

Dave Mazany - Episode 851

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SPEAKERS


James Geering, Dave Mazany




James Geering 00:00


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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 Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering and this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show. Professional MMA fighter turned firefighter Dave Mazany. Now in this conversation, we discuss a host of topics from collegiate decathlon, his journey into mixed martial arts training under the shoebox umbrella, professional wrestling, his journey into the fire service, merging vets and players, firefighter fitness, mental health, and so much more. Now, before we get to this incredible 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 over 850 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women's stories so I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them. So that being said, I introduce to you Dave Mazanyi, enjoy Well Dave, I want to start firstly by saying thank you to Derek would ski for connecting us and to welcome you on to the behind the shield podcast

 **D** Dave Mazany 05:08
today. Awesome. Thank you. Thanks for having me.

 **J** James Geering 05:11
So where are we finding you on planet earth this morning, your time?

 05:17
This morning, I'm at the Red Rock Casino, my girlfriend and I decide to have a little staycation. Yeah, it's the day we scheduled and happened to be here. So like, it's nice about technology, you can do everything everywhere.

 **J** James Geering 05:30
You and I talked when we set this up. And one of the things I told you was from the outside looking in how strange it was that the Vegas shooting that we had a few years ago seemed to garner a little attention when it happened and it just dropped off immediately now, right is that where you're at now that area in Vegas?

 **D** Dave Mazany 05:53
About a little wet to them like that. So that would be the Las Vegas Strip and kind of a nice little locals area and near the Red Rock. National Park I think it's a national park. But yeah, a lot of the best climbing and stuff is around here like the good hikes and everything. So just an area of town and it's what's weird about Vegas is there's there's casinos on the strip, but then there's

like, spread out around the city and they're almost like community centers kind of like so you. You're the theory here. There's bowling, there's nice restaurants, and stuff like that. So locals, if we do want a staycation we kind of stay off the strip.

J James Geering 06:38

It's beautiful. Well, I know that's not where you were born. So let's start the very beginning of your journey. Then tell me where you were born. And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic. what your parents did, how many siblings?

 06:51

Yeah, Anchorage, Alaska. Both my folks came from the lower 48 color by below lower 48. They were they both came up for the the trans Alaskan pipeline. Right. So my dad was from Michigan and mom was from New Mexico. My dad did the operating heavy equipment, mom, fueling trucks, but there's a lot of money to be made. A lot of people just kind of escaped to Alaska, back then. So we didn't really have a lot of like, family members like grandma, grandpa, cousins and stuff like that around but we didn't adopt other families to be our family. That's kind of how things worked around. They're very blue collar. My dad a construction company and my mom's did what she could to make money too. And my dad ended up owning a construction company. And then I went off, I don't know, long, long, long story short, I grew up playing sports or ice hockey, and I'm doing track and field went to college, where I met Derek Watsky, which which we mutually know. He was one of our throws coaches. And I was a decathlete. He did most of the strength conditioning programming. My other coach, the California coach kind of ran most of our practices. And from there, I started mixed martial arts after graduation and moved back to Alaska started fighting just for fun of this moment. It's a bucket list item and knock off and then after had a few fights, I guess dig into other things. But I just wanted to take it further. So I moved to Vegas and finished my career. I had I guess the highlights of my career was my title run in EFC and South Africa. There's a runs all over national TV over there called EFC. And I was the lightweight champion. And I retired at 34. And then years later, like I'm 40 now I'm a probationary firefighter for Clark County Fire Department. Oh, I also it was one that did the pro wrestling as well. A lot of people have been throwing it out there. I don't know. Interesting enough that the iron claw is it's a new documentary coming out and that happens to be my finisher the iron claw. So highlights the von erichs which was one of the inspirations for the iron claw. So I've done a lot a lot of random things I've noticed in the firehouse people really like the pro wrestling part because I think it's unique and different but the MMA fighting was actually probably better I was definitely better at and was really shooting for the pro wrestling was a side thing but it's it is Interesting, random thing that I did here in town.

J James Geering 10:04

So I'm gonna go way back to your childhood. That was a great overview and I appreciate it. Never let people know what's coming now. I listened to you on Michael Yos podcast. And it was kind of interesting because you talked about the diversity in Alaska where you grew up, and I would agree with him. I think a lot of people have a very blinkered, superficial, not even

understanding like, concept of what it would be like. So talk to me about those early years as far as the community and the background that you mentioned about the work bringing your parents up there, the diverse spectrum of people that you grew up amongst. Yeah.



10:41

So yeah, Mike Leo's podcast. I knew Michael. I knew him through. I got introduced by it to him by Nick Carter, who was training Nick Carter, the Backstreet Boy, I was training him. And Michael was as a comedian, here in town. And he needed somebody to train him. So I was training him. And he was actually joining my nine round kick walks fitness studio for a little bit, too. But, yeah, when I was on his podcast, I used to go, Hey, there's probably no black people in Alaska. And I was like, Dude, you're actually there's actually quite a few different like we had a wide it wasn't just black and white people we had, especially in my school, I was an East Side Anchorage and by Bartlett, high school, and we were kind of known for being a lot of mixed races. We had about one point they said 36 languages spoken or something like that 34. And the numbers coming through. There's been a few diversity indexes that that the United States had, and there's like three Anchorage School District schools that scored like, top five or something like that on there. What people don't realize is, is families will travel where the money is, and they'll travel because of the military. We have two major military bases Elmendorf and for Richardson up there in Alaska, or in Anchorage, specifically. And so So I found an anchorage is kind of a melting pot, like kind of like America over one point. I don't know the reasons why. But But we said, America, Alaska is what America was, in a sense, it's it was a little more wild, a little bit more still like this melting pot. I mean, obviously, you have different sides of town that houses different, you know, groups of people like cities tend to do but yeah, when I was fighting that I was fighting and playing sports, track and field all that stuff. I was exposed to everyone you'd been surprised at the whole the Hawaiian and the Polynesian population, the Tongans, Hawaiians and Samoans still, like you think, Oh, they're gonna be they don't want to be around the ice and the snow. And it's a big old Samoan guy at the bus stop waiting to go to school. And he's, he's wearing sandals and a T shirt shorts, and it's below freezing. And I'm like, speed. They're resilient guy. Not so good. I don't know, that always cracks me up. You're supposed to be in the real palm trees not around the so bad. That's not supposed to be but yeah, it was. I enjoyed it. I think I've benefited a lot from that.



James Geering 13:33

But I think it's an important perspective, because I feel like there is a narrative trying to be pushed at the moment that, you know, we're all so segregated. And so like, even now, the whole anti semitic thing is kind of arising again, there was the anti Asian thing around COVID. You know, it's like, there's this constant pressure to remind people of pigeonholes that I think, of course, exist amongst the shitbags of the world, the most prejudiced, but everyone else will I mean, you look at New York, LA London, I mean, so many places around the world. It is a beautiful melting pot of cultures. And I was surprised to hear about Alaska, because I was naive to that particular state. But there you go, like, No, my home is the same. So I think it's important for us to, to hear that America was built on immigration, you know, so and I'm one of them coming from the UK. So hearing the reality of the communities, you know, the same way as people turn on the TV, like, oh, there's race wars and you walk out your front door. Do you see a race war going on? No, stop fucking looking at the, you know, this much of the world and look at this much of the world.



14:36

Right. I agree. It's, it's it. It has been a strange thing for me to I don't know, like because I've never really, I've had a hard time. Even I don't know when there's a lot of talk about it. And people are trying to be, I don't know, politically correct or whatever. And they're like, yeah, and black people and white people. and Asian. And they're like talking about people in that way. I always talk about people as people well, and I don't really focus on their s, their, their genetic background, I might, I might, like look at something they were like, culturally, right. Like, I know a lot of people who are like my work when I ran cross country and track Adam state. They're from Mexico, and they were Mexican. Right. And so I got to learn about Mexican food, and, you know, and different regions in Mexico to it's not the same foods everywhere else. So we learned how to cook from people that were from Mexico. And then one of our guys was from Somalia, he like went through the Somali wars, you know, like the stuff like there's like, wars and stuff that happened when he was younger and, and we would talk about food too. And like this, like the way he grew up, and so I looked at him as a black guy, I said, it was like, Mo, his name is Muhammad, we call him Mo. He was from Somalia, we're curious about what his culture was, like, you know, when another guy from El Salvador that ran with it. So I saw that part, like, Hey, you're from a different place, and I want to learn about it. And it was pretty cool. But like, I never really associated of somebody with a different color skin, if they grew up in America, or grew up in Alaska, like, they're Alaskan, or whatever, they were black or white, or I don't know, whatever. Yeah,



James Geering 16:38

I agree with you. Can you ask most people in the UK at least when I was growing up, you know, of whatever I mean, we have, again, like I said, a real melting pot of cultures, because the, the British back in the day, went to other people's countries and did a lot of bad stuff. And so the beautiful side of that is we have this, you know, like I said, a tapestry of cultures now. But, you know, you ask someone, what are you about what I'm British? What are you? Whereas, you know, they're not like, I'm Afro Irish, Caribbean, oh, Asia, no English. I mean, so I think the refining that as important, I'm American, or even bigger than that, you know, I'm human. You know, we're all we're all the same species. Just we're just born a different rock at the end of the day.



17:23

Yeah, I agree with that.



James Geering 17:26

All right, good. Good. Tangent. Anyway. So back to sports. When you were in school age, you mentioned ice hockey, they're gonna walk me through the sports that you were playing through to college.



17:35

Right. I saw he was in Alaska, like, and I guess I've seen ice hockey here in Vegas blow up because of the Vegas Golden Knights. So it's really cool because ice hockey was huge. When we were kids. We never had an NHL team. But we had University of Alaska Anchorage that played and we had the anchorage aces, which were a they're kind of a semi pro team at first. And then they kind of joined and they kind of become became like a feeder team to the WC HL open not West Coast Hockey League. Hope I'm not butchering that. It's been a long time, but they're part of that there, then they became one of the feeders of the St. Louis Blues, they would feed layers back and forth between there. But, um, so we grew up watching hockey, like that was like, kind of what we did on the weekends, you know, we'd go to the hockey games, and they're, you know, they're relatively affordable and stuff. They weren't like the Vegas Golden Knights tickets are here. And then we also like, there's high school sports, and one of the high school sports you'd play was ice hockey, right. And there was a cheerleaders and all kinds of stuff. So when we were younger, it was cool to play varsity ice hockey. And so I rose started in first grade and played all the way through my senior year. And that that was a blast, but for some reason, I felt like I was better at track and field. Kind of first silly reasons. Like I thought it was kind of like it was less object is more subjective. And I liked the thing about tracking field was, it's not like, if you put up the number, you're better than that person, right? Like, if I ran fast, and you are through further or whatever, had a higher score, and then to capitalize on it ever, but you, you weren't you, you were successful. So and I look, I'm kind of a knucklehead, right, like, in the sense of, I saw like, I was a distance runner, and I was like, Well, all I got to do is run faster. So I got my feet move quicker and awake. I can do that. It's like as well to happen, right? Like, if I'm just not a pussy, I can do just making my legs move faster and I can beat the next person. And you know, as I got into college, I kind of realized that there's like something called genetic potential, right and what people's genes are. And I saw a guy like we were talking about my friend Mohammed, you know, and he was from Somalia, and this dude was built to run man, like his guy would float, you know, he'd come off an injury and then start beating me to workouts the next week, and I'm like, What the heck is going on? It was frustrating because I kept getting hurt because I couldn't withstand, you know, the 90 plus miles we did a week, you know, at an elite college level, and they're all quality miles. It wasn't like we were like putting 12 minute miles it was, you know, our recovery pace was like 730s, something like that something ridiculous 730 miles and at 7500 feet altitude up in Alamosa, Colorado. But, um, so I graduate gravitate to that it was a distance runner for focus primarily on distance and then transitioned into the decathlon just because I kept getting hurt. Coach Wallen he was he's not out of state anymore. He's up near Boston or something. Coach, a great coach, and he noticed I would stay over the summer, I wouldn't go home, you know, we would just stay in train and he's like, Dude, you got dedication, man, like, do the decathlon. It's that it's that sport where you gotta learn a lot. You got to be disciplined. If you put along and do it, you can get far just just by learning technique, and just training hard, you know? And so he saw that I had the mind for it. So I transitioned to the decathlon didn't did decent, like, scored up, you know, a couple points that regions or somewhere or that conference. So I did create a little bit of value there. But as an athlete, I decide I'm not really done because I don't want to do so. I started to like train for mixed martial arts. There's a Gracie Baja gym, and then Alaska. And they were winning most of the local fights. So I was like, Okay, well, my train there, you know, because I, I follow them on a my whole life. Oh, man. That's cool. And the reason why I thought it was like one of the greatest things is what better test is there than fighting another man in a cage like to say like, Hey, I'm athletic, I'm strong, mentally. I'm tough the shit. Like, I'm facing fear in the end of the most. I don't know, when there's somebody across the cage from you, they want to kill you. Like literally you're kind of simulating death. You're choking somebody out, knock him out, dismembering the limb with a submission. What better way to conquer a fear than you'll have that person that's trying to kill you and try to kill them? Right. So I just

thought it was just like something that's great. Because, you know, he grew up watching movies like Bloodsport, you know, John Claude Van Damme was going to Kuma Tay and, and stuff like that. And that, you know, it's something that like, it's really cool. I want to see if I can have the guts to do it. And, you know, that's how I kind of ran me as a distance runners eyes had guts, and I would just grab onto my nut sack and just go, like, see if I had had something in me. But fighting was was that that type of thing. And I, what I noticed is like, if you're persistent, and you're tough, and you learn a lot of technique, and you really dive into especially mixed martial arts at that time, it was an evolutionary process when I started in Oh, six. Now, there's still techniques coming out today that you're like, Whoa, this is a game changer. You know, but when I started, there's a lot of guys who fought and barely knew what a triangle choke was, right? So, you know, follow my back and I would show coach to come out, you know, with a triangle choke and, and so they'll be hopping everywhere. That's kind of how I got into mixed martial arts and then I just kept going because I always wanted to be a pro athlete. I used to see you know, anchor Jason and I saw the NHL and I saw people as like, I want to be a pro hockey player. I didn't have the finesse and the size, I think for pro being abroad and player like five nine. So yeah, there's five nine people but you look at the stats and you look at the reality the numbers. It's not that they're so fighting, there's weight classes and unfortunately I got to fight but probably arguably the toughest weight class in in professional MMA is with the 155 lightweight division. It was so I fought welterweight a couple times and even at 185. middleweight, which, which was was fun, but I didn't have to I got to ate breakfast that day of weigh ins, you know. But arguably the schedule slower, and I actually generate a couple of wins that middleweight, you know, so yeah. And then here I am now I'm just doing just staying in shape doing yoga and lifting weights and keep my cardio up. And I'm training for the fire ground and stuff like that.

J

James Geering 25:21

Where you said you played hockey, then you transitioned into track and field, my son's actually a runner, it's kind of almost distance, he was crossed for a bear, then he shifted to the one mile now he's even being I think he's gonna do the four by eight as well. So he's kind of shifted a little bit shorter distance. But, you know, I had the same thing growing up, I played field hockey, which is the one with the stick. And then I got into martial arts. And it was an interesting contrast between the team, where, arguably, if it's not a super cohesive team, there's a lot of kind of blaming when they lose like each other. And then you have the individual where it's just you on the mat. So what were the takeaways from the team, ice hockey arena that you brought, but also the individual one?

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26:08

Man, you know, I love I love sports. Like, I feel like if I haven't, I haven't reproduced yet, right? I'm not a kid yet. If I did, I think sports and have to be such a solid part of their lives, because it teaches you that amazingly, I also coached I mean, I guess I took that out, didn't put that in there, too. But I coached varsity sports when I was 25, I was a head Track and Field cross country and ice hockey coach, as I was going through my fight career and working construction, substitute teaching, doing all these things at the same time. But I decided so I believe in, in sports, because it teaches you how to work with other people, right? Like, you, everybody in this group has a goal and they got to achieve the goal together that kind of a leader who's a coach, and the leadership from the coach trickles down. And you see the effects

of like a good leader, a bad leader, different styles of leadership, and how it how it affects the team. And then you kind of work with a team dynamic. And there's always people that you really like and don't like and in between, like, okay with, and you can find how to create this route that will be cohesive and, and whose strengths and weaknesses work together and they accomplish the goal. I think that is amazing, right? There's also the physical fitness part of it, you know, you learn good, like healthy coping skill, mix mechanisms and skills, you learn how to win and lose, right? I feel like it was so important to learn that I remember one time I was trying out for a hockey team and I looked at the list of a wall, my name wasn't on it. And I had to deal with this, that devastation of like, not making the team, you know, like, your mom can tell you, you're, you're you're the best person in the world all day. But in reality, you're gonna get kicked on the junk with the reality of hey, I'm not as good as I thought I was, which I think is great, because that's what we have to deal with. Up there. So, I think those things took away and even mixed martial arts, which was crazy, is, I guess respect is a huge thing that we generated, it wasn't because they put a belt on us and told us to bow and say, Oh, son, like, do kados. And like martial arts, traditional martial arts, we gained respect, because we would train with each other, right? Like, I had to use your body. And you had to use my body as a tool and a training vessel to like, learn practices moves on, I had to punch my best friends in the face, and, you know, choke them out and do all these things. And if I didn't respect them and their body and what they do, like, they're not going to train with me anymore, right? You're, you're, you're there has been a few people that I'm like, I'm not training with you. You hurt me all the time. You know, like, it's, it's not gonna happen. But also there's like this weird, you know, if I'm a fighter, you're a fighter, we have this mutual respect with each other. Right? And it's something that happens because we've been been through similar trials and tribulations so there's kind of a brotherhood. And like I said, there's, there was no like, it's weird. There's no hierarchy. You know, like, this guy could be in the UFC, but an amateur guy comes in, we still respect the amateur kid, right? As long as he has good a good attitude, you know, as long as not, and they're cocky and arrogant and whatever. But if they are, we got to tune them up, right? You got to put them on the mat and beat him up a bit and then it humbles them down. And we've all had that, you know, go that check in our life. But typically, I've seen an amateur kid come in, and I respect them just like anybody else, because he might even teach me something that I don't know. You know, and I'm gonna teach him stuff that he doesn't know. And eventually, this amateur kid might be able to beat me up, right? Like, you just, you just don't know you'd never because people just take off. So I feel like this mutual mutual respect and humility that came with it like, I love is this this? Hens Oh, Gracie. He was one of the I'm a Gracie fan, one of my favorite Gracie fighters. I forgot how the quote went. But he talked about how like, if there was like a, like a five year old, walking up to you. And he was gonna beat you up. He's like, Yeah, I'm gonna beat you up. And you don't have to beat up the five year old to prove that you can beat up the five year old, right? You can. You're like, ah, that's cool, man, you know, and you brush it off. So I look at a lot of things as an adult, right? We treat each other with respect, because, you know, if I'm confident as a man and what I'm capable of, I don't need to beat people up or be a dickhead to somebody just to prove that I'm above them. Right? Or, and I gotta prove that I'm above them. I'm just, I'm just a human being right? Because you don't know what each person harnesses you know, like, there could be the dude that like nerdy with glasses playing his Nintendo Switch, that could be a murderer, and you don't even No, right just because that that's what I've seen through the nature of science, I respect everybody and know that somebody can harness something incredible, and I don't even know it and might not even be might not even, like, it's kind of like, going back to my current situation you like, I don't know, like, the medics are a little different than like the knuckle dragon firefighters, right? Like, they just kind of have a little different vibe to him. It could be a little nerdy or But dude, like, that person can teach me so much about what they have. So it's I'm gonna, you know, we're gonna work our strengths and weaknesses together.

So I think it's really cool to, you know, just just just sort of see what somebody has to offer in life and, and respect that. And I guess that's what I've gotten through the whole sports realm. But mostly, I don't know, the fighting. I love the diamond dynamic and fighters and what we ended up going through and doing everything, but also the team that we had a cohesive team, we had to work. Ice Hockey is something I miss as well.

J

James Geering 32:36

Well, you the humility, I think is so important. It's funny when you were talking about the martial arts, and I just literally did jujitsu this morning, only a blue belt. So not anywhere near the level that you're at. But I've always said that this a good gym, and I drive 35 miles to go to the one I do, there's a few in town, but it's just the right fit the right level of intensity without the the ego without people trying to win every role. And you know, so at 49 I can go there, you know, kind of escalate to my partner's level, will you agree, you know, have a hard role haven't have an easy role, but walk out and still get to do it the next day, not be sore and separated ribs and all the rest. But that humility element that you find in the map, because you can get the apple you want, the moment you get on the map, we're going to see who you actually are. And it's interesting because it parallels the fire service. There is a lot of ego in the fire service from certain individuals. And they're the ones who will be yapping about no one cares what you did before and they kind of be in their chest. But when there's a mat in the fire service, be at training be a real fire, you get to see who they really are. So it's an important kind of carryover in the fire service to the best firefighters or known as so humble and they will literally look to learn from the new guy. He might be a carpenter or she might have been a plumber or who knows and you're gonna pull something from him. But the moment you're like, you know, go mop the floor rook is every fucking time you open your mouth, then you know maybe you need to go take a jujitsu class and learn some humility so you can actually learn rather than be an arrogant prick.

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34:17

But one of my buddies I was it. I used to referee Naga North American grappling Association. We travel all over and so I'm friends with a bunch of guys who are referees, but we're like really great friends, but we live in different parts of the country. We just happened to meet up in Austin and meet up in LA, wherever we got flown. And we'd like to stay in hotel rooms and I don't know like it was it was it was kind of a blast. We thought we'd do matches in Hawaii. But I had a good buddy who joined San Francisco Fire about five years ago. And he actually started a jujitsu club over there and he sent me pictures of like they have a mat room in there and and he's done think Rich is rich now Black Belt. So, yeah, so it's cool. He's like sort of streamlining it and he had a few fights and everything but one of my favorite guys like, I never lived in the same town as him, but I went to his wedding because we're that good of friends. You know? And, and yeah, I think I think jujitsu is at men. Like, that's one of the best martial arts, you know, like, people always ask, want to ask me Hey, what should I train to learn how to defend myself and I'm like, first track and field, get the hell out of there. That's number one, get stay in shape. I tell people to stay in shape. Be Fit, so you can at least push and run. Especially when it comes to like women's self defense. They do all these fancy like maneuvers and like do just just push them and run poke their eyeball, whatever. Just get out. And but jujitsu. If you really want to learn a technique, you got to do it under pressure. And in order to do it under pressure, you got to have a live 100% roll. You can't do that with striking techniques, like especially when

you're older, you're not going to like later on to punch each other in the head. He's not going to do it anymore. When you do you're not gonna do it. 100% Like, I learned so much every single fight because we're trying to kill each other, you know, and even in sparring. Depending on betta Vandelay Silva's gym, we were like killing each other. But But even then the pressure of an actual fight is different. So you learn you elevate your practice so high, but the nice thing about jujitsu is you every once in a while you can go 100% relatively safely and learn and executing a technique with that kind of pressure is different than something you drill 1000 times so and you get to see the effects of it like oh, if I train this way, see how it comes out in the competition. Okay, cool. You go back and adjust back here while you're practice and go back and forth so yeah Jiu Jitsu. I tell people they need to do jujitsu if they truly want to learn like physically do something to somebody that somebody else you know, maybe a little bit more Thai learn some like kickboxing but you just you should be your, your base jujitsu wrestling, all the grappling.

 James Geering 37:10

Yeah, I think that's the answer to bullying, too. And I think when people think when they hear discussion of martial arts and bullying, they're like, Oh, so you see your kids and defend yourself? It's like, No, when you bring the bully, the potential bully into a jujitsu school, for example, they cease to become a bully, if you can keep them there. Right kind of school, a bully out of them because a lot of bullies ultimately were hurt when they were younger. And they feel this need to project when that is temper when they they are humbled. And they realize that other kids can be kind and other kids can also work their ass. You know, as you said that you gotta get the Enforcer in that school, whether it's a child or an adult, they'll soon humble someone who's got the attitude, but we've got that mentorship, you've got, you know, that discipline, you've got that respect. And so I think, you know, martial arts, you can't force it on every school. But I mean, if you could encourage jujitsu in every single school, I guarantee you would see a lot of this bullying that we see online start to diminish.

 38:06

Well, yeah, well, I mean, I don't know. I'm looking at if I'm thinking of the dynamic of my school, like, if you look at the wrestlers, the wrestlers are never bullies. They're kind of weird. You know, we look at him like the IRS and all this stuff and, and I wrestled one year in middle school. And I do remember being like, well, I can like actually handled business. When I was like, learn how to wrestle. This is like, it's incredible. Nobody told me about this. And then I went out and played hockey instead. But like, but Yeah, but you're absolutely right. Like it keeps you from being a bully and I guess I never really thought about that as much as laughing with me as I was kind of like a dorky distance runner kid. You know, what, I wasn't dorky. I was just kind of different, you know, like, have my hemp necklaces and my running shorts. And I'd be walking around and you short shorts, and like, yeah, it feels better when I run dude. That's just like my son one time. At practice, I had this kid who was like, you know, six foot something over 200 pounds, and I'm like a buck 55 soaking wet. And he's always messing me at practice, you know? And like, he was one great ahead of me and treat me like I'm, like a freshman. Okay, whatever, then my sophomore years still treat me like I was a freshman. And then here's my junior year and he was a senior. One year I was like, I was on the ice and I just like, I just snapped and I grabbed his face mask and I ripped it off and just drilled them in the face and broke his nose. You know, I just I just I was wasn't having it. Right. But then I felt like his power.

Like, I don't have to let people fuck with me. You know what I mean? Like, I don't have to I can and and yeah, he went to this kind of funny. He went to school and he had like the raccoon Nice. And all the girls were like, what will happen is a good visibility beat my house. I'm really bad at it later on. But then after that we were cool. We're friends, right? Like, we didn't, we got along and every even still, he'll come into town in Vegas, and we'll, we'll hang out, we'll get dinner. And he even told me later on that. He's like, dude, I'm really happy. He became a professional fighter. So don't feel bad that you broke my nose. But, um, but yeah, it was cool. I mean, I think that's something that that we tend to sort of neglect is, is there is a place for masculinity and place for like, you know, bumping heads together, because that's kind of what we're supposed to do in nature. And, and, you know, like, if you're gonna like, that, like, I do yoga and stuff, I do some of the feminine things, right. I used to teach Pilates and stuff. But but like, I think I think if you you have masculinity, it's not bad to embrace the masculine, let boys be boys and get dirty and, and do all fight each other and whatever. Because that you hold that back. And it just gets even more aggressive than if you just let us duke it out.

J

James Geering 41:17

You know, when they talk about toxic masculinity, I think where it that term actually applies is the way that you and I were raised. When you think about how men were presented to us, it's the Arnold Schwarzenegger are the John Wayne actors on screen, you know what I mean? So you're big and tough and strong, but you're not even you know, you're you're a bodybuilder, you're not even maybe tough you know, and then there's that boys don't cry. And the reality is men and women or whatever, you know, gender these days, people identify with your a yin and a yang together, you know, so at times, you know, firefighters, you know, when we're about to make entry to a burning building, or try and cut a car away from a person who's bleeding to death. That's not the time for unicorns and kittens. But after to process that the roof claps, we almost fucking died or we couldn't get that person out, they bled to death. That's when you have to have that kindness and compassion. It's the same kindness or compassion that leads us to be a protector in uniform, you know, so I think when men get in trouble is that they believe that we're just supposed to be out getting, you know, getting dirty, and all that stuff from roughhousing. But then where society is in danger of going is now the other way, where we've got kids, you know, barely doing any pee anymore eating shit foods in canteen, living their world virtually, and not getting any of that stress exposure. So now, God forbid, we have, you know, some nation decide they're going to come invade our country, there are some extremely able men and women, but we have a very growing population of people that don't experience discomfort. So I agree with you completely, that balance between the two is important. And suffering, whether it's cold, mud, wrestling, striking whatever it is, is an integral part of a human being male and female.

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43:09

Right? This is, I always felt I was I was I was I was a fighter, hyper masculine and masculine things work construction and all this stuff. And this is one of the reasons why I definitely feel like I need to introduce people to things like, like yoga, right? Like people look at as like, oh, it's stretching I'm like, Dude, it's not it's way more than stretching. It's not it's your breath. It's your you're focusing on your on yourself and doing all these things. It's a it's a healthy mental practice. Through our fire academy, again, like brand new, I'm brand new 23 one. So we had Clark County we had the biggest rookie class ever we graduated 80 people which was huge like

why don't ever graduate anyway in the holes and the whole cadre and everything did amazing. Just putting that together somehow, right? Because it's never been seen ever been done out here. But I'm so a lot of the guys so we're at the silver dome, silver silver bowl, which is the the stairs, the old UNLV football stadium now they play and Legion stuff, you know, I think they play there and they play not there. So the old beat up, rickety stadium with that didn't really have air conditioning or heat. So we're dealing with conditions while we're in classroom and outside the classroom. But we did a lot of stairs, right? Like you'd imagine you're up the stairs. And then obviously the heat is something that people had trouble with. And so I would invite every weekend during the academy I'd invite everybody, you know, only a few came and people who did Come benefited, but like there's a Bikram yoga class that is over at the studio near that I'm friends friends with the owner called hotbox as the traditional 26 and 226 postures to breathing exercises, 105 degrees 45% humidity. I think those are the specs. But it is you go in there and you think you're gonna die, right? And a part of it. What I liked about Bikram is an introduction to yoga for these guys, because it's not very fluffy, it's very rigid. It's structured that there's, it's gonna be the same every time you're doing each post twice. And so they kind of know what because I think what turns people off is somebody you'll get an instructor that's too fluffy and talk talking about I don't know, like their, their their chakras and stuff, like I can't find my chakra, where's that and we, we took anatomy, we couldn't find her, you know, heart chakra and there's the I can tell you all the chambers, you know. So, but introduce these guys is something new. And what I really found is you could go through mental adversity simulated simulated through heat and stress. And it kind of for me, like it goes, brings me into those times where I was sparring really hard or in a you know, and I was gonna die and we're beating each other up or whatever. And but I can do that on the mat and actually get good movement in my body and healed internally and externally. But that was a way to introduce a bunch of people to yoga, and there's a few of the recruits that came out and really benefited from it. And again, it's not going to be the same for everybody. But being open to different training practices is huge because I noticed as you know, as people get older, like I'm 40 right and I came out of in a mixed martial arts career relatively injury free compared to most guys. I mean, I fought some tough dudes, it wasn't like I had easy fights either. It's not like I came from gyms that were were, you know, like not as like extreme couture. Vandelay Silva's gym, I've trained Robert Drysdale is jiu jitsu gym, you know, like, he's like some tough dudes. And it's because I was very mindful of my, my, keep my body together. And I think something like Yoga people get overlooked and they think it's just stretching, but it's, it's more and you'll get mentally and physically better with it. But again, you gotta find something like you said that yin and yang balance, something to balance you out. I just want to step on the yoga mat. And I was doing a lot of like MMA stuff, do Jiu Jitsu stuff I'd like feel so relieved that I was doing something that was the opposite everything I was doing. And then on the other spectrum, I used to teach a boxing class at a studio called to true fusion. Right? It's a yoga Pilates studio. And I'll actually help them design that boxing program and they're franchising all over which was kind of like cool like my little baby is growing grew. And but like, you'd see the girl come in that like, Mr. Yoga class and she was all upset. It's like, I don't know, I guess I'll try this I need to do something. You know, okay, cool. Because how you wrap your hands and I get to go in and, and she's like, hit the bag, pow. Pow, pow Ooh, you see your eyes light up and all of a sudden the person that's going apeshit on the bag more than anybody is this little Yogi that came in said she was very nonviolent you breathe everything out. While she needed some of that masculine energy all she had, all you're trying to do is harness this feminine energy and and channel it whatever and like off so peaceful. Dude, you gotta hit a bag to you gotta do you know scrunch your face up make an ugly face spit and sweat little bit and let it out. But if you're all you're doing is that you need a little bit of like breathing relaxation meditation look

inward, maybe go for a hike or or something however you let it out. There's a way to do it. So that's kind of what I've learned with yoga and keeping the body and the mind together through through my 4040 trips around the sun so

J James Geering 49:18

well that's beautiful and it's so pertinent as well and obviously you being from Alaska me being from England that was one of the hardest things for me I was always in shape I was you know hand on my heart I think I've already got exhausted on a fire and a training ground but over he absolutely and that was the biggest mental bow it felt that my damn organs were cooking sometimes but using tools like that understanding cooling when you get to strip down your bunker gear and doing it you know efficiently but also putting yourself in those situations where your heart and again like you were saying sometimes it was just doing stairs in new gear. But then you think about Bikram or even you know martial arts or CrossFit and one of the old places where there's no AC and you're in a you know Florida Uh, industrial unit, you know, I mean, these are all great pieces to simulate. And obviously you're not absorbing carcinogens from your gear, which is a plus.

i 50:08

Right? Yeah, that's a good. That's a good way to think about to forget about that.

J James Geering 50:16

So I want to get to the martial arts journey, because we've got a shoe box connection. But before we do when you were in high school, college, you know, you went down the the athlete route, you went down the coach route, with any other career aspirations you had earlier on before you found yourself in the physical side. You

i 50:33

know, like, I always had a calling and be a pro athlete. You know, I just wanted to get so bad. But I did want to stay around sports. I love that the dynamic sports I was finding a way I could think maybe I can coach collegiately maybe I can, you know, like, maybe I teach and then coach high school. I just want to be around sports, regardless of what it was like, that's just what I want to do. And even when I was fighting, I you know, I wasn't vandalized gym. I did a lot of I worked a lot of the amateur guys and cornered a lot of their fights and spent a lot of weekends doing that, like late nights, just, you know, not not for pay, but like just because I want to do it and help my help my brothers out, you know, wrapping hands in the back and sitting on the corners and making sure they're taken care of and making sure they leave there. Okay. So, yeah, that's that's pretty much what I want to do is be around sports, whether it's, but I don't know being the athlete is the dream. That was the dream.

J James Geering 51:43

When I moved to America, I spent a year on the coast coast as a firefighter in Ukiah. Then I got

when I moved to America, I spent a year on the east coast as a firefighter in Hialeah. Then I got hired in Anaheim, California, my wife at the time wanted to move out there to LA do the whole acting thing. So found myself living in Burbank and was looking for a martial art school. I'd been a taekwondo athlete up to that point, so tippy tappy won some trophies and stuff. You know, knew that there was a pretty big deficiency in my contact game. So there was a gym shoe box open up in LA in La Brea. And Melrose I think it was I think his name was Roberto the guy the member that came to open up and coach. But up to that point, semi contact Taekwondo, and then the full contact, but you can't punch to the face, you're gonna punch to the chest and you can knock hadn't really experienced like, you know, fighting fighting in the gym. And then I walked into shoe box. And I mean, I always tell people, it was the closest thing to fight club I've ever had. Now, did I learn a lot of technical stuff? I would say no, but I learned I can at least take an ass. Yes, I did. So. So talk to me about the contrast of your previous training up to that point and then your shoebox experience.



53:01

No man is putting twinkles in my eye right now. Like thinking about that journey. So in Alaska, I was at Gracie Baja jujitsu, right and we kind of we kind of learned well, it was we got to do Gracie baja a little later. But back in the day, if I knew jujitsu I could like beat 90% of the people because they didn't know what I knew. Right? It was like this little mind hack. And then as everything evolved, I mean I was five minutes at one point and then I lost the last a local fight in against Josh Henry and the last fight championships. I lost a decision and then a promotion wanted to fly me out to to Edmonton. I thought I can a guy named Claude Pasteur he beat me ground and pound second round. And he went a little bit off and went to the UFC a little later, which was okay, cool. And then they flew me back again. So you want to fight Ryan for that guy? Still a beast. This is what little wait he gave me a good evening look this one up online Ryan Ford like cracking my shit. Game you're the one to the left. Yeah, a left kick to the side of my head. And you know fractured my my face and my nose. My nose had a compound fracture bone sticking out of it. And my teeth are still kind of numb from that fight because they severed nerve facial nerve. And, yeah, that was like about 13 \$14,000 in medical bills that had to pay because, you know, fight. They weren't insured that way. They're in Canada, right? They didn't need so made \$1,000 lost about 13 or whatever. And so I had to go home and really, really reevaluate what I did was going to do and you know, obviously, even as things were healing, I was super gun shy and after that third loss, a devastating injury. That's what I chose. was to move to Vegas during the recession and all that stuff. I was like, I'm gonna be a fighter. This is what I want to do so, so hard headed, I think I still am sometimes. Then I went to Vandelay Silva's gym and what they had like, again, Shooto blocks train by the same guys he did is they would spar so hard, right, they, but that's exactly what I needed. I needed to like, get on the horse, right? This horse kicked me off three times, like real bad this last time. And I need to get on the horse and sink or swim. And when I was at Vandelay is like we said, they beat the hell out of me. Right. And then every time we went to sparring practice, my heart rate would be going up as if I was going to the arena, right? And it was funny because our amateur team, I remember Amridge team, they're all white belt jujitsu, guys, they were all you know, they, they knew techniques. But like, if I was to ask them, Hey, let's not all these techniques of stuff. But the our guys could bang, they could scrap the little techniques that we didn't know. And I'm gonna say we didn't know we were we knew our stuff, but they're young. But they fought so much in the gym that like when it was game time, they can pull off all their techniques executing clearly because they've worked under pressure in the in the training ground. Now. Did you have to sacrifice a few brain cells and sacrifice a few injuries in the process? Yes, 100%. That's the nature of the beast, right. But I remember reading my first the first book I

read on mixed martial arts was Ken Shamrock to enter the lines and I still remember this part in the book. The best way to get good at fighting is fighting. So you have to fight. If you want to be the best good eater in the world eat a shit ton of spaghetti. Right? If you want to be a good fighter, you have to fight a lot. And unfortunately, like there's you hear this, this bush like, hey, you know, you we there's not a lot of sparring for especially the UFC guys, a lot of guys. There's a lot of guys that talk about Yeah, barely spar anymore. But you also got to take in consideration these guys fought a lot before that. You got to fight a lot, learn how to fight and then he can start pulling back on the sparring, unfortunately, did he get good? You might have to lose some brain cells. And that just like I said, the nature of the beast. That's why don't tell people they should be fighters, right? Like, hey, you should just go and fight you know, like, but going back to vandalize gym, yeah, it was it was it was incredibly savage. And I fucking loved it. I loved it. Because like Vandelay would have the attitude, you know, and again, we that was probably the closest byte team I've been been to, because we beat the hell out of each other. That's we did. And we were really close. And we had a good brotherhood. And it probably was because of that, you know? So, yeah, it was a unique experience. I don't know if it's, the best thing about that is when somebody come in talking smack to we're kind of close to the strip, you know? And somebody would come and be like, oh, yeah, you know, I'm the best fighter ever. But okay, cool the Tuesday or Thursday, that's when we spar and we'd come in and we just light them up. And it just like, Man, how many times in life is there somebody like talking a big game and you just want to tune them up? And one way or the other just show it was proven that they're wrong? And we could do that? You know? Like is this why none of our got all our guys are humble didn't talk because we've got our all our got our butt kicked. And we felt a duty to us. So we felt this duty to educate the public. Right? So somebody comes in talking a big game. We do our public service by beating the shit out was fun.

J

James Geering 58:57

Yeah, like I said, I learned I learned two things. I learned that I wasn't as much of a pussy as I thought I was. But I also learned that I was not destined to be professional fire. Like, you know, I got my Toughness Training, but it's not the road that I you know, it's just it's not it's just a brutal reality. But I remember some of the times that there was a time as a goddess How big was this guy? Probably 220 ish shaved head tattoos head to toe. And you know they didn't you just for everyone. There was no oh, you know you smaller guys go with them. So yeah, I mean, he broke my nose. I got my eardrum perforated by a guy who was mortified that was in there. One of the black belts got me in a crucifix and was punching me in the face. Go and get me out, you know, get out, get out and I'm like, Okay, you haven't taught me how to get out. So I'm just gonna wear down your face with my face instead. But um, but it was it was amazing, but it really did. Make me realize the damage as well, like you said and now you know in the TBI conversation. You do have to be mindful and I and it's a very, very interesting point. You're absolutely right there has to be that base layer. have, you know, proper contact training and then the other gate off a little bit, you can't, you know, walk into a cage having just hit the mat in the midst and some light sparring. But you know, where is that fine line because I even now, like I get some brain fog and stuff and I'm like, how much of that was, you know, just that time the boxing I did the taekwondo when we did get hit. I mean, it all kind of adds up. We don't get a lot of impact in the fire service specifically, but if you've taken you know, taking your role as a neighborhood, sheep dog for lack of a better word and apparent you know, and a husband you know, you're taking a lot of damage to hopefully get to the point where God forbid someone tries to hurt your family, at least in that realm. You can defend yourself and you can't do that with as you said earlier, grabbed my wrist No, no, grab the other wrist No, grab that with the other hand. That doesn't work. You got to learn if you can, you know if you can take a beating

or not and I could but at the same time I will hand on my heart say because I actually trained with you remember Anthony Johnson, he was the heavy light heavyweight heavyweight I trained with him for he was at the school at the same time. And he cut down to 170 It almost killed him. But I mean, he was just No, no, everybody was normally like 200 Plus lean, lean as can be but that's who we'd be sparring with. So amazing group of people, like you said real camaraderie, but I definitely have some misshapen facial features and my time there.

 1:01:31

Yeah, it's so that's a place where I saw my first tibia fibia fracture, you know that one that everybody's doing? leg broken? happened right there on the mats. Yeah, I've seen some crazy injuries, which is just fun. But But you said sacrifice you gotta you know, you got to give something to get something back.

 James Geering 1:01:53

So how did you find yourself from fighting in Canada to fight in South Africa? Right.

 1:01:58

So yeah, South Africa. That was interesting. So Vandelay was doing some promotional things with this. With with EFC. Back in the day, it was EFC Africa. And they needed a last minute replacement fighter. And this is, this was so silly. I was I was going to vandalize camp. I was fighting and I was looking for a fight you couldn't be it's hard to find a pro fight. People think oh, you can just grab get a fight? No, you're like, looking for fights, especially fighting out of Vegas, we didn't have a local pro promotion. Because like, if you're at the best of the best, you're going to sell tickets to an entertainment thing, right? You go to Anchorage and the AFC, the last Fighting Championship. And you go, Hey, there's gonna be fights. Those fights were like, I don't know, Thursday. And we would like to pack the place. Because what the hell are you going to do during the winter, and Alaska. Males watch some locals beat the hell out of each other. Cool, we'll pay for that. But you come to Vegas, when you have a new entertainment thing coming in and out every day. And there's residencies and stuff, you're gonna watch a low level pro fight locally. So we have amateur fights, which those tickets get sold, because you got the amateur fighters being like, Hey, everybody, come watch me fight because they're outside of the watching fight. And so they kind of in a gym support each other and they come into the fights and you don't have to pay him and the commission is different. You don't get to do the same bloodwork and MRIs and all that stuff that you do for the pro fights here. So you'll see amateur fights, and you'll see UFC fights or like EFL, or something like that, rarely do you see like a, you know, an o a place where an OH guy will fight. So fighting out of Vegas long story long, you have to travel out in order to get a fight. So when you travel out to fight, they typically fly you in a loose, right. So every fight you have is not going to be one to pad your record unless you got some kind of connection. You know, and your work in some angle or whatever. But that's what's tough about building a record here in town, that training in the world but building your record up until the UFC was just it was tough. So they call this a hey, we needed a last minute fight. We need to fight here in 10 days to fight in South Africa, in the Coca Cola dome, against our champion Wenzel nil. How about that guy that you have that lost the last three fights? He had his record? Oh, God, you know, and I'm just thinking I need something. But literally, they

know I was doing nothing but training. I had a little bit of money saved up after I paid off the \$13,000 in medical bills from my face getting smashed. That was my first flight back. Because I'm like, Hey, like why don't I fly to another continent and fight the champion and that's all like getting my feet wet. Again, not not a very wise career path, but it just all I had. And so I get cut away to a weight class I've never cut before I haven't cut to 55 at that point. I think we did a catch weight at 160 So that considered a non title fight. And so in the process I throw my back out really bad like I like walking like a grandpa my shit. Okay, so I got 30 hours of travel to get there come on across that seven, seven or eight timezones and I can barely walk much less fine dude. Like whatever he's gonna do what you got to do. And I go in there and I ended up fighting domain event was coming event I just ate a bunch of ibuprofen beforehand like okay, I'll see what happens. Then I finally ended up choking him out the first round. But what's funny is I sunk in this joke. And I like it. It was weird because it was Walmsley that level looking at a tape. It was like a split second book and it's done. But in my head the way it happened, I sunk this choke in this conversation myself, because I had this choke deep. I'm thinking man, oh, my confidence was so low. It's like, I wonder how this dude is gonna get out of this choke. This is weird, like, so deep, but he's gonna get out somehow. And then he tapped like, Oh, my God. I run around the ring. Looks. The cage. I'm so excited. And I get on the mic. And oh, hey, Damon Zandi. How do you feel like I don't want to fight in yours. I'm excited. And they end up like cutting that out. Or like the guy that got in the production was like that don't hear that. He just beat her champion. He hadn't won a fight in years. Like, but it looked great. Like I was ripped. I was like, ready, I was ready to go, you know, and that kind of sparked the, the momentum forward of the Dave the pain train was on, right. So then they didn't bring any international people back for a while. They're like, I don't know, we just got kind of embarrassed or champ. Little they know, they brought in a special guy. I feel like I was I wasn't at some shop that I look like one by record. But I actually end up being their champion later on. Because like when they went international again, I had a few fights in the middle and fought, you know, all over the place. And then when they're ready for international people, they brought me back and I kind of like came in, knocked the dude out. And I go, I look in the camera. I'm like, Hey, man, I'm the real champion. I beat your champ. Nobody's beat me. I'm the real champ give me the title shot. You know, I do the little belt thing on my hands, signaling the belt. And then I got my title shot. And then the run came from there. But it was that whole experience was was freaking amazing. Like being the one being an American in a promotion that I was the only American so I kind of represented who we were right. And that was a big responsibility in my mind. And to just fight fighting another country introducing martial arts and mixed martial arts to them because I think they still have this public view of of MMA being kind of brutal, and, you know, human chops fighting and stuff like that. And it's still at a view of human being key macaque five is gentleman he is a sport. It's an it's an athletic event. It's what it is. So I don't know it was it was a blast. Or sorry, Somebody's knocking on my door interrupting the podcast. No worries. Take time. Hi. Hi, good. 1212 dlaczego Yeah, thank you. All right, there we go. Yeah. It was cool about it as I was one of the few guys who sort of was a foreigner that was able to win over the crowd a little bit. Right. And that was very rare over there. And I just kind of killed them with kindness. That's what I did. I was respectful of everybody. I was an ambassador for the sport, I felt one thing I would do too, is like when I meet people and make these little pens that said day the pain train was on and had like a little face logo on it. Now, given the people like when I'm meeting I'm like, Oh, you're that guy. I'm like, Here you go. And like what was funny is like how many fighters actually give things to people then and they kind of typically like want to fighters typically want to take like, hey, you need a sponsor may Hey, can I get a free meal? Can I get a I'm a big time fighter I should get a really nice room. You know? And so I just kind of like look past entitlement and and I was one of those people and this is one thing I like about Shawn Strickland right now he's trained out of extreme couture is the current middleweight champ is he's like really thankful the fans because like yo man like without fans, you'd be

nothing without people put putting their hard earned cash on the table to come see you fight. You're not I couldn't fight somebody for entertainment, you know. So I think being really appreciative of fans is super important. That's something I learned from Pro Wrestling and pro wrestling. You have to you know, interact with the fans be appreciative. You don't have to but the guys who are successful the guys who are really good. Take that time. spend their time to talk to you know a kid or talking to somebody who really enjoyed what you did you put a smile on their face. And that's, that's that's what it's all about in my mind being a professional entertainer lighter.

J James Geering 1:10:11

Yeah, I mean, absolutely. I mean, you can't obviously take a beating just to make it entertaining you still have to be in there are five but I think that's kind of what I miss a little bit about the UFC until somewhat recently is it didn't kind of get pulled into the theatrics. And then more recently, it's been a while these Russian organizations where they're all fighting that the way and every single one of them is fighting that the way and now you know, and now you've got these YouTubers coming in, whether they can fight or not, it's irrelevant that they're kind of making it this fucking circus. And you know, what I love about MMA is the martial artists. Yeah, there's five, there's fires as well. But I had Greg Jackson on and he said, that's two different types of people. It's the martial artists that I love. There's, there's some peers and you know, the people that have the respect and they'll leave it all in the cage. They may not love each other. But it's that, you know, that hug at the end, you know, that show, like we said, that humility, whether it's in a, you know, a kid's jujitsu match, or, you know, in MMA, you know, and when there's disrespect to the end, or when there's, you know, getting personal into people's family members, or whatever, I think you've kind of lost your way. So I always admire the fighters, the, you know, you can have a little banter before the fight. But yeah, understanding that there's an element of respect within, you know, that platform that they've got, and yeah, and understanding that, yeah, you're absolutely right. There's people all over the world that are spending the harder money to watch that particular fight. So giving them a nod, I think is admirable.

 1:11:41

Right? I look at this way. Because you want to you want to put asses in seats, right? You want to put butts in seats. That's the goal at the end of the day. But what UFC did when they got huge, was that the ultimate fighter, the reality show, right like that. But what that did, is it allowed you to understand the personality. So people would always try to try to give me this advice. You know, if you if people give you expert advice from the experts in the field, about you know, like, there's like, oh, every guy thinks they know how to fight, which is funny, right? Like the good onion.com article like it's called, man or 1,000% less effective and fights than they actually think they are. You gotta look it up. It's hilarious.

J James Geering 1:12:29

Don't hold me back. I just see red bro type of mentality. Yes.



1:12:35

It's crazy. I just don't know how to do. So the what I what I notice is authenticity sells, right? This is what people want to see. They want to see something authentic. So if you're, if you're naturally a guy that talks crap, and like, likes to disrespect people, and whatever that is, and you do it, it'll work right? But if you take a guy who doesn't do that, and try to it's it's clear as day, you know, I learned this a lot like pro wrestling is pure entertainment. Right? That's 100% Entertainment theatrical. But the guys who do the best and pro wrestling, live the gimmick a little bit, right, like the one of the greatest, arguably one of the greatest of all time, Ric Flair, right. They always talked about Ric Flair being one of the greatest, but that dude lives the gimmick that guy would would have gators on and his Rolex watch and he was, you know, with women and all, you know, partying all the time, and that's the character he portrayed. And that's why he was right. Stone Cold Steve Austin, he was beer drinking redneck. The dude actually likes to drink beer. And he's kind of a redneck. And he's played out the gimmick a little bit. Right. So you look at these people like this. May fighters it's the same thing. Like I wasn't, you know, I felt like I'm a tough guy. But I'm a tough guy. That makes sense. Like, I'm not that dude that just wants to go around, beat people up. Like, I love being an athlete. I love training hard. I love doing the right thing for others. And that's what I portrayed in Africa. And they did I did get a little bit of push the gate was it like we've a little bit more of a bonus if you just like push them at the way in or something like I'm a dude, that's not what I do. I push them during the fight. Like you're talking crap that way and I have an opportunity in the in the hexagon over there as a hexagon to knock this this fool out. But choke him out. That's that's what I'm gonna do my topic. Right? But until then, I'm gonna be made. And I think people saw that and I appreciate it. You know, because you can tell when something doesn't look right. You're trying to be somebody you're not being who you are, be the best of who you are, you know, and then take take your strengths and harness them and work on your weaknesses and whatever but authenticity cells and authenticity is what gets you to this life better. You know,



James Geering 1:14:52

I think some of my favorite highlight. Instagram reels are the ones where the guy's talking shit. And then the other guy's just standing there. All kind of stone faced and then the stone face guy kicks his ass, you know? So it's all well and good if you're going to talk a game but you got to be sure shit that you're going to win otherwise you're going to look like an idiot.



1:15:12

Yeah 100% I just, you know, it's not that, like you said the person that talks the person that's Yellin The person that's loud. They're usually the weakest parts, right? There's a reason there's the reason why we should wawas is the one that you're like, kind of just like, you know, barking the loudest. i It's hard to respect the loud person. I just, he'd be loud and fun but the person that loud telling you how much of a tough guy they are. No respect for that. You know, don't don't talk about it be about it. Like that's just but that's my background. That's what I grew up. Noticing. You know, the hockey player that was good. Was was humble and quiet did really well and a guy who was a best fighter he did all his talking with his fist. You know? It when he steps in the when you see somebody like Randy Couture step into the room, you just feel that that championship aura about him Vandelay Silva you knew why he was a champion, right? You just felt it? You know what he those guys didn't have a talk tell you about why they're a champion who they are they they live in? And that's who they are. So I don't know.

That's just, that's just how I operate. Maybe some people think some some opposite. They gotta be loud and try to be good, same time. But typically, the pattern is humility. Yeah, that's asking for some humility.

J James Geering 1:16:40

Sorry, guys, again, to the fire service to politics. You know, you name it, sports stars. I mean, I think, yeah, it's impressive when someone you know, scores or whatever, a touchdown basket, you know, goal. But really what strikes people's hearts, if someone uses that platform, you know, they do something kind on the pitch, the runner that stops when they're about to win and picks up the person that fell, you know, those are the ones that really, you know, I get competition, but you know, not at the expense of everyone else. So, I think humility and compassion is huge. And it's what we need at the moment, you know, you've got all these people, especially in politics that are masquerading like, they are the UFC world champion, then it's nothing but words from both sides, let me be very clear, same fucking person, basically. And it's all yap yap. It's all nastiness, it's all divisive. And yet, what we actually need is going back to Alaska, is that community of people that are all, you know, there for the same reason that, you know, all love playing hockey, or all the work in the pipelines or whatever it is, and they're, they're brought together by that. So I think, you know, humility is something that, you know, we need more than ever at the moment.

U 1:17:47

Right, yeah, I agree. Well, we got the we have these false realities that we can live. You can be somebody or not so easy right now. And this is what was tough about Vegas in general is like a lot of people move here from somewhere else. And they can pretend they're somebody else for a while. So like, I didn't really like it was weird. I would look at somebody unless they're here about five, six years, I really wouldn't really trust them the way I would. If somebody's here for a while, because like some people, oh, yeah, I'm this, you know, especially back in the day, I guess. And this goes with any career that I would run into somebody like they're a promoter, or they're this or that. But like, you run back in the day, you'd run with so many fighters that would say, oh, yeah, I have a bunch of fights, but they're unsanctioned or whatever. Like when somebody says, they're a fighter, I immediately look them up online. Like, I can Google, if any, if you're a real fighter and Google you'll pop up, you know. But um, for but we talked about humility. Yeah, humility. It's just, you know, I was I was going on a tangent dude, and I just completely mind it. Yeah. Yeah. That's

J James Geering 1:18:58

all right. Oh, come it. I'm sure. I was just interviewing Cody Gibson yesterday was in the most recent ultimate fire show and he was a veteran back in 2014 2015. Yeah, the first contract and then came back again. But again, such a nice bloke so humble. He's a teacher as well, PE teacher at the moment. And this is it. Like I've always said, some of the nicest people I know are also some of the most dangerous people I know. So it goes hand in hand usually.

U 1:19:25

Yes. I guess I gotta plug this group a little bit like to talk a little bit about merge, merging vets and players. I think we might have talked about that earlier. Yeah, please talk about it. Yeah, that was that was one because, again, talking about people who are you know, complete savages, right? Like are they probably like they lived a different life that was was different, but there's still some of the nicest people. Merging vets and players. It's a support group for combat veterans and ex pro athletes ex combat. Veterans, pro athletes when they take off the uniform, right? So war veterans and pro athletes kind of the same issue when they when they get done, I guess I'm starting to notice this in the fire service. They're like, Hey, why so and so not retired yet? Because they kind of missed that camaraderie and all that, you know, you. So So basically, the support group is like, you know, people will retire from military, medically or whatever, pretty early sometimes. And then fighters, you can only are pro athletes, you only go so long, and then you're done. Right? And then so this the support group is, well, there. There's a chapter here in Vegas, I think it was once Washington, and one in LA, and they're all over the place. But we kind of meet we do a workout together. And after the workout, we sit around, we have the huddle, or we talk about out. So we meet every Friday here, extreme to tour. And it's one of the things that helped me transition out of the professional fighting space to civilian life. Because I could talk to somebody about you know, what I'm going through? I was just talking to somebody who plays pickleball with Joe Bonavita. Is the the what's the name?

J

James Geering 1:21:17

What happened was hilarious. Signs just showed up on our screen.



1:21:22

Yeah, I think if you put your thumb up, it'll actually make a thumbs up sign. But he was playing. He's playing with Jobin. Aveda is, and, and Joe is like talking to this ex NFL guy who was added for who it was. But they were like retired athletes. They're saying that like, man, it feels good. Because we can talk about things. And other people don't understand, you know? And that's kind of what the MVP does it bring those groups together and talk about our, you know, like going to civilian life because they don't understand the mindset, the camaraderie, they don't understand. Kind of like the sense of humor, we have the, the everything, you know, like, the different regimens like things are different. So that was a, that was a really good program. So if you know, anybody who is a combat veteran or an ex pro athlete, check out merging vets and players.org, I believe, is one of the coaches for him and one of the members. And it's been a great thing. And they get like, like we said, sometimes we don't talk about stuff, it just sits in there, it doesn't get out and in the end up, hitting you later. And we need to make sure we recognize understand why we're functioning a certain way, you know, mental part is very difficult.

J

James Geering 1:22:49

I watched the documentary called The weight of gold, and it had Michael Phelps and the whole load of things Lola Jones, Lolo Jones. And during it, you know, there was such a strong parallel between sports and then military first responder, and it was, you know, you spend years and years doing this thing, it becomes your identity if you're not careful. And then one day you just not whether you aged out the Olympics, whether you you know, again, your your TIB fib got

shattered in a fight and now you can't fight again, whatever it is, and all of a sudden, everything's taken from your purpose why you train every day, the people the tribe that you were training around, you know, the the identity I'm, I'm a fire, like I was a firefighter. Now I'm a podcaster. And I always say there's no there's no podcast or calendar going on, for horny housewives. So it's not it's not a cool label anymore. So yeah, the identity piece from that, even if we just transition out like I did, there are a lot of parallels and you see, you know, not only my prefer our profession, excuse me, you know, the uniform professionals but also you see it in sports, and then you add in the the martial arts, the football players, the hockey players, you've got the TBI as well. Now you've got this really dangerous, you know, perfect storm of psychological and physiological, that if we're not taking care of each other can go unchecked. And that's when we end up with, you know, Junior saao and all these other athletes out Aaron Hernandez some of these that probably had that, you know, contributing to it and they just get lost, you know, they get forgotten about. So I think it's extremely important to bring those two groups together because they have got so many commonalities.



1:24:34

Right, and, you know, and there's Yeah, it's, I'm learning a lot about it's been cool to get to learn a lot about just just the veteran what they kind of go through, you know, just this through that and I have a lot of friends that have seen a lot of combat and gone through some things and you realize the public doesn't really understand, you know, because I even a lot of my friends are there Veterans, they're all savage just writing fighters and veterans and even the pro wrestlers is weird, right? I'm not around a lot of normal people and, and recently, like, one of my buddies, he's seen a lot of combat, you know, people would meet up with him meet him and find out like, oh, you're a sniper who's like, yeah, he's like, Oh, how many people have you killed? Right? Then what's your headcount? Like, dude, this isn't fucking Call of Duty man, like, like, this is like, you're literally asking him about the most traumatic experience of his life where he had to take a human life. Like, he had to look this guy through a scope for God knows how long, right and decide to pull the trigger and in his life, and, and you have kids and yourself, and you realize this guy has kids, and you don't even know this person, he just happens to be across a different visible line, and you have to kill him, right? And you just realize that there's parts of the public is don't understand certain things. You know, we're maybe we're desensitized. That, like, this is some strange, I guess, I guess, that I thought I thought about it recently is like, how many people actually even see a dead body? You know, when that was something that we probably saw all the time in the past, right? Like, what, 123 100 years ago, you'd see dead bodies. So you would you would deal with it, you know, or whatever. And now, somebody dies or leaves room and somebody else takes care of it, you know? So even then ask him how many people have you killed you cry out even seen a dead, you know, again, just I don't know. It's, it's strange. It's strange to me. But again, like something like merging vets and players they can, you can talk to other people, I've had similar experiences and see how they dealt with that. You know, like, sometimes learning this seemed the right way to respond to statements or what what you can do to cope afterwards is good. And like I was saying about, you know, yoga practices and stuff like that, because everybody has their own way of dealing with stuff and you got to figure out what works for you. And you might tell me something might talk to somebody else, you got me, we all have the same experiences. But all three of us deal with all differently, I can take a little bit from you. And you can take a little bit from me, and we can figure out how to deal with something better. So I think programs like that are important to know, there's like, you know, I think it's becoming more and also you're talking about head injuries, too. And stuff we deal with the combat veterans, a lot of them have severe head injuries, they've been blown up a few times and I've

been taken you know, advice from because I'm actually in a brain study myself by the Cleveland Clinic. I've been about 10 years now actually is scheduled another appointment, they still keep track of my brain to see what what is happening long term with the head trauma as a stain. Unfortunately, I've come out pretty good, you know, but I know a lot of people who have like legit, like behavioral issues because of their head trauma, and this isn't like, and stuff I've observed, like with my own eyes over time. Things changes. Right? And I guess it's nice for us to know and maybe even the public starts to understand a little bit that hey, like getting hit in the head can actually change your behavioral patterns. It's it's scary and strange and some in some people devastating devastating stuff or happened to and I've seen it sauce as I'm thinking guy right now like he's pro wrestle with a guy named Phil Baroni. He remember the New York badass? Yeah, one

 James Geering 1:28:59

of the original UFC guys. Yeah, he's,

 1:29:02

he's, I mean, when I would work with him, he would be up and down and he'd forget your conversations. He would like have emotional outbursts and stuff like that. And I guess I didn't really know him too much beforehand. But over time, I've seen him sort of change more and more. And it might be like this, Hey, I'm retired at all my identity anymore, too. But yeah, that guy like and I'd look at an old interview and he'd be articulate speaking well, even though he's kind of like stilettos, attitude and all that stuff. It was really strange to see like, do this. I mean, who knows what else contribute to it? But I know right now he's in the last I read. He was he was arrested in Mexico for some really gnarly stuff. But yeah, you see see that and, you know, I think I think Stephen Bonner that that contributed to some of his stuff, too. I worked pro wrestling matches with Stephen When he was always a nice guy, you know, all the time, but I can definitely feel some, you know, some just the way it was talking to him since the effects of all the head trauma he took. Because he goes, I guess one thing that's always interesting is looking at interview that they had the beginning of their career, the middle, at the end, you can see speech patterns change and, and just the way they talk and everything. And it's, to me it. But again, it's like one of those things, you got to understand the risks before you do something. And then you just do it anyways, if that's something you really want to do. Like, like, we like the big subject is firefighting, right? Like, you're a first responder and, you know, there's cancer, there's cardiac issues and all this stuff. And I'm well aware of those issues before going in. And I think most people, maybe maybe some people aren't, but I think the more and more you understand what you're sacrificing, what part of your body what health concerns, what what's the trade off, you know, I get to live this lifestyle, do something I love, and I just might die earlier because of it. You're just gonna have to, like, figure that out and be okay with it. You know, just like fighting like i Man, I, I did some amazing things. And it's experienced something that most people won't. But what has taken years off my life. Probably, if I was just working out and eating healthy and whatever, not cutting a bunch of weight and not getting hit in the head, I probably would have been able to live longer, but is that the light I don't know, I I just feel like life is meant to be live with reckless abandon. Sometimes you gotta like, squeeze, squeeze that fruit as much as you can and get everything out of it before you get

six feet under. But, you know, that might not be February, May people just want to you know, live safe, and that's fine. You know, and do what they can to stay on. Stay, stay, stay circling around the sun as much as you can, you can put that trade off.

J

James Geering 1:32:05

When you think about head trauma. Another one that springs to mind is Evan Tanner. I mean, I remember he always had wars, you know, and he went off for a walk that he never came back from one time. But I think with our service, my big thing is there are areas that we can't control and we just lost a firefighter in Baltimore this week. Yeah, last week, technically. And it was I don't know exactly what it was. But was that preventable? I'm not sure operationally, but when it comes to the heart disease, the cancer, all these things, you know, they're we have a long way to go in the fire service before we create a work environment that's actually healthy for firefighters. So I think there is a lot of prevention when it comes to that. And the same, you know, with MMA, like you said, a lot of gyms are understanding, you know, yes, there's an application for hard sparring, but there's a reduction. Now, it's not this kind of fight club mentality all day every day. You know, so this understanding there, but, you know, yeah, I mean, I think there's that fine line between living your life, but also mitigating as many of the areas that we understand now that we just didn't, you know, 2040 60 years ago, but evolving. And if we don't evolve, and we keep losing people for the same reason, which is the fire service at the moment, then shame on us because the information is out there now. We're just not acting on it.

o

1:33:25

Right, yeah. I it you gotta be open minded to stuff and this is the like the here's an example of Mixed Martial Arts this is what I have most experienced, I can speak is like a like headgear had years one, that's a sort of a debate, right, we have to always wear headgear, and then start to recognize that like, you're actually getting more head trauma with headgear. Because the fulcrum begins, you have a lever, right and lever goes out. So that fulcrum on my head, goes straight down the middle, the head gear almost increases that fulcrum, right, so you get more like we talked about that with fourth fourth entry, and the mechanical advantage of your tool, right the law, the further you reach on the outside of the tool, the more mechanical advantage you have. So if I get hit, and I hit the edge of the head here, it's able to whip my head a little bit more efficient than if you just glanced off my skin, or whatever, or is close to the center of that lever. So arguably, there's they're saying head here creates more head trauma, then I kind of like felt like it was it was a I get less head drawn without headgear, which is funny. Also, I would wear headgear towards the end because I didn't want to get cut. Right. So I felt like headgear prevents the cuts more than the head trauma. Right. So so the tool, it's still relevant, but we use it for different reasons now, right? About I think it's like that. But you'll still see an old school guy that has this heels dug into the sand going, hey, you know, you got to wear your head year for head trauma, you know, and I've been I've been when I was an EMT class and one of the instructors was saying that about head gear and head trauma and I was kind of I was like, I was want to raise my hand and actually, sir. No, it's not like that, guys. I just let them go with it. But I was like, how this guy's like that old school dude, that kind of believed one thing, and maybe he hasn't heard the evidence yet. Or maybe might have heard it as BS, you know, I don't know. But I guess we just gotta like, keep in mind, it's easier said than done to be open minded about something. We all can be stubborn about something, especially when you're like

considered an expert on something like, right now I feel like I'm an expert in fighting and then somebody might tell me something about fighting and I want to like, dig my heels in the sand, not be open minded about it. You know, you still gotta step back and go, Okay, let's hear this out. See what happens. See what works? You know, look at the numbers. And take it take it from there. Yeah, your adaptation super important. All facets?

 James Geering 1:36:11

Absolutely. Well, I want to be bound for your time, because I know you're gonna get kicked out your hotel room soon. So let's talk about service. So how did you find yourself entering the fire service? 40 years old.

 1:36:25

Oh, man, like, like I was saying that transition out. This is million life is difficult. I mean, I was never making a good living. So like, even probie rookie pay. I'm like, hell yeah, I'm rich. This is great. Like, I need to make a living. I live without insurance for a long time. I've glued cuts together more than I can count. You know, like, I learned that you could solve any, any problem with three things. It's duct tape, superglue, coffee, that's basically the basic tools of life. And that's what I did. But I needed some of the retirement with medical with all that stuff. And it also I needed, I need stability. But what the fire service I notice because I had a few buddies who were fighters My Buddy Rich and and in California, and then I had a friend who retired up in Anchorage. She lives out here now. We went paddleboarding all through the pandemic, and shoot tell me stories and talk about your job and how cool was and also a really good friend of mine, who I trained with at Van delays. The way we met is funny, we're talking about it. We grab each other's shoulder like talk Yaga talk Yama, Don Frye, and punch each other face until neither one of us stopped. And after that, we're best friends. You know, it's I've been friends with him for 13 years, and he's been on Clark County for five, six years, you know? So he's like, Dude, you got an average. He was telling me to do this thing. I'm like, I don't I don't know. You know, because in my mind, I was like, Why I gotta own my business. Or I'm gonna find a way to get rich or whatever. Because I always have this like mindset, like, real hard to go home. But then I'm kind of realizing man, like, I really enjoy helping people. I love to coach I love to mentor I love to help people extend their lives through health, health and fitness. And, and I always kind of had this superhero mentality in my head where I want to be a superhero. You know, like, I was like, I don't know why I was ever when I learned how to, like, stop a bleed when I was really young. You put pressure on it and stuff like that. I was like, I always like visualize when someone's bleeding on the playground, I saved them, you know, I thought that'd be really, really cool. And actually, off duty, I got my first tourniquet on somebody, like punched a hole through window at a park at a at a river. And they're bleeding out. Somebody actually had a tourniquet the head on wrong, that it was super loose, they didn't have any pressure on it. And I readjusted to put the tourniquet on and they airlifted the guy out eventually but he's bleeding out of a brachial artery but I was like that was really but that that save off duty was really cool to me like that like that got my blood going. So at the end of the day I wanted a job where I can give back have team camaraderie have stood instability and stability at the same time right like you go into work every day not knowing what you're gonna do what's gonna happen you know, you can be sitting there eating a doughnut or something. And somebody could be you know, there could be like a giant fire or or somebody's really sick or overdosing or, or whatever having a baby in a park. And that to me was like is like amazing I because I

can't I can't I've tried to work I worked for true fusion corporate I worked for a corporate got a corporate salary and elbow bend franchise franchise studios all over in the fitness industry. It was like, it's it was cool, but man, I needed some more. So it just made 100% sense and they it was hard to get to get there and I'm still just they're still probie and but like Everybody I talked to came from the background I did. It fits and it works and it makes sense. And I know there's a hiring issue right now maybe that's why they let a geriatric like me and but, but it I feel like it's a hidden secret, but like, Man, this is a great job. But I'm also realizing there's a lot of people that wouldn't be willing to do that job, which maybe my brain is wired differently, but I'm like this is, you know, this, the tasks required to things we got to see it do for this job. To me, seems awesome, but other people really scares them. So I suppose everybody's wired differently had different roles in life. And so I did, so far, it makes sense as a fit. And, and I'm one of those people too, that like, I hope Oh, because of my background, all the shitty jobs I had in the past. I'm never gonna take this thing for granted. You know, you see some, you know, people have a great job. And I'm I'm saying this one in general, but like, they forget how great how good they have it, you know, being being thankful for what you have. I guess that's when fighting in South Africa did for me too, right? Like I got to see the actual four sides of town, and the effects of still effects of apartheid and stuff like that, like, wow, we have a great America. We have a freakin awesome country. You know, you immigrated to here, you know, like, you understand a lot of people don't a lot of people like, want to complain and say how bad it is, then smell the roses, because this is one of the greatest places in positions we can ever be in. We just got to wake up and like stand back and take a good look and realize we have a great over here. So yeah, that long story long. That's that's how I got into it. And what made me excited about it and look forward to the opportunities that are afforded to me in the future.

 James Geering 1:42:16

Was it Cape Town you fought in

 1:42:19

Cape Town quite a bit? Yeah. Yeah, I fought twice in Joburg and I don't know keep terrorizing a little home away from home now. It was it was because that's what they would say. And as they're promoting the fights like Amazon is home away from home and stuff like that, which is strange. And I do like with with some of these days off one day I want to fly back and go go see it again without actually get to eat food the whole time and have a beer stuff I was waiting to get riled up.

 James Geering 1:42:49

I was just there in February, I did this round the world trip with a bunch of special ops guys, it was kind of a almost like a research project to simulate like a wildfire season or deployment or you know, whatever it is. So they broken down. There's a group of them that ran a marathon in every continent. So seven continents seven days. And we started in Cape Town. And I know exactly what you're talking about. Beautiful, beautiful place and some gorgeous areas. But then right next to him are the shanty towns that remind you of, you know, some of the the ugliest side of, of South African history at times.



1:43:24

Yeah, I mean, you saw people. Yeah, I love I love that place. But then also I just made, I guess made me realize how good I have it, you know, and, and that I was saying, when I fought over there, I would never like wave the American flag like, oh, yeah, we're the greatest, you know, I want to like, rub it in feet. You know what I mean? It's felt wronged. I want to come as a human, you know, like, and be appreciative. And, I mean, one of my favorite things to do there, they'd give me like 20 tickets, and a lot of guys would sell them I'd give them a few people who sponsored support me, but if I had a conversation with somebody who like absolutely would love to see the fights but couldn't because they couldn't afford it. I would love to give those tickets to people just because that would make them alter happy, maybe something I'll remember the rest of our lives, right like that. That's, to me, that's, that's my goal is to like, put smiles on people's faces. That's my favorite thing. That's why like pro wrestling, that's why I actually fought. So I like to have fun around people because I love to see people smile, you know. So, yeah, end of the day. I'm looking forward to the future. It's gonna be great.



James Geering 1:44:38

To do that more. Well, I want to hit one more area and then let you go so we can get you check out time. One of the observations doing martial arts most of my life, being a crossfit coach athlete as well. Being a firefighter is I think that training like a fire seems to parallel when it comes to the strength and conditioning Inside seems to parallel the fire service really well, because we don't know what we're going to be doing. It could be climbing a tree, we could be going down a sewer pipe, we could be crawling into a burning building, whatever it is, what is your perspective? Because you've got such a strong coaching background as well of the strength and conditioning side for this profession you found yourself in now.



1:45:18

Right? Like, yeah, like you said, My degree was in Human Performance and Physical Education. I had a minor in coaching. I trained everything from distance running to the decathlon to mixed martial arts. So I've had to shift a lot of gears and I, and I was with a guy like Watsky, who was very super intelligent. And so I got to get early on a really good lick look of somebody who's a professional sport coach would ski for you guys who don't know is a, he was a throws, he was the Canadian record holder in the hammer throw. And, and he grew up in a small town and how to learn. He was just obsessed, and we're like, we'd like to learn on his own a lot of these things and strength conditioning things. And he like worked for the Cleveland Browns before we came to Adam state and worked out of state and we're the Poliquin group around it. So this dude does like newest shit. So I got to see what an intelligent strength conditioning program looked like. With the fire service result, real relevant MMA Well, one thing I noticed is there's tons of techniques, right. In MMA, they're an endless countless amount of techniques. Right? And, and they're I've forgotten more techniques. And I know right now, like, an MMA, and it was funny because I remember a woman, okay, for example, one fight when I fought Steve Kennedy, I went down and I put him in a triangle choke. And I don't know, I can't I don't know if I can explain it. But there's a weird thing where he can reach his arm around and hide it and keep one artery open. But if I switched my feet in the triangle, and it's like this weird, intricate, weird scenario that you'll see, often, I just switch my feet. And it goes, and I remember, like, sitting

there at the fire was like, oh, yeah, there's this move I learned a long time ago. And I switched my feet, I won this fight at 185. To get a title and Australia, this is in Australia. And I want this but because of this one little technique that I learned a long time ago that I still retained. And so and I would practice it every once awhile, but this is what I noticed. In the fire service. There's tons of forced entry techniques, there's tons of ways to, you know, lay out a hose, and there's techniques to extricate a person. There's techniques to like medical techniques that we learned. And there's always a better way to do it always a smooth way to do something, even like putting an IV, we were talking about different techniques of putting IVs last time, I was like, Oh, we didn't learn it that way. But man, it's a good thing. You know, so you're always sharing these with your friends to like and sharing. So that's where mixed martial arts came together. It's like, no, two, mixed martial arts have the same tool bag, we all have different bags of tools, and we trade them back and forth, your teammates, you trade them, and you got to keep them sharp, because all these skills are perishable. So all the techniques is one that's huge. With the physical side, it's all functional, full body movements, right? It's, you know, when you're gonna go hard on a fire ground, it's gonna be about the same time you would in a mixed martial arts fight, right? The metabolic demands, you know, five or three, five minute rounds, is about what you would do if you're going interior and put something out knocking something down and getting out right? Rarely are you going to be working, you know, your Bible only lasts, if you're breathing hard, it's not going to last an hour, right? You're sitting still you can make it lasts an hour. But if you're going hard, you know, I put a timer to it more but like you know, 1520 30 minutes, you're not going to get much more out of it than that. So the metabolic demands are the same. So it's kind of cool to see you know them design skills courses and see what people are doing for strength conditioning. But I also see like there's longevity practices that I would want to implement myself I was talking about yoga and in this thread like a flip mat mobility regimen and stuff like that because you see a lot of like meathead like to get jacked and be able to things and stuff and you know maybe even do some of the metabolic who will do stairs and do the cardio and and everything but but this is what will happen with mixed martial arts to with MMA and strength conditioning in the beginning was like hey, let's get super jacked and, and do like basically long drawn out CrossFit workouts. You know, they do this giant circuit they would like have ropes and flip flopping tires and also, they completely smash their nervousness. isn't right, and they weren't adhering to periodization very much and not doing longevity. Now, longevity practice, like There you go down the street to the UFC Performance Institute. And they have, they're starting to really put science behind their strength conditioning. They're stabilizing joints. They're working on mobility things, their work, like shoulder stability, right? Like, that's a huge one, right? Like, like Charles Poliquin said, You can't shoot a candidate out of a canoe, right? If you have an unstable joint, and you're trying to generate force from your body and something and that joint is unstable, well, you're not gonna get power out of that thing. So I noticed like, through my MMA career, I started really focusing on on keeping my knees strong, my shoulders strong, make sure I can have good mobility and my practice and, and I can definitely see a more an approach like that I'm gonna implement to myself as I grow as a, as a firefighter, right? Because, you know, you want to keep your body moving and optimal level as long as you can. I tell people, a classic car is a beautiful thing. But man, you got to change that oil, way more than you do on a brand new, you know, Honda coming out of the gate, you know, coming out of the factory. And because that's what we all we're all turned into classic vehicles. So he's got to put more love into it. You gotta put more more consciousness to it, you gotta like change the brakes a little bit more put may put new ones in. Feed it, feed it the good fuel you put, you know, you don't put eight, you know, put 87 octane inside of a Corvette, you know, you put the good stuff in there. But yeah, see a lot of similarities. I see a lot of similarities with the progression or where it could go. Right. LC So yeah, that's what and hopefully we'll talk in a couple years and we'll see what see where it come out. See what happens with it.

 James Geering 1:51:59

Yeah, no, I think that'd be amazing. Well, like I said, I want to be mindful of your time so for people listening, where are the best places to find you? And then I know you've got an out nine rounds franchise anywhere else you want to tell them online as well? Oh,

 1:52:13

yeah, I mean, Amazon and eBay as my my Instagram I, I guess I'm, who knows what I'm using for these days. I used to really use it to promote all my fighting and my pro wrestling and I'll play and throw stuff on there. But yeah, find me at aquazone Ma, ma z A and Y. MMA. Yeah, that's I have a Facebook fan page. I never go to them anymore. But But yeah, that's what I've put up there. But everyone's I'll put some good nuggets in there and maybe some throwback Thursdays and, and stuff I'm doing right now. I guess like keeping track track with all the stuff that fans in South Africa and stuff and, and my friends and family everywhere else. So find me on Instagram. That's probably the best. Twitter's the same thing. I guess I still work on, or x, whatever we call it, but your Twitter. I posted that in a while but yeah, that's it.

 James Geering 1:53:07

Brilliant. Well, Dave, I want to thank you so much. It's been an amazing conversation again. You know, firefighting is what we do. And a lot of us absolutely adore it, but it's everything else that people have done, whether it's in the uniform prior to the uniform, you know, alongside the uniform, whatever it is, but um, to hear this journey that you've been on, you know, from Alaska, and there's diversity to the MMA fight in the pro fight and then here we are now it's, it's been a hell of a story. So I want to thank you so much for being so generous with your time taking two hours out of your staycation and coming on the vine, the Show podcast today.

 1:53:41

Alright, hey, thanks for having me. Appreciate it.