Same difference.

Dave:

What about hot sleepers? How do they deal with weighted blankets?

Elizabeth:

That's a great question. Actually, as I was living in Bali, coming up with how to design our weighted blanket, it's the tropics, it's warm, and most people don't really have indoor air conditioning. So it was always top of mind to me to make a product that could be used in all climates. The other reason for that is because this is not a seasonal product. This is something that you want to be able to use as a self-care tool all year round. So our blankets are designed specifically to be able to be used by hot sleepers and all year round. The way that it works is because it's just simply a small amount of cotton and the glass, the glass still doesn't trap heat. So they're really quite breathable.

Elizabeth:

I have got friends that have been going through early stages of menopause, struggling with hot flashes, and they've texted me, "Oh my God. I had the best night's sleep. This really works." So-

Dave:

Wow. So it does work. I haven't had problems with heat from it, and I've used it with and without a ChiliPAD, where you can actually pump cold water underneath on your mattress pad, which works fine. But I've not needed to do that. So I've not noticed the difference there, but normally there's been times when I wouldn't have a blanket on, but I'm not bothered at all by the Baloo. So it seems like he did something right there. Okay. In terms of using it with other blankets, do you just put it on top of all the other blankets, or do you put the other blankets on top of it?

Elizabeth:

My preference is to do your sheet and then your weighted blanket and then any other kind of bedding that you want, because more than just the pure weight of it, you really want to feel sort of the contouring of your body. That's that really nice hugging feeling.

Dave:

Okay. What about washing it? I mean, glass fibers wash, but how does that work?

Elizabeth:

It's machine washable, cold water, gentle cycle. For our larger blankets, which we just launched, actually weighted comforters that are a lot bigger, those we recommend taking to the laundromat not because the blanket would get damaged, but we don't want you to hurt your machine at home with too much going on inside. Then they can go in the dryer. No problem. They dry super fast.

Dave:

Oh, that's cool. So that's probably a better than a plastic thing anyway [crosstalk 00:43:52].

Elizabeth:

Yeah. Melted plastic in your dryer.

Dave:

Oh, that's so cool. Well, I've got to say I'm very happy with my Baloo, and I knew that there was some science. I did not know about the study from Sweden. Some science around weighted sleep and the whole universe of improving sleep. I've gone from someone who would say, "I'll sleep when I'm dead. Four hours a night is better than eight because I just don't want to sleep because I have stuff that I care about that I'd rather be doing." To the point that, "All right, I'm going to get my six and a half hours, which is what healthy people need to live longest. But I'm going to do it like a boss."

Dave:

So part of my stack is my Baloo sleep blanket. I do everything I can to get better sleep because it's so important. So I appreciate that you made a clean product that I'd be willing to put on my bed, because I get a lot of crap sent to me that I'm like, "I feel bad. I guess it's recyclable, but I didn't want to give it to friends because they're my friends. But who made this?" So you are as far away from that as is humanly possible, where every little detail, I feel like you nailed.

Dave:

As usual, on an episode like this, you have an offer for people who are listening are saying, "I want to try it. I do my best." Guys, you're listening to this. Whenever I have a product on an episode like this, I'm like, "Hey, let's have a discount for Bulletproof listeners." Because you guys know that I'm doing my best for you as well. So you're giving everybody 15% off. They go to Baloo Living, balooliving.com/dave, use code Dave 15, get 15% off your weighted blanket. I'm telling you right now, if you're thinking about this, and you're saying, I could get some cheaper things somewhere else, you get what you pay for. These are not super expensive blankets, and thank you for keeping them price reasonable. But these are noticeably different. They look different. They feel different. They have different materials. They're clean. Since you spend a third of your life in bed, that's a good place to go clean. So I really truly believe in the product, and thank you for making it.

Elizabeth:

Thank you. My pleasure.

Dave:

Thank you for being a guest on the show today, and we will talk again.

Elizabeth:

Thank you.