

# Greg Walsh - Episode 767

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people, training, crossfit, work, bmx, kid, kettlebell, started, movement, barbell, athlete, love, firefighter, fucking, feel, martial arts, understand, snatch, put, called

## SPEAKERS

James Geering, Greg Walsh

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James Geering 00:00

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G

Greg Walsh 03:19

Thank you, thank you. I'm pleased. I'm pleased to be here and thanks. Thanks to Iron Legion for setting it up for us.

J

James Geering 03:25

So just quickly on that so techtree are he is the owner of CrossFit Arnage and him and his wife Karen, or Iron Legion athletics now as it's called. And I've watched him now for probably I think it's about eight years going from an athlete to then ultimately coaching and some of the genesis of of the the way that we've coached everything from strict CrossFit to the bootcamp kind of salesy side getting in for a while and then get rid of that. And then really watching the the martial art side come in. And then yeah, the wolf brigade philosophy coming out as well. So just as an icebreaker, talk to me about your relationship with relationship with Ted and what you saw from the other side of his aha moments.

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04:06

Oh, well, geez. It was a cool introduction. We've got some very good friends in Florida. And those friendships are all still kind of burgeoning. But the American combat club people have been huge, tremendous resources. And Terry, the teachers down there for Ted tremendous resource. And then when they came up for convergence last year, it was very cool, because we all knew that they had a ton of experience. But we also knew that there was going to be a ton of holes in the boat, that big strong guys usually don't fight until they're shown. And that's exactly what happened. And you could you could really see them kind of falling in love with the process and us falling in love with the ability to help them out. And then when he started talking about using some of the methods and philosophies with his people, it's a perfect fit. If you're if you're training in combat sports, and your strength conditioning is reckless. It's going to take away from your ability to train martial arts and certainly from your success in training martial arts, so it's just a great fit great people. We trust them we like them. It's it's really cool.

J

James Geering 05:11

Beautiful. We've give each other shit all the time like he I don't know how much he snatches he was a Masters champion in some organization with barbell, but then he'll do air squats with his hands on his knees so I'll be like, well

i

05:24

okay. Okay, I mean, to the to the uninitiated, that may be a strange statement. But yeah, that's that's not the way the cookie crumbles.

J

James Geering 05:33

All right. Well, very first question where on planet earth we actually finding you today?



05:39

Thanks. I'm in Rochester, New York. And that's where I live in work. It's where I'm from. I moved to Southern California in January of 1999, to work at and run a bike company. And then I moved back to Rochester, New York in May of 2008. And then that is the day that will brigade began formally.



James Geering 06:04

Beautiful what I want to start in Rochester then. So tell me where exactly you were born. And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic, what your parents did, and how many siblings



06:14

thanks, one brother, I'm from Fairport, New York, I got out of there as soon as I possibly could. It's an okay suburb. And I found BMX bike riding and hardcore music at 1112 years old, young, through just a magazine in the grocery store. And so as soon as I hit those awakenings, I just I knew that the suburbs weren't for me the attitudes that were there. I started as a normal sports kid. And when I started doing things like BMX, the ways that I was kind of alienated and treated, you know, taught me really quickly that that that wasn't the place for me. So my family, my family stayed there. I moved to downtown Rochester early and lived there until I until I moved to Long Beach. to parents, as I said, One sip one sibling, my dad is a very smart guy consultant, did a bunch of really, really excellent work for school districts, help helping kids helping transportation, admirable stuff, challenging weird stuff. And we couldn't have be more different. But some of the positive things I took from him were the attention to detail with writing and language. The fact that there's never nothing to work on. I don't know if that's positive or negative, but it's served me well, sometimes. But the biggest thing really was was attention to language and attention to making notes of things that were important. And as as a writer, I, if I hadn't had made notes, when I was younger, I would have lost so much credibility in the stories I tell them out. But my dad was always big on contemporaneous notes, I had no idea what that meant as a kid. But it basically just meant writing down important details of stuff that happened or that you thought, so that you had a record of it. And I've referred back to those for so many stories and pieces of writing and conversations and things like that. My mom worked for my dad most of the time. And that's it, we also could not possibly be more different.



James Geering 08:32

Well, I want to get back to what you said for a second because I can relate to that intensely. You said that you tried the classic kids sports. And you know, then you connected with the extreme sports at the BMX. When I was young, I loved skiing. Windsurfing got into martial arts, but it was the most I remember the over and over again, which Which team do you support as in football or soccer? And I was like, I don't. And they were like, you know, there was this whole What the fuck? What kind of weirdo you're not a real British person? And then I'd be like, Yeah, I like I like fighting and it'd be like, Oh, okay, yeah, like fighting. And then you get your man card back instantly. But it was interesting, because yeah, there's these parameters. If you don't

like football, or baseball or basketball in the US, then you're a weirdo. So, when you look back, and uh, what impact did that have on you as a young kid? Was it a positive thing that you felt like you didn't fit in? Or was it a struggle at first?



09:26

So I'm, I'm not sure that it never really took a total turn to positive. But when I when I was a kid, especially that time, that era, there was no glamour to being a weirdo. It wasn't it wasn't homogenized like it is now. I mean, BMX now even hardcore now is it's popular. It's things that a lot of nice, normal people watching, do and enjoy. back then. It wasn't, you know, late 80s, early 90s. Those things were looked at as extremely unusual and In a weird, you know, stingy, stodgy suburb like that, I was I was, I was treated poorly, that's for sure. I was good at sports, I enjoyed them, I still enjoy them. But the team sports element of it was was tough for me, because it was really just an excuse for people that excelled in those things to behave like this, and not get any type of criticism for it. And that was something else than even just reading the magazines and getting into the cultures of BMX, and the cultures of hardcore music, it it was the antithesis of that, I would go to a BMX demo, and the famous guys that I was watching, right would come over and speak with us and give us stickers and we were their little homies, you know, and, you know, meanwhile, a kid that was, you know, second string quarterback on a Fairport football team would treat you like you were, you know, a second class citizen. So that didn't go over particularly well with me and high school was was, was not a super fun time for me. And it was basically just because I realized quickly that if you took shit from those people, then they would give you shit. And I didn't take any shit from them. So we had a contentious relationship, and high school was not my favorite. But, you know, I made a bit what I needed to do. I traveled a lot during that time for for both hardcore and BMX. And I was I was, I was in an interesting position, because I would go and do these really, really interesting fun things, even even sometimes being celebrated for them, and then come back to school and be treated like a like a pariah. It was a strange, it was a strange mix for a kid to deal with. I was I was I was angry about some of it. But I was also correspondingly pleased that I had found those other paths. And I really just kind of doubled down on that.



James Geering 11:56

My son is varsity track athlete. And he like often says, Yeah, I was walking through the change room and the baseball team is there. This kid said this and there's always like making fun of the track runners. And I'm like, did you just tell them that they play baseball like to me that is that is the ultimate comeback. You throw a ball and eat sunflower seeds. There's nothing impressive about that whatsoever. But it's so crazy because they all play for teams from their own school. And that's what I don't understand this arrogance with some there's some beautiful, you know, sportsmanship and camaraderie but some of this you know, the football player that the kind of American jock let you see in the movies, which is so weird for an English person to watch that when I was young, because that just didn't happen. But this jock mentality, put the geek in the locker, you know, you hear about us sometime that's a real thing. Like how the fuck were you ever educated to think that by throwing a ball or putting a ball into a ring, or hitting the ball suddenly makes you a superior human being? I never understood that.



12:57

And neither of us will ever understand. Thanks, thankfully. But but really No, I mean, not to not to over glamorize it. But that's, that's exactly what high school was, like. It was, it was like they had achieved some type of super social status, you know, they've been given keys to an imaginary city. And I just, I really didn't like it because as, as I watched closer, you know, they would push the weirdos around. And it was it was kind of when weirdo culture started becoming a thing. The music, the music, tenancies shifted people's people's, you know, appearance and style of dress, and things like that shifted around those times. And it created some some interesting divisions. And I don't really remember them all that finally, I remember at least a few times, things not going particularly well, you know, jocks, or most especially football, kids would pick on my friends and I was no tougher than they were, but I, I'd been around violence already at that time in my life, and I wasn't going to let them pick on my friends. And even a few times it went, it went a little bit far. And even if the football players would start it, I would be the one that got in trouble. And that was that was a real, that was a real introduction to how true authority works for me. One particular instance, a kid was messing with with a friend of mine, and I ended up needing to hit him in the face. And he ended up pummeling me on the ground, but I broke his nose and he wasn't able to play in whatever goofy senior football game was coming up next, and it was like a big deal. And I got pushed around from then on. You know, I'd be walking down the hall and get shoved from the back and what it would be as a football player that was mad that I broke his little buddies nose and he couldn't play in his stupid game, you know? So my thought on that was Always, that wasn't my default mode. I've never been a bully I've never been, I've never looked for trouble. But you don't get to do that and not find any type of accountability for it. That never made any sense to me either. So it was, it was a weird line to walk. But it's taught me a lot of important lessons.

**J** James Geering 15:19

Now, when I hear about, you know, the kind of extreme sports BMX skateboard and then the punk rock side, I was kind of amazed that there was obviously what you would think of kind of leaning into what I saw more on that the punks back home, which was, you know, cider and drug abuse and fight and, but there's the straight edge lifestyle, especially in the US. So which of those two passes you find yourself initially as a teenager,

**o** 15:43

yeah. And the big distinction when I was young, especially was was hardcore, and punk. And while there was positive punk, most of most of punk rock at that time was much more what you said, drinking drugs, debauchery. And what I had found early on was was hardcore, mostly stuff from New York and Boston and LA and things like that. And it was, it was very often, not always, but very often kids that look like us. Were doing weird stuff skateboarding, doing doing different stuff, painting graffiti, running around the city causing trouble, but positive positive minded trouble. Most most of them didn't drink many of them, you know, lived very, very simple lifestyles, that's what we could relate to, all we wanted to do was ride BMX, listen to music, you know, run around, and, you know, cause low level trouble and go to shows. And so I found, I found the positive side of it, the, the positive side of it, from a lifestyle standpoint, was, I didn't drink, I didn't do drugs, I didn't get into debauchery and things like that. But there was a lot of violence that surrounded those scenes at that time. And so there was a lot of that around, I got exposed to a lot of that early and learn some learn some rough lessons. But it also gave me a really good sensibility on that. And it was, it was very seldom violence, for the sake of

itself, it was it was always defending something that needed to be defended, you know, if a if a bully security guard went after a small kid or to show well, you know, they got what they got what they got, and you know, if a if a club changed the rules, and it went from all ages to 21, and over, and things got broken, they got what they got. And so it was, it was, it was positive, but it was also very, very different than anything else that I had thought about or known, or what most people had at that time, you know, late 80s and early 90s Hardcore was in the second second wave, I guess, so to speak. So a lot of it was it was still really new. And you know, conceptually and philosophically I was I was all in and then when it started turning into something that looked like it was going to be more of a full on lifestyle for me. I was just, I was just really really pleased and grateful to have to have found it. And so when crazy shit happened or negative things happen, I just I just rolled with it.

 James Geering 18:13

Now more often than not when people have struggled earlier in their life. A mentor usually is the person who can make someone turn a corner now you didn't feel like you fit in in the traditional 1950s version of America. Who did you find who were some of those figures in your whether it's a hardcore the BMX world that steered you into a place where you felt like you belong in a tribe?

 18:37

It's it's such a cool question that the communities themselves at that time were that there were there were singular people, and I'm happy to bring them up. But But in general, at that time, if you saw a kid riding a BMX bike, they were your friend immediately. If you if you went to a show, and there were a handful of kids that look like you that came from a different city or whatever, you were friends immediately the enemy, the enemies, the enemies were society. The enemies were, you know, the wrong minded skinheads they came to the show to cause trouble. The the enemies were the security guards, the enemies were the cops. You know, it was it was there was a lot of solidarity within within those scenes at the time. A lot of that fragmented later and changed a lot but when I was a kid that that's one of the things I remember the most is you could see a kid riding a BMX bike. And you were you were friends right away. You know, you'd be you'd be eating dinner and playing Atari at their house in two hours, you know. And from a from a single out person standpoint, there were a couple people here from Rochester, a guy named Hal Brinley and another another guy named Steve wooden deck that were almost kind of luminaries in the BMX scene even at that time, they were very good at writing. And they'd been doing some interesting stuff and we really just looked up to them. They were just like these. They were just like these Positive minded troublemakers you know, and we really we really love that from from a hardcore standpoint when I was young and so some of the older people took me under their wing a little bit. My friend Eric really helped me learn how to do a lot. With hardcore, we booked a lot of shows together. A lot of them went extremely challengingly There was, like I said, it was a lot of violence at the time, Rochester and Buffalo had a lot of the wrong types of skinheads around. And so as a young kid, we were navigating, you know, contentiousness and violence that was very, very unusual for for a kid of that age to be dealing with and, and I mean, he, he helped me figure all that stuff out. So I was fortunate that the communities themselves provided that, but then there were a few, there were a few single figures that really, it really helped cement in for me.

J

James Geering 20:52

Now, you said it got fragmented later, when when you're thinking about the violence, I'm thinking about football when I was growing up, and I did never grew up in a town that had a well known team with a lot of trouble, but I went to college, and witnessed it a little bit when I was in that in that place in Swindon. But, you know, there was some horrendous violence. And you talk about the skinheads again, I mean, the National Front, which is our kind of version of the kk k, almost, there was a lot of people that didn't care about the game, they just went there to stab people and beat people up and push walls on them. So but you had a sport that initially pull people together until it was corrupted. When you look the same as we're so divided at the moment as a nation, and we I don't think we are, but that's the the message that's being put out there. Well, Greg, you're Yes. And I'm that and you like these people, not like these people. So we should hate each other. When you look at that group that you are with, it was very tight early on, what were the outside influences that started breaking up that tribalism?

G

21:50

Well, you know, the, the bad people coming into the scene to cause trouble, like you just mentioned, actually added solidarity, because the goal was keep the shows keep the venue's you know, protect the kids. And so we did that, and it created kind of a unity and things like that. And that that was something that was very prevalent in the Hardcore scene at the time, is, is that that mindset was never tolerated. It's still it's still isn't. I mean, we, we ran a lot of that out of the city. And it never came back. You know, the shows that we booked here, there was, there was violence, and even several riots at many shows. And it was mostly just people getting squashed for coming in there and trying to cause trouble. Where the fragmenting really started, I believe, was when the strength of opinion became polarizing, like you just mentioned. You know, if some, if someone was a vegan, and someone else was a drinker, and they were in a different city, or they're, you know, they wanted to align with some different crew, or a band talk shit about another band or something like that, it became a lot of weird fighting for no reason, you know, it kind of inter scene fighting, bickering over nothing. And that was that was really really unappealing to me. I was I was and always, always will be someone that if I can hear sincerity and passion in a band, the exact genre that they're playing isn't isn't really an issue for me, I listened to I listened I listened to hardcore and that are very, very different bands, you know, thuggish type of bands from New Jersey and, and more political style, you know, punk bands from from Portland, Oregon, or something like that. If they're sincere and passionate, and they have integrity, I'll listen to it and love it. But for a long time, in hardcore, that didn't really happen you were kind of just a thing. You You were you were you were a straight edge kid, or you were not, or you were a vegan, or whatever the case was. And that always seemed a little bit foolish to me. I got caught up in it for a minute when I was a kid with the straight edge thing simply because I had seen so much damage already from the other path. But I just wasn't mature enough at the time to realize that the path to that improving for everybody was not faulting them for that and attacking them for that. It was just providing a positive outlet for them. And that's, that's I think, where it started breaking off is when people started in fighting BMX was similar. BMX. BMX was similar because money came into BMX money never really came into hardcore until much much later. And but when money came into BMX, then things started to fragment. Mostly mostly for that reason. There was just there was a few too many hands in the cookie jar, and not quite enough cookies and that that created some some polarizing.



 James Geering 25:01

So walk me through your success in BMX and how that took you to the West Coast.

 25:09

Yeah, that's it. So it was funny to think about it in those in those terms. I was never particularly good at BMX riding, I had to work really, really hard at it. And I loved it. And I was durable. And so I didn't really care. But from a small city like this, we ran around a lot. We went and would ride in contests and things like that. There's one particular contest outside of Chicago that I did really well. And I actually got a clip in a very well known video magazine at the time. And that was kind of like a little corner Turner. There was a brand from here called kink BMX that I was integral in the beginning of, and, you know, that was going well, the kid that runs it is a dick, and he still is. And so when I got the opportunity to go to California, I took it, though there was a company called props, Video Magazine, and in 1998, they had the absolutely phenomenal idea to do a, a road rules, parody, called Road fools, in which they took professional BMX riders, put them on an entertainers bus and drove around the country riding different spots. And I got invited on the second road fools trip. And it was just it was just a giant corner Turner. For me, I met a lot of people from the West Coast that I'd never met before. And one of them knew what was happening in Rochester, New the amount of success that I'd had and helping that brand grow, could see that I was working really hard to to ride well also and ended up being able to offer me a job in Long Beach. Soon after getting to Long Beach, he left the position he was in, and it put me in a place where less than a year into moving out there I was essentially running very significant brands in the BMX industry. I was on equipped for it, but I was also over equipped for it. It was a company that was run by money. They made wheelchair tires, and they made millions and millions of dollars selling all manner of tires. They had BMX is kind of a hobby. And I just took it and ran with it. We brought all of our friends brands in because they were the best looking brands. So I had money to funnel into these tiny independent brands that they've never had before. I would sneak and scheme, anything I possibly could to help them make sure that they could grow. And I knew the company that I knew that the parent company had the money. So I didn't I didn't feel the slightest bit bad about and I would fake invoices, I would write dates on things that weren't real, simply to make sure that the small brands that were doing a great job could make what they were going to make and get it out to the public in a larger way. And it went really, really well. It really kind of actually turned a corner for the American BMX market. I was I was following the lead of a guy named Ian Morris. That was from England, Hastings and he was the only one at the time that had done that type of thing, a really kind of writer owned focused distribution company. So we really kind of changed some things over here. That made a lot of people very loyal to me. And it made others dislike me in a significant way. And eventually, that that job at that bike company ended for several relatively negative reasons, not the smallest one, which was someone that I'd looked up to since I was a kid didn't like how we were handling their brand. And I used some star power to influence the owners that I was doing a bad job. And when I wouldn't back down from the conversation, I ended up I ended up leaving. So it was it was a strange ride. California was a great choice. I got to work with my with my, you know, my heroes from childhood. I got to make a ton of money for a lot of great people. But I also got fucked with by people that I had looked up to since I was a kid. I got maligned by people that I had kind of idolized as a boy as writers and company owners and stuff like that. So it was it was positive, but it was also bitter. The silver lining of all of it is that I found my gym in in California.



**J** James Geering 29:46

So let's talk about that and how did you get into the strength conditioning world and then walk me through into your introduction of CrossFit and then the inception one of the very first gyms.

**i** 29:54

Okay, so I trained martial arts prior to ever training, strength and conditioning. And as we spoke about briefly the other day in Aikido when I still lived in Rochester. Kempo karate when I first got to California, because it's what was close to my house, and I could afford it, and then got into grappling and Muay Thai. And then in 2000, late 2000 to early 2003, I found what I call my gym in Long Beach, my instructors, Travis Downing, and Joe Pena had a small facility in Signal Hill, which is North Long Beach. And I walked in the door and never walked out. I was there every single day until I left in May of 2008. And it was wonderful they hybridized without bastardizing. They were they were absolutely just passionate about training. And they, they could see that I was the same. Man, it's strange, I still get emotional thinking about it, because like, they invested in me so much. I mean, they could see that I wanted everything that they could do. And I'd already been injured a lot. I mean, BMX is not a forgiving thing to do. And so they could also see that I wasn't going to slow down no matter what. And I was never reckless, I was never the strongest person in the room. But there was not a single day that I wasn't in pain, and they knew that I was still there. And so, you know, I think I kind of became their product of the system. And we weren't, we weren't early days CrossFit CrossFit, Long Beach. And it was it was great. There was a lot of solidarity around CrossFit. At that time, there was still some intelligence involved. There was still some strategy involved in what it wasn't just what it has become now, which is just, you know, competition and aesthetic based. But even though there was a lot of positives, we still started realizing early that if you were doing paint by numbers, CrossFit, there was nothing left in the tank for anything other than CrossFit. And what we really wanted to do was be stronger and more brutal at martial arts. And for me, also BMX, I was still riding BMX all the time and training grappling kickboxing all the time and getting involved in strength and conditioning. I had to optimize stuff or I would have died. So we started tinkering and moving things around and and omitting and adding what made sense. And it was just always a very critical thinking process, and I loved it. They were great at a lot of things, but they were never closed door about anything. We were we were catch wrestling out with with CSW and Eric Paulsen we were Brazilian jujitsu with with clever Luciano. We were from Inosanto Academy. It was SIOP there. I mean, they were just you know, man, it they were just they were so so talented to survive. I mean, they were they were just incredibly talented individuals. And I was I was thrilled to be there. And we looked at CrossFit that same way. What Why would we do exactly what everyone else is doing if our goals are different than what they're doing? And our our thing wasn't crushed, hitting better. We wanted to be better martial artists, you want it to be more complete and more athletic and more violent. And if you put yourself in the bag every single day, then that became impossible. So that's kind of the beginning of transitions into into my strength and conditioning was I started realizing when I started grappling and kickboxing that the that the perceived strength I had in something like karate did not really hold up. The only positive attributes that BMX gave me were a great grip and really strong shins. So I was I was at least Okay, in the durability side of Muay Thai and I could hold on to people are grappling. But outside of that I had, I had everything in the world to learn. And that's how I looked at weightlifting too. We had to make a lot of adaptations because I mean, at that point, I had already broken my right wrist twice. I couldn't really front rack a barbell properly. And so that's when I started tinkering with kettlebell lifting adaptations to get really heavy

kettlebells into the front rack. And that was really kind of thrown in the face of CrossFit at the time, too, because they didn't do anything with kettlebells at the time. So anyway, that's that's kind of that's the first the first couple steps.

**J** James Geering 34:29

Now well, that's amazing. So was funny because when we spoke the other day talked about cash rustling I had Eric on the show not too long ago, about probably six eight months ago, because I grew up with the G KUNDO philosophy myself and bear in mind, I'm a farm boy in England. So I it's just me, but I get into these martial arts and, you know, start studying and Bruce Lee started I'm questioning I did aikido for a bit. I did show it to Ken I did taekwondo. And then as we spoke about there's this constant journey of humbling as I went into boxing and Muay Thai and jujitsu and you can't Did you realize okay, here's, here's what works for me, here's what doesn't. And so, from that fundamental concept that Bruce Lee talked about absorb what is useless discard what is useless. absorb what is useful, excuse me. That's what I shifted from my martial arts also to CrossFit. So, yes, when this original gym that you walked through, was there a strong JKD foundation to it, then?

**i** 35:23

Absolutely. I mean, they, they routinely went up to Inosanto Academy and trained, I got to go up there with them only two times, but like, even just being in that room, it's I, I don't know, it's, I just feel really, really fortunate. And the time the timing out there to it was before everything had kind of turned into a big mess. Even Even things like the UFC, we're still very much organic and small time and, you know, kind of growing and things like that. So, you know, watching Eric's success in the Japanese organizations, and you know, watching it was just, it was phenomenal. These people were near me, you know, I mean, Dan is Dan and Asana was someone that was influencing my daily trainings. In train Bruce Lee got to him, you know, what did I walk into here? You know, ours aren't shy is someone that that I hit? I mean, it's I still just stupefied by it. You know?

**J** James Geering 36:17

It's amazing. Yeah. I mean, I, I actually was working on trying to get down on the show, I went to a seminar that he did here in Florida. And then kind of there was a break of communication again. So I'm still trying to do that. Because you talk about the wealth of knowledge. And my wife is actually half Filipino as well. So there's that Philippine connection. So I don't know how I'm going to do it. But that is one of my, you know, people say, Oh, who do you want? The show is no one, no one, you know, not some big film actor or something. I think Dan Inosanto, from my adoration of the G KUNDO. world, when I was young Mattis, someone I have to get on the show and get his wisdom down on tape.

**i** 36:52

I agree with you. And I also believe that Eric would probably love to help with that. But But anyway, so that's that that was that was kind of the inception. And from then on, it was just training and tinkering and learning. And really, exactly as you said, absorb what was useful and

training and tinkering and learning. And really, exactly as you said, absorb what was useful and discard what was useless. And in order to prove it useful, we had to be able to repeat it. One of the concepts that CrossFit did instill in me, even though they don't really adhere to it anymore, is observable, measurable and repeatable. That's been the foundation for everything I've done with strength and conditioning. And it can't just be those things on the highest level athlete with no dysfunctions and a ton of experience, it has to be those things on someone who just walks in the door, or that has an injury, or that has a very specific goal, or a very specific limitation. Because if it only proves itself in one arena, then it doesn't really prove its luck. And that's really been a foundational concept. For me.

**J** James Geering 37:57

It's funny, because Greg is actually in this new world now called the breaking. Oh, my God, I'm forgetting the term now. Anyway, they're, they're challenging the way that studies are done. So I mean, you're talking about it on Chris, for CrossFit itself. But the way that we have kind of just accepted everything that the scientific world has told us is, quote, unquote, proven. And of course, there are studies where, you know, if I let go of an apple and it falls, yeah, gravity is probably a thing. You know, of course, but there's so many things that are loaded and funded by, you know, organizations that prove Yeah, these cigarettes are fine. You ask your doctor, which cigarettes you should have for your health or your cocaine or whatever it is. And then fast forward, you're like, oh, wait a second. No, that was absolute bullshit. So I think it's a really, really important question, especially after the last couple of years for people to take a step back, allow all their emotions to drop down to zero again, and question is this proof, or as you said, is this probability because those are two very different things.

**U** 38:59

And they couldn't be more different in the physical realms, either, which is, which is, I believe a point that many people would contend but that very few people can prove on the pavement like we can. And a quote that we use all the time is science alone will never pull the sword from the stone. And that's, that's really, really important to me, because I've read all that I've, I'm not going to say like some arrogant prick. I've read all the studies. But I've read a lot of sports science. I've read a lot of movement science. I've done a lot of the background research that allows me to tinker educated ly, and simplify language and not overcomplicate with these nerd words that are engineered to just make people think you know what you're talking about. We want to be able to prove it and we want to be able to prove it on anybody. And one thing that we started realizing quickly is that most of the people with the most letters after their name actually knew the least about training people. And I mean, man, if there was one thing that I'm continually convinced of it's that It's disappointing, but the more the more on paper experience they have. And of course, exceptions noted, but the worse they are at actually improving athletes.

**J** James Geering 40:10

Well, I had that myself, I went to I did an exercise physiology. two year degree in London, finished it here and University of Florida, great professors like I enjoyed my classes. But when I looked at the skill set I had when I walked out the door, the only thing that I would say, even contributed slightly to being a train was there was the prep course for the NSCA CSCs that at

least gave you the tools to go take a certification to at least understanding some fundamentals of Strength Conditioning, but outside of that it was myopic study. So his you know, muscular muscle can contractility, this compared to this? Well, that doesn't help me help someone who walked in the door, as you said, with, you know, a cast on their foot, or, you know, an overweight housewife was someone who wants to, to become a firefighter. These are all very, very human skills. And I got so much more from actually going to classes with strong fit or strong first or whatever, and absorbing knowledge that way than I did from the classical higher education model.



41:13

Completely unsurprising and I really couldn't agree more.



James Geering 41:17

So with that, absorb what is useful mentality when I got into CrossFit, like, oh 607 time and was blown away and hands down, had amazing success was introduced to gymnastics was introduced to barbell, it did so many good things and really served me well as a firefighter. But as I progressed, and I touched on strong fit, I found holes in my game, I got some injuries that I was like, Okay, why did I get hurt. And so then I started broadening my horizons a lot more. And so for the firefighter, which is what I was doing, and then and also the fire, the sled work, the sandbags, the calories that became an excellent adjunct to the CrossFit. So the CrossFit would be you know, the movement and the cardio and really the play, like I want to climb ropes I want to be to do some of these things. But the meat and potatoes for me became can I carry a sandbag 200 meters? You know, can I drag a sled Can I push a sled these simulate pulling someone out of a building, advancing a charge hose line carrying gear to a fire. So I found without that there was a huge hole in my game. So you are you know, you're all in a CrossFit at the beginning. Talk to me about the kind of unpacking of the philosophy and how you found your own way to the wolf brigade model that you've started creating?



42:34

Well, we started, we started seeing it as more Completion based, and less composition based. And something that we speak about often in our groups here here all the time, probably ad nauseam. And anyone that's listened to me talk at all knows, I think accuracy is the king of all skills, and accuracy leads to safety, proficiency, longevity. And I credit coming into strength and conditioning from martial arts is teaching me that. I mean, anyone that's trained a legitimate martial art, especially if you've competed at all, especially if you've trained hard, knows that if you, if you complete something inaccurately on someone who is as good or better than you, it's simply doesn't work. That's really, really important information to take away for all physical fields. So we would immediately translate that into into strength and conditioning, if I move worse, but faster, am I really building anything? And the answer the answer for us was No. And the answer for me since then, until today is no. But the interesting thing is one leads to the other while the other never leads back. Higher quality composition always leads to more effective completion, but it never leads the other way back. If you're just focusing on finishing, you're losing something in the process. So those those are, those are big things for us. And the the other idea that CrossFit introduced to us by not introducing it to us is focusing on the power

source, not the extension cords. So the way that we consider the trunk and midline, stability and all that kind of stuff is if you build the power source correctly, the the extension cords are going to do whatever you want. So high rep barbell snatches for time, and people that can't air squat, for example, or people that can't do a dead hang pull up. For people that can't carry something, you know, half the length of a football field. It's just cart before horse always has been, always will be. And when we see people come from those fields into our place, they're often very, very discouraged because they can't lift as much weight as they thought they could when they did it right. Some people don't care and great if you don't care. Great if all you're doing for training is CrossFit obsessing about cross fit, talking about crossing with your friends and trying to win at a training day, you're probably not going to think what we're saying is important. But if what you're trying to do is transfer skills to other realms and train forever, then what we're saying is vitally important.

**J** James Geering 45:18

Why does that show Eastbound and Down he was the Danny McBride. Excuse me, McBride plays the baseball player, and he talks about I don't want to be the best at working out. That is how I viewed you know, I mean, I've said this from day one, I really, really owe so much to CrossFit, I still I'll probably go to a class today. But I'm always looking for those other things. I've been a martial artist my whole life, and I'm much more concerned about being able to choke someone out and knock them out with my hands than I am be able to do a snatch. But what I've seen, and this is something that I witnessed as a coach is, for example, the butterfly pull up. Like to me, as you said that the gold standard is the strict pull up. And then if you're going to do a kip than a gymnastic Kip, that actually relates to being able to get to the top of the Rings. So you can do a German hang, you know, there's there's an element of that. But when you look at the inception of the butterfly stroke, and swimming, it was trying to find loopholes, there was breaststroke, both hands are gonna lose move at the same time, both legs, and someone figured out a way around the rules. And then you had that. And that's what I started seeing. And that that lack of movement, I've always, I've always made sure that I'm doing the full range of motion and not looking at the clock. But I think that's because I have a background, all these things. And as you said, martial arts is a huge thing that's such attention to detail. Even if you think about shutter count or something in a you compete in in cartel forms, you are being judged by the accuracy of your ownership of your proprioception. And then now all of a sudden, we're shortcutting in CrossFit, because you want to, quote unquote, win. And this is what I tell my athletes when I coach is that hey, do you see that? See all those medals hanging up on the shelf, and they look and they're like, No, it's exactly because there's no fucking medals, you're not trying to win today, we're trying to practice you are going to do repetitions of movement that your body will remember, so do them properly.

**i** 47:11

And when we see people competing in a group class setting, they're very often shortchanging the most important elements of what that training truly is, in order to win the training day. And an important point to note too, is is healthy competition in certain things in a training realm is super important. But for us, we've whittled it down to the highest reward, lowest risk stuff, you know, if you want to compete with someone in in completing 25 calories on an Aerodyne and 250, jump rope, great, that's perfect, it's very low risk, it's very high reward, it shows an awful lot of things, especially when completed as it should be at the end of a training day and not

beginning. And then then you have that. So you're you're satiating that competitive need, but without doing it to a point where you're compromising the purpose or function of the training. And it's possible to do both, but most people just really haven't dove in deep enough to understand that. I mean, we build strong, powerful, extremely technical, extremely transferable athletes, that can also do all kinds of stuff really fast and really hard. And it's just, it's just a matter of how you're structuring the training. It's, it's, you know, strategy and detail, and composition over simple completion.

 James Geering 48:34

Now, I know that you've discarded some movements from, you know, traditional CrossFit. One thing that I've observed, even within myself, I'm not known for being great at snatching at all. But when you give a firefighter for example, especially one that maybe is not in good condition, they're trying to find their way back, they've got over their, their ego, and they've got the courage to show up and say, Okay, I need to get back to where I used to be. And you give them a sandbag. And you say, just walk over there, and then come back, and you give them a sled and say, just push this around the building, there's no real fear of looking stupid. And there's no barrier to them actually getting the work done that they need to. But when you take a complex movement, like a snatch, for example, now, the skill more often than not gets in the way of the actual workout that you're trying to do the demand of, you know, the physiological system that you're hoping that person will achieve. So what was some of the movements that you ended up discarding? And then what are some of the implements and movements that you've brought in instead?

 49:38

Thanks, great question also, and we've already covered two of them. We call them wiggle fucking pull ups. We don't do any wiggle fucking pull ups. And instead of that, what we'll do is, is make the distinction that a partial pull up, performed in an excellent hollow body position is far better than a wiggling full pull up. When it comes to strength development when it comes to midline stability development, so all those goofy ass things the overhead kettlebell swing was created because Glassman doesn't like Pawel, there is no purpose to that movement in any way, shape or form. We discarded that and like probably 2006 2007 and barbell snatch, we teach ground to shoulder, we teach ground overhead with something called a tall slam ball, which is essentially just a medicine ball that bounces hold from below the knees to overhead and back. We do a ton of power clean with the barbell, we do a ton of high pole plus goblet catch with kettlebells that are correspondingly heavy medicine balls. So all of the fundamental timing issues are handled. All the fundamental strength and power and things are built from the ground to the shoulder, or the barbell snatches is to high risk and low reward for a generalist training group. And so we get overhead with kettlebell snatches. We do a lot of as I said, Great pull ups and chin ups. We do mace presses and mace shovels. And so we covered of course, tons of excellent powerful ground overhead barbell strict press, of course. But barbell snatches is something we took out, we don't do full versions of clean or snatch because the technical demands for a generalist training group and versus the risk reward too high. We have a ton of people that if we taught them that they would do that heavy and well, immediately, because they squat phenomenally, they have excellent timing. But when we think about, you know, the juice for the squeeze the full versions of cleans and snatches, I've never thought we're we're part of a generalist training program. And when I look, and I see the most

technically inaccurate performances anywhere, it's that stuff done fast for time. So we cover those, we cover those positions, we cover those systems, we just don't cover them in those ways.

**J** James Geering 52:04

Well, that's one thing that I've observed as a coach, and then within myself as well is, there's again, this kind of get swept away from the competition element of CrossFit, where you've got people trying to snatch, that can't even do an overhead squat with a rigid triangle, you know, with their arms in the barbell, it's maintaining an upright body position. So we have it again, backwards, we've got these people, as you said, that are trying to keep pull ups without being too strict pull ups, we've got people trying to catch a snatch, especially in the squat position, who simply cannot go from a standing position down to a deep squat and back up with even 50% of the weight they're trying to catch in the snatch. So again, it's just one of those things where I had Chad Vaughn on, you know, one of the best Olympic lifters for a long, long time, Wes Barnett and other one, those men in this case, are absolute masters of their craft. But when you look at how much work and the Olympic lifter puts in, it's very arrogant to think that you're an accountant, and you go to a CrossFit gym two or three times a week, and you'll be able to master that skill. So most of us, sadly, with our immobility is from modern life, and the lack of, you know, the ability to train for that movement. It's just asking too much, and like you said, putting us in some very bad positions.

**o** 53:17

Well, it's, it's a little bit arrogant from the athlete, but But it's more so kind of irresponsible and naive from a trainer standpoint, you have to be able to assess your athletes. And if you can't dial in a position to the point where it's accurate, you either switch tools, or you switch strategies in that order. If someone can't get a barbell overhead, you have to have the option based on technical ability with those tools to put a kettlebell or a mace over your head. If you can't do any of those things, then you change the strategy. That's something that I'm extremely critical of Is CrossFit did a very excellent job of making most people think that it's the only way to get generalist skill. And that is just absolutely 100% Not the case. In fact, when we see people come in that are modern CrossFitters, their skill level and movement is usually absolutely poor. And that sucks. I don't like thinking about that. I don't like CrossFit now, and I have no love at all for Glassman. But I do respect where it put me when I found it in the early 2000s. I don't respect where it is now. And partially it's because in a sense, I believe that it's a trick because they have done an extremely effective job making people think that that is the be all end all to being a brutal, capable athlete. And in fact, for many people I've seen, it's been the opposite of that.

**J** James Geering 54:42

Well, a big aha moment, like I said, was was the strongman stuff. So what I realized is what we weren't doing, at least in the programming that I was following from the main site early early on, and then and then the programming our Legion, was we weren't really moving way over distance. So as a firefighter, I'm not standing there by an engine You know, I've got to go pull things off the engine, carry them to the building, break doors in, you know, make entry pull



people out, etc. And so that's why I love the carry. So that was an incredible, you know, like missing piece for me. And it was illustrated Ted has a thing every year called fenders mayhem, and you get a lot of these high level CrossFitters and we would demo these movements for the video to say, hey, here's what to expect. And these people would come and they'd fall apart some of them if they weren't training in those movements. And then they'd be like, How the fuck did that skinny English guy move this stuff? You know when we can't and then this exact exactly the point because that was definitely you know, one area. Now another thing I think about being a first responder is that kind of the different planes of motion as well. So when it comes to mesas, if I'm, you know, using, you know, a hand tool or you know, anything where it's coming a different plane rather than up and down. Again, this is an area where I think Mason kettlebells really fill fill that gap that was also missing, I think, in some of the traditional programming. So talk to me about the different planes of motion and unless you said that midline stability, they're so important.



56:08

Yeah, Geez, it's almost, it's almost, it's almost comical to think that life or sport moves in a straight line. And so when we see a lot of people come in, that have mostly done that type of training, it's it's challenging for them to start moving in lateral ways. And something else that's important to note, I believe, is that when you're when you're talking about building generalist capacity, you have to consider the training language. And also the idea that scaling is not a demotion. So a lot of people think that kettlebell lifting or mace lifting is some scaled down version of barbell lifting. And really what happens is when you combine those three tools, in a very strategic, excellent, accurate way, they create the most thorough, generalist athletes I've ever seen. And I would put that on the table with anyone walking the earth. And that doesn't happen overnight. And it doesn't happen with looking at one tool is lesser than another tool. We love the barbell. We use it every week, we use it heavy, we use it accurately. But we also use kettlebells and masons and that's what creates the circuit. So the kettlebell lifting engineering that we've done, came from the fact that there wasn't really a lot of that involved in CrossFit. But I didn't understand why because pound for pound, it's much harder tool to use. It feels much heavier. If you take a 45 pound kettlebell and a 45 pound bar, the kettlebell feels heavier, harder to move. You do the same thing with 115 pound kettlebell and 15 pound bar, the difference only becomes more clear. So when we started reengineering, kettlebell lifting in like 2006 2007, it was because we had started reaching structural maxes with the old fashioned internal rotation, single arm kettlebell lifts. Our people could lift more, but the missing link weakest link was the internal rotation at the bottom. So I started shifting stuff from a vertical pistol grip to 10 or 15 degrees in but never going again past parallel. And what it did was open up an entirely new door. And now our people there's no ceiling on the weight that they can lift we have we've we've we've engineered stacked hand positions that work with the pistol grip, that allow people to move tremendous amounts of weight. We've got people kettlebell front squatting, and back squatting 220 pound kettlebells. We have women that can that can lift more than their body weight and kettlebells to their shoulder and into the back rack. Additionally, no one else had ever done. Back loaded kettlebell squats, we figured out a very organized way to do kettlebell back squats, because we needed a posterior load that wasn't a barbell. And, you know, in my opinion, and I know that there's people that will definitely disagree with this, and I'm happy to contend it anytime they'd like, if you're still teaching an internal rotation at the bottom of kettlebell lifting, you're under servicing your trainees, and you're not lifting as heavy as you can. And if the point is to build as much strength as we can, with as little risk as we can, without having to over volumize why would we not do things the most efficient and powerful way? So we'll never go back because we're sold

tenfold and so is so is all the high level people that we train remotely. And then with the Masons, it was a similar story. I got a hold of the Mason 2005 Great guy named Jake Shannon's cat wrestling guy. I got to train at his place in southern California a little bit and, and I always credited him with introducing me to the mace. There wasn't a ton of detail around it. All Old, old timey wrestlers and then Indians for hundreds and hundreds of years. It's been it's been a staple in Indian wrestling culture for hundreds of years. But they don't detail it they do just do it. It's just it's just a component of their of their training. It's a, it's a component of their lifestyle. So I started seeing how valuable it could be and just started putting details on the books with it and started teaching with it. In Long Beach started adding movements that weren't done, no one had ever swung a mace in the front plane. Prior to us doing it, it was just the 360s and things like that. A very rudimentary version of the of the shovel had existed. And once we started sharpening it, then we realized that not only was it this rotational powerhouse, that transferred perfectly to martial arts, of course, but it was also a diagnostic and development tool for all the primary patterns, it makes the most accurate, simple squat to teach ever. It makes the most accurate, effective hinge position to teach ever. And it's just it's become a it's become a really, really irreplaceable tool in our toolbox. And we've helped a lot of people improve from a technical standpoint, lit a lot of corners, people that have been injured that couldn't do other stuff, or needed some stability. The mace provides that because the distance between your hands allows for a ton of leverage and stability. It's a it's a, it's a Swiss army knife. And it's in my opinion, it's a secret weapon, because because most people still haven't dug really into it.

J

James Geering 1:01:18

Well back to the kettlebells. For a second, the way you were talking about the way we were traditionally taught to swing from one of the big aha moments that I learned from Julian pugno from the strong fit side was when he looked at the hand position, you think about the deadlift, the clean the snatch the pull up, we were always in this pronated grip. And when the when he's kind of started educating me on that specifically, I started trying to do reverse grip pull ups, and I was like, Holy fuck, like my arms don't even want to turn this way anymore. So was that one thing that you realize is that we are stuck in that grip in in CrossFit. So the moment you start allowing those arms to rotate, you're putting that balance back in, which in turn is then creating that strength?

U

1:02:04

Well, well, absolutely. And one of the ways that we helped address that with people that were finding what you found, is really organized kettlebell halos with extensions. Also, also things like dips, dips, or this dips, or this so often removed thing because they're very challenging, and most people don't teach them particularly well. And if you're using a slightly angled dip bar facing out, then you're getting that new external rotation that you're missing and so many other lifts. Additionally, I mean, our warmup is simple and thorough and very much the same each day. There are chin ups in every single warm up there pull up in Israel, so chin up, because that that's one thing that we did find is is and I mean Geez as as a BMX rider and a kickboxer and a grappler. I was here for for, I mean, decades, you know, so the idea of meeting any more internal rotation was absurd. And what we were finding is that when people would get hurt in kettlebell lifting, it was trying to overwhelm the weakest link, which is that big internally rotated arm at the bottom. So essentially, we were just, we were just removing a very

obvious weakest link. And replacing it was something that was that was provable in in every skill level. The only knock I've ever heard on changing that is, well, how are you training internal rotation? And I've always kind of laughed at that, because that's where everything else is. And so you're getting plenty of that. And my only other response to that is everything you do with the mace if you're doing it properly and heavy enough to be useful.

 James Geering 1:03:43

Have you ever seen a documentary called The motivation factor?

 1:03:46

No, I'm gonna write it down right now, though.

 James Geering 1:03:48

This is what's so sad. I've asked so many people in the strength conditioning world and no one has heard of this. So this guy ended up having on the show, Doug orchard, amazing documentary. He basically details or tells the story of the California high school in the late 50s, early 60s that adopted basically what was the Russian model initially, and they had back to our martial arts background, they had almost like a belt system for their high school kids for this Pe program. Well, the whole school mandatory had to do this program. And for each level that you got, and you did it in teams, so you were a group that had to rise up together, which you could imagine all the positive benefits of that. But then there was you know, way shorts and then red shorts, and I think gold maybe or Blue was that was a top one I forget. But the the best kids in this group. I mean, you see clips of these kids, any one of them could be on the front cover of Muscle Fitness, but none of them are bodybuilding. But that's the physiques that these 18 year old kids had. But it was such a beautiful philosophy. Firstly, all this was basically bodyweight stuff but the Indian Clubs I'm almost certain there was an element of that certainly the people in it In this story, we're using them if not the kids themselves, but but it was the long long dip bar. So they would do the dips, they would shuffle along, up and down. It was pull ups, it was pegboards, it was partner carries. And so their philosophy was the least fit kid is still going to be fit. But now if some of these kids want to be baseball players, and you know, football players and bullied kids are probably not bullied kids, because they actually work together and understand community. So I think bullying was probably low as well. But you had the strength and conditioning already. So now you could just go and learn how to play the sport. But so they had several of these graduates that were now you know, in their 60s, that still did the same thing. So I thought that was such an amazing model. But that got shut down because of you know, all the politics around it. And there was one school that was sad in the documentary, they had actually, given it a rebirth, they'd actually I think, was a middle school. And they started it. And then when I interviewed Doug, is that you know what, sad, they shut it down during COVID, and then never came back again. So that's a very, very long intro into with all the background that you have now with all the safe movements that you can do with very inexpensive implements. What is your perspective on PE and sports and the way that we introduce our children to movement that either sets them up for success or failure when they become adults?



1:06:26

Yeah. Geez, good, good questions. I think a lot of it has to do with transferable language, when we're when we're teaching and when, when we're sharing ideas with people, I want the language to be transferable to whatever they're doing, you know, a term we use is violence of action. If you're committed to playing a sport, if you're committed to training properly, if you're committed to safely lifting the most weight that you can structurally bear, the concept of violence of action has to be there. If you're planning on fighting anyone, if you're a law enforcement, if you're on fire, you're in a military violence of action, not present in your training means that you're not sharpening that edge for your actual performance. In another one, we use this floor to extremity power. You know, everyone here is core to extremity. But if people don't know how to address the floor, they don't know how to make power. And so that's transferable to every single sport, everywhere, forever. And then, obviously, the lateral side of things has been transferring in really, really powerful ways. We've had the opportunity to work directly with UFC Performance Institute. We're working directly now with with both Santa ball and Texas a&m University, and specifically the golf team that's had a ton of success recently. And they're doing our stuff they're doing kettlebell and mace stuff, they're doing it well. They're doing it heavy. And it's transferring to things like golf. It's incredible. So a lot of a lot of a lot of it, I believe goes into training language and movement strategy. And you know, we call it micro details, but it's it's the small things that really lead to the bigger the bigger increases in performance, performance improvements. When it comes to youth, physical development and sports, they need to be developed in the same patterns. They just don't need to be developed with the same amount of weight. When we train kids, and we do it and we do it well. They're using extremely light maces that they can use to make sure that positions are accurate. Sometimes it's a sport ball on the end of a PVC pipe to replicate a mace so that there's still a tiny bit of leverage, but there's no weight demand. They're given the same types of language that the adults are given. We we had a phenomenal program for a short while called wolf brigade cubs, we worked very hard to get it in the public schools here. It was squashed out at the beginning of canceled culture because Antifa said that I was a white supremacist. So the the the hard earned public school arm of wolf brigade. That was that was creating absolutely exactly what you said solidarity, camaraderie, physical skill was squashed out. Because people don't like how we look and don't like how we articulate things. So to your point, I believe it's absolutely crucial that kids are shown and taught movement accuracy, but also in a competitive type of setting. It isn't a team sport. Because some people are minded for that, and some people aren't. But the idea of camaraderie, the idea of working together, but but against each other in some context is excellent. It's important, it's crucial, and it keeps people it keeps people from wanting to bully each other. It keeps them wanting to bolster each other and help each other out. As opposed to maligning each other for for whatever bullshit comes up. And of course, there's no shortage of that in society now. I think that if I think that if the standards for Physical Culture lower much more, it will be impossible to recover them. Because what we've already seen, and you're the last person I need to tell this is it's translating all the way up into law enforcement, military and fire to the point where physical standards are getting removed. Because people are so far gone, that they can't even maintain a minimum. That starts as a kid, you know, if you're, if you are brutally athletic kid, and 10 or 12, or 15 years later, you decide that you want to, you know, be a cop or be a firefighter, be a military person, you're going to at least have kept some of that sensibility and physicality. So, I believe it's foundational, and I believe it's, it's more important now than it's ever been, but it I don't think it's going to I don't think, I don't think it will research. I think everyone is too scared of their own shadows now to actually treat kids properly in a physical sense.

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James Geering 1:10:56

Well, I mean, firstly, it's so heartbreaking because Kancil culture was, you know, huge during COVID. You know, how dare you suggest that, you know, that. I mean, you can't, you know, you can't come see my grandma, because you're not vaccinated in the other person. But, but it was a Chinese conspiracy. It's all bullshit, you know, and as these voices, which is nauseating, but then you have the fat shaming voice, you know, as a paramedic, I was the last face and poor people, I mean, this, you could have a decent looking face, but it was mine that you saw, and then you stopped, your heart stopped, and I stuck a tube down your throat, and I put pads on your chest, and we try to bring you back. And then we put a sheet over you. So it's not about shaming, it's about people listening to the show know exactly the fucking ugly side of the obesity epidemic. 70% of Americans are overweight or obese. The school conversation, I think, is a contributing factor. Because what I've seen with British eyes come into this country, is we have this high level of performance in our children, more often than not at the expense of their wellness and longevity. So you'll overfeed the high school linebacker, no, it's okay, you get fat, get fat, you're fine. Because then you'll be a brick wall. I don't give a shit. If you have a coronary you know, when you're 30. That's not my problem. I want to win this thing. And then you know, and so there was so many kind of Uncle Rico stories where these kids, you know, had all the best intentions, but they were coached terribly, whether it was a coach, whether it was parents living vicariously through them, and then they were excelling at 18. And then their body fucking fell apart. I mean, it's tragic that you see so many kids that have had these surgeries that are still children. That is that is paramount child abuse, in my opinion, same ways, as feeding a kid till they become a morbidly obese. So we have a responsibility as a society to nip in the bud some of these cancerous, toxic Council voices, if it's not aligning with the mental and physical wellness of our community.

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Yeah, I mean, there's a period of the end of that sentence that is extremely well said, we get to see it here, a lot. And one way I get to see it is we work with an absolutely tremendous recovery facility here called pitsford, performance care, geniuses, and I don't throw that word around lightly. We've been working with them for 12 years now. And I've seen absolutely utter miracles come out of that place. And we've gotten to train some of them. I mean, there's a few stories that may may be fun to share in that respect, please. But But But what we see is, a lot of the kids that come in there from sports are very, very poorly trained, and I have no dog in this fight. If people want to send their kids to us to get trained, they're going to they're going to be trained well. But I'm not I'm not a youth trainer that's trying to disparage other trainers. But I can identify bad training when I see it. And these kids are terribly trained. They're they're beaten into the ground by playing four sports in a row. They're still eating totino, his fucking pizza rolls, and then they get sent to this facility to be treated. The treatment is excellent. But then when one of the doc's there recommends they do some smarter diagnostic and development training with someone like us. They're too busy. You know, they don't want to go across town, all this kind of stuff. And it's like, there's just there's just a laziness to it. That, like you said, I mean, it's child abuse is such a strange way of putting it but it's not far from that when you're a 1617 year old kid and you've had six concussions from playing team sports, or when you've had two knee surgeries and your parents will not will not think outside the box in order to help you recover properly. What are we saying about the priority there is a priority winning a high school sports game. And if there is any potential for a future athletic career in college or beyond, those kids are going to get trounced if they come in there as as, as you

know, strawman, if they come in there is already broken down. So of course, I agree with all that. And it would be an enormous paradigm shift to inch to introduce accuracy to youth movement. And of course, and as you know, also, a lot of the trouble is that the volleyball coach is also the strength and conditioning coach. And the history, let me, let me, let me tell you what, I'm not going to teach fucking volleyball, because I don't know anything about fucking volleyball. So it's, it's one of those things that I just can't get my head around, because there's so much to be gained. But there's also so much at risk. It's not a guessing game, you know. And when we when we see high school athletes even even come into our place that have managed to not be catastrophically injured, the amount of bad habits they have that has to be beaten out of them, is incredible. And it's it's it's it's a testament to their durability that they're not injured. But But man, it's tough. It's tough to watch stuff to watch. And to circle back, it's on topic, on topic, but off topic. The other thing that I think makes that difficult is that the language of scaling, movement and scaling performance is treated like a demotion. And one of the things that we've put an enormous amount of time in and we've had a tremendous amount of success with is strategic and accurate scaling, that has allowed people to actually make progress. Scaling is only a demotion if you don't work as hard once the adjustment is made. And so when you put intelligent progress minded scaling on the table, you're able to pull progress out of anyone that wants to make progress. And that really needs to be implemented in kids as well. Because Because training is never a one size fits all, especially when you're young. So it's it's it's a lot of things that could that could be addressed. But I I think glass half empty on a lot of those fronts, we've seen what schools do, they roll over at the slightest contention. And if they keep rolling over like that, then they're gonna end up getting what they get.

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James Geering 1:17:14

Well, I think the other thing just to be fair play devil's advocate is I've seen, my son has had some incredible coaches. But you know, I'd like to think as as the parent that I am, and making sure he's not overtraining and making sure that he has other influences, too. But, you know, kudos to some of these coaches, because they're also the math teacher, or I think I think my son's track coach is the vice principal, you know, so they get, I mean, pennies to do what they do. And a lot of them are out there, investing a lot of time, but like you said, there's one thing being in charge of that sport. But if we're talking about the well being of our children, there needs to be a professional in that school, who is the strength conditioning person who is that that's their, their world, their expertise, and hopefully has the humility to maybe be open to the modern strength conditioning principles that are out there at the moment, like the ones that you have, as

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well. And if there was an asterix put on this entire conversation, it could be exceptions noted. Because anytime I'm saying anything that resembles negative, I understand that there are shining examples of the opposite. And I respect him to the absolute peak. And we and we always tout that it's, it's so important to think about, but not bringing up the darker side of it is also irresponsible, because then often people just simply don't know. We have people that trained at our place, and even some that are that are trainers at our place that work in high schools, and that our sports coaches alongside of that, and the sensibilities and movement, accuracy and training concepts that they learn from us and practice in their own in their own



work, translate to that, whether they're teaching track, whether they're teaching skiing, whether they're teaching, you know, just youth, pe all of these kids are benefiting from the accurate details. So it's also a trickle down from the adult learning environment. So many so many gyms, especially mixed modality, gyms are not places of learning, there are places of doing. And we always want to be a place of learning. I want I want to think that we could take anyone that's been in our place for six months or more. And if they needed to put them in front of a group to teach what they know, and that it would be accurate. I'm not saying that they're ready for it. I'm just saying that that's something that I think about a lot. And that's just that's just, that's what's going to trickle down. Whenever it gets the chance to trickle down, whether they're training their own kids, whether they're getting an opportunity to train someone at school, whether they're helping their spouse, whatever the case is, and we've seen it we've seen it so many times when people fall in love with details. They want to share them because they know how much better they feel and how much better they're able to put form. And jeez, we see that with kids to like, what when, when they see that aha moment, when something feels really, really good, and they feel powerful, and they feel accurate. They love it. And, and you know, as as you know, as a martial artists detail but gets detail, if you're not paying attention to your details and lifting, then you're not doing full justice to your martial art, or your sport, or whatever else you're doing. Because our brains don't know the difference. In the same way, as your brain doesn't know the difference between a barbell and a kettlebell, it just knows if you lift it well, or lift it poorly. It doesn't know if you're throwing a ball at a wall. Or if you punching someone in the face. You know, it doesn't know if you're bear hugging a 200 pound medicine ball or if you're picking some motherfucker up and tossing them over your shoulder. So when they're looked at the same and when they're addressed the same day, you know, not surprisingly, the transfer well.

J

James Geering 1:20:52

Absolutely. Well, that was a good segue picking the motherfucker up and put on your shoulder. So let's talk about the tactical athlete. So again, the Asterix I've always very, very, very, very fair because this is something that is a huge deficit in the first responder community, especially the firefighters or the the US, we work them into the ground, like their work week is fucking ridiculous. And then they're, they're understaffed a lot of times she's another thing we'll kind of get into but so now those men and women, it's not the people in the in the offices that pick up the slack, it's the men and women that have just worked 24 hours straight that a told seven o'clock in the morning, before they go home to see their kid on their birthday, you can't go home, you need to stay another 24 hours. So the environment the love of these men and women with the shifts and the sleeplessness sets them up for failure. There's no other way describe it. If you take an athlete and look at human performance, and you behold a mirror, and what would be the polar opposite. It's how we work our responders. So that is the environment that we're working with. That being said, though, let's go back to the dark side. Let's go back, dip your knuckles in glass. And let's let's, you know, pull out some raw truths through your eyes. Because we had a conversation on this a few days ago. What are you seeing with the first responder community through your eyes, and then let's talk about some of the solutions we can bring to the problems?

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Yeah, I will reimagine that asterisk, because my respect for the ones in those communities that actually put their full ass into learning and training in intelligent ways is insanely high,



extremely high. It's why I invest so much in it. And it's why I invest in it for a very, very little return. I'm not a money focused person, but I haven't gotten paid to train the cops since 2012. So what Okay, so So then taking the gloves off a little bit from the top down. And what I'm talking about is I've ended up having the opportunity to moonlight and train some very high level tactical groups, in some relatively private settings a couple of times. One in particular, I just happened to be there for something else. And a few people noticed that I was there and asked if I was there to train them. And I ended up training them. What it turned out is that they were in day four of, of a tactical training block. And there was not one of them that could identify the difference between a hinge and a squat. There was not one of them that understood how to make power with their hips in a kettlebell swing. I only saw a few of them male or female doing anything that resembled a push up. And the overall movement quality and the ability to receive the information that I was providing with clarity and brevity was terrible. I was frustrated. But it also made me want to help. So I did, and I trained them for several hours. And most of them said that it was the first time they'd ever heard most of those details. That is a huge problem. The fundamental patterns and optimizing them in a 360 degree model type of way is the most important for first responders, law enforcement and military because they are by nature, not linear. So trickling down to what we do on a more regular basis. When we see cops come in that have only been trained in the police academy, their physical skill sets are at last sip levels. There's there's really not much to speak of there. Most of the cops that take two years off of training after the academy thinking that they got the Batman belt and they're all set when they come in to see us their physical liabilities to themselves. And occasionally we get them in they're like wow, okay, this is the key to the kingdom with this is this is simple and accurate. It's it's quality over quantity. So I'm not beating myself into the ground if I'm working if I'm working a full two day shifts. And I get two days a week of training, I'm still getting something positive out of that not just getting beaten into the ground. So a quality over a quality over quantity model is most important for anything first responders, law enforcement, military fire. But it's so rare, because when they do get a chance to train, they just either want to go balls to the wall, or they want to lift heavy and get that adrenaline rush and go home. And neither translates to the job. So oftentimes, when cops come in, and their egos get ahead of them, which very often does. And I don't say this in a goading type of way, but it's important for them to hear, I'll point at one or two people in the room, and I'll say, you couldn't arrest them for money right now. If you had to. They're not fighters. They're not professional fighters. They're just very, very strong people that understand their bodies and are extremely durable and athletic, and would respond with violence of action and accuracy, if they were addressed. The idea that 75 to 80% of the cops out there could not arrest a mid level member in our gym without a Batman belt and some help is terrifying. Of course, it proves that there's strength and conditioning lacking. It also proves there's there's continuing education and martial arts lacking at this point, any competence not pursuing extracurricular grappling, is just straight fucking up. And from from a fire standpoint, a handful of years ago, I had the opportunity to train a fire academy. There were a couple pieces that fell into place, and I ended up being the being the, I guess the I don't know what you'd call it a guest instructor. But I was the one that set the standards and stuff for the for the Fire Academy. We had a focus group at the beginning, we had a test in the middle and we had a test at the end. And it was something really simple. It was something like how many accurate sets of three burpee and six lunge could you complete in six minutes or something. And it wasn't engineered to show anything other than baseline work capacity and durability. And then alongside that, we build midline stability, we got them off the ground properly, without the use of their hands, we did all the intelligence stuff that needs to build. Every single person improved. At the end of that cycle, the third series of tests was the best by a longshot. We saw this many of them come into our place to train zero. So there's a huge, I believe piece of cognitive dissonance in the fact that having the job of means you can perform the job. I'm not

in those fields. I'm not a cop. I'm not a firefighter. I've never been in the military. It's not where my mind is. But early on, in my time in Long Beach. I got exposed to very, very excellent law enforcement. And at that time, that was not something I wanted to be around you know, I'm I am an always will be a street kid. I ran from the cops more and BMX and running away from stuff when I was a kid than most people could ever think about. And so when when I found out that that a lot of the people that were going to be training with us in Long Beach, were law enforcement. I remember being like, Oh, God, be around a bunch of cops all the time. Well, what I learned the hard way. But the very important way is that the good ones are the best ones, the ones that are actually in that job, because they want to kick ass and help people for the right reasons are assets to society. I mean, jeez, it'd be hard to it'd be hard to put a priority on something higher than that. But the fact that they're 5%, maybe 10% is a huge problem. And just like we just spoke about with kids, though, it trickles down. We have a lot of cops here that train with us that have become almost these like somewhat villains in their community because they work so hard. They pursuing these continuing education, in physical fitness, in tactics in fighting, and, you know, the others start to you know, poke fun and cast aspersions and it becomes something like, oh, well, I'm not doing that because this is whatever. So there has to be a middle ground found. And in my opinion, it would be a systematic change of how that stuff is addressed. There will be baseline physical exams, that someone who actually knows how to address movement performed, so that when the standards were not met, a scaling suggestion, and a positional optimization suggestion could be put in place. Because when someone doesn't mean when I say meet a standard in our place, all I mean is if you can't do a push up on the ground yet, we will keep the exact same mechanics and prop you up on something and You can do that push up, when you can do the push up on what we prop you on for a handful of reps, then we move you down. When you're good with that, then we move you back to the floor. If you put sensible scaling options like that on the table, everyone improves, no one gets out. But that's not in place at all. And so instead, they lower the standards or remove the standards as the as the fire department here is done. And that's, that's just in my opinion, gloves off, that is the wrong choice, and will lead to that's harm to many, many people. So much insecurity on the job that bad decisions are gonna get made. And how much of that have we seen in the last few years? It's terrible. It's terrifying. When people are not secure in what they're doing, because they're not confident physically or strategically or martially. They're going to make bad choices when they're given the opportunity to.

**J** James Geering 1:30:53

So I teach just once a week, and it's a free class for military first responders, corrections, dispatchers, etc. So if you're in any of those professions, you don't even have to be a member of Iron Legion, we will coach you for an hour every Monday at five o'clock. And that's it. Now yesterday is funny because my my class is sometimes much more attended and others But yesterday, they did have a firefighter who's I think it's a son does jujitsu at the gym. So he now jumps in, I used to work with him, my last department. Neither one of us is one of the members of the gym, we've got other firefighters coming now his girlfriend's a nurse, I've got a guy who's in correction. So I've got a handful. But it's the same thing. I've gone to our local county department. And again, this is the one that's understaffed to get worked into the ground. So I've got to give them some, some leeway for that. But I did the three shifts, I did a seminar on each of the three shifts, took all my fucking sleds and sandbags and everything in my car went over there. And the same exact thing. Not a single person from any of those ever showed up. So I kind of have my ideas about why this is through your lens. Because I hear this from Jeff

Nichols. I hear this from all these incredible strength conditioning gurus. What is it? Do you think about when we go into these first responder communities? With some of them? I'm not the expert. But when real experts come in and train, why is there still no buy in?



1:32:24

Well, just just to run parallel tracks for you for a second one of our main guys here, Matt, and also myself, we've offered Academy prep courses for free. We've offered times for different elements of teams to come in and train with us for free. I've gone out, I mean, 2025 times in the last five or six years to teach small things about whether it be getting off the ground, whether it be just learning basic body mechanics, or something like that fighting for free. Only when it's mandatory is their attendance. The the academy prep courses are, you know, something that I don't understand how anyone couldn't be interested in participating in. I've brought it down to perceived ego. They believe that they have to think they're all set in order to do their job, versus earning the fact that they're all set by making sure their skills are in place. I in a in an ass backwards way I understand it. Because to have that role and feel completely ill equipped for it would be terrifying. But my mind can't get around. If you feel that way, why would you not be hunting anything available to you to make that not the case. And I try and go back and forth and have some level of understanding of it or something like that. But I just simply can't. And I can relate it to when when I was a kid in a lot of ways. You know, I was I was in over my head with a lot of really, really sketchy situations. And at the time, I wasn't training martial arts. I wasn't a particularly tough kid. I didn't have any special skills. But I always made sure that we were all set. And the idea of leaving it to chance was never in my mind, even as a kid that was up against challenging very unusual odds. And so when I think if someone's doing that for a living and they're getting paid a reasonable wage to do that, yeah, of course it's time out of your day, but it could be time on to your life or other's lives. I can't I can't process it. But I do really think it comes down to a massive ego breach that most people are just not willing to to to undergo when when cops come into our place in the last four or five years, the people that have not honored our very simple three month initial agreement, we don't contract anybody ever, but we don't take anybody for less than three months because What are you going to figure out in 30 days? And when we ask, we ask people require people to give us 30 days notice of departure, same as any membership base facility in the world. We don't hold credit cards on file, you know, we're not we're not big brother about anything. Tend to one, it's the cops that fuck us. And so it's been very hard to stay invested in that community, because they are so irresponsible about things that are so important. But the upside is that the ones that stay are there, and they are excelling. And they're setting a standard that has never been set before. And so we're landing but it's, it's, it's a real real, it's a real, real uphill battle. And the numbers are, the numbers are I mean, polarizing if we've, we've, there's a post on our Instagram, we made a graphic, that Civil Service report card, and I attached some text to it. And it's, it's very sadly true. And most of the responses to it. Were first responders, law enforcement, fire military. So it's, it's, it's a solvable equation, but I don't know if it's gonna get solved with with the strategies they're currently using.



James Geering 1:36:17

Well, that's the one thing that I've struggled with. I've never felt good enough for the job never felt strong enough, never felt fit enough, because lives are at stake. So how could you be like, I'm good. And here's what's crazy. In Florida, the Fire Academy is labeled minimum standards,

that's what we call our certification. It couldn't be a more beautiful description of where mentally you should be. When you graduate from fire academies. You're the shittiest you should ever be through your whole career. And I was 26 I think when I went through high school, so I was working at a publishing company, I would go to the YMCA and lift weights on my lunch break, I would do like a four and a half mile run come hell or high water I would run I do pull ups on the steps and you know, like a rocky montage. But it was simply because I'm like, I've got to get ready. Because you know, when we've put on the uniform on, people could die. And I assure a ship not going to be, you know, the weak link and a phrase that that's going around, which I really like is called would you want real? Would you want you rescuing you? But I always say Well, that's that's good. But what motivates me more is, how would you feel if your family died because the rescuer hadn't trained. That's more sobering to me, because that's someone else. That's not me. I'm prepared to die, you know, in the GE that I've signed up for, but my family that didn't sign up for shit. So the person that responds on a police car or fire engine, and I've had a horrendous incident where my son ended up in a horrible situation, because of a fucking awful law enforcement actually, to two occasions really, where they fucked up royally. And the law ended up getting changed. And that fucker would be in prison right now, they did what they did to my child. So I'm not exactly all in on loving law enforcement, but I'm not going to tire everyone with the same brush either. But what I struggle with having walked the fucking walk myself, before I became a firefighter, and all the way through my career, is people could die. If you're not in the condition, that's the most basal nucleus of what we do. You could die, your partner could die and the people that we serve could die. And if they die, but you knew you did everything in your fucking power, to facilitate that rescue to try and save them, then at least you can sleep at night because you know, you were prepared. But I don't know how the fuck you can live with yourself because someone died and you knew in your heart of hearts, you were too fucking scared to look yourself in the mirror and go, I need to be better.



1:38:46

Yeah, but both perspectives that you shared on that are excellent. Matt has a poster, right, right in his office that I look at all the time that says you can never train hard enough for a job that can kill you. And you know, I'm a BMX kid, man. And I think that way, and I all I'm doing is training people and making sure that that's that that's handled to the best of my possible ability every single day and training myself, and I've been injured a lot. And we you know, that's not even worth going jumping down the rabbit hole into. But when it comes to viable excuses for not doing all I can, I've had a hell of a lot more than than most. And yet every single day I do something physical, I do something tactical and do something martial. It might be 10 minutes, it might be it might be 20 minutes of, you know, hitting the round hole in my kitchen with gloves on at 10 o'clock at night when I'm having a snack, but it never goes on done. And, and the first reason is because due to bad luck and strange circumstances, I've had to put that stuff to the test. And I believe that if I hadn't trained as hard I would have gotten hurt or killed. And I don't Don't doubt that for a moment, I believe I believe training and composure and preparedness kept me safer. And I extrapolate that 10 fold into helping someone else if I come up on a situation. I know I'm not as well trained as some people out there. But if I come up on a situation, I want to be able to navigate that, and at least exactly as you said, if I have to go home and something terrible happens, that I did everything I possibly could, and I'm just some dude, like, that's not my job, I don't get paid for that. And that's on my mind all the time. So I, I agree with you completely, I do not understand how you can be in that role, swear that oath, take that paycheck, put on the Batman belt, eat like a fucking garbage truck, and train like a total dipshit. And be afraid of challenge. I will never understand that. And

honestly, I'm not kind about that when people like that come into our place. Because when I can see that their ego is going to keep them from training at our place, because they don't want to get out lifted by a brutal ass girl that's been putting her pants on and coming in there for six years. I have no sympathy for you. And you couldn't arrest her for \$5,000. And I've offered that to people. This is funny, on the tail end of a little bit of a heavy situation, there were a couple of really particularly fussy, goofy cops that came in a year and a half ago, completed the introductory training very unenthusiastically. One of them tried to wear gloves. And then they didn't come back. And they didn't pay us. And they basically just bounced, didn't really tell us. And we knew why it was. And it was the exact reason that I said, we have a brutal group of the nicest people you will ever meet. They will help you all day long, they will they will shirt off their back type people. But if you've got an ego and you come in there and you haven't been training, you are going to get outperformed by a 42 year old 115 pound female fucking math teacher. And a lot of people can't handle that. So when these two particularly fussy little babies left, I wrote them emails. And I said, How about this, instead of you paying us the \$375 that we would have made over the next three months of training you? If you can come in and last five minutes with this one particular girl in grappling, then you're off the hook. If not, then pay your dues. And guess what I got? Pay Pal to me that day. \$375 That's exactly fucking right. And, and I'm not, I'm not tough guy about stuff like that. But there are certain lessons that just has to be learned with humility. And if you're going to act that way, and you're a cop, man, you drive around in a car with a gun ready to save people's lives. You can't even be accountable to a place in your community that that puts that first puts their money where their mouth is first. I don't know, I will, I will never understand those communities for that reason, but but to put a positive spin on the end of it, it really makes me so pleased and proud at the ones that we do create because, man, they're just setting an absolutely new standard and a new standard not only for Rochester, but a standard for everywhere. Training that group that I mentioned at the very beginning. That was a very, very high level curated group under a very notable organization that didn't know their dick from a fucking watermelon at the end of four days of training is a is a problem. And I've offered to help that group since I've offered to speak at an event for them introducing some movement accuracy concepts, introducing some violence insulation concepts, and based on lack of letters behind my name. I was I was I was passed on so yeah, it's a fixable problem but it's not going to get fixed the way they're trying to do it now.

#### James Geering 1:44:01

While flipping that on its head I think why I have so much admiration for the responders who truly understand and take their job seriously is they truly are swimming upstream like they are thriving despite the environment every day the same people that are okay with going to work putting on a uniform on and not training physically and skills wise and everything they ultimately become you know, chiefs and again there's some amazing chiefs Roger Shai amazing in Idaho think I've got that right. jujitsu was in their in their you know program they they get points for their promotional test if they actually pass like the the fitness test at the highest level. I mean, phenomenal department. Those people I'm not talking about but you got people that have no ownership at the basic police officer firefighter level now they become chiefs. Now you have the same issue but instead of lives because I've responded to a call now it's the lives of the people under me and we have a suicide epidemic in First responders, we think we've lost more police and or fire to suicide that we have what we call line of duty deaths. And again, it's like, oh, you know, oh, well, there's nothing we can do. I wish I had the answers, which is absolute fucking bullshit, we have to actually create an environment for these men and women to thrive. And as I always say, the person in the bank works 40 hours, why is the person in the fire engine working 56, eight hours and everyone's just fine with that, when

they're awakened lives are in their hands. So kind of giving people credit in that middle group that have got to understand like you are working against against the tide, you know, you are upstream. This is why it's harder, you know, your hormones are broken down, your motivation is destroyed through the way we work. Talk to me about the importance of rest and recovery when it comes to the athletes maybe outside the tactical athlete space. So we have this kind of sleep when I'm dead, bullshit mythology that we buy into, talk to me about what rest and recovery looks like for high human performance.



1:46:06

It's not my field, as a scientist, I'll just I'll just qualify it with that. If you if you don't have the discipline, to rest and recover, your discipline during the work is much less important. And that's something I see an awful lot I've been victim of that myself. I mean, in in, you know, I mentioned early days in California, I was riding BMX, training, several martial arts, and still doing strength and conditioning. I was I was beating myself into the ground. And I was learning a lot, but I was breaking down just as much as I was learning. So now, the way that we try and help people balance it, is we tell them that if you're putting your full ass into a training day in our facility, four days is enough, three days is great. Five to six is earned, and only occasional. And if people were there five or six days, we see it in their performances, we have a few people that are very insistent that they want to come in five and six days. And I make sure to help tailor their work back on those on those extended days. But the reality is the strength is built in the rest and recovery, it's not built in the room. And that's far smarter people than me have said that. Something else that goes unsung is is how the training is structured in those realms. Our experience, and I'm relatively intractable on this is you always tax first what demands the most, and then you attack the rest. So early in the week, and first in the training days is the heavy stuff. And then it starts getting more technical, more power endurance oriented, there's a there's a time under tension piece at the end of each of our training days, that's partially skill building, and partially just like, you know, confidence instilling and midline stability. And that also allows people to put out just as much as they have, and not more and train more frequently with less attrition. So, of course, it's rest recovery, it's not overdoing it unless you have an absolute purpose. I mean, if you're training for something in particular that has an end date, then then you train hard, hard, hard, and then you taper down and you get ready for that event. But if you're training for life, in general, you're training for life insulation, you're not training six days a week, because you're not going to be able to, you're not going to be able to sustain that. It's impossible. So that's important. And the other thing that's important is if the if the volume and strategy of your training are poor, even three days a week is too much, it's too much for your CNS, it's too much for your actual muscles, it's too much for your brain. And we see that all the time. We see people come in that have trained a lot of other stuff. And they are cooked. And it's really hard to recover from that it doesn't take a day to recover from from overcooking yourself that much it takes much longer than that. So it's both the protocols for best and recovery and also the strategy and volume of the training itself.



James Geering 1:49:09

Have you observed responders coming off shift that a sleep deprived because we talked about you know, stress in the CNS and then even the old school mentality, which I bought into I'll put my hand up? Oh, I've just had a terrible shift. Let me go do Murph at CrossFit on the way home



and then wondering why I feel even worse. So talk to me about what you observe with people that have high stress jobs that maybe come straight into the gym where the heavy day maybe isn't the best idea?



1:49:35

Yeah, so so a lot of the training language that we use, is tailored to that and caters directly to that. One of the most important phrases in our entire training modality is scaled to full ability which basically means if if on the board is 85% of x and your full ability because you just worked 14 hours and still want to move but but don't have what you usually would in the tank, your scale to ability may be 65%, it may be 50%, it may be something totally different than that. And another really, really important one is up to in parentheses. So say it's, it's, you know, deadlift, five sets three reps at up to 95% of your five rep max. If the first set feels like you're trying to pull the fucking sword from the stone, then that up to becomes the most important phrase on the entire board. Because then it lets you pull down without feeling demoted, prioritizing position, and getting a full amount of work in but not worrying about the weight. And so it's in a lot of times, if we get someone who comes in shot, we get someone who comes in clearly not firing on all cylinders, they're still going to move accurately, they're still gonna move through the training day. But we can scale it to their full ability and therefore not hurt them and still get them what they needed.



James Geering 1:51:02

That reminds me, you were on the breaking muscle podcast few years ago and listen to that one. So I want to give shout out because I always like to credit podcast when I listen to him. But he talks about I think it was his wife never did a one rep max at a two rep max. And that's something that I've seen with the scaling even in the CrossFit space. Like normally you'll have three movements. Well, people, if it's are actually do this, if it's fitness you do this? Well, well, I think a lot of people don't understand that the kind of basic member level is that you can chop and change to if barbell is your thing, keep that as your x weight, but you can't do you know, whatever the other movement is, right? We'll scale that. And it's going back to what you said with the scaling the weight to those days where I just feel kind of smoked on that. Okay, I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna do 50 60% doesn't say anywhere that a scale that low, but I know how I feel. But I think that the problem with that is that's an educated athletes kind of mentality.



1:51:59

That's exactly what I would have said, if you weren't told that. And you were much, much newer in your training career, you would feel like that was a demotion. Meanwhile, for us, because position governs weight. And accuracy governs everything. We tell people, if you want it to feel heavier, you make it heavier, you brace harder, you move with more violence, you move accurately. And when you do that, the weight doesn't really matter. I could put myself to sleep with a 15 pound kettlebell if I wanted to by bracing as hard as I possibly could. And yeah, you earn that. But it's also a concept. If you want something to be harder, you just simply make it harder. It doesn't have to be heavier in order to be harder. And that's a bitter pill that people have to swallow with learning mace lifting from us, is that we get a lot of really, really big brutal



guys that have never moved in those planes, their shoulder mobility is not great. Their midline stability has often been insulated with belts and all this other bullshit. And then they start swinging a mace or trying to swing a mace that they think is a suitable complement to their strength. And it turns them upside down. So the mace is also very, very good at teaching people what they don't know, and improving them from the ground back up. But yeah, I mean, if someone comes in cooked, you have to address that. And it's always best in our opinion, to not address something on a singular case basis, we want to find it and address it in a way that would help anyone at any time, so we don't have to guess. Because anytime you're teaching your group class, of course, you're going to have to teach a bunch of different level people. And you have to use mostly the same tactics. So anytime you can think something out before applying it is definitely the way that we choose to do it.

 James Geering 1:53:49

All right, so coming from the completely other end. So you've got the enthusiastic athlete has smoked and you're trying to just taper him down a little bit. When Ted came back from the last seminar, I think that you guys put on, he was all about violence of action. And he was talking about exploding from the push up and those kinds of things. Again, as a martial artist, I'd like to think that was kind of how I left how I move. But when I look at some of our members, you know, usually the ones that aren't first responders, maybe they're you know, a little bit more gentle in the way they approach it. It's they're still doing these movements, but there's almost like a, you know, path of least resistance mentality to the way that they move the way they lift. So if you wouldn't mind to kind of expand on that, that that philosophy and how should we be applying it to our movements in the gym.

 1:54:37

We like to think that that the group self corrects because when you watch someone doing something powerfully and violently that's that's what you would want to do, you would want to emulate and replicate that. Something else we say to people that makes it really easy is that listless is useless. And if you can do 300 of something or 500 of something it is probably not enough Effective strength building movement. So you want to put the most that you have into every single rep. And the training should reflect that. If we put 50 of something on board, we know that someone can put their full ass into 50 reps of that in an organized, powerful, accurate way. And that's just the expectation for us. The other thing is making sure that we're insulating that intensity, intensity is not something that most people just walk in with, especially if they've never been in a martial arts realm, if they've never been in a first responder realm, anything like that, they may really have only trained with a relatively passive, peaceful mind. And while that's wonderful, it's just not reality. If you if you ever have to apply that training outside of the training room, for anything, I mean, shit, your kid runs in front of a car, you need to fight somebody off, you need to lift something out of a really weird position that's going to possibly cause harm to someone or something that's going to be violent, and it's going to be immediate, and it's going to require intensity. If you're not insulating, that intensity and training, you're not going to have it when you need it outside of training. Because for a lot of people, it's not something that that occurs naturally. And we've trained hundreds and hundreds of them. And what you end up finding, when you dig a little deeper and the language is conducive to it, the training volume is conducive to it. The the standards of accuracy are conducive to it. People want to assert themselves in training, people want to exert violence in

training, because it feels right, it feels good. And when you do it accurately, it makes people feel extremely confident and empowered. So a lot of times, it's tough to crack newer people a little bit. But once the group self corrects, and they start feeling what that concept actually is, I mean, there's there's no one in our place that doesn't move accurately and violently on every given day. So it takes cultivating a culture but it's it's worthwhile.

J

James Geering 1:56:56

Beautiful. Well, we talked about the youth athlete, we kind of be in the middle. I want to just kind of finish with the aging athlete. Now I've shared some phenomenal, phenomenal videos. There's a gentleman in Haiti, that's 83 Absolutely jacked from a normal human movement, Jack, not a bodybuilding jacked again. And in the conversation, he's like, Well, I would retire but I don't want to be a burden to my kids at three years old. Then if there was 102 year old woman that was, I think she won the 400 or 800 meters World Championships, there was a 96 year old man that ran a marathon. And yet you look at the way that 40 Slash 50 is viewed in the US. It's like, you know, pills and ills are completely normal. So talk to me about the longevity and performance in the second half of your lifespan through woof brigades eyes,

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1:57:49

as well. And I hate to keep beating the same drum, but it's an important drum to beat. When positional accuracy is built into everything they learn every single day. There's no age limit on performing these fundamental movements. The body is always going to want to hinge and press and pull and squat and lift. It always is forever. And what we found is that the way that we insulate people, and that's it that's a power source, which midline versus extension cords priority. We've had truly remarkable things happen in our training room. I know we haven't, we have a 60 year old guy that had trained with us for 10 years. But prior to that never had any athletic experience that has 106 pound Turkish get up on each side with a kettlebell perfect from standing. So so we always do Turkish get up from standing because that's the way it should be done. Standard push press it, no, you can control it, and then climb back up to standing. He's 60 106 pounds on each side. We have a wonderful woman that's been with us for for 1213 years now, that has gone through ups and downs physically. She was obese at one point, she had a lot of other really challenging lifestyle issues. And she can still squat 225 pounds on a safety bar, she can still deadlift more than that from the ground with a straight bar for more than one rep. She still gets off the ground without her hands with kettlebells in front rack. There are very few things that she has to omit or adjust much in a training day. Because she's worked so diligently hard at staying sharp on that foundation. And they're not the only two examples. I mean, we have we have other people that are in their 60s that are they're swinging some of the heaviest masons in our room. Plenty of people in their 40s and 50s. And I would argue that several people in their 40s that we train in person and also remotely that are more complete and more brutal than they were 1015 years earlier. When the body moves accurately, it gets exactly what it wants, and there's really no end to that site. So when you start thinking about training older people, if you've built a proper foundation, you're going to be able to keep them above average, strong and training forever. I've never been one that thinks that anyone's training should be this glad handed, pre engineered, kind of whatever. You know, if you get someone who's 4550 years old, and you come in, oh, that's, that's nice. You want to do some strength training. I've never taken that attitude with anyone. They learn accurately. They're never pushed beyond their abilities, but they're, but they're always encouraged to work

to their full ability. And they want to, because they understand that what they're really doing is insulating the later years of their life, the stronger they are, the more fit they stay, the more capable they stay, the better they're going to be for longer. It's just, there's no science that needs to tell me that's the truth.

J

James Geering 2:00:54

Well, firstly, I just turned 49. And I've sworn to be in better shape when I'm 50. And it's not that again, I'm found myself in some terrible shape. It's just I want to level up, you know, I kind of really went all in and jujitsu to really make sure that I was consistent because I've been so inconsistent being on shift when I was doing it before. And then now this next year, so I'm actually going to jump in with both feet and follow your programming for a few months. And I want because I can compare it now. And I've done CrossFit and all these different things. And I love self experimentation. So firstly, there's that. Secondly, you talked about the one member being obese, we've talked about the physical component. I love that phrase, you can't out train a shitty diet, because I've seen it. I've seen people that are diligent in my gym that have gained weight, and it's heartbreaking. And of course, nutrition alone isn't, you know, there's the environment in their home. There's the mental health, it's always other conversations as well. But what dietary philosophies or principles do you tend to follow or, or tell your members you know, to look into.

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2:01:58

So I try not to be too hard handed about this stuff, because I know a lot of people have a really personal attachment to it. So in some ways, we let it self correct. If people start adding volume to their training, and they want to get stronger, and we start seeing them slow down. Then we say, look, let's start addressing the more lifestyle factors here. What are you doing for eating? What are you missing? What are you doing? What are you getting? If someone tells us that they're really low on protein, maybe they haven't been eating enough carbs. They've never really, they've never really balanced their macros, they've never really figured out what they should and shouldn't be eating for performance. Sometimes if people are just really, really not building in the way that they want to. And they're looking too tired or drawn out or something like that, we find out they're vegan. I mean, we we we try not to be too hard handed about it. But the simple prescription is, the answer to protein is more. Our friend Tyler mitten says that often, and quality food, carbs, fat protein, in a balanced ratio will help everyone always. And so if someone comes in and they say, oh, you know, I can't figure this one thing out, well, then we send them to someone like Tyler, we send them to one of the couple of charts online that can actually help them measure that stuff out. We're not a we're not a micromangement place with that stuff. But we almost wait in a safe way for the proof to come out in the pudding. If someone is improving physically, their technical abilities improving and everything like that, but they're still just, you know, looking dry. They're not they're not progressing the way they want to. That's when we start looking at the other factors. And, you know, that kind of comes from early early days CrossFit, there was some real, real hard handed stuff there. There were there were a few people. And I respected them as trainers. But they wouldn't take clients unless they were allowed to go in their house and clean out their cupboards. And while I understand where that was going, I was kind of like, no, motherfucker, I'm an adult. And I'm disciplined, and I'm disciplined every single day. But if I want to eat, fucking whatever, if I want to eat a cookie, if I want to eat a piece of carrot cake, I'm going to eat it because I'm an adult. If

I want to eat some ice cream, I'm going to eat some ice cream. I just understand exactly what cost that has. So that's we're big on self responsibility. And so instead of pushing, pushing, pushing on dietary stuff, which which I've found tends to alienate certain minded people. We let it come out in the wash. If they if they fall in love with physical culture, they're going to want to improve and what that means is that they're going to have to eat like an athlete. Not a not a starving high school student.

 James Geering 2:04:46

Beautiful. Love it. Thank you so much. Well then for everyone listening, tell tell the audience kind of what are the programs that are available to them and then also, whether it's a garage, whether it's a fire station, who garage should I say um You know, what are some of the tools that maybe people want to start looking at purchasing so they can actually have access to the things that they're going to be using?

 2:05:11

Thanks. That's great. We're physically located in Rochester, New York, and Toronto, Ontario. You're welcome at either of those places, anytime, but not as a drop in, you're welcome to come in and watch, you're welcome to contact us ahead, and we will try and train you privately, help sharpen up some details. If you're looking to do something specific, we can almost certainly add something to the soup. But we don't take drop ins, because we teach skills. And then we teach application that our online portal for training is called subversive fitness. So subversive fitness.com. And it's remote versions of training that we've done in our training room twice. So it's double vetted training that we've performed in our room on every skill level person imaginable, tinkered with, because we know it's remote, but all the same protocols, strategies, details, it is the most well articulated training remotely I have ever seen. And the reason we didn't do remote training until 12, or 13 years into our career, is because I didn't think we could do it to the same degree of quality that we do in person. And now we can, there's an assessment phase coming in. Most people learn a ton about themselves and their movement just from the assessment phase. Something else that we offer for free is our Public Assistance Project. Right now, there's a public assistance group in Toronto, and there's a public assistance group in Austin. It's simple free training, done in parks done at night done in the snow done in the rain, all the primary positions that you would use in primary lifting is done with whatever you have at your disposal. But what we what we ask is that people bring up a gallon jug, water bottle, you fill it with whatever you want, fill it with something heavy, you leave water in it, whatever. It's it's very, very difficult. Very, very simple. And it's an amazing gateway drug for people that are looking to get into training in a in an accurate but very challenging way. And it's a great way for our people to keep applying training remotely when they're on the road. And so that's that's public, that's public assistance. And that's on our website, what brigade.com And that's really it. I guess, if I could point people to to other things. We don't waste a moment of our Instagram. There's no bullshit on there, you're not gonna see about my morning oatmeal. I'm not taking pictures of my neighbor's shoes. What we have on there is accurate training information and tons of it. Some of the most well viewed videos we have have been ones that people credited with teaching them mace lifting others on there are are never been done with kettlebells and bases to a degree that most people have no idea exists. You want to see someone kettlebell back squat a 220 pound kettlebell, it's on our Instagram for free. You want to see a you know, really, really great girls front squatting 150

pound kettlebells after lifting them to their chin, and it's on there, you want to see you want to see girls swinging 24 kilogram meses I mean, it's our Instagram is a valuable tool. We don't waste that resource we appreciate our audience. And our YouTube channel is is there's more information on there than any one person could could ever want.

 James Geering 2:08:36

Beautiful. Well, thank you so much. So I want to throw some closing questions at you quickly before I let you go if you've got time. Yeah, sure, of course. All right. Well, the first one I love to ask Thank you. Is there a book or other books that you love to recommend? It can be pertaining to our discussion today or completely unrelated.

 2:08:53

To keep it quick, the Book of Five Rings and hunchy Steve Kaufman is the translation that I liked the best. My Kempo instructor gave me that book. And I've read it 50 times and I will read it 51 times. And if you haven't yet read 1984 Yeah, put your helmet on and read 1984 We're living it right now. Reading reading that when reading that when I was a young teenager because an older kid had told me to do it was terrifying, and also probably the most important recommendation I'd ever been given.

 James Geering 2:09:30

Beautiful. Well, thank you for both of those. What about a movie and or a documentary that you love?

 2:09:38

Simply because it's even remotely on topic. The movie Hot Fuzz

 James Geering 2:09:43

documentary?

 2:09:45

Yeah, the documentary was and that's my joke, man. I resisted myself saying I almost said the excellent documentary Hot Fuzz. And then as far as Geez as far as an actual documented my gosh Oh, man, I think you might have you might have caught me with my pants down.

 James Geering 2:10:04

Did you ever watch that 35th Bruce Lee like water.



2:10:08

I did. I love that. I love that. I'm going to be a little bit selfish here. And I was I was featured in the documentary a couple of years ago, called Don't stand in line alongside three people from independent culture that I respect tremendously, one of which I grew up with. And an award winning videographer asked all four of us to be in this video. And it just really chronicles the life of small, quirky, independent business. And I could recommend documentaries that I've watched and enjoyed. That's one I would love people to know about. Because it's, it's really, really good. And I'm really proud to have been included in it.



James Geering 2:10:50

Beautiful. I have to look that up. Thank you. All right. The next question is there are a person that you recommend that come on this podcast as a guest to speak to first excuse me, speak to the first responders military and associated professions of the world?



2:11:07

I think my friend Paul Roberts from the sect in Salt Lake City might be a great choice for this. He's he's he's a firefighter of the highest order and just a just a absolute salt of the earth. high integrity as kicker he's



James Geering 2:11:20

been on already. Yeah, they're actually early on in the podcast. So a long time ago, we probably need to do another episode.



2:11:25

Well, then. I mean, I think you're Dan Inosanto thing is spot on. I think I think maybe you should talk to Brandon Lilly. He's, he's, uh, he, you know, for you know, Brandon Lilly,



James Geering 2:11:40


I recognize the name. So former,



2:11:43

one of the strongest people in the world competitive power lifter. He's a great friend of mine. So of course, there's some bias there. But he's been through the wringer training everybody he's rebuilt himself from from catastrophic injury. Using just really, really smart training. He's applied training to so many tremendous people. And he and he's just a truly phenomenally


motivating dude. And he he doesn't work directly with first responder communities. But he's, he's a he's a wonderful person to listen to. And anyone in those communities that thinks they're too down or too out. To make progress. We'll take something from his story.

 James Geering 2:12:22

Beautiful. Yeah, if you can help me connect. I'd love to thank you. Done. All right. Well, then the very last question for you make sure everyone knows where to find you. What do you do to decompress?

 2:12:34

I can I get the impression you might be equally bad at this. I'm bad. I'm bad at this. Before suffering some challenging injuries, BMX writing and martial arts were how I decompressed. I write, we didn't talk at all about my sub career. But I've put two books out one is a novel, one is an anthology of stories. So writing is something that I've done my entire life. And I still do that. In the last three years, one of the biggest casualties for me has been attention span. And that is something that I need to I need to recollect myself on. The Volume Two of the novel is firmly in the works. And Volume Two of the anthology of some of my stories is in the works, too. So I write, I really, I really just am. I'm pretty simple. If I if I have time on my hands, I'm drilling something or practicing something because it's just how my mind works. And unfortunately, the last couple of years have led a lot of my downtime to be body maintenance, mobile mobility and stuff like that. Those are some super boring answers. But that's it. And I mean, of course, I love I love shooting guns, I love shooting bows and arrows. And those are those are my those are my actual decompressions. Archery is something that recurve archery traditional archery is something that I got into over the last few years. And I really credit that with with keeping me sane,

 James Geering 2:14:06

with speaking of right and I wrote a book, that's you during the pandemic, technically, I finished it up and then I'm writing that was nonfiction. And then this time, I'm writing fiction, which is an unknown array. And I didn't write a bunch of stuff when I was young. So but it's, it's empowering. And it's so exciting that if you can get that crazy story from your brain onto a paper in a way that people will be noted by it, you know, then potentially even then my goal is to even get made into a TV show or film because I want to take these concepts that I see causing so much suffering. And if Tiger King can be a hit, why the fuck can this you know? So? Talk to me about your journey into writing and what you pull from it personally.

 2:14:44

As well as writing is something that has sewn all of this together since I was a boy. A good friend of mine, Sean harvest is going to it's hard to even say this and take it seriously but he's going to make a documentary on me And so I've been looking through old stuff. And I found a lot of really old stuff I wrote from high school newspapers. I had a job as an intern at a local paper here, where I wrote movie reviews and horoscopes. And I wrote, I've written little fiction



stories and narratives and stuff since I was a kid. The the nonfiction book is called war of attrition. And war, war of attrition is a website that I put online in 1999. And it's just been a chronicle of stories of of oddities that have either happened in my life, or perspectives that I've shared based on things that I've run across or anything like that. And in 2017 2018, I turned it into a into a book. So it's a full length anthology. And then the the fiction book is called theft of the age. I started writing that in 2007, when I was still in California, and then had a very challenging couple of years. And that got finished in 2014, edited again, in 2015. And then and then put out as a full length novel in 2016, published in 2016. And so those, those were it I believe that that finishing a book is like getting a black belt, I would imagine this, that it's the beginning of the journey, not the end. And so the theft of the age, we'll have a volume two, and volume three, and then and then war of attrition will have a probably a volume, at least a volume to

 James Geering 2:16:34

beautiful. I'm glad I asked that question. Thank you.

 2:16:37

Thank you. I appreciate you asking me.

 James Geering 2:16:38

Thank you. All right. Well, then just to make sure I haven't missed anything. You've got Wolf brigade.com. You've got subversive fitness.com. Are there any? And then you said about the YouTube channel and the Instagram? Are there any other areas online that people can find you or we pretty much encapsulated in?

 2:16:54

Well, the the war of attrition site is up and has a lot of the stories from the book, there's a few stories that are in the book and aren't on the site. And there are a few stories on the site that aren't in the book. The site is cool, because there's a bunch of pictures from ever from all the stuff we've ever done. I mean, we could get into we could get into you know, two hours of talking about wacky stuff from BMX, but there's a lot of there's a lot of history lessons on there. And then the wolf brigade website, it's a little bit antiquated in the sense that a lot of people aren't using full form websites as much anymore. But there is a massive amount of information on there. There's there's over 100 articles in just the mental section alone. There's there's years of previous training, there's there's there's rabbit holes is deepest people want to jump down from us for free. You know, and I guess the only other thing would be smart because making money is somehow important. There's an there's an instructional that I made through BJJ fanatics, called the Encyclopedia of Modern mace lifting. And in addition to all of the free stuff that we have, that is a perfect complement supplement. It's a really all inclusive way of seeing what we do and putting it all in one place. And it puts a little money in our pocket and with the amount that we give away. That's important.



James Geering 2:18:11

Beautiful. Well, Greg, I want to say thank you so much. I mean, like I said, I saw Ted's fat face and his enthusiasm when he came back. And I recognized the name but obviously I really hadn't explored who you were, I hadn't explored the work. And now I've had a chance to really dive in. Obviously, we've had a couple of conversations. It's been such an amazing two hours. And I think there's so many rabbit holes for people that dive down themselves and really start questioning some of the quote unquote, traditional ways that we've been training. So I want to thank you so much for being so generous with your time today.



2:18:43

Man, I appreciate it. The conversation was amazing concepts and strategy or never ending journeys. And man, the idea that you're going to do the training for a while to is really exciting. I really really can't wait for people to hear this. Thank you so much.