



MIGRAINE WORLD SUMMIT

INTERVIEWS WITH WORLD LEADING EXPERTS

TRANSCRIPT

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**HIDING IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
CELEBRITIES WITH MIGRAINE**

ANDREW LEVY, PhD



Introduction (00:05): Elizabeth Taylor and Elvis Presley, because those were two people who were extremely high profile their entire lives, and in the '50s, '60s, '70s, and '80s, and they both had persistent headache conditions. Elizabeth Taylor was actually in the hospital 70 times during her life, not just for headaches, for a variety of ailments. But she frequently had to leave the sets of movies or movies had to be moved if the weather conditions weren't right. And that made her seem like a difficult actress, but it was migraine conditions that were acting up throughout. Elvis, you know, we make a lot of jokes about late Elvis and how he looked and how he kind of just seemed like a shell of his former self, but he was also in and out of hospitals for migraine and hypertension, as well. And that famous cocktail of drugs they found in his system during his autopsy, which I think is also a subject of jokes — a lot of those drugs were 1970s treatments for migraine condition. So, these are people who really put it out there for 20, 30, 40 years — were just extraordinary performers — and the whole time they were in pain.

Paula K. Dumas (01:09): Despite the millions of people with migraine in the world, we rarely hear stories of how famous people have thrived while living with the disease, until now. And like many of us, famous people tend to hide their pain and disability, and that can be even harder to do when you live your life in the spotlight. What's surprising is that people like painter Georgia O'Keeffe, Wimbledon tennis champion Serena Williams, and actor Hugh Jackman, have been remarkably successful despite migraine, and that should be encouraging to us all.

Paula K. Dumas (01:39): Our next guest gives us a glimpse into the hidden lives of famous leaders, artists, and celebrities with migraine. Professor Andrew Levy is an author of six books, including the critically acclaimed *A Brain Wider Than the Sky: A Migraine Diary*. He's an English professor at Butler University in Indiana, and his literary works have been featured on NPR, *The New York Times*, *Spin*, *Sports Illustrated* and many more. Professor Levy, welcome to the Migraine World Summit.

Professor Levy (02:06): Thanks for having me here.

Paula K. Dumas (02:07): We're delighted to talk with you today. So, as you set out to write *A Brain Wider Than the Sky*, this magnificent book, you shared some of your own experiences with migraine, as well as those of some pretty famous people. So, who are some of the famous people that many of us would know but not necessarily have known that they had migraine?

Professor Levy (02:26): Well, there's really such a broad, eclectic range that it's quite amazing — a vast number of living actors, performers, athletes, politicians, some world-changing individuals. You can go back to Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, five U.S. presidents have had serious migraine conditions or headache conditions that we know of. Athletes ranging from Serena Williams, as you mentioned; Kareem Abdul Jabbar; Dwayne Wade — one of my favorite, more interesting stories — Troy Aikman; Terrell Davis; actors and actresses like Elizabeth Taylor; Hugh Jackman, as you said; Sharon Stone; musicians Kanye West, Janet Jackson, Elvis Presley. It's really just ... and these are just the people we know about, which is the more extraordinary part of this.

Paula K. Dumas (03:21): And we oftentimes don't know that they dealt with migraine until after they've died. What's the quality of information that we're able to get on people who are alive versus those who have passed?



Professor Levy (03:31): Well, I think that people who are alive, especially performers today, politicians today, curate their reputations pretty carefully. They often have, you know, PR crews or consulting firms working for them to guard their reputations. So, in certain cases they might release information that they have a migraine and they've missed something because of a migraine, but they won't issue any more information than that. But in terms of presidents, I mean, Harry Truman and John Kennedy, for instance, both of their headache conditions were closely guarded secrets till well after their death. At that point, more information is released — journals become available, doctors can testify. It's a different ballgame once the person has passed.

Paula K. Dumas (04:15): Right. So Kanye cancels a concert in, I think it was Australia ...

Professor Levy (04:20): Right.

Paula K. Dumas (04:20): And we just get a tweet about it or a brief news bit.

Professor Levy (04:23): Yeah. Same with Hugh Jackman. He just missed something. He said, migraine, that's it.

Paula K. Dumas (04:27): Right. And then some people are mislabeled as having migraine. I know we engaged with a celebrity, actually to appear on the Summit and she said, "Really, really, I don't have migraine; that's been misreported." So, it's really important that we say, "alleged to have migraine." So, you discovered some evidence of some legendary thinkers who had migraine and dealt with it quite a bit. What kind of characteristics about them impressed you? And talk about that for a bit.

Professor Levy (04:55): I think that the people who are "great thinkers," as they say, they thought about their headaches, too, and they often wrote a lot about it. Virginia Woolf, one of my very, very favorite writers about pain — one of the best people, I think, in all of history, writing about pain — she kept detailed notes. She classified or had actually broken them down into different categories. She wrote about her creative states before, during, and afterwards. She talked about the disability and the inhibitions that it produced, for instance.

Professor Levy (05:31): Freud wrote about migraine before he wrote about all the things Freud was famous for writing about. Nietzsche — one year he had 118 headaches and he kept track of all of them. So, these people, they were intellectuals but even the artists ... You know, one of my favorite moments in the history of migraine is Georgia O'Keeffe, who when they asked her how she basically learned how to paint like Georgia O'Keeffe — we all know what her paintings look like; there's a distinctive style — and she just said, "I saw it in the headache." So, you know, in terms of just having a quick moment of instinct or intuition, sometimes people just got right to the chase about it.

Paula K. Dumas (06:11): So after your next scintillating scotoma, get out a paintbrush? Maybe, maybe not? So, let's talk about some U.S. presidents (A few notable presidents showed signs of migraine — which ones and what do we know about that?)

Professor Levy (06:23): Well, again, as you've noticed, this is all alleged. But in each of these cases, there's no question that they had serious headache conditions. And there's no question that they had some of the symptoms that we associate more closely with migraine, as well. Jefferson had headache periods; he claimed he would lose a season three weeks, six



weeks, maybe longer, throughout his life. Ulysses S. Grant, he had headaches all throughout the Civil War. He stayed away from any kind of sound. He stayed away from any kind of light. He wouldn't talk to people, which is hard to do when you're running an Army. He walked around with compresses on his head and wore big hats in order to keep the light away.

Professor Levy (07:02): Woodrow Wilson had headaches all through Princeton and he really doubted he'd be able to do anything. And then he wrote a very amazing essay near the end of his time at Princeton talking about William Pitt, who had been British prime minister, and had a lot of debilitating conditions, as well. And he said that Pitt's example inspired him to see through the pain to a career in public service. Kennedy's examples of course, very ... conflicted. He had a lot of health conditions, but migraine was among them. Truman would overwork and then he would get these periods of headache and nausea, and he would just have to stop. And that was throughout his 20s, 30s, and 40s before he became president. He called them sinus headaches; he didn't think he had migraine, but the headache and the nausea together is suggestive that maybe he had migraine and not sinus headaches.

Paula K. Dumas (07:49): If only we were there to help diagnose them. I was particularly fascinated by your account of Thomas Jefferson's migraine attacks, and that he wrote the Declaration of Independence after a migraine.

Professor Levy (08:04): Yeah, not the day after or anything, but he was in Philadelphia in the spring of 1776, and he went home to Monticello, and he had just, I think, six weeks of steady headaches every day. And then when he came back to Philadelphia out of it, he described himself feeling like a new man. And then in very short order, wrote the Declaration of Independence, as well as the Constitution to the state of Virginia, which is a great political document, as well. It was during that period of sort of being refreshed and cleansed after a long period of headaches — invigorated. And I think that is something he did throughout his life, in fact; that after these long periods of headache, he would come out and he would write some of his more amazing things. His brain was just wiped clean.

Paula K. Dumas (08:55): Well, that's a lot of men, very interestingly, and we know that there are many women who also suffer. Let's talk about artists because the scintillating scotoma often allows us to see the world in a different way. You mentioned Georgia O'Keeffe. Any other famous artists?

Professor Levy (09:12): Well, I think O'Keeffe is probably the clearest example of someone who just said, "Headache, got it, right then — the vision." There's a lot of talk about van Gogh, a lot of debate about how to diagnose him. There's no question that van Gogh's landscapes resonate with people who have migraine. And there's also no question he was being treated for some kind of head pain during his life, and not just the idea that he might have been treatable in a mental institution, but actual head pain. But some people think that was migraine, and some people think it was temporal lobe epilepsy; there's a lot of overlap in the symptoms, as well. Giorgio de Chirico talked a lot about visions that he had prior to painting some of his paintings, and that came out of that, as well.

Professor Levy (10:03): For me, the most interesting example is kind of an odd example, which is Picasso. To a lot of people who are interviewed by headache researchers and asked to come up with an example of a painter whose paintings really resonate, is Picasso. He's got heads kind of cut in half, moving around like this. There's often a kind of grayness or a darkness or interesting alterations of the landscape in a Picasso. But there's no actual record that Picasso had migraine or headaches or any kind of neurological condition of any kind. He



just speaks to people like that. I think that raises, really, the interesting question about painters, which is whether they're kind of getting to a kind of deep place in terms of perspective — a kind of constant hallucination that might be common in other ways of looking at the world and that people with migraine or epilepsy, in some cases, also have access to at moments in their condition.

Paula K. Dumas (10:59): It is fascinating. Van Gogh in particular had many reports of his depression.

Professor Levy (11:04): Right.

Paula K. Dumas (11:06): And severe kind of mood issues.

Professor Levy (11:08): Right.

Paula K. Dumas (11:08): Do we have any evidence of migraine or depression? What do we know about van Gogh?

Professor Levy (11:14): Well, we know that he, in letters, talked about his head being treated or his head being taken care of. We know he's talking about pain. So, it wasn't just, or exclusively, metaphorical allusions to mental illness of some kind, whether it was depression or something more profound. So, we know there was head pain there. And we know, as well, that there were some sorts of alterations of vision that went with the head pain. That's about as far as we can really get. A lot of the kind of hallucinatory visions would have been true of epilepsy as well, but there's no real record that he had seizures. Again, when you're diagnosing people who have passed, it's a tremendously tricky business and it really pays to be humble about it. Some people just tell you exactly what they said; van Gogh was not one of those people.

Paula K. Dumas (12:09): A mystery ... So many entertainers have also reportedly dealt with migraine, among them Elvis, you mentioned before. Can you talk about some entertainers?

Professor Levy (12:19): Well, the two that jumped out at me recently are Elizabeth Taylor and Elvis Presley, because those were two people who were extremely high profile their entire lives, and in the '50s, '60s, '70s, and '80s, and they both had persistent headache conditions. Elizabeth Taylor was actually in the hospital 70 times during her life, not just for headaches, for a variety of ailments. But she frequently had to leave the sets of movies or movies had to be moved if the weather conditions weren't right. And that made her seem like a difficult actress, but it was migraine conditions that were acting up throughout. Elvis, you know, we make a lot of jokes about late Elvis and how he looked and how he kind of just seemed like a shell of his former self, but he was also in and out of hospitals for migraine and hypertension, as well. And that famous cocktail of drugs they found in his system during his autopsy, which I think is also a subject of jokes — a lot of those drugs were 1970s treatments for migraine condition. So, these are people who really put it out there for 20, 30, 40 years — were just extraordinary performers — and the whole time they were in pain.

Paula K. Dumas (13:27): So, do we think that Elvis overused medication that led to migraine or was that because of chronic migraine? What do we know about that?

Professor Levy (13:35): Well, everything gets kind of mixed up. I think at a certain point ... you know, he was taking drugs he should not have been taking. There were hallucinatory



drugs in his system, as well as some of the very basic migraine drugs of the period, as well as some of the very basic hypertension drugs of the period. And he did suffer from depression at that point, as well. So, it's very hard to clear your system and start fresh, and I don't really think that was a sensibility that a lot of people in the 1960s and '70s had. There's a great essay by Jeff Tweedy, the leader of Wilco — came out in *The New York Times* in 2008 — and he talks about performing through serious migraine conditions. And he talks about how he ended up in a cycle of painkiller abuse, and that things didn't get better for him until he kind of backed off everything and he cleansed everything out.

Professor Levy (14:32): And I think you find that among athletes, as well. Serena Williams, who has talked a little bit about her migraine disease, says that for her, it's staying away from salt and staying away from ... what's the other thing she stays away from?

Paula K. Dumas (14:42): Alcohol?

Professor Levy (14:42): Definitely alcohol. There's two things. Salt and light! That's right: Salt and light. She stays hydrated.

Paula K. Dumas (14:52): I apologize for the lights today.

Professor Levy (14:52): That's OK. It is a little bright in here this morning but it's not a problem for me.

Professor Levy (14:52): So she's learned the two or three things to stay away from, and a lot of athletes have done that, as well. If you can figure out your triggers, if you can boil it down ... Carly Simon talks about staying away from triggers, another musician with migraine. Dwayne Wade, the basketball player, talks about staying away from triggers, too.

Paula K. Dumas (15:15): Well, you're not the first author with migraine, although one of the most gifted, I might say.

Professor Levy (15:23): Doubtful, but thank you.

Paula K. Dumas (15:23): And a few of our favorites have put their pain to a pen, as well. You mentioned Virginia Woolf; any others that come to mind?

Professor Levy (15:31): Well, I think, in the modern world, my very favorite is Joan Didion, who's written a great essay called "In Bed" that everyone should read, about having migraine. And there's a lot of contemporary authors who talk about having migraine. Virginia Woolf, I think, is the very best author for writing about them explicitly. Your easiest diagnosis, weirdly enough, is Rudyard Kipling, who talked all the time about how he had headaches that took up half his head. He described them in such concrete detail — perfect descriptions of a migraine.

Professor Levy (16:00): But the most interesting example, and possibly the most mysterious example, is Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, of course, who left all sorts of symptoms described in his journals, who had drawings — which suggested that sometimes he would only see about half of what he was seeing in front of him the way you might with a migraine aura — and for whom *Alice in Wonderland*, for anyone who reads it and has a migraine condition, is just checking all these boxes in terms of symptoms rendered into a kind of an amazing, symbolic world.



Paula K. Dumas (16:35): I never made the association between *Alice in Wonderland* and migraine until I started researching in the field. Can you talk about the Alice in Wonderland syndrome?

Professor Levy (16:44): Oh, sure. Well, Alice in Wonderland syndrome is, as you know ... at the start of *Alice in Wonderland*, she's got the little cake that says, "Eat me," and the little bottle that says, "Drink me." And she partakes of both and she becomes super big and then she becomes super small, or perhaps the other way around. In any case, people have that. They're actually things that people have, that kind of neurological disruption, where they suddenly either feel like they're looking down on everything or that they're looking up at everything. I had it once or twice; each time it was instigated by sort of a blinding moment after a fresh snowstorm. So, it was very specifically targeted for a symptom where I suddenly felt super tall and, I have to tell you, it was pretty amazing. And because I had read about Alice in Wonderland syndrome, I knew what it was, and so I didn't find it particularly peculiar, in that sense; I didn't have a panic moment, so I just kind of went along for the ride and it was really something.

Paula K. Dumas (17:40): They talk about your hands feeling like they're out of proportion to your body and everything feeling out of scale.

Professor Levy (17:46): Right. My head, too, felt like it was super big looking down and stuff — it was quite amazing. But the whole start of *Alice in Wonderland* ... I mean everything in the first 30 to 40 pages of *Alice in Wonderland* is all the steps you get before a migraine starts, rendered into a kind of fantasy world.

Paula K. Dumas (18:03): So many of these people that we're talking about are among history's most creative minds. Do you think there's any credible link between creativity and migraine?

Professor Levy (18:12): Well, I think it depends how you put it. You know, I think the important thing to stress is that migraine is a debilitating condition and that, in all likelihood, it's preventing people, or it's inhibiting people from doing the things they really want to do. But the sources of creativity are mysterious. Neurologists have not been able to find where in the brain creativity comes from. And the way people respond to pain conditions, the way they respond to disability, can become the sources of creativity. In Rudyard Kipling's case, for instance, he said that the only cure for the shadows was work, so that he became a workaholic in response to it. Virginia Woolf said that there was a stage in her migraine attacks which was visionary.

Professor Levy (18:54): And then of course, there's this kind of postdromal moment — postdromal refers to the period after a migraine. Nietzsche said he did some of his very best work in that clarity after the migraine. Jefferson, the example I gave before, did some of his very best work at those moments afterwards. Freud was incredibly specific about it (He would talk about two- or three- day headaches, and afterwards he'd say, "And then I came up with this idea and this idea and this idea." *The Interpretation of Dreams*, probably his most famous book, he absolutely links the key ideas in that to moments after headaches passed, where his brain felt super clear. So yeah, in certain cases you absolutely can say there was a link to an incredible creative moment there. Georgia O'Keeffe, as you've suggested, the scintillating scotoma, absolutely becoming part of her artwork.



Paula K. Dumas (19:43): Have you ever felt that yourself, where you have an epiphany or something when you're, you know, day two or three into a migraine? Or just the hallelujah moment when it breaks? Have you ever felt kind of that creative surge?

Professor Levy (19:55): Yeah. Yeah. I would say there's two things I would link to that, maybe three things. First, I will say the workaholic moment is absolutely part of it (It's like, "I do not want to be defined by these headaches. I do not want to be defined by this pain. I'm going to work in response to it." It was a driver during the moments I was clear, but I have felt great after migraine attacks. I have felt super clear and done some very good writing and thinking at that point. And I've had some moments in the warmup to the migraine where I had almost a kind of, you know, a spiritual epiphany — I'm going to describe it as that. And that is also something that you see documented very thoroughly and in people with epilepsy, as well. It's often actually very specific: a moment of, I think, unusual humility. And then the headache comes. And so, I've had all of those, not all the time — I don't want to say that I'm looking forward to that next migraine because I'll have a spiritual moment — only two or three times in my entire life. But I remember them.

Paula K. Dumas (20:54): Those migraine attacks are very humbling and can bring you to your knees.

Professor Levy (20:57): Yes, yes.

Paula K. Dumas (20:57): So no one achieves fame beyond the grave unless they have some characteristics that produce those kinds of fame worthy achievements, like resilience and determination. So, do you think that it could be a byproduct of the migraine experience?

Professor Levy (21:12): Oh, I absolutely do. I mean, I think there's a joke, right? And Nietzsche's famous line: "That which doesn't kill you, makes you stronger." But Nietzsche had a ton of headaches; Nietzsche was a very sick man for most of his life and he came out of it. If you look at his writing, there's a lot of that stuff in terms of ideas like will to power — so the idea of rising above and beating back something that's pulling you down. And I do think that in terms of creative artists, you will often see that kind of toughness. I think you see it more and more though in — especially now that people talk about their migraine disease more — just in the everyday lives of ordinary people. I mean everyone is creative in their ordinary lives. Everyone is doing stuff in their ordinary lives. But what it takes to get up and go to work or take care of your children? These are acts of creativity, too, and these are things that I think people with migraine or other pain conditions learn to fight through, often learn to push through, and that stoicism has a negative component to it. But I think it does become part of the component of the personality of the kind of person who has to deal with headaches in a very, very common way.

Paula K. Dumas (22:19): Any other characteristics that you see as a common thread through some of these people that we've talked about?

Professor Levy (22:25): Well, you know, truthfully, I think toughness is number one. I do, I do. I also think that you go the other way and there's kind of a pattern of intense humility, which we talked about. I don't want to quite say, passivity. Joan Didion's "In Bed" kind of says, well if you're going to have the migraine, the best thing to do is just get into bed and let it go. That's great if you have the time to get into bed and let it go and, even then, it's not a perfect solution, but it is a solution. You do have to learn to sort of dance with life and what life offers you in a different way. You have to learn to accept more of what your body



gives you and what your mind gives you in a different way than, I think, other people who are more typical. And I think that is something else that people living with migraine disease learn to do. I think they have a much richer palette of responses, when pain comes.

Paula K. Dumas (23:10): I see a lot of determination and people keep trying, keep trying different things. And I see a lot of empathy, because once you have suffered like that over and over and over again, when you see any other kind of suffering in people's faces, you can relate to it.

Professor Levy (23:28): Right. Right.

Paula K. Dumas (23:28): And the fascinating thing is that this comes earlier in our lives than most people have pain and suffering. And so it kind of equips us to help others in the later stage of life because we've been through something rather agonizing over and over again. Now, we've had the opportunity to interview a few of the current stars with migraine, including NFL Hall of Famer Terrell Davis and award-winning actress Kristin Chenoweth, who appeared on the Migraine World Summit last year. Why do you think that so many of today's stars are not as vocal as we would like them to be about their struggles?

Professor Levy (24:03): Well, first of all, Davis and Chenoweth are, which I think is wonderful. And you do see some examples of people who talk about it: Troy Aikman, the NFL quarterback, became a spokesperson. He was particularly interested in making sure men didn't get so hung up on concealing pain conditions. Chenoweth with the interview she does for Migraine Again — I can't recommend that resource enough — I think she's just spot on; I think she's inspiring. The Davis example is amazing. That's one of the few examples of someone who can actually target a specific moment: That Super Bowl performance where a migraine first inhibited him, and then the period after the migraine liberated him. It's a great story and it's well-worth watching that interview that he also did with you.

Professor Levy (24:47): I think it's, again, a question of just curating your reputation, but I also think that it's not easy to be in the public spotlight these days, and I think you watch what you do and I think you watch what you say. And I am struck by the number who will say or identify migraine: "Yes. That was a migraine that kept me from that." And then that's the end of it. They're willing to say they have a migraine; they're not concealing that fact, but they're not going to talk about it. And it's tricky, and I think it ties back to some of the things we were talking about earlier. I think you're right about empathy, and I love your point about empathy, but I think there's this battle between empathy and toughness and resilience.

Professor Levy (25:27): I was rereading my book yesterday and I felt a little sort of red in the face thinking, "Did I really write that? Did I really say that?" And it's not because I'm afraid of talking about this stuff, it's just because so much of my life with migraine was trained to conceal it, to tough it out, to be resilient, to push through it. And the kind of microcelebrity a professor has in front of students, at meetings; those are public faces, too. It's not like being a performer. It's not like being, you know, Elizabeth Taylor. But it is a moment where you don't want everyone to say, just go, "Oh, look at that guy with a headache." So, you just don't say anything; you just don't do anything. I think you get used to it.

Paula K. Dumas (26:12): Unfortunately we do. So, can you share how you have managed to have a thriving career as a college professor despite the fact that you're dealing with migraine?



Professor Levy (26:23): Well, most of the time I was developing my career, the migraine attacks were not too bad — this is the short answer. There was a period where they were very bad, and then I think it was more a question of day-to-day adjustments. It really was a question of what are you going to do when you're having an aura while you're teaching? What are you going to do when you just can't function throughout the course of a day? You can't read or write or think — it's a Jefferson line, by the way: He said, "I couldn't read or write or even think during a headache." And there was a lot of toughing it out and a lot of muddling through and a lot of moving your schedule around. I'm lucky: Professors work hard, but their schedules are very flexible. So, a 60-hour week, you break it up into different pieces and parcels, and you bluff your way through some moments, and you tell people during other moments.

Professor Levy (27:16): I did write that book during a period of pretty intense migraine attacks. And I know the book is kind of an "F-U" to migraine. So, in that sense it was like this was a competition with migraine and I refuse to lose. And that's kind of what drove me through that. But in so doing that, at the same time, I learned so much about treatments for myself. And I really learned better how to treat myself by writing the book and interviewing people, and attention to triggers, attention to my own health in other ways, really finding a headache specialist, someone I could trust. I learned all that researching the book. So, writing the book was also kind of my treatment.

Paula K. Dumas (27:53): Yeah, very cathartic. And that has been true for me as well with Migraine Again. So, OK, here's the fun question: If you could have a dinner party and invite any other seven people, living or dead, who also have migraine to come, who would you invite?

Professor Levy (28:07): Well, that's a hoot of a question, isn't it? Because if you go through all that, I mean you're going to put Serena Williams next to Virginia Woolf. Where are you going to put those presidents? Who's John Kennedy going to talk to? Elvis Presley next to Sigmund Freud would be pretty good, as well. I would mix and match over the years and go kind of in that direction. I would get some of those new people and some of those old people; you know, get Freud in there, for sure. Get Darwin, Charles Darwin — very serious headaches, as well. And try to find someone super, super old to toss into the mix, too. One of my favorite sort of possible person with migraine is actually Paul the Apostle on the road to Damascus — flash of light followed by three days where he couldn't do anything; couldn't eat, couldn't drink and function.

Paula K. Dumas (28:54): I never interpreted that in that way.

Professor Levy (28:55): Yeah. And that's all he has. Not a lot of evidence there, but that's the evidence — that's a migraine fit. And wouldn't you love to have him at the table and go, "What was that? Let's talk about that." Among current people, the person who I think for me who is just on that edge of talking about it more is actually Dwyane Wade, the basketball player, whose headaches seem to run three or four days with intense light phobia, which is a tough thing to deal with as an NBA basketball player. And I think he's actually probably done quite a lot in terms of making people in the more masculine sports world respect migraine. So, I would toss him in there, too. I'd love to have Serena Williams there because I just think she's super great.



Paula K. Dumas (29:30): This has been fascinating. What else would you like people who have migraine and headache to take away from our conversation?

Professor Levy (29:36): Well, I think the lesson is that migraine and any pain condition is worse if you think you're alone. And I think the important thing to know is you're not alone. And I think the second-worst thing is to think that you're defined by it. And I think the lesson of these creative people — these artists, these athletes, these performers, these politicians — is that people have worked this out, people have figured it out. Pain doesn't go away. Pain doesn't help you. But there's ways to dance that dance. And a lot of people have done it throughout the years. Migraine disease goes back ... they'd been diagnosed for 5,000 years. People have been dealing with them for a very long time. You are not alone. And I think that's the thing to remember.

Paula K. Dumas (30:16): That is a good reminder. How can we connect with you? How can people find you?

Professor Levy (30:21): Well, they can write me at Butler. I've got a nice email there; I'm actually always happy ... I'm on Facebook. I don't mind responding to one-to-one responses because I'm not that famous.

Paula K. Dumas (30:36): Yet! You just wait ...

Professor Levy (30:36): No, I'm going to stay away from it if I can. And the book is available just anywhere online.

Paula K. Dumas (30:38): OK, wonderful. So, the book is *A Brain Wider Than the Sky: A Migraine Diary* by Professor Andrew Levy. And it's been such a treat to have you here on the Migraine World Summit.

Professor Levy (30:49): It was a pleasure to be here. Thank you so much, Paula. You're doing great work.

Paula K. Dumas (30:51): Thanks.