

# Cody Gibson - Episode 848

Mon, Nov 20, 2023 6:36AM 1:49:57

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, fight, wrestling, kids, ufc, day, visalia, sport, train, find, feel, started, life, year, week, talk, parents, grew, taught, school

## SPEAKERS

Cody Gibson, James Geering

---



James Geering 00:00

This episode is brought to you by Thorne and I have some incredible news for any of you that are in the military, first responder or medical professions. In an effort to give back, Thorne is now offering you an ongoing 35% off on every one of your purchases of their incredible nutritional solutions. Now Thorne is the official supplement of CrossFit, the UFC, the Mayo Clinic, the Human Performance Project, and multiple Special Operations organizations. I myself have used them for several years, and that is why I brought them on as a sponsor. Some of my favorite products they have are their multivitamin elite, their whey protein, the super EPA, and then most recently, Synaquell. As a firefighter, a stuntman and a martial artist, I've had my share of brain trauma and sleep deprivation and Synaquell is the latest brain health supplement. Now to qualify for the 35% off, go to [thorne.com](https://thorne.com). Click on Sign In and then create a new account, you will see the opportunity to register as a first responder or member of military. When you click on that it will take you through verification with Gov X, you simply choose a profession provide one piece of documentation and then you are verified for life. From that point onwards you will continue to receive the 5% off through Thorne. Now for those of you who don't qualify there is still the 10% off using the code BTS 10. Behind the shield 10 for a one time purchase. Now to learn more about Thorne, go to Episode 323 of the behind the shield podcast with Joel Toro and Wes Barnett. This episode is sponsored by NuCalm and as many of you know I only bring sponsors onto the show whose products I truly swear by. Now we are an overworked and underslept population, especially those of us that wear uniform for a living and trying to reclaim some of the lost rest and recovery is imperative. Now the application of this product is as simple as putting on headphones and an asleep mask. As you listen to music on each of the programs there is neuro acoustic software Beneath that is tapping into the actual frequencies of your brain, whether to up regulate your nervous system, or down regulate. Now for most of us that come off shift we are exhausted and do not want to bring what we've had to see and do back home to our loved ones. So one powerful application is using the program power nap, a 20 minute session that will not only feel like you've had two hours of sleep, but also down regulate from a hyper vigilant state back into the role of mother or father, husband or wife. Now there are so many other applications and benefits from the software. So I urge you to go and listen to episode 806 with CEO Jim Poole. Then download NuCalm and you see a link from your app store and sign up for the seven day free trial. Not only will you have an understanding of the origin story and the four decades this

science has spanned, but also see for yourself the incredible health impact of this life changing software. And you can find even more information on [nucalm.com](http://nucalm.com) Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering and this week is my absolute honor to welcome on the show, high school teacher and UFC fighter Cody Gibson. Now in this conversation, we discuss a host of topics from Cody's journey into wrestling, his MMA career, the world of teaching, the importance of physical education, overcoming the loss of his first UFC contract, entering the fight to house through the Ultimate Fighter show the importance of mentorship and so much more. Now, before we get to this amazing conversation, as I say, every week, please just take a moment, go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast therefore making it easier for others to find. And this is a free library of almost 850 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women stories so I can get them to every single person on planet Earth needs to hear them. So with that being said, I introduce to you Cody Gibson enjoy Hey, Cody, I want to start by saying two things. Firstly, thank you to our mutual friend Matt Garrett for connecting us. And secondly, for taking time out of your busy girl dad's schedule and coming on the behind the show podcast today.

 05:13

Oh, thank you. Yeah. Is his son is it my, my goes to my school. So I've known him for a couple of years now. So it's, I'm always getting onto him and tell him I'm going to tell his dad

 James Geering 05:27

was funny the way that we even came together because I watched you on the most recent Ultimate Fighter, which I haven't actually watched for a long time, Avid, avid fight fan. But you know, it's a lot of footage a lot of time, and I really got pulled into that one. Then Matt reached out and said that you guys knew each other. And then after we'd scheduled my son, who's big into the kind of the positive stuff on social media, which is, you know, brilliant, thank God, he's actually got into that aside. And he's like, Dad, there's this guy who's a UFC fighter, and he's also a teacher, and you should get him on the show. And I was like, he was coming on the show. So so here we are. So you've had it from multiple people advising me to get you on here.

 Cody Gibson 06:05

I appreciate it. Thanks for having me on. Just kind of followed along, when I when I found out about you and started researching the show a little bit. It's a pretty powerful stuff you guys have done? So happy to be here.

 James Geering 06:19

You fall? Well, very first question, then where on planet earth are we finding you today?

 06:26

My very messy garage, that is a project that keeps getting paused. But I'm in Templeton California is a small little town. Central coast. It's like an old west town, it used to be a railroad kind of stopping place for the railroad. And so we still got an old mill. And, you know, like, it's a, it's reminds me of like an old west town where the streets are, you know, wood with overhead. And, you know, it's that kind of that kind of vibe, only about 7000 people here. So it's blue collar kind of all the all the wineries around us kind of brings in a different crowd. So it's an interesting place.

 James Geering 07:10

Is it is it both of those kind of existing simultaneously? Because if I think of someone like Austin, it's Texas, you know, on one side is very kind of ex military, one would argue maybe slight right leaning, and then you have this other parallel hipster, you know, tech group that's also in there as well. Yeah,

 07:30

I would probably something still, I mean, obviously, not as big as Austin. But it has that kind of dynamics where you've got this kind of a fluid wine culture community. And then you've got a lot of, if you go to the typical tin market at noon, any day of the week, there's a line out the door of guys in steel toed boots and dirt on their hands, and they're there to get their sandwiches and chicken, chicken fingers and stuff like that. So

 James Geering 07:59

let's start at the very beginning of your backgrounds and others. There's some interesting chapters in your early life. So tell me where you were born. And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic what your parents did, how many siblings

 08:11

so I was born in Blackwell, Oklahoma, a little town and lived in a town called Ardmore, Oklahoma. And my mum, my mother was 16 when she had me, and 15 when she had my brother, my older brother's a year older than me. And she was, you know, drug addict, and had had had a very hard life of abuse herself. And so it's kind of just like that cycle, you know, unfortunately. And so we were put into foster care. Pretty much as soon as I was born, I think he's spent some time with her. But I don't think I spent very much time with her. I was pretty much in foster care. And it's been a couple of years in foster care and ended up getting adopted and moving to California. My father, my adopted father. He has family in Oklahoma. And we were we were living with a foster mother who was an elderly lady, and she would go to this hearing aid business place. It was like an at home. It was like a in home business. You know, like it was someone's home, but they ran they operated a hearing aid business out of it. And so we we were, you know, we're two and three years old, and we'd sit in the lobby, or I guess the living room. Whenever she was getting her hears her ears looked at and she the person who owned that was the aunt and uncle of my adopted father in California. And my

adopted parents had been trying to have kids for 1012 years since they were married essentially. And now they were in their 30s and I Um, you know, they got married in 19. And now they're in their 30s 1012 years have passed, they can't have children's never happening for him. And so yeah, they were kind of looking into adoption a little bit. And my father's aunt, who ran the hearing aid business knew we were up for adoption. And so, in 1989, adoption was a very different process than it is in 2023. I think, in some ways, it's, it's not as good anymore. It's a lot, a lot harder to adopt today than it was in. And so a social worker, flew out to California and ran down the checklist with my adopted parents. And a week later, we were on a plane and heading to California. And so yeah, we were adopted, and my parent, my adopted parents, you know, they ended up having two children after we were adopted. A few months after they adopted us, they got pregnant. And Josh was a premature baby. He was my little brother, he's three years younger than me. You but he was born in six months, as opposed to nine. And back in 1990, when he was born, he was spent a large majority of his early life in an incubator, cooking still, and, and he's, he's doing great. Now he has cerebral palsy. That's been his disability, but his mental mental ease, you know, he's got his master's degrees, married with a kid and living life and doing great things. And then, a few years after Josh, my parents got pregnant again. And Jacob was born and yet the pregnancy actually went well. But during childbirth, he got wrapped around the umbilical cord, and lost, you know, oxygen to his brain. And He's severely mentally and physically handicapped. He turns 30 years old this year. And when he was born, the doctor said he only probably would live a few years at most, my parents have really done a phenomenal job with his health and under, you know, trying to navigate that when when you have a child with the disabilities that aren't. They're not, there's not like a blueprint for how you care for that child and keep them functioning and healthy, because it's a unique, you know, disabilities. And so they've done a phenomenal job. And he's still, he's still with us, and still doing well. And his health has definitely deteriorated over the years, but he's still happy. And he has a great nurse who's with him six days a week, which helps my parents a lot. And yeah, so that's kind of my backstory. And it was definitely an interesting childhood growing up in a house with me and my brother were adopted, which really isn't too much different than normal life for normal people. But then having two brothers with special needs, and try to navigate that as a family. You know, little things like taking family vacations were very different and more challenging in a lot of ways. And but I I've really attributed, like, I always felt like I had a sense of empathy for people. And I think I attribute that, that I have to, to just having brothers with special needs and kind of seeing a different world and growing up in a different world. My parents both run nonprofit organizations do so grown up in, you know, nonprofit stuff, doing a lot of volunteer work with their organizations. Yeah, I think it just made for a unique kind of childhood. When I'm, you know, I'm grateful for

J

### James Geering 13:56

I'm obviously a little bit older, knew based on the color of my hair and my wrinkles. But when I was young, the way that special needs communities were received, the way that the adaptive communities that were received was very, very different now that it was bad so much as I think they were just hidden a lot more they were kind of pushed into the shadows. And even as a firefighter, paramedic, I've found facilities, you know, that I've worked at, or responded to where that's still somewhat the case. But with, I mean, sadly, probably 911 and all our veterans that came back from overseas, there's been a real kind of paradigm shift in the way that that community is viewed the way some of the members of that community have done incredible things, whether it's, you know, power lifters with cerebral palsy, or I had one guy, Chris Nichols, who was a Ironman triathlete with Down syndrome, I mean, just phenomenal, phenomenal

human beings. Have you seen you know, being actually within a family with two members of you know, with with physical and mental challenges? Have you seen that even in The the adult span that you've had so far.



15:04

Yeah, you know, we were always, you know, Jacob was, you know, obviously, very limited in what he was able to do or not do. But the Josh, we were always very, very much like, you're gonna be like every other kid on the playground, you're gonna play the sports, you're gonna do all these things. And if we have to make adjustments for how we do them, we will make adjustments, but he wrestled all four years in high school. And he only weighed about like 90 pounds. So the lightest weight class was 103 pounds. So he was always a little bit undersized, even for the lightest weight class. And he was just dropped to his knees as soon as the match started and wrestled from his knees. And you know, he lost a lot. But he had one match his senior year on varsity that he had a really good cradle. Like if he got a cradle, he had a good grip strength, and he could pin someone with a cradle. And so one match he was losing like he normally was, and he was able to, I think he chose top the third round. And he locked on that cradle and pin the kid. And so that those type of moments are the ones that stick out to me that, you know. And yes, to kind of answer your question, like, the special needs community has a lot of amazing individuals and people that do amazing things. And just, you know, I remember, as a kid, I used to do the Special Olympics with my brother, Jacob. And he was in a wheelchair. So the way they do races for wheelchairs is they have a runner, someone who's behind the wheelchair helping them because they're not like the kind where they can push on themselves, you know, they're bigger, heavier duty wheelchairs. And I was, I remember, we won the Special Olympics, because I was, I was competitive. And Jake didn't mind going fast. So yeah, we, we won a couple of events doing that, too. So there's, there's just so many good people in the community have special needs and disabilities and people up that have to face you know, I think so, so many times in my life. And I'm sure a lot of people's lives like you take, you take for granted things that you get, you know, you have your senses, your ability to run in, right. And I mean, all these little things that we kind of just take for granted as human beings. And when you're around people who don't have those same advantages, that have challenges that I would never even know how to deal with and face and you see them, like overcome it. And like have a positive outlook on life and be doing great things and you're like, Man, I really have nothing to complain about. You know, like, whenever I find myself getting that way or feeling that way, like, Oh, I'm down about it or on or you feel like you want to soak about life a little bit. You know, it's pretty, pretty easy to snap out of it when you see that on a regular basis.



James Geering 18:02

Yeah. 100% Yeah. When your lattes cold or your iPhone screen is cracked and think the world's come to an end, you can remind yourself of the you know, the raw marine that last three arms in combat and does jujitsu and you go, okay, reset. Yeah,



18:16

present.

 James Geering 18:18

All right. Well, you mentioned wrestling. So talk to me about school age, what you would do in athletics wise.

 18:25

I love playing sports as a kid. We didn't have a lot of money. So I never got to play in like the club teams. But anything the school provided. I probably remember fifth grade was the first time I could do a sport. It was track and field for the school. But I got to do that. And I spent a lot of time with the Boys and Girls Club as a kid playing basketball and stuff like that. But I just there was always a very rambunctious kid, a lot of energy loves to run love to wrestle have to fight, love to get dirty. And my freshman year of high school, I was really into basketball. I thought I'm going to be the next, the next big basketball player, you know. And the my problem was that I didn't hit a gross dent until my sophomore year of high school. And so my freshman year, I'm about five foot four, about 130 pounds kind of had that just a chubby little kid and just was going through a phase of kind of just being a little chubby kid and I didn't make the basketball team, my freshman year and I was I'd already bought my shoes to the season. All right, I think it was my birthday is in September. So I had asked my parents for shoes for tryouts. And so I was, you know, devastated. I made it to the final cuts and I didn't make the team. And I was devastated. And my brother my dad had encouraged my older brother Keith, to wrestle and he started in seventh grade. And so he encouraged me to come out for wrestling and the next thing I knew I was in the living room practicing Double legs on the carpet and getting rug burns. And once I found the sport of wrestling, I never really just never looked back. I loved it. I didn't know I was gonna love it as much as I did. But it was just the competitive nature of it and the one on one and individual part of it, I think I really gravitated towards and just trying to outwork other people in our hustle. And that was kind of my, my one attribute and basketball is that I would hustle a lot of guys, I always remember that I wasn't always the best, but I would out when they thought it was going out of balance, I'd fly out of nowhere, and you know, always put in that extra effort. And so for wrestling, it was perfect for me. I was horrible. When I first started, I lost my first 27 matches. And I remember I was oh and 27 my freshman year, before I finally got a win and I was I was wrestling at the the minor leagues, the fresh freshman invitationals and junior varsity stuff. And, and still, but I was just having a good time. And I really enjoyed it and stuck with it. Stop playing any other sports, I just wrestled year round, me and my brother would just stay on the mat when all the other guys on our team, you know, they would play other sports to do other things. They would, you know, come February every year, they'd disappear until next October. And they wouldn't get on the mat and me and my brother would just stay on the mat somewhere some doing something all the time of the wrestling. So that's why we really excelled and got good at it. It wasn't because we were anything special. It was just we just never left the wrestling room. And so yeah, but our junior and senior year, we were having a lot of success and carried carried me on through college and wrestled in college and for five years. And I think it just saved my life, I was getting into a lot of trouble. Before I found wrestling, I was getting suspended quite a bit. getting into fights. I was introduced to skateboarding as a kid. And so that kind of culture. We had we they built a skate park in Visalia, where I grew up the town I grew up in and they just built it. And so I spent a lot of time at the skate park, getting introduced to things that weren't necessarily that great for me, you know. And once I found wrestling, though, you know, suddenly my grades improved, and my focus on school and what I was doing and stop getting into trouble because I had

something to, I couldn't get in trouble for, you know, that mattered to me. And so that's why I'm just such a big proponent to kids being active and being involved in things, whatever that that is, it doesn't have to be wrestling, but something that's going to keep them out of trouble and on the straight and narrow and teach them some life lessons. So I always tell kids to find something, I don't care what it is. Find something that you care about outside of just coming to school and go into classes. And so yeah, I always, always try to help kids find that thing that like they can connect with and identify with and have fun and learning. And yeah, I still coach wrestling now too. I coach the junior high team now. So I coached high school for many years. But it's a big time commitment. And I'm a pretty busy guy with you know, two jobs. So the junior high seasons about as much as I can commit, but I have a really good time. And I have about 10 Special Ed students on my team. So they're always fun. They'll do the funniest things. And it's great to see when when they weren't a match, like a legitimate win. Now that's a that's always the highlight of our season.

 James Geering 23:43

When he talks about fighting so many people that come on here, yeah, myself included. We get into a profession, whether it's you know, MMA, whether it's firefighting, whatever it is. And a lot of times there'll be that, oh, well, you know, that's, that's why you had an issue because you got punched in the head or you're a fire or you know, you saw horrible stuff as a firefighter. But as time goes on, kind of like us really understanding the adaptive community. It's kind of the same with understanding mental health and you start looking at early life and go, Ah, there's a big, big thing that I was missing. It seems like a lot of people whether one or both parents walked out whether someone was fostered and or adopted, that there's that kind of subconscious voice of why wasn't I good enough for my parents. When you look back at the fighting done with now with this mature lens that you have? Do you identify why you were kind of leaning into the trouble side until you found the mentorship of wrestling?

 24:41

Yeah, I always I feel like I've always had a chip on my shoulder against the world. Like as a kid I remember that was my kind of mentality was like, I was on the outside looking in. And I think also growing up with Jacob And I remember family vacations. You know, we would get a, my dad would always have a TED trailer or some sort of trailer, he had, you know, some old rinky dinky trailer that he would buy or trade or something. And I just remember that I would always be angry when people would stare at my little brother. And that was something I, you know, I would lash out and say things to people in public as a kid, you know. And yeah, I just, and I always, just, to be honest, I just enjoyed fighting, I liked to be rough and wrestle. And I liked it. And I got beat up a lot as a kid, you know, but it wasn't that I was winning the fights necessarily. But I always, I always would find myself or inject myself, if I saw a guy was a bully to other kids, like, I would find a way for that guy to come at me. You know? And then okay, now I've got something, you know. And so I don't know, you know, why I felt the way I did. But I think about certain things that maybe there was something about adoption, too, that played a role in that, I don't know. But yeah, once once I found wrestling, and after wrestling, mixed martial arts to you know, those have been the things in my life that helped me have a sense of identity and also deal with life, you know, I can always go to the gym, and I can always sweat, you know, and there's something there's something to be said there. And I'm the kind of person

if I don't get to a gym, and like, I could go a day or two. But once that third, fourth day hits, and I haven't, like, exerted myself and sweat and worked out hard, I started losing my mind. So for me, it's just as simple as that. I got to do it. You know,

 James Geering 26:55

I can relate 100% You talked about wrestling through college. So when you were in high school age, I know you ended up in education. Was that where you were dreaming of initially? Or was there something else?

 27:06

I'm thinking as a kid, I wanted to be a writer, that was kind of I wrote for the school paper, and I was the editor of the opinion section. So I was very much like, you know, the Iraq war was going on. And so I was a big, you know, kind of beatnik when it came to that, you know, and anti war. And I remember getting into politics, and I really liked writing. And then I wrote for my college paper to anybody you need. I'm on saying, Can you stop coming in and out of your, your underwear, too. But yeah, I loved writing. But my, like, college, my college journalism teacher was on the nightly news for this for the locals station in San Jose. He was the nightly news anchor. And he taught the journalism class, and who ran the school paper and stuff like that. But he had told me, essentially, that I can't remember exactly where he worked. I think it was like the San Jose Mercury or something like that. But essentially, he had been in that profession for 4050 years, you know, and he had said, you told us about how you know, back in the 60s or 70s, you know, we had this bustling building of five stories and tons of reporters and people in different positions at the newspaper and, and how it's dwindled and dwindled and dwindled. And so he kind of discouraged me from following a career in journalism and writing. And, you know, and I could always write, you know, it doesn't have to necessarily be my profession, I could always try to write a book or strive to write articles for an outlet. Nowadays, it's even easier to find a website that will host you, you know. So it's still something that I like to do, I like to still into writing. But the education part was, I think that I always, when I graduated from college, I wanted to I knew I wanted to coach wrestling, and I wanted to get give back and give to other kids what I had gotten from coaches, and from the sport. And so automatically, I went back to my alma mater high school and became the head wrestling coach right out of college and spent five years doing that. As I was doing that, my fight career was taking off kind of and so it started pulling me away from coaching a little bit. And so even to this day, I've you know, now I'm just doing the junior high and you have to be pretty limited in how much I can be involved. But I just love working with kids. I think, you know, kids need good people in their lives and that are steering them in the right direction and helping them grow and develop and it's a super rewarding job. Have you know, you get to make an impact, even if it's just, you don't even know what at the time some kid will come back two years later and tell you you made an impact on him. And that's always like, mind blowing, you know? So yeah, I don't know. But I just, I don't I can't imagine doing a job where I didn't feel like I was making a difference, you know, as small as the difference might be, I don't know. But you're doing something productive for society that's positive. You know, it's not just about making money I got I've never been like, I don't know, like, I don't know how I would do in a world where I was like, all I'm trying to do is maximize profits for my business. Like, I don't know, you know?





**J** James Geering 30:43

Yeah, no, I've no, completely. That's why a lot of us become firefighters and cops and everything else. Because you know, you could be a salesman, you know, you can make a lot more money, we don't make a lot of money wearing uniform. But when you drive home the next day, that fulfillment, that you made a difference. And that mentorship is so important. So many people will be on here have been in really dark places, and they were younger, and it was a wrestling coach or a high school teacher, or you know, whatever it was someone who just saw them and gave them that self belief that they needed and show them another path other than the one they were on. And you know, so you don't have to be, you know, a soldier or a firefighter, you can be just a regular member of your community. But I think this is such an important conversation in the moment that rather than pointing fingers and rolling your eyes and saying kids today that you actually step up, and you become a mentor in your own community.

**i** 31:35

Yeah, there's a quote from Socrates, or one of the, you know, like the OG philosophers, and I can't remember who I think it was Socrates. But it was essentially, he was essentially ragging on the generation of youth, in his day and age, like this next generation doesn't have respect for their elders, or this or that. And I always just thought that quote, was so interesting. So whenever I find myself in those, like, kids these days moments, because you do have them, you know, there are things they do that bother you, you know, and you're like, Oh, these kids, Dolly, they're all on their devices. And, you know, they're not going outside and playing like they used to, and, you know, it's a different world. But there's certain things about the the youth and the next generation behind that one, and the one behind that one that you do see, like, shifts in behaviors and how they treat each other. And there's some good things that are happening, you know, with those generations of kids that weren't around and some of the things we call the kid, you know, the boy when I was in school in the 90s, and then the names we call each other and the terms we used, I mean, to good to see that some of that's gone away, because you do the kids are still kids, but you do I at least feel like there's a sense of empathy amongst the current youth that my generation didn't grow up with. So that's kind of good to see, you know?

**J** James Geering 33:02

Absolutely. Well, you talked about wrestling in college, were you studying education at that point?

**i** 33:08

I actually got well, I got my, my degree in history. Well, I loved history. I loved English, and I loved history. I was god awful when it came to mathematics. And I wasn't really that interested in science sciences. But philosophy, economics, politics, history, English. That was my wheelhouse. And so I got my bachelor's degree in history. And, and then I came back home to Visalia, I was living in the Bay Area. And I came back to the Central Valley of California, farm farming communities, and started coaching right out of college, started substitute teaching. And while I was doing that, I was also started my fight career. And so all this was happening.


And then I got went back to school and started working toward a teaching credential and was pretty, pretty sure I wanted to get into education. And so I would just work toward that. And, you know, it was fighting and subbing and coaching, and those were some fun times. Sometimes I forget about them, because it's like, I think before you have children, and like what was life like, you know, what was life like before children? And I kind of forget to be honest with you.

 James Geering 34:30

Yeah, yeah. Well, they reframe your world. Like you think you know what life's about. And then you have a child and you're like, oh, he talks about selflessness. I mean, if you're parenting right then I would argue like 98% of what you do every day is for your children and I'm wait some way shape or form.

 34:46

Yeah, yeah. Are our Friday and Saturday nights definitely look a lot different today than it did when I was you know, my my 20s.

 James Geering 34:54

So, you were wrestling. How did you transition into the MMA world?

 35:01

I was so what I would do is I'd go away to school, and I would wrestle and go to school and then in the summertime I would come home. And my brother, Keith, he only wrestled a year in college. He wasn't really to call it college wasn't really his thing. He wasn't really much of an into academics. Really good at working with his hands. But not a an academic kind of guy. And so he didn't he only wrestled a year and he was also undersized for he was 120 fives is the lightest weight class in college and my brother weighed about a buck 15 soaking wet his freshman year of college, so a little bit undersized. And he was living with a friend of ours who we'd wrestle with in high school. And so I would just crash on their couch in the summertime and usually pick up a summer job. And I had a buddy who had wrestled with me in high school, Mitch Mitchell Waikato and he was training out in a little town called Exeter, California, about 15 minutes east of Visalia, just a little martial arts kind of dojo, McDo Joe type Jim. And he invited me to go out and try it out. And so I went out, didn't know what I was doing. But they threw me in the cage in the ring right away and started sparring and having a good time. And then about a week later, I made my professional debut. And after a week, yeah, just about literally about I think I went like four or five times. And they said, You want to fight? And I was like, Yeah, sure, I'll fight. You know, I think I've made \$300. And yeah, luckily, to my first few fights, I wasn't fighting world beaters. And I wasn't a good wrestler. So I knew I could just if things weren't going well, in the striking, I could always just double a GM and try to beat him up from on top of them and not get caught an armbar or triangle and but yeah, those early days, it was kind of the wild wild west of Mixed Martial Arts, you know, a lot of Native American casinos and Indian gaming casinos. were hosting a lot of underground type fights. And it'd be I still

remember out in Porterville, California at the Table Mountain casino, it was in a tent. And there's a guy in jean shorts, cut off jean shorts, and he's smoking a cigarette. And then they say you're up and he's heading in the cage. So that was kind of what it was like back then. So. So I had my first three fights while I was still wrestling in college, and I would just do it in the summertime. And but I'd never really, I would just train a little bit, and then I would just jump in there. And and then when I graduated from college, that's when I started training at elite team Visalia with Tom Knox. Really good Brazilian jujitsu guy. He's also a really famous professional skateboarder from like, the early days. He's kind of just a renaissance man, but started actually learning some jujitsu and taking the sport seriously. And that's really when my career started and learn in boxing, I got really invested in the boxing community in the Central Valley. The Central Valley in California is predominantly Hispanic, probably 70%, Hispanic, and so there's a vibrant boxing community here. And going well with boxing, you know, I think if I'd have found boxing as a child, I think I would have pursued it and maybe not ever get into wrestling. Because I really liked boxing. And yeah, I started taking it seriously from there and fighting in different regional shows and stuff like that. And here I am now, I think I just had my 30th Pro professional fight so 16 years I think I've been doing this so it's kind of crazy.

 James Geering 39:07

Amazing. With you coming in as a wrestler only what was the evolution? Obviously you said you like the striking side to the boxing side? What was the evolution of your training that allowed you to continue that trajectory all the way to the UFC the first time when so many you know they have a few fights and then they they give up or they can't win any of them and they end up getting dissuaded that way?

 39:33

I think for me, it was just the challenge. The challenge of a new thing you know, wrestling taught me like the importance of discipline and hard work. Obviously those those are kind of staples in the sport of wrestling. But it also taught me like, like I've talked to talked about this with kids all the time, like getting good at something like wrestling is repetitive As you're doing this, you're you're repeating the same thing over and over a practice over and over. And you have to kind of shut your brain off and say, I'm going to focus in on this technique that I'm trying to get better at. And I'm going to do it 1000 times, I'm going to shoot that sweep single, over and over and over until I get better and better at doing it. And so I just took the same approach to the other martial arts. You know, jujitsu is, although it's similar to wrestling in some ways, there's a lot of things you have to learn. But again, it's about I kind of take the same approach is like repetitive drilling. And I just applied that same approach to the other martial arts and fell in love with them. And it's kind of interesting, because each of the various martial arts that you train, whether it be boxing, or kickboxing, or Muay Thai or Jiu Jitsu, they all have like their own community and their own kind of vibe, you know. And I didn't come from like a big MMA gym, where it was like, we're an intimate gym. It was, I did my jujitsu at this gym, and then I wouldn't do my boxing at this gym, and I didn't like kickboxing over here. And, and so you kind of had a goal for yourself in those communities in that environment. And so, and you were always the odd man out, you know, you were always the MMA guy coming in the box with all these professional and amateur boxers. And so they were looking to use you to beat up on you and, and you're looking to prove yourself and prove your worth. And so for me, that was a challenge. And I think it's a little bit unconventional, because a lot of guys today,

you know, move to a big MMA gym, and that's that, you know, they just trained that they made them. And I think that the fact that I had to go and go to a traditional Moy, Thai gym or go to a boxing community kind of gym and, or even my jujitsu, I went to a jujitsu sport jujitsu gym, where they competed consistently in sport jujitsu, which is different than MMA, you know. But I think that it kind of having that background and, and coming up in the sport that way, there are a lot of benefits for, for me, you know. And so, I think too, you just fall in love with it, you know, if you love fighting, that's how I feel, I feel like I might, I may never, you know, end up, you know, going down to the history books as the greatest fighter to ever live. But like, there's something about it when you're in the fire and and you have to kind of gut check yourself, and you have to overcome adversity in a fight, and mentally get past that point. And there's been a few moments in my career where it's just like, I've never felt more alive than when those moments happen. And you and you do you do the thing that people are surprised you're able to do you know, you overcome the adversity. And I've had a few moments and fights that stand out to me that it just I don't know, those are the things I'll remember, I think more than anything else is moments, you know.

 James Geering 43:04

Now you continue to rise and rise and rise to the point where you get a UFC contract, which is arguably the pinnacle and through some eyes when it comes to MMA. So let's talk about the first time that 2014 have got their own.

 43:18

Yeah. And that was the goal from the start was especially after I graduated and moved in started pursuing the sport, the goal was to try to get to the UFC. And I had a lot of hiccups. Just to make it to the UFC. I wasn't undefeated. When I got to the UFC, I had, you know, five guys that were I always fought tough guys, you know, they bring in guys from Las Vegas, and I'm the local guy that's got to fight this kid from Las Vegas, you know, that's got a lot of hype around them. And I would be the local guy who took that fight. So, you know, I think I was 12. And for something like that, when I got signed to the UFC the first time had a nice little run of like six or seven in a row and got signed to the UFC on short notice. And so I was fighting in in Las Vegas. I think I had 10 days notice for that first fight, and I didn't fight in hell Jemaine Sterling, in my UFC debut, and it was his

 James Geering 44:20

UN World Champion, by the way

 44:24

in World Champion, and it was really a crazy so after we fought, it was a close fight. He won two rounds to one he won the decision. After we fought, he reached out to me and said, you know, he'd never been to California and he wanted to come train with me. And so I said, Yeah, I've got an extra room, guest room in our house, you know, come over and you could stay at my house and we'll go out take it up and down California and train it some different gyms. And

so he did that and he came out for a couple of weeks and I got to know him real well and got to train with him for a couple of weeks and take him to some different gyms and, and then, you know full circle, he obviously went on to have have have the success that he's had. And when I was got called back to the UFC for the Ultimate Fighter, he had moved to Las Vegas at least part time he lives there part time. He's from the East Coast. And so he was at all my fights for while I was on the show. And so I'd see him there every time and then to make it to the finale. And then I'm fighting in Boston, and he's the main event. So I got to hang out with him all week leading up to our fight too. So it's kind of a crazy full circle thing. We've had very different paths, but it's always good when I get to reconnect with him. And I've always been a fan of his and supporter whenever he's fighting. So yeah, it was just kind of a cool, cool, full circle moment for us.

 James Geering 45:57

Yeah, well, I mean, of the four that you had, a Madigan Bereans and other one that I think of, you know, I know, it's a slightly older generation, but I mean, absolutely revered at the time as well. So you had some very, very tough people, you fought your way all the way up to this point, you get this golden ticket, this contract, then four or five years later, it's taken away. So many people, whether they're athletes that get it stripped, either it's the last time they aged out in the Olympics, whether it was the NFL, and they blew their knee out, or whether it's a firefighter that got hurt or retired, you know, it can be a struggle, then you've had your legs cut from under you, how did you deal with that first time when you lost the contracts in 2015.

 46:40

I mean, I just kept kept going, you know, I started teaching full time. I was substitute teaching my entire time I was in the UFC, which was a great job for what I was pursuing. Because when I had a fight, lined up and scheduled, I could not go I could not work essentially and train full time. And then when I didn't have a fight, I could have my work and, and make money that way. But then, when I got released from the UFC, I had finished my teaching credential and had a job opportunity. So ended up going full time into teaching. And so I wasn't really sure how I was going to try to manage training, when I had such a commitment with teaching. And but we just made it work. You know, I didn't have kids yet. So I think it was a little bit easier. But I would just go in before work and after work and train and just kept myself busy on the smaller shows, I thought, you know, won a couple of smaller regional show titles and was just trying to find the best guys I could find outside the UFC. And I still had a couple of hiccups. I had gone out and tried to do the Conor McGregor double champ thing in one promotion where I was the bantamweight champion. And I was like, Okay, I'm gonna go up to the Featherweight weight class and try to beat their champions. So I can have both titles. And maybe that's what I need to do to get noticed by the UFC again, and I lost. And so it was a, it was definitely a journey because I would go on like a three or four or five win streak and think, Okay, I'm close, man, I'm gonna get called again, and then I would lose. And then I'd go into three or four or five, fight, win streak, and then I'd lose. And so there was one time. My first loss outside of the UFC was the time I had gone up to 140 fives and I thought, Okay, I'm done. I'm done. I'm retiring. I think we just had our oldest child. And so I thought, Okay, I'm going to focus on being a dad, get back into coach and wrestling. And just know it can't be selfish. And I'm just going to, you know, put this fighting stuff. I'm done. And I was out of I was out of the gym for probably about three months. And I was just coaching high school wrestling and teaching full time and had a young

child and, but I just missed it. I made it and then I started finding myself going back to jujitsu a couple times a week and then I started finding myself going back to kickboxing and boxing classes and next thing I knew, I was like, well, if I'm doing all this training, I'm just full fight module keep fighting. So yeah, I jumped back in there and continued my career from there and it'll been a long journey to get back but when the opportunity with the Ultimate Fighter appeared it was just right timing for me, you know, they're doing a season of veterans and that's what I was, you know, as a veteran of the UFC and at my weight class, so just kind of the things lined up right the right time and fortunate, you know, fortunate to get back get another opportunity in the UFC. And, you know, I'm going to make the most of this and hopefully have some success and finish my career here in the next couple of years but excited about some of the fights on the horizon. And there's a lot of fun fighters out there in the UFC that I, I'm hoping I get to mix it up with here in this next year to

 James Geering 50:20

Well, between your first and second UFC contracts or experiences. In 2018, something unique happened to talk to me about reconnecting with that original family, your biological family.

 50:33

Yeah, I was. I had a sister that I didn't know I had, I had never really pursued finding out what other relatives I had out there or siblings. I was always curious, my brother's never been too curious about it. And I've always had more curiosity. But I'd never really pursued it. And I got a message on Facebook, from a girl named Cindy. And she said she was with my sister, and has she known about me and Keith her whole life. And we had never known about her. And so yeah, I connected with her and started talking to her. And she made a trip out to meet us and visit. And so, you know, every couple of years to her, her family will drive from Oklahoma, and they'll come to California and stay with us for a couple of weeks. And they're coming out this summer. Actually, we just talked about it a few days ago, actually. So connected with her and just trying to build a relationship with her. She she was kind of the one who got left behind, you know, she, my parents had told Tammy, my birth mother, that if she ever had any more children, and she couldn't keep them that, let them know, and they would adopt that child. And it just never happened with Cindy. And so she stayed with Tammy and I think was in and out of different foster systems as well. And she would sometimes be back with her mom. And other times she wouldn't be. But she's done exceptionally well, given the circumstances she was dealt. She's a mother of their just found out. So they have four, they're gonna have their fourth child now, husband's a really great guy. He's works from Michelin tires. So he's a hard working guy, but a good man. And so, you know, it's been fun to connect with them and get to meet my nieces and nephews and my nephews wrestling. So he's always got questions for me and stuff like that. And so yeah, it's been it's been nice. And then I went out two summers ago and met my birth mother, and met my birth father, separately. And so it was a, it was an interesting experience, I think one that I needed to experience. It definitely gave me a sense of closure in a lot of ways. It wasn't that I was going out to necessarily develop new relationships that I wanted to have. But it just gave me a sense of closure. And I don't know why. But I still communicate with them through email, from time to time. But I think for me, it was just the right time to go out and kind of just find out where I came from. And, you know, hear hear my story from their perspective, which you always have to take with a grain of salt, I think, but it was a good time for me to kind of explore that, that part of my life.

J

James Geering 53:43

I have a guest on Kevin Berthier. And and if you've seen on social media, he's one of the guys that was going to jump off the Golden Gate Bridge, African American guy, white t shirt, and he's looking in, I'm facing the bridge. And one of the, the CHP officers ended up talking him off Kevin breaks. And I had them both on the show. And Kevin Berthier was talking about being adopted. And as he got a little bit older, there was a sense of, you know, my real parents, they're going to be amazing. And he built this whole story about them. And sadly, it wasn't true. When he when he met them. They weren't the people that he dreamed that they would be. But you know, again, there was closure. So sometimes you hear these beautiful stories and the adoptive parents, the original parents are amazing. And then, you know, they have relationships with both and all that stuff. And sometimes that's not the case. And like you said, there's closure as well. But I think what's amazing when you talk about your sister and yourself as parents now, we always have the power to stop that domino effect. And like you said that mental health crisis and the addiction these things that ravage neighborhoods, you know, all through this country, whether it's poor, middle class, rich, whatever you want to classify it as, but the only power we have as parents they say you want to change the world start at home. The only power is whatever your parents Did you know that you experienced that you physically have the chance to actually stop that? And create that, you know, home for your your children? Is that something that you're kind of cognizant of that you focus on now as a father?

U

55:14

Yeah, 100%. You know, that's why I'm proud of my sister in the way she's raising her kids. I mean, they still live in, they live in a town called were eco Cal, or were eco Oklahoma. It's a tiny little town. And what was very interesting for me, going back and visiting them was, you know, you hear the stories about Big Pharma going into a lot of these poor communities and exploiting them. And that it definitely happened there. They're all on. It's not oxy cotton, what's the one they give them? Now to get off the Oxycontin, the methadone, methadone, they're all take little methadone pills, all these people in this town, are on methadone. And they're trying to decrease their dosage. They're always talking about it. And I mean, they, it was it was an eye opening experience, being in that community and seeing that. And so I'm proud of her in the work she does is a mom, and she's a great mom to those kids. And yeah, that's, that's true, though. And that's, you know, he's think about that, as a parent, you know, and I was just fortunate enough to get adopted, had I not been adopted, I don't think I would have made it, I don't think I would have done as well as Cindy is doing. If I was in her situation. So you know, she lives a clean life and a sober life. And, you know, I think it would have been a hard thing for me to do, given some of, and I think that's one of the bigger things too is you always, you're always kind of battling in your head, like nature versus nurture. Like, what are my natural tendencies genetically, that I'm predisposed to, and how much of this has been, you know, I grew up in a good household, my parents were loving people and great human beings, and they didn't drink and there was no substance abuse problems or anything. And then, you know, but I come from this genetic trait of addiction. And I do feel that, you know, I feel like I'm a, I'm an addict, that whatever, whatever I'm going to be doing them, I'm addicted to it. And it's all I consume, and think about. And so for me, it's always it's been a journey, but it's been about

trying to find things to be addicted to that are positive for my life, you know, because I'm going to be addicted to something. So you got to make sure that those things that I'm addicted to are good things for my life. And so that's kind of where I'm at now.

J James Geering 57:45

It's such a fascinating conversation, too, because people talk is it? Is it nature? Is it nurture? And obviously the answer is, yes, it's both. But when I was young, we were taught, for example, your DNA is your DNA, it is what it is. And now there's this whole concept that epigenetics where you literally can morph your DNA based on your behavior that can be negatively or can be positively. So even if you came from a family with a history of addiction, you through your actions, now your sister through her actions now are literally changing your DNA and your genetics so that your children are experiencing something completely different. So I think when you get that side of the story, it infuses a lot more hope rather than, you know, throwing your hands up in the air, which is the old mentality of well, you know, it's in my family, you know, I've got, we've all got bad fibroids, or you know, whatever it is that you hear some people say, it's like, no, you can control it doesn't mean it's going to be as easy for person A and person B. But the nurture side is a big, big part of it, you know, and so the same way as it was skewed negatively, by generations prior, you have the power to pull it back the other way, but it's not going to be easy. That's the thing. Yeah. And

o 58:57

one of the things I feel like I've learned a lot in the last few years, especially is just the habits you build, like being deliberate in my habits, you know, like, you develop habits, like little things I'll notice, like these stupid energy drinks. I've got them on Celsius now and I really limiting how much I have. But I'll find myself in a habit of stopping at a gas station after work before I'm going to the gym and saying, Oh, I think a Celsius kind of give me that, that that caffeine, I needed second wind in the day. And I'll notice, if I do it one day, then I do it the next day, then I do it the next day. And the next thing I know I'm like I've had six energy drinks this week. And so I'll be like, I don't want to have six energy drinks this week. And so I'll have to break that habit like okay, I have to make a car like a conscious decision now. I'm not going to get the energy drink after work every day. And so for me, it's just like learning about how I'm have have building the right type of habits whether it's, you know, other things like I you know, I find myself, I'd be scrolling through my phone at night, and I'm laying in bed, oh, I don't like that. So maybe I need to put my, my charger in the living room, and my phone stays out there. And so when I go to bed, I pick up a book and read for 10 minutes as opposed to scroll through mindlessly on some application. So it's just for me, I've been in a kind of a process, I feel like the last few years of building trying to build good habits, and recognizing if I'm building negative habits and correcting them quickly. So that's just kind of where I'm at right now. I feel like,

J James Geering 1:00:33

yeah, I can I can be 100% with the cell phone. And then for me, it's alcohol as well. I don't binge drink or anything like that. But that self talk of oh, I'll use it to wind down I have a you know, a glass of wine or whatever. It's like, No, it's It's poison. That's the reality. It is poisoned James.



But sometimes I'm, you know, I fall into that. And sometimes I'm strong enough to not and I will not drink for long periods of time. But at the same time, if I open that door very, very, very quickly, I'm, you know, having one or two in every evening and falling into that again. So when I think of a teacher and an MMA fighter, I think of rich Franklin OG fire, and then I think of Here Comes the Boom, which I'm sure you've probably been, you know, compared with more than once. So what is the reception of your students knowing that their teacher is not only teaching them US history and economics, but also is out in the cage, snatching souls on a weekend



1:01:29

is I taught high school, seven years, and I taught AP history, which I loved teaching that course. But then last year, I, I was commuting about 45 minutes south, every day to go to work. And I was getting kind of tired of doing that and trying to fit the training with another with an hour and a half commute on top of it, you know. And so I found a job closer to home last year. And the problem was that there wasn't any history positions open at any of the high schools. But there was a junior high PE teacher job. And so, and I coached Maria, I'm used to coaching and being around kids in that kind of environment. So I just told her, I didn't really ever envision myself being a PE teacher, but I wanted to get a job closer to home. And so this is my second year, that middle school teaching PE, which I do miss history, I miss being in the classroom, especially the AP classes were just always a lot of fun for me. But it's a whole different experience now and dealing with the different demographic of students as far as where they're at in their process and age. And I found I found that I liked it a lot. You know, I'm dealing with 12 year old kids, 13 year old kids. And sometimes I felt like at the high school, because I would only I would have like, you know, two or three periods of AP, but then I would have two or three periods of like general education, history, or government or economics or whatever they're having me teach. And sometimes in those gen ed classes, you get a 16 year old in there, and I hate to say it because never, you never say never, but they've already gone down so far down a path. And there's just, it's not gonna happen for him, at least not right now. Like, they're gonna have to do some real growing up. I mean, I've had kids in my class who wouldn't do anything, and I'm trying to talk to them and reason with them, like, Hey, man, you got to pass this class to get out of high school, you know, like, what could I do to help you, man, I want you to pass I'm not here to fail you, I want you to do well, but you've got to meet me halfway. And, and if I get straight told me like, Oh, I'm just waiting to get to continuation school. You know, once I hit 16, I can go to continuation and, and they're just willing to just sit there and flunk it all out. And, you know, so there was a several times as a high school teacher, where I felt a little deflated, like, there's no, there's no hope for this guy, or I can't do anything to change this guy's trajectory. Whereas the middle school, those kids are really that's the way they're going to choose their path about that age, what direction they're going to head. And so I feel like I get to make, I always joke with my my co workers. And I say, we're more we're more guidance counselors than we are teachers out here in the PE department. Because we just get a lot of opportunities to have conversations with kids and build relationships with them. That maybe in a classroom setting where you're busy, and you're focused on the academic side of things, you don't have those same type of opportunities. So it's been a fun experience. And as far as the fighting stuff goes, last year, they the kids kind of knew I was a fighter. But they didn't really, I don't, it wasn't advertised as much, you know, and it wasn't. I did have a couple fights and so I would have to go to my fights but it wasn't as big of a thing and then when the Ultimate Fighter things happened, it was very good. difference. And, yeah, well, they were super, super excited. You know, and but I feel like as time has passed since this last fight I had, you know, kids are very much that their world is, you know, different the way they think about the world and see things is very different than adults. So I think they kind of forget, you know, and then don't

remember when I say okay, well, I've got this coming up, I'm going to be gone for a few days, and like, oh, they'll get interested again. But I feel like I'm at a stage right now where they're kind of forgot about my fighting. So which is fine with me, because I, I don't really try to be the focus of attention. You know, I've tried to they're the focus of attention. And but I, you know, I can use it. And I use it all the time to teach them lessons that I've learned about overcoming. We just had boys basketball tryouts were two weeks ago. And I had a boy who loves basketball. And he didn't make the team last year. And he practiced and practice and practice. And he got a lot better from last year to this year. And I would tell him that you've gotten so much better than you were last year. And but I was still a little skeptical that he was going to make the team and he's ended up making it again. So then, but I'm able to share with my story, like, you know, the best thing that ever happened to me was not making my freshman basketball team because look what it did to my life. And like I found what I really loved. And it changed the trajectory of my entire life is this thing that I thought was negative? And at the time that someone asked me, Is this going to be a good thing in your life? I'd say no, this is horrible, you know, and ends up being like the, in my opinion, like the best thing that ever happened to me, or one of the best things that's ever happened to me. So being able to kind of relate to him in those ways and tell those stories and use my experience is a fighter as a wrestler to try to help help them and help some of these kids make good decisions and find their thing, whatever that thing is, you know,

J

James Geering 1:07:01

you got a unique perspective because you taught a very academic subject and then you shifted to PE specifically you've been a high level athlete most of your life what is your perspective of physical education in schools my I've got two boys one is 22 116. So one's in kind of asked to track at the moment he's he's very much gone down the athletic side, the other one was more of a musician. Not really big into exercise. But when I look at it through kind of like a British lens went in again, very different generation my went to school in the 80s and 80s. And 90s. You know, pe was was something that we always did, it was non negotiable as part of your school week. But as a parent, you see these programs, as you said earlier, I couldn't play because it was too expensive. So some sports, literally kids are removed, or there's a barrier to entry, just pure finance, and you have these recesses being cut, then you have PE programs being cut, or in my son's case, they have one here called hope. But I think two or three weeks in all they done was you know, watch PDFs, and PowerPoints and videos, and they hadn't done any exercise. So even if they call it PE here wasn't actually movements. So I kind of totally loaded that question. But what is your perspective on physical education looking through an athlete's eyes.

o

1:08:21

Um, I mean, you've got like a variety of kids, you know, you've got kids that love sports said they, every single day, they show up, and they want to play, and they want to get after it, and they love the athletics. And then you've got kids who can't do a side shuffle, you know, like, they just have no coordination. They're not athletic. If someone throws a basketball at them, they're ducking like this, they're not trying to, you know, like, they just don't have it. And so, for me, I try to approach it like, hey, whether you're going to be a superstar athlete, or you're just going to be in person who doesn't play any sports, you still, you know, you need to move your body every day, you know, like, find things that you can do that you enjoy and move your body

every day, because that's going to be better for your long term health and well being. And so we really, in our department, I feel like we've done a pretty good job of trying to develop a curriculum that gives kids a lot of choice and also variety. We don't just do like traditional ball and Sport, Sport sports, you know, it's not just the traditional sports, but we introduce them to a lot of different things. We have a pickleball unit, we do things like that, you know, like, people can get into different things to be active that they have fun with. So we try to expose them to a lot and then give them a lot of choices and variety of options. But as long as they're moving every day, and they're exercising. That's kind of our our kind of mission. But yeah, I don't know. You know, I think kids they need to be active every single day and moving their bodies and PE, there's problems. There's, there's, I think the junior high kids are a little bit better than the high school kids as far as like their willingness to participate, and the kind of pushback you get from certain things. But, you know, we do run into challenges, we're, you know, we've got to try to get kids, they've got to, we've got fitness testing and things like that. And getting a kid to actually given effort on things is sometimes a challenge when they want to walk a mile, 20 minutes, and you're just like, pulling your hair out, trying to motivate them find things to motivate them, but most of them are, are pretty good about participating, putting in effort, and I just tried to get them, especially the ones that aren't really athletic, I try to help them find something that they enjoy. That's movement based, you know, whatever that is.

J

James Geering 1:10:58

I have a guy on the show, Doug orchard. And I can't even remember how I came across his documentary. But he made a documentary a few years ago called The motivation factor, and it was a school. I forget the name of the area, but it was right around you somewhere, I think it was central California back in the 50s, and 60s, and they kind of copied like a Russian PE or exercise regimen. And they added in almost like a martial arts belt system to high school. So they will get the kids into teams. And you start off with let's say, white shorts, the colors were shorts. And they had to get to a point where they could do you know, exercise ABCD and E as a group and then they would promote now you're a blue shorts and red shorts and gold shorts, or whatever it was. And watching the footage and you may have even seen it might have come across your your feed on social media, if you ever look at it, but it says like, you know, high school in the 60s is usually what it says. But what was amazing is not only did bullying go down, grades went up. But then if a child chose to play a sport, then they didn't have to worry about the conditioning side. I mean, they obviously they would do additional but they were already strong and fit. But if as you said if they didn't really have an interest in sports specifically, then they were really fit band members or history or you know, whatever it was so it was such a beautiful system. And actually one school in California, start it up again. But then COVID here and from what I understand they shut it down and and never start again. But it was all just bodyweight stuff. It was the parallel bars along parallel bars and shuffle it was the pegboard it was partner carries and runs and this kind of thing, it was 10 minutes of calisthenics with push ups and star jumps. And but it was it was amazing. And all these these students looked incredible. And you don't have to be an athlete, you just excel or whatever area doing but including academics, because as you said, when you're sat in the classroom, it's very hard to keep kids attention if you let them burn off some steam first. Now they're going to be more engaged. Oh,

o

1:13:01

100% by we do. So I teach seventh graders predominantly, I think I have five periods of

seventh graders. And then I have one period of sixth graders. And the way it works with the sixth graders is that they alternate. So one week, I'll see them Monday, Wednesday, Friday. And then the next week, I see him Tuesday, Thursday. And I have two groups, two classes during that, you know, they alternate each week. And the sixth grade teachers, I have to go to their classroom and pick them up because they're they walk in a line to get to, to me, that's the big difference between sixth and seventh grade to sixth grade, they still do the lines and they've got to walk single file and all that stuff. And the sixth grade teachers always tell me every time I pick them up, please run them hard today, please, please get them to burn some of the energy. And so I always make make a note to make sure I get them nice and sweaty the sixth graders especially but yeah, I would love to see a program like that. With us. They used to have a program like that at my school where they had different shorts, and the shorts meant that they had achieved different fitness levels. And you know, they had a color system. And they did away with it. So I don't know, you know, maybe if you could bring research from that study, and take it to a school board and say hey, here's the data on this program, here's how it helps the school and the students grow. And we want to try to implement that here. That'd be something I'd be interested in trying to bring to the school board, you know, and seeing what they said. So I don't know how receptive they would be but Yeah, something like that. I think just to I think setting the standards a little bit higher on the physical fitness side, you know, where they are going to be getting sweaty every day and and all that stuff and we they do you know, we we've run them and we do calisthenics and we do bodyweight stuff, we do pull ups, we do. Push ups, we do core exercise work. We have one day a week where I take them into the gym, and which is just a straight, like, hit workout where it's some cardio based stuff, box jumps, things like that. So I feel like we do a better job than probably a lot of places. But man, if I need to look into that study from that guy, I'm talking about a little bit more and see if there's some data that I could bring to a school board and have a congress start opening the door to that kind of a conversation.

 James Geering 1:15:32

What's the name of your school again?

 1:15:34

I teach it a Tasker Darrow Middle School?

 James Geering 1:15:37

Because I know, I think it was Laredo, I forgot that right? I'll look it up anyway, I'll find it for you. But the motivation factor is the name of the documentary. It's, I mean, I think it I don't even know if it's on the Amazon thing, you have to just go to the site and pay three bucks, whatever it is to watch it, but amazing, and it's not, you know, I think he's got all the data and everything from back then. But as you said, you know, we've got kids that maybe don't get the best influence when they get home. So, you know, some people will school shouldn't have to do everything. No, but what an amazing place to for a kid to learn about movement and exercise, and also diet and nutrition. So another thing I think there's huge as we should get regular cooking back into kitchens and schools, you know, all the OSI the Cisco bas saw the Cisco truck coming and dropping off all the process shit. Instead of you know, what we used to do in all

schools was you have, you know, people working in the kitchen that would cook real food, and the kids would come and eat it. So I think if we just devolved back to, you know, the 20s. In those areas, we would literally revolutionize childhood obese, obese in itself.



1:16:41

Yeah, and one of the more frustrating things in America is, there are foods that the chemicals they allow in our foods, and I'm not like super versed in it and under, you know, but I just see, it's frustrating when you see like, the ingredients list of a bag of Doritos in the United States, but then Doritos sells Doritos, in other countries that have bans on some of those chemicals. And they somehow still sell them and they somehow still make them they just don't have those chemicals in them. And so that's been just kind of an eye opening, seeing some of that stuff. And like, man, we really need to like, think about what we're putting in our bodies. And and I don't know, if there's a food industry, that's lobbying the right people, I'm sure that's happening. But yeah, kids, we talk a lot about nutrition with them, helping them understand how to how to read nutrition on the back of a label. And then talking about ingredients and talking about another part of the frustrating thing, and I don't know how it is there, but here is that you do have this like niche market of organic stores that you have to be pretty wealthy to shop at. And so that's a little frustrating to, you know, the the organic apple costs, you know, so much more than the non organic apple and you're like, well, you're really limiting who's got access to this quality food, then this is the way we're gonna go about it. So yeah,



James Geering 1:18:12


yeah, absolutely. But it's all about subsidies. They're, you know, the people that made the chemical covered food, get tax breaks and incentives and the local farmers, which again, post COVID, we should have farmers thriving right now at Matt Irish acres. I think as Matt is farmers, you know, they should be getting all the subsidies. Now, you know, we need to realize there was a massive block in the food delivery system, we need to go back to all our local farmers making clean food, where it would be cheap, because you're buying it from farmer Steve or farmer Jane, you know, directly down the road, and they wouldn't have all these transportation fees and the middleman and the grocery store, and then it would be affordable for everyone. But that's not the system that we have. And if a two year pandemic wasn't enough to change people's views on this, I don't know what would be



1:19:00

Yeah, unfortunately. It could be I don't know how your experiences but like having two daughters and now a son on the way and like, they're, you know, you notice that they're entering into a world that you don't know where it's heading in. It's scary and you want to protect your kids but you also want I don't know which sometimes I can get get my own head about like what am I why am I bringing children into this world with this stuff so much wrong with it, you know, and but I did see a good thing the other day about that it said something to the effect of like, I think it was like a play on words on you know, what was it whenever whenever someone you know, says I don't want to have children and bring them into this very, you know, troublesome world. I'm reminded that I'm saying I'm gonna screw this up, but I'm reminded that I'm raising I'm not really embracing dragon slayers to be to fight dragons. You


know what I mean? Like, so I kind of liked that when I'm sure I screw that up to some degree. But I get the gist of it, you know, just you're raising, you're raising people to fight those corruptions and problems in society, I guess.

 James Geering 1:20:13

100%? Well, I think it was it was apparent. I mean, this is why I do what I do now. Like, my kids are 16 and 22. And I'm still trying to change the world for them, you know, not single handedly, of course, would be one of the voices that moves the needle, because, you know, yes, we brought them in. And yes, they are the future. But it doesn't mean that we have to just say Tag you're it and then stop trying, you know, so I'm optimistic. But I think it's platforms like this and social media when it's used properly, educate people, bring them together, highlight the problems, bring solutions with the problem, not just bitching. We can make change, but we got to get people educated, so they understand why it's a problem in the first place.

 1:20:50

100% Yeah. Yeah.

 James Geering 1:20:54

So you get a second chance in the UFC. Now you find yourself on the Ultimate Fighter TV show, I was just racking my brains when we were talking a second ago to remember who else had been on here that was in the house. I had Chuck Liddell on obviously, you train at the pet now, so and I was one of your fight colleagues. But they were talking about the experience. But this was quite a while ago now. So back in the day, it was very apparent, it was kind of like that reality TV cocktail, they put all the fires in, they fill the liquor cabinet full of booze, they film everything and wait for them to, you know, just destroy each other. Basically, you can see it's been cleaned up a lot now. But what was some of the the highs or pros and what were some of the lows of that environment that obviously is still made for TV. I mean, you guys are just on your fight journey. But there is an entertainment fly on the wall element to it as well.

 1:21:49

Yeah, this this season in particular was very advertising heavy. Conor McGregor, I think a part of his contract to do the show was that he was going to be able to promote all of his products. And so he has not just his Irish stout or Irish whiskey, proper 12. That's his most famous product, but he also has a cream to help with inflammation, he has a stout company, forged Iris stout, he has a protein company that makes protein in nutrient nutritional stuff. And so all these different companies that he has, with were broadcast throughout the house, you know, we had limited counter space and calendars and or cabinets with, you know, plates and dishes and things like that. And, but there was an entire counter of proper 12, probably 100 bottles of proper 12, if not more. And so some of that was a little bit. And then he would come over to the house, and he would tell you would call the house. And he would say oh to his team, because we each got to train twice a day at the facility, the UFC apex. And he would call midway through the day, and he would say, Hey, guys, we're not going to the apex tonight, I'm going to

come to you to do a workout at the house. But every time he came to do the workout at the house, or do something at the house, it was always to promote one of his products, where he would be like doing a rowing competition, and then he would promote whatever thing is associated with that. Or he came over and made an Irish Stew, which was really cool. But it was really because he wanted to show that he's putting the stouts in the stew and that was the big thing you know, and so it was very commercial kind of driven and heavy. And so I kind of just was like watching a lot of that unfold and getting a laugh out of it but also like seeing how how it works, you know? But luckily, we had all the guys in the house were good guys. You know, we didn't have any scumbags. One of the guys actually didn't we were able to bring two photos from home like photos of your kids or your family or whatever. And one guy didn't bring any photos and I asked him like hey, why didn't you bring any family photos? And he said, I didn't know it was gonna be here. I didn't want know if there was gonna be some scumbag. I don't want to see my family, you know? And I kind of took me aback like I didn't think like that. But luckily we didn't have anybody like that in the house. Not everybody got along all the time or anything like that, but genuinely, they were all genuine, generally they were all genuine guys. And good good men. So some of them were young and kind of foolish, but the good crop of guys so and even the drinking and stuff you know Back in the wild west days of MMA, a professional fighter was a lot different than what it is today. If you want to make it at the highest level, you're not drinking alcohol prior to a fight, you know, like, I don't drink alcohol at all for an entire 12 weeks, 14 weeks, whatever. at all, I don't drink any alcohol. And even even when I'm out of training camp, like right now, I'm getting ready for a surgery and not able to train too much right now. And we still really try to always be cognizant of, okay, I've got to watch my diet and stay, you know, you got to live the life. And so as the guy started getting eliminated from the competition, there was a little bit of that going on. But not it never seemed to get out of hand like you'd seen in some of the past seasons where guys were getting so obliterated that they're fighting each other in the in the front yard or anything like that.

J

James Geering 1:25:56

Brilliant. Now, what about being a dad, I mean, you are in the house, obviously, you're if I'm reading it, right, as a viewer, you don't really get much contact with your family. And if you know you have a win, or there's something else, you get this extra time then. So being a father myself and being just a way for, you know, two, three days as a firefighter would be horrible. Hey, it in. So how did you deal with that side? And how did your family deal with with holding the line while you were over there?

o

1:26:26

That was definitely the hardest part for me. And I knew that going in, like, I'm not worried about the competition, the training demands, none of that stuff is going to bother me. I've been doing this for a long time. And I kind of know what I'm getting myself into. And when it comes to the physical part of the sport, the part I knew was gonna be the most challenging and it definitely was, was just being away from my kids for six weeks, my wife for six weeks, with no contact, and not knowing how things are going at home, and kind of, you know, playing out a lot of scenarios in your head about what what could be going wrong at home, you know, I missed the end of basketball season. And my daughter who's short for her age, was getting very frustrated. Because you know, pretty much at her age, the basketball, whoever's the tallest kid is making the most baskets, because they're all just standing there with their hands up. And

the tallest one usually gets the rebound. And, you know, by the third or fourth attempt at laying it up, they get it in. And she was getting very frustrated because you never got to score point. And I missed it. But she scored her first basket. And so I was bummed I missed that. My wife actually had a surgery, skin cancer removed while I was gone. And luckily that production was able to reach out to my mother who had come to stay with my wife for a couple of days while she was having that surgery. And they were able to relay that information that she was safe and healthy and everything. I didn't get to actually talk to her, but they were able to relay that through my mom. So that was good to hear. But yeah, that was definitely the most challenging part was just being away for that long. My wife took on a lot of extra responsibility. You know, me gone. And it was in some ways it was a good thing because I came back and she was like, man I've ever needed to realize how important you are to running this. The running the ship, you know, you disappearing for six weeks like that showed me that man, he does quite a bit of stuff around the house and helps out quite a bit. So maybe that was a good blessing in disguise. But yeah, it was the toughest part. And if you made it to the semifinals of the show, the day before the final fight the day before we left, they let you make a 10 minute phone call or Zoom call home. And of course it's all videotaped, you know. But I knew I was like, Oh, I'm gonna cry like a baby. Like as soon as I see my kids, like, I'm going to start crying. And I'm going to look like I'm gonna be the guy on there just crying. And sure enough, that's what happened. But whatever I guess, right? That

 James Geering 1:29:13

will I mean, that's what men do, though. That's the crazy thing when I was young as like, you know, why you being such a pussy and crying on TV? Well, I've had people on here that are Navy SEALs, shs ocean lifeguards, you name it all in tears, because that's what men do. You know, when we're sad or were touched by something as beautiful then you cry. It's a normal human emotion. And it's, I'm glad to see that stigma being smashed now because it needs to be. Yeah, I

 1:29:39

agree. I agree. I definitely grew up with that, like men, your family kind of like you don't cry mentality. And I don't think my dad ever pushed out or anything but I just think in general in society, it's always been something that is not manly. But for me if it's anything to do with my kids, I'm probably crying so That's

 James Geering 1:30:00

absolutely me too. Well then so you get to the final have very close fight with brackets ona doesn't go your way on that particular night. Now you are about to have surgery on hernia is that right? Yeah,

 1:30:13

now that hernia surgery on Wednesday, but I actually have a torn groin and my adductors like these big muscles underneath you, that kind of go all the way down. They're big muscles. And there's a tear in that So I'm doing physical therapy for that And now I'm having surgery on my



there's a tear in that. So I'm doing physical therapy for that. And now I'm having surgery on my hernia, they only found the hernia because I had gone in for the groin tear. And they were like, Yeah, you have a torn groin, but you also know you have a hernia. But they said that the pain wasn't coming from the hernia, I'm not feeling the hernia, but they, they're gonna fix it, since it's there. And so yeah, it's been a it's been a little rough, just because, you know, fighting is very, there's a lot of highs and there's a lot of lows. And, you know, being injured is something that's always been rough when you when you're sidelined, and you can't do what you want to do so. But luckily, these aren't like injuries that are gonna keep me out for six months, nine months or anything like that, though, I'm hoping by December, I'm back in the gym. Sounds like a pretty good timetable, and can get a fight, you know, early next year. So I'm hoping to get back in there in February or March, if everything goes right, and my recovery goes, well.

**J** James Geering 1:31:29

Brilliant. Well, you mentioned about some people that you're excited to fight. So just before we get to the closing questions, you heal up and it's funny you talk about the hernia groin, I was told I had a hernia with I had a hernia when I was a firefighter and turned out it was a groin tear. So I've actually know exactly what you're talking about. But so now you're healed up. You don't need rehab, your hernia is fixed. Who are the people that you want to try and use as rungs on that ladder to get to that title?

**o** 1:31:57

I think guys that there's certain guys that just excited me when I watch them fight and how they fight and I'm like, Oh, I think we would have a really good fight. You know. Adrian Yan is just actually lost to Jonathan Martinez. fun guy to watch fight. John Johnson Martinez and his teammate Chris Gutierrez, two guys out of factory ex who are just throttling people with late kicks right now. Johnson Martinez was the only the second fighter in UFC history to finish multiple opponents with leg kicks. He just did it Adrian Jana those last couple of weeks ago or last week. So I'm really looking at the bottom of that top 15 are guys that are right outside the top 15. And, you know, that's who I want to test myself against. And if I can pick up some solid wins. And I think step number one is to get a number next to your name, right? That's the way it goes. So you got to do that. And then see how far we can climb up the ladder after that. But yeah, it was it was just for me. It's like, I liked watching guys that have certain guys and their styles. And I'm like, I think that certain fights are excite me more than other fights, you know, and it suits the style of the guy. I like challenges. I like to be the underdog. When I fight I want people to generally genuinely, like generally I want to I like it when people doubt me and say, Oh, he's gonna lose. He's a plus 150 A plus 200 and he's gonna lose. So those are the kind of challenges that kind of excite me I've always underperformed when I'm the favorite. I just don't like the being the favorite. I like being I like being doubted. I don't know, there's something about that. That gives me gives me some sort of satisfaction when I'm when I win. And so yeah, the guys that I'm supposed to lose to that's who I want to fight.

**J** James Geering 1:33:49

We're just one one quick. Tangent. You mentioned that you train the pit. Now. What took you to that particular, you know, group I know obviously, it was made somewhat famous by several fighters, including Tim Kennedy at Kennedy, but obviously, Chuck, he was on the show. But

now we're in 2023. You mentioned about having the Brazilian gym, you go in a boxing gym, you're going to more Thai what was it that took you to John's gym specifically?



1:34:14

My father in law moved out here. He's a retired teacher. And he bought like, the house I was just, you know, tore up the pieces back in. Oh eight. You know, during the recession, the housing crisis and real estate plummeted and he had the resources to buy this house that needed a complete remodel and facelift. And his best friend is a contractor in Bakersfield, California. And so his best friend did the work I'm sure I mean, I'm sure he paid for it, but he probably got a nice discount. And so we would come and visit him all the time. And here in the central coast. We were living about three hours east in the Central Valley. I'm, and we'd always come and visit them. And I would train to the pit. If I was getting ready for a fight or something, I would just stop in for a session on a Saturday if we were coming here to visit her dad or anything. And so I was kind of already knew the guys at the pit. And we're just friendly with them, we would train with them when I was around. And we always talked about moving over here, and real estate's kind of ridiculous over here. I mean, it's not as bad as it is in LA or San Francisco. But it's right below that, you know, it's still, you know, the Central Valley of California I can, as a teacher, and my wife's a nurse. So, you know, we're upper middle class in the Central Valley. Whereas here on the Central Coast, we're, we're the bottom of the ring, you know, like, in trying to afford real estate is the challenge, especially right now, it's the challenge. So we're just trying to be patient. And I don't know, I just had an opportunity to move over here during COVID. Actually, in 2020, I applied for a job at a high school teaching AP courses, and which is a pretty niche market. You know, like, there's not a lot of people who, who you don't necessarily have a huge comp, a ton of competition, people that want to teach those courses because they don't get paid anymore. But you definitely do a lot more work, you know. So you've really got to love this subject. And that's how I like to do it. And anyway, long story short, we took the leap of faith, I was really just getting tired of Visalia. And that's where I grew up, you know, and I bought a house, about a block away from the house I grew up in. And the neighborhood had changed a lot. And safety was a concern for my kids. A lot of gang stuff going on in Visalia these days. And I still love I still yet I still have so many good friends and good relationships with businesses in Visalia and people. And in the education department, in the schools, but I know we had an opportunity to move over here. And to me, it was a new challenge. You know, like, a lot of a lot of people told me Don't do it, you know, that it's too expensive to live off of a teacher's salary there, and there's no way you're gonna be able to make it work. And, and for me that, again, just kind of the same mentality I have been fighting. It's like, oh, I have a challenge, you know, and I've got to figure it out. And so that's what I've been doing the last three years. People are always asking me, why are you still teaching? Why don't you just fight full time, and you're probably making more money doing that than you are teaching. And that is, that is true. But for me, the fighting money, any money I make from fighting is just going away to save for a house. And so I don't want to live off the money. I want to keep my teaching job. And it does make for a very busy life. And you have to make sacrifices, my wife has to make sacrifices to make it happen. But as long as I'm getting my four or five hours in the gym every day, just like the guys that are doing it full time. I don't see it as a disadvantage. So that's why I operate and again, well, you know, maybe next year if I went a couple of fights, and we're like, maybe I need to step away from teaching for a year and focus on this full time. And maybe I'll make that decision. But as of right now, I'm, I'm fine doing doing both and just trying to make it work. And yeah, so that's kind of where I'm at.

 James Geering 1:38:20

Beautiful. Well, I want to be mindful with your time. So I'm just gonna throw some quick closing questions at you so I can let you get back to your doors. The first one I love to ask is there a book or other books that you love to recommend you can be related to our discussion today, or completely unrelated?

 1:38:37

Um, I'm kind of in like, two dystopian literature, like, you know, George Orwell, or I got into like, I took a lot of lit classes for all you it was like a book club, you know, you've read 10 books in a semester, and you talk about them and in class and took like American literature and World Literature, we're getting exposed to different books from different places. So there's a lot of interesting books I've read in those classes that have led me down different paths and exploring different literature. I really like like existentialism, like, the the a lot of the books like from Cameroon, and some of these guys that the stranger comes to mind. And then there's an American author named boo kowski. I don't know if you've ever heard of them. Charles, but kowski Oh, yeah, I have to have quotes I have. Yeah, yeah. He's a dirty old man. And that's literally he was kind of disfigured. And he didn't start making money and writing until later in his life. And he's got some great books. Kind of, you know, rated R for sure. But I've always enjoyed his writing style and some of the concepts he talks about, have always resonated with me. So he's one of my Ain't go to authors and I'll reread some of his stuff from time to time as well. So brilliant.

 James Geering 1:40:04

What about movies and or documentaries?

 1:40:10

Who I can't say I watch a ton of movies anymore, you know, maybe one or two a month, I watch. But, and then I forget, I always forget him. You know, my all time favorite movies, The Big Lebowski. I just the whole concept around the dude. And he's kind of philosophy on life. I just always found it really funny and fun. And so I'm a big, Big Lebowski fan. There's even a religion based around the movie that exist, I've been told. So we used to have Big Lebowski parties, where you always served with white Russians, and you had to wear a robe to the party. So that's one of my all time favorites. And then I kind of grew up on old westerns. And then that's what I wrote my senior thesis on, was on how, how accurate were Westerns in telling the story of the West. And so I took 10 of the most famous western movies. And I critique them based on their historical accuracy. And so I've always been into westerns, and they don't make them quite like they used to anymore. But anything, any of the any of the Wild West kind of genre is something I've always kind of gravitated toward as well.

 James Geering 1:41:37

What was your takeaway from that? That thesis? How close were they?

 1:41:42

Oh, they weren't very close at all. So I was thinking, yeah, there's there's some accuracies. There's some things that are accurate. And there's a lot of things that are are not so yeah, the the gunfights the crazy gunfights and the Old West movies, when you learn about what their gun fights really were like, we're a lot different. Those those guns did not shoot very straight. So they would literally be standing feet from each other, missing each other time and time again. Because the guns were so inaccurate. So yeah, some of that stuff, even though I love it, because that's what draws people into the Westerns. As far as their historical accuracy, I get why they changed some things, but they're not necessarily the most historically accurate. No,

 James Geering 1:42:35

I don't think the Native Americans were white dudes with face paint either. None real life. Though racist Hollywood from back then,

 1:42:46

when I represent, all right, well,

 James Geering 1:42:47

then the next question, is there a person that you recommend to come on this podcast as a guest to speak to the first responders, military and associated professionals of the world?

 1:42:59

That's a good question. Who would I recommend to have on the podcast, who's somebody that think would have a good story to tell and a good message?

 1:43:13

I would probably recommend my jujitsu coach, Justin Fraser. He, he's a teacher. He teaches at a continuation school in Santa Maria, which is a really rough area. And he teaches at the continuation school. So he teaches at the rough school in the rough area. It's it's, it's a rough thing he does, but he's the he's the department chair. And he does a lot of cool things with those kids. And he's also just a phenomenal grappler. And he's not a guy who anybody knows. Like, he's never, you know, he wrestled at Cal Poly. And he actually has a background in gymnastics before he wrestled, and that's an interesting, that's something I think I'm gonna my brother's doing and I'm going to be doing with my son and my daughters do gymnastics. I don't know if they're gonna get into wrestling. But if my son chooses the into wrestling, I'm gonna have him in gymnastics. But he just has a, he's a phenomenal grappler. And he kind of grew up

wrestling with Tim Kennedy and Jake shields and Chuck Liddell, obviously, but that was the agenda. That's his generation of guys that he that he learned with, and so he's not he never pursued mixed martial arts. He is he's not much of a striker, but he gets a hold of you. You feel you feel there, you understand that there are levels to this and he's always a couple of steps ahead of you on the chessboard, so to speak. And he's just a phenomenal grappler and a great guy. He's definitely on the spectrum somewhere. He's very He neurotic at times and his personalities, you know, can be challenging at times, but I just think he's a phenomenal person. And yeah, I think he's one of those guys in the sport of mixed martial arts that doesn't get a lot of recognition or not a lot of people know who he is. But, you know, go ask Tim Kennedy about them go ask Jake shields about him. I bet they would have a story or two to tell. Because he is a phenomenal grappler. So he would be an interesting guy. And he just has an interesting take. He's from the East Coast, actually. But yeah, just an interesting guy. And a good convert. Always a good conversation.

 James Geering 1:45:35

Beautiful. Well, I'd love to make that happen. If you can help. Yeah, for sure.

 1:45:40

He would. He would love that, I'm

 James Geering 1:45:40

sure. Excellent. All right. Well, in the very last question before we make sure everyone knows where to find you. What do you do to decompress?

 1:45:51

Well, I walk my dogs. That's, that's, I feel like that's become my decompressing thing at the end of the day, is I'll leave my phone at home. And I just walked my very old dog who's, unfortunately our walks are getting shorter, because he peters out pretty quick. And he's been with me since he was a pup and he's, he's on. We're hoping to get another year or so with them. But we'll see. That's probably my biggest decompressing thing is walking my dog. And yeah, I think that's kind of my nightly ritual to kind of just give me 10 or 15 minutes to just think and walking in silence, you know, and so that's probably the one I go to the most.

 James Geering 1:46:37

Mine is exactly the same. I literally leave my phone at home. I got I had a sadly I lost my German Shepherd last year, but she was 10 and a half, but then they got they got shorter and shorter, and she got slower and slower, to the point where one kid almost ran us over and I ran through a heads to chase him and she couldn't even keep up so he got away but anyway, that's another story. But um, but yeah, it is it's just beautiful. Because you just can't think you know,

you just walk in with them and you know, you've got no distractions and, and they pick up on your energy too. So yeah, it's amazing. All right, well then for people listening, where are the best places to find you online or on social media?



1:47:16

I'm on Twitter and Instagram, and it's just the renegade 559 The Renegades My name my nickname or whatever in the cage. So the renegade 559 I'm on Instagram and Twitter. I do have a tick tock but I don't know how to use it. So I wouldn't recommend going there I don't really use it or understand why people are so into it. But my manager told me you should probably have a tick tock so I made one but yeah, I'm not the most active on that thing. So Twitter I like to keep up on politics and stuff like that in the world. And sometimes I'll have interesting conversations with people on there but Instagram to me is still all this social media stuff I'm a little bit weary of and you know I like I like having a photo photo library to put pictures of my kids but I think when the fighting is done, I think my social media days will probably be done as well so I am pretty active on there though I try to be at least to interact with people and connect with people so and keep people updated on what I'm up to it's a fighting stuff seems to be what people are interested in so but really it's just a place for me to put put photos and my children so



James Geering 1:48:41

beautiful yeah I think you can curate your feed to be pretty amazing and I mines Mines a lot of you know obviously training videos five videos but also a lot of positive stuff whether it's you know the regular world but it's first responder profession so you know, the only thing you just got to be careful not to click on anything that you shouldn't click on I mean by anything slightly click Beatty divisive, then then it'll just send you down a terrible path but it can be a really good place to see stuff that you wouldn't see on a news you know what I mean? The real feel good stories. So while Cody I want to say thank you so much it's been an amazing conversation to really learn about the human behind the you know the fire in one side of the cage. So I want to thank Matt again but more importantly I want to thank you for being so generous with your time spending some time away from your family and coming on the behind the shield podcast today.



1:49:28

Thank you so much for having me. It was a great talking to you and keep doing keep doing you guys are doing it's, um, you got to if nothing else came out of this interview, you got a new listener. So big fan. So thank you