

MERYL: Welcome back, everybody to the Rebel Nutritionist Podcast. Today I am so excited to interview Aaron Novello. Welcome Aaron. He began his real estate career in 2006. Currently is the. Owner, Of elite real estate coaching where you coach top real estate agents in the country and faculty member at Gremlin Taming Institute.

And proud to say that you have over a hundred coaching clients nationwide, or was it worldwide? I think it was, yes. Nationwide. Yeah, nationwide. Nationwide. So really excited about our conversation today. We're gonna be talking about all things, I guess, behavioral change, right? So welcome.

AARON: Yeah. Well, thank you for the opportunity.

I am excited to be here with you today. And it's interesting because even though we are me and you are helping people in different areas in their life, **ultimately what it comes down to is lasting behavioral change**, right? Yeah. And what I think is super interesting is I was having a conversation with somebody recently and they're telling me about all these books about habits.

and people get all like, oh wow, I read this book and like, ah, it's Atomic Habits. I'm like, okay, well it's not new information. It's recycled information. At the same time, I always ask a similar question, which is like, okay, well **has there ever been a time where it, like it created either a tremendous amount of will on your part to create a habit, and once you created it, you actually moved away from**.

and almost invariably the answer is yes. So the question is, is like, why is that right? **Why is it that we know something's good for us like nutrition, yet we don't do it? Why is it that we know that? Like the discipline of, let's say prospecting, I'm trying to get clients. We know that that's important, but we still don't do it.**

And I really believe it's because **people can only behave in accordance with the way that they see themselves**. their identity. Right. And that's an interesting question. And it's much more deeper and much more, I think, lasting than just trying to work on developing habits.

MERYL: For sure. And I love, love, love that point.

And I really wanna go back and spend some time on that because, and I know in my business, right, **people come in with their predetermined identities**. I am this, I have been on a million different weight loss programs and I don't I can lose weight, I gain it back. I am, I was told a story, right? **I often say it's the stories that were told.**

I was told when I was younger, I was heavy. And I needed to lose weight and Right. What was then subsequently, that conversation in their head was, well, I am not worthy if I am not thin. Right. And I am not deserving if I am not of a certain weight. And they have taken that from when they were younger, that, let's call it trauma, if you will, on some level.

and it's morphed in many, many different ways. Right. And they end up in my office whether it's at the age of 20, 30, 50, 60, I have some people, I have a woman who's 80 years old still listening to the voice of her mother in her head about not eating. So, so it's not like it just goes away.

And I think that's so important about the identity piece. So how do we help? I and, and I think that's the key to behavior change. You gotta change the identity, you know? Who's that person now?

AARON: I do. And something you said I thought was really interesting cuz people say like, I am or you hear them say like, I never, or I'm the kind of person or I always, and whenever anybody uses language, like that, **language is exceptionally powerful.**

Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. In the Bible it says life and death is in the. . So I can either lift something up with words or I can tear it down with words. So **when somebody attaches I am or makes those definitive type statements, they're talking about themselves as though they're static, as though they're like a tree.**

**When in fact you're like this constantly changing dynamic human being and out of an infinite sea of possibilities, they're choosing one.** So what they're essentially doing right in front of you, even though they're not aware of it, is they're hypnotizing themselves. Because if they've said it to you in your office, they've said it to themselves thousands of times, right?

Absolutely. So **it's being aware of perhaps, where did I get that idea from?** That's a question I ask people all the time. Like they'll come to me and we'll talk about, let's say their, from a financial perspective. and I'm like, all right, well where did you get the idea that spending more money than you earn is like, that was a good idea?

Who did you watch? Who told you that? Like, who sold you on that Being like a good strategy and these and, and **how that story, if it's not something that's brought to the surface and a spotlight of awareness is en shined on it, it'll continue to run in the background like software.** Oh yeah. And then become self-fulfilling.

Right, right. So if somebody's the type of person that's like," I always," yeah, you always, that's gonna keep happening to you. I guarantee you that's true. So to your point, now it gets interesting. So if like, **now that I'm aware that it's the self-image, how do I intentionally and purposefully work on that?**

Yes. Because I think my experience has been with the people that I've had the good fortune of working with and in my own kind of personal growth and development, is that those stories, there's a saying that says, if you show me the boy till he is seven, I'll show you the man A lot of those stories and identities are based on kind of these experiences.

**We get pushed out onto planet Earth and we get bombarded with experiences and from those experiences we deduce meaning.** So in your example, when that lady's mother said to her like, Hey, you need to eat less, her little seven-year-old brain, or wherever it was, cuz it's not fully developed. took that and gave it meaning, which is, I am fat or I am not healthy, or I am not good.

That's the message that was conveyed. And, and not being aware of that. It'll continue to keep, **you'll continue to keep self-sabotaging cuz you're gonna keep reverting back to the way you see yourself.** Right. So like you strike me to be a super like, fit person. So, okay. **I'm pretty sure , while there may be days that you may not feel like doing certain things that are required in order to have that level of fitness, I'm also aware you see yourself as a fit person. So it's much easier to do the things that are required. It doesn't require tremendous amounts of willpower because you're just behaving in a way that you see yourself**, right? So if it's like, okay, if that's what's true, how do I work on identity? Because I can't really control those stories that were pushed in when I was.

Now, some people got different stories. They got like, I'm strong and then they, that plays out in their life. Right. But let's say you got one that's like I'm not a healthy person or I'm not a wealthy person, or I'm not, whatever it is. Well, there's a triangle, right? And at the bottom of the triangle is physiology.

on the right hand side of the triangle is focus. And on the other side is language, and at the top is identity. . So what that like, **so physiology is our physical body, right? Like fear is a visceral response, but so is courage.** Mm-hmm. and my body, my nervous system responds to my body. So if me and you like were to get into like some fierce argument and somebody was to pop in and say something hilarious, it would be impossible for us to stay angry. because my body's like, my nervous system is responding to my body. So, so movement.

focus is interesting because **what I focus on is what I feel and what I feel is my home emotionally**. It's where I actually live, not my physical home, right? So if I'm focused on that story all the time, I'm not enough.

I'm not fast enough, I'm not quick enough, I'm not strong enough, I'm not, I'm too fat, I'm too skinny, I'm too this, I'm too that. How am I gonna feel? I will feel less than I will feel like, you know? , like, I don't know, weak. I'll feel all of these kind of emotions that aren't enjoyable ones. So I have to be intentional about what I'm focused on.

And then language, right? Because language is this magical thing where if I told you that there was a being that could say something and make it real you'd be like, that's, that's like divine. Well, that's no different than you saying I'm the kind of person I always, and it becomes real.

What's interesting is all of those add up to identity the way you see yourself. **What's so cool about all the things on the triangle is that you have control over all of them. So that means that identity is malleable.** I can change it. I tell people all the time, they're like, wow, man. Like you have all these coaching clients, you teach these classes, you do all this stuff.

You sold 2000 homes, your career. I'm like, listen, I made this guy up. If you would've met me when I was 13, I had a butt f like mustache and aviator glasses. Like I made him up. But **the way I made him up is through physiology, focus, and language.**

MERYL: So and, and that's, great, that, that is.

I love that. So let's, Break that down a little, right? How do we then, and I'm sure that's part of the coaching. Obviously we can't, can't do all that. Now. We're not gonna get to all of it. But you know, someone who's listening who's like, all right, well, where, how do I begin? Because they're so stuck in that loop of their identity of where they think they are.

Right? That I'm not enough, I'm not this, I'm not that. I'm a failure at this. What, whatever the right, whatever that is. How, **how do we get them to even be able to step outside of that? Yeah. To say, oh, okay, I recognize this.** Because the interesting thing is, is we have a lot of people, and we do a lot of that.

**I always say the work that we do, 80% of it is in that brain, right? It's that mental, emotional, behavioral part. And the food part is kind of easy if you're paying attention,** right? But we get so stuck in the behaviors because they are difficult to change for so many people who are stuck in that identity. So where do you start with that?

AARON: Yeah, so I think it's with **an understanding that what the majority of people do is focus on the wrong thing. they're focused on strategy and they're focused on information.** Right. And they're imagining that if I compile more information that that's gonna lead to quantitative change it.

So, okay. Book worms. They eat books. Does that make them smart? No. So people that go out and they read, oh, I saw this and I saw this article, and I watched this podcast, da, da, da, with **this thinking that if I just gather more information that it'll solve this other thing, which is actually the real problem.**

Right? I'll get this, I'll track this, I'll do this. I'll get the aura ring. I'll do all these different things. to try to measure and gather more information and read more books in hopes that that's gonna solve this underlying issue. But it's not the issue. So I know like you have this awareness that **it's 80% psychology and 20% mechanics, and the greatest thing that you can get from a coach like you is access to the way that they think, because the way that they think allows them to do what they do.**

Right. So I think it's one, getting clear on that. **I think affirmation without discipline is the beginning of delusion.** like to imagine that I'm gonna read and watch podcasts and measure everything and that's gonna like dramatically change my approach to my health or my business, or like, it's not a realistic expectation.

So I think that's number one.

And then **number two is to shine a spotlight on that**, right? Cuz that likes to operate in the shadow. So one thing I would do is like, hey, what I want you to do, cuz I'm aware you've told this story a bunch and you know it very well, okay? I want you to take out a pen, a piece of paper, and **I want you to write the story that you tell yourself all the time.**

Go ahead. Just like, just write it all out and then when you're done, **I want you to read it to me, but I want you to read it in a funny voice. Like in an annoying voice**, like, oh my God. Because what you're doing is, is I'm showing you the story, but then simultaneously **when you tell it in a different voice, it seems foreign**, right?

It's like different. It's like, whoa, who's that? So that's work, right? In and of itself. Another thing that comes to mind is you could do work where we have this conversation and we, we, we make it very clear like, this is the real issue and we're gonna help you in totality. At the same time, we're gonna focus here first.

**Is to do like chair work. So in one chair, you're the story.** So I want you to sit the way you sit when you're in the story. I want you to breathe the way you breathe when you're in the story. I want you to make your musculature the way that it is when you're in the story. Cool. Get into full character.

I want you to go full out. I don't want you to like half-ass it. I want you to go all the way. And they do, great. How do you feel? and they report back to you. Well, I feel like, ah, my breathing shallowing quick. I feel like, hmm. You know? Right. Okay, cool. **Now I want you to go to the other chair, and in the other chair, I want you to feel peachy, keen, hunky dory.**

**Like that that story doesn't even exist.** Right. And in fact, maybe it's the opposite of that story. How would you, how would you breathe? How would you stand? Right? How, what would your musculature be like? How would you communicate with me? And what I'm

doing there is underneath, I'm showing the observ., the witness or the watcher, the one who learned how to walk and talk with no instruction.

The one who has the name Merrill, but is not her name, Merrill, the one who has a body but is not their body. **I'm showing the observer that you have a choice. There are two stories that exist and you get to choose moment to moment, breath to breath, which one you're actually interested in engaging in.**

So those are just a few ways to like play around with. Concepts because that's all that is, is a concept. But the problem is, is me and you are not a concept. Right?

MERYL: No. And that I love that idea though. That's great, right? Putting someone in that because they do, they're so in their own story so much of the time, and then they're, and then they're self-defeating, right?

They're saying, well, no, but I can't do this because, or I can't do that because, and so, and

AARON: it's funny when, when, when people say to me they can't, I'm like, you can't walk on water and you can't fly. , **when you say you can't, what you really are saying to me is you don't want to and it's probably because it's uncomfortable.**

Yep. So my intention in pointing that out to you, it's not to be a jerk, **I just want you to be clear and concise in your language. Yes. Because remember, language is one of those things that creates identity. .**

MERYL: Mm-hmm. . So let's go back to that. Let's talk about elaborate a little bit, right? So it's the fear, right?

They are afraid as much as they're uncomfortable in that identity, right? They're not comfortable in the identity, let's say that, that they're in at the moment to go to the other identity and consistently get there or consistently practice these. It there's, there's fear there. Yeah.

AARON: And I think there's a few reasons.

One is **you have all these unwritten agreements with these people in your life, based on your story**. It's like, okay, I'll allow you to continue to believe that you are who you say you are. As long as you allow me to continue to believe that I am who I say I am. But the moment that that kind of unwritten agreement is broken, then you'll start to see like, Hey, what do you.

Right. You think you're better than me? Like you don't want to eat out like the way we used to eat out. Well, you don't wanna drink alcohol. Like we used to drink alcohol. Like what do you think? You're like cooler than me. Like that sort of thing, right? Yeah. **So part of it I think is being way overly concerned what people think.**

And then the second is, is **it's a fear that if I change, I won't be accepted. And if I won't be accepted, I won't be loved.** that's what's underneath it. Yeah. It's just such a powerful thing that we don't even realize that that's what's operating, but the need to feel love will cause us to I don't know, prop up.

And it takes a, it takes a tremendous amount of time, energy, effort, and resources to prop up an act. And it's not as though, like, I, I remember I was at a learning event and this guy he was presenting like that. I'm like, oh. And he was talking about like which is a serious thing.

I'm not trying to make it light or anything. But he was like, yeah I'm thinking about like doing something harmful to myself, like that sort of thing. And the guy who's facilitating,

who's a master, he's like, I don't believe you. The whole crowd was like, and he's like, why don't you believe me?

He's like, because of you're shoes, man. Like, they're, they're just so nice, like that red color. And it, the guy started laughing. He's like, you see, you're not really that sad, are you? Like, he was just breaking him out of this pattern of thinking. So yeah, just it, it takes a lot of energy and effort, but yeah, to your point, it's, you're afraid, you're either **afraid of how you're gonna be perceived, and there's a real thing about being afraid of success**, which I used to think was silly.

Yeah. Like when I was younger and ambitious and I was like, what do you mean? Like, afraid of success? But it's true. I tell people like, look, if you get in the best shape of your life, it'll mess. Like, it'll probably mess you up. . **If you make more money in a month than you've ever made in your life, it'll probably mess with your identity.**

You'll be like, oh my God. Like, whoa, what is that? Right? And then people have a tendency to revert back. Yes. They'll, they'll, they'll lose it all and then, and then **they'll start to get attention or something and it feels weird and uncomfortable. And then they're like, whoa. And then they'll go back.**

MERYL: Yeah. And we see that all the time with people who are right. They're, they're adopting all these healthy, healthy habits, these healthy behaviors. They're feeling good, they're losing weight, they're feeling better, right? Their ailments are disappearing less inflammation, whatever it is.

And then, Something happens and boom, they, they just go back and you're just thinking to yourself, what just happened? ? And or people who are working with us for months on end, and then something happens in their life. There's, it just boom, they spiral backward quickly and you know, you're saying, well, we still come back, let's coach you, come back and then, and then they're ashamed and you know, then that whole other thing sets in.

right. So how do you speak to keeping right? How do we get people to get better at sticking with it?

AARON: Yeah, so I read **a book called Change or Die** and it was interesting and the premise of the book was the guy, I think his name's Ornish, he's the first guy to do open heart surgery or one of the first and he was like he was the man, he's flying all around the world doing open heart surgery, but he noticed after five years of doing this, the people that he gave surgery to, a good percentage of him needed it again. And he was like, oh, I'm actually not, I'm like a mechanic. **I'm taking out like a piece and putting another one in, but they're actually not changing their behavior**, right? So he was like, okay, that wasn't acceptable to him.

So what he did is he got a group of people together and , they had to live in his facility for like, I don't know, nine weeks. Yeah. Put them on a, yeah. Yeah. Dean. He put 'em on a very specific diet, certain amount of exercise, meditation, like cardiovascular, whatever. And all of their vitals came to, and these are people that had super-advanced cardiovascular.

, like lots of closures and like right about to have a heart attack and their vitals like, changed dramatically. Like you're like completely different people from their organ function perspective. and **60 something percent of the people kept the change. Now that's, that's la that's a behavior modification.**

And most of people's, **most of society's problems are behavior modifications.** Yeah. Right. Like, how is it that we live in the richest country in the world and 65% of people that paycheck to paycheck? Like how is that, that's a behavior modification, right? Or that 60% of the population is overweight or obese.

That's a behavior modification, right? So most of the problems are behavior modifications. So the people in the book that got interested in that and they're like, Like

what happened and what they said, which I thought was super interesting, is the following. **The first is you have to like find someone that you can relate to.**

And that's interesting. And they told a story about this guy. He went into the gym and he's not a particularly like fit guy. And the guy who met him at the gym was like adonis, like just like you. . He's like, I don't relate to that dude. Like, I'm never gonna look like that guy. So no matter what he tells me, like, I'm like, that's probably not gonna fly.

Then he went to another gym and there was, it was actually like someone, it was actually a, a female and they actually grew up like in a similar neighborhood, blah, blah, blah. But he could relate to her. So the first thing is you have to find somebody you relate to with, it's Meryl, if it's Aaron.

Whoever finds someone that you can relate to, **second is then they have to teach you what needs to be done**. . like, like, okay, here's what you gotta do. You gotta, you gotta take these supplements, you gotta like blah, blah, blah. Okay, cool. **Then the third thing that needs to happen is the individual has to do the repetitive nature of doing it over and over and over again.**

Right. And once that's done, then there's kind of a stick. And then what I would add to it, you know how they say like you're the sum total of the people that you hang around.

Yeah. I think **proximity is super important. getting proximity to people who are kind of doing the things you want. What I also think is most people get that wrong.**

**They think that the people are influencing you. I actually believe your friends are a reflection of the way you see yourself.** It's actually a reflection of your identity. It's actually the opposite. A pop culture thinks like, oh yeah, these people rub off on me.

I'm like, no, no, no. That's not what's really happening. What's really happening is, is that you hang out with them. , their reflection of the way you see yourself. Right. So that's is, that's like the cocoon that holds it all together is getting like community and getting into

, not only proximity to somebody who could teach you that you relate to, but also **getting into community with other people that are kind of on the same journey, the same path sort of thing.**

MERYL: Absolutely. And we're, that's what we're trying to do here is really. Recognizing the fact that people look, the, **the number one predictor of longevity is having a sense of purpose and having a community to support you.** And so making sure that you have like-minded people where you, you can see yourself in that group I think is hugely important.

And I, this is one of the things I talk about to clients all the time, because, a lot of people with these negative outlooks, negative behaviors, whatever it is, are surrounded by toxic people. So whether Right, that's a reflection of how they feel. I mean, I, I hear you. That's like, it's like, wow, that was pretty profound because you know, you can see it and getting people out of that.

And I think, yeah, we talk here a lot about boundaries and I think especially for women, I know men deal with it too, but I do think especially our crowd. When you're a, oh, you a woman with a family and you're that nurturing woman, really hard to create these boundaries because, we, we think it's selfish, right?

We, we confuse self-care with selfish. and I try and explain to people all day long, like, okay, first of all, you're entitled to your own time and you're entitled to that self-care. And, and the one thing I hear all the time is I can't say no. I can't say no. I can't say no. I'm like, well, you better learn to say no because Yeah.

AARON: And then there I'd be like, well, you can't walk on water and you can't fly, right? So when you tell me you can't, what you're really saying is you don't want to. . **So tell me a little bit about that. How come you don't wanna say no? Well, I'm afraid if I say no, they'll be mad at me.** Okay, let's imagine they're mad at you, then what?

Well then maybe they won't like spend time with me and me. Okay. Maybe they won't spend time with you. Then what? Well then they won't love me anymore. It's like, okay, that's, you see? You see how we go from like that to like Woo. Now we get down to like what it really is. Yes. And it's not until I get down to what it really is.

That's where lasting change exists. Yeah. It doesn't ex exist. Topographically, it doesn't exist like in information. No, it exists in **understanding from a psychological perspective. Like what, what's really stopping? Like you, what's getting in the way? Because once you can figure that out, then you can unlock internally and then you can kind of unleash and then you can do whatever it is you wanna do.**