

Heather McAllister - Episode 834

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SPEAKERS

Heather McAllister, James Geering



James Geering 00:00

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Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. So as my name is James Geering. And this week, it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show, Wolf brigade training director and lead instructor Heather McAllister. Now in this conversation, we discuss a host of topics from her own journey into the world of fitness, strength, training, myths, overcoming injury, the aging athlete, mental health, mindset, mais work, art, and so much more. Now, before we get to this incredible conversation, as I say, every week, please just take a moment, go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast, therefore making it easier for others to find. And this is a free library of well over 800 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women's stories. So I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them. So with that being said, I introduce to you, Heather McAllister enjoy Well, Heather, I want to start by saying Firstly, thank you for your mentorship when you came down the Crossfire and leisure and we'll get to that in a minute. And secondly, welcome to the behind the show podcast today.

 Heather McAllister 03:23

Thank you so much. I'm excited to be here. Yeah, it was great meeting you then I was super, super interested in you and what you do and so I'm really excited to be here today.

 James Geering 03:32

Yeah, well, as you are aware that day ended up being an absolute shit show. So I didn't get to glean as much knowledge from you as I as I hoped I could. But it was just one of those days where 1000 Things were happening at the same time, but including an interview I think so I had to run away again.

 03:47

Oh, that's right. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, as as it happens, that everything happens at once.

 James Geering 03:52

Absolutely. So first question then where on planet earth are we finding you today?

 03:58

So I'm I'm at our home base location. I'm actually at the gym in Rochester, New York.

 James Geering 04:05

Beautiful. So I would love start at the very beginning. Obviously, we'll get into wolf brigade and the gym now. Tell me where you were born. And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic. what your parents did, how many siblings?

 04:17

Okay, I was actually born here in Rochester, New York. I lived here all my life. So I was born. My, my mother and father got divorced pretty early on. I was only I was only a baby. So it was pretty much I was raised by my mother in a single parent household. I had an older brother at the time a half brother. Well, I still have my guess. An older half brother. He's about eight years older than I was. So we were we were very very far apart in age so I don't have a lot of memory of him before he left the house at as a teenager, and then never really, you know, caught up with him too much after that. So, so felt like growing up as an only child till I was about a teenager in 16. And that then my mom passed. And so it was kind of a little bit on my own after that,

 James Geering 05:25

how soon after you graduated, did you lose your mother

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I actually didn't graduate because she had gotten sick. So I she got sick, when I was 16. And with her with the, with the insight that I have, now I understand that it was not ever going to get better. But that's what we kind of thought at the time. And so I stay, I quit school and stayed home, I was driving her around to her appointments, because it was really just the two of us. And we had, we had a good circle of friends at the time, of course, that were that were helping, but it was just the family dynamic shifted pretty quickly. So I had to sort of step in and take care of her. So that's, that's what I did at that time.

 James Geering 06:21

The crazy thing about the podcast and up to 830 plus episodes now is almost everyone, not everyone, but a lot of people have a lot of trauma in their life. And you know, obviously, we don't always view it as our poor me, I have this thing, but people have these things. And it's, it's, you know, we put people into these kind of like one dimensional pigeon holes, you know, and therefore you should be fine, because you're whatever. And then you actually look at these children and for example, it comes up a lot. Single family homes, a child has to become an adult very fast, because they're paying, you know, to keep a roof over the family's head or you know, a parent gets sick or another one walks out. So when you look back at that, with this adult lens now, what were the pros, because obviously not everything is negative. So what were the pros, and what are the cons of the family dynamic that you had.

 07:16

So the pros right away, were just the closeness that I was able to experience with my, with my mother, you know, it was just us really for such a long time. And I was kind of like her whole world, I was just talking today to somebody about how, no matter what I did, I was a I was a creative kid and a little strange. So I would be making I would I would rearrange the whole living room before she got home, I would do all this stuff and but no matter what I did, she thought it was the most amazing thing in the world. So gave me a little bit of false confidence in some things, but, but that that was the takeaway, our relationship was really strong, because it was just the two of us and so that I am super grateful for I think the the cons just being that I didn't have a really good male role model in my life. So I didn't really know what that should look like. Or, you know, what, what, what a healthy dynamic was in those areas. So that's always been a you know, a little a trouble spot for me, but um, and then just, you know, not having someone checking on me all the time, you know, my mom would was working, she'd be she'd be at work and I would have to just kind of take care of myself, which in itself is a positive but the negative just being that I didn't really feel like I got to be a kid for a very long time. I was a very silly, Goofy, adolescent. And then when that happened, it really kind of went, you know, from zero to 100 she had brain cancer which affected her speech and her ability to kind of think out things. And so I remember one very specific time where we were grocery shopping. And she wanted she wanted this like giant bag of candy and I told her that we couldn't have it because we had a budget that we were sticking to and we needed to get the other stuff and

and and she she couldn't express herself very well because her words wouldn't weren't coming in she just kind of like threw like a tantrum it at the store and it was I just remember feeling so terrible because I love my mom and I want her to have her Have her she wants but I'm like, totally like, like not understanding what's happening in this moment. And so it was just a really weird role reversal at that time to try to like, tell my grown mother that she couldn't have a bag of candy and her being really upset about it. And so, so after that, it was just it was it was very, was very quick her her death happened within a couple months of her being diagnosed, and I lived with a family that I grew up with. So I was close with them for a little bit, and then I and then I moved out when I was 18. Because it just didn't, it just didn't feel right. So, so again, just just on my own early, and I think just fumbling through, you know, the things that your parents sort of teach you at those ages. Like I had to figure all that out on my own. So the con would be making a bunch of mistakes in figuring out how to be an adult and you know, all that kind of stuff, just normal day to day stuff, you know, that your parents teach you. I had to figure out?

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James Geering 11:14

Well, I mean, that last part of yours and your mother's relationship seems to mirror a lot of people who have a partner with dementia or, or a mother or father with dementia where they start losing them before they lose them, which is I think, I would argue worse than just one day that they're gone. Tell me about who she was, what what did she do as a profession and tell me about the woman she was before you lost her.

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11:40

My mom was a she was she was a really, she was a really dynamic lady for being really kind of introverted and shy, almost, is how I remember she was very quiet. She had she, she had a very, very bad upbringing. Very bad. And she was really, she kind of did what she had to do to get out of her family situation when she was a younger girl. And you know, at that time, growing up, you you get a husband, you know, she then she went into another terrible situation with her first marriage and had to kind of flee. Sure her, her first husband was a criminal. And her life was in danger. So she fled with her little son at the time. My my brother and then moved back to Ohio, I think. And that was she had was out in California at that time. And then she moved back to Ohio, and eventually found my father, who was also not anything delightful. And so then she kind of, I think, probably what I would imagine her at that age, you know, being twice divorced. Now with two little children. She kind of just did what she had to do, she turned to herself, and started, you know, started working doing odd jobs. When when I was when I was little, she had her own cleaning business. So she she was going around doing that I would go with her a lot of times, and pretend those houses were mine. And I would pick up my bedroom and you know, all that fun stuff when you're a kid. And, and she just worked really hard. You know, she never, she never complained. She you know, she would put in the long hours, she would figure it out. And she just did it, you know, so So one of the main lessons I have learned from her is just that you just you just do the work you you do what you need to do, you don't complain about your situation, you just make it better. And the only person that can make it better as you I think she kind of came to that realization that stop relying on these outside sources and I'm going to create what I need myself. She eventually got a really good job at putting the real estate book together who had like a little journal before the internet was a huge thing. And she she like helped put that together. And that started actually paying some adult money. And I remember her buying her first brand new car, which was the Saturn at the

time that company was new at the time and I just remember her like finally, like feeling less anxiety from her because I think she just didn't hit there wasn't such a worry of how am I going to pay the bills and how am I going to provide? And you know, I just remember just her energy kind of switching at that time. Um, you know, she, she kind of like she made it, you know, she had something that she could rely on, and not have to worry about every single day. So she, she was a really funny woman, she was always joking around, always making me laugh, she would do, she would, she would do whatever I wanted, you know, if we, if I wanted to go out playing if I wanted to do this or that, or, you know, she was she was just down for an adventure 111 particular thing that she would do was when I was upset, she would say, Okay, we're going for a drive in the car, so to get in the car, and then she would just have me say left or right, like, no matter when we would just end up somewhere, you know, so it was just, and we had a lot of really interesting times because it was in the car was like the safe space. And then I would kind of relax and open up. And it was her trick to like, get me to tell her what was wrong. Because I was really closed off as a kid and, and it worked every time you know, and then we would end up having fun and end up somewhere weird. And you know, having a little adventure that way. So she was just a really, really smart, intuitive lady who just worked really hard for us.

J James Geering 16:13

There's a lot of looking down people's noses at broken homes, you know, and the problems with kids today is if the just the people wouldn't get divorce and everything will be fine. But you look at what's clearly now through my eyes 2023 a multi generational story. And again, you talk about the kind of men that your woman was a woman's because when your mom was drawn towards as a woman, and then you know, the childhood that she grew up in there is this kind of domino effect. So, you know, we need to understand like the, the incredible things a lot of single parents do. And I was a single parent for a long time, myself and my little boy when you talk about the father figure, I'm thinking about subconsciously, the way my son watches me treat my wife now, you know, and I mean, obviously, it was harder with his mother before because very long story very short, there was infidelity. So it was era unfixable through my eyes, you know, I wasn't going to kind of take that back. So it wasn't a very great relationship that he really started becoming conscious of as he was three, four or five. But as a dad, I showed this young man Okay, this is how you should be treated as a young man and also how you should treat other people. This is what love looks like, this is what affection looks like, talk to me about the impact of not having a father figure through a young girl's eyes.

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Yeah, I think I think about that a lot. You know, I've thought about that a lot through through the years and it's, it really makes a really huge impact. And I think the biggest thing is just not knowing what to look for, you know, what, what, or what's okay? Like how to be treated, you know, what's okay to, like, let people do to you or treat treat you like you know, and because I didn't have didn't have that example. And I think your own always, a child is always going to yearn for a parent that they don't have. And, and in that daughter father relationship, I think you're constantly looking for that approval and love from a male that you didn't have and it gets really distorted. It gets really distorted as as a young girl and then even on into my adulthood like I I'm what I got married at a very young age. And I didn't have any idea what to look for, in a husband and my husband at the time that I that, that I had married. We were

friends like we were kids, but we were friends but none of the none of the important things about you know, how to how to hold a relationship together were in place at all. And so you know, that it was it was kind of like almost dooming yourself to fail when you when you have no idea what to look for, you know, and eventually that that marriage did fail. And it wasn't like a huge surprise why. But yeah, it makes a really big impact I have I think about it all the time because my, my daughter now she had she had her father for for a bit till she was about 13 And then he he tragic. We passed, we had separated before that we had gotten divorced before that, and so that was a little spotty. But I think about that all the time. Now, you know, like, I have massive guilt about repeating that for her, you know, because that's not what you want for your kids, you want them to have everything so that they can, you know, become this whole person and then not make the same mistakes that you made. So yeah, not not having not having a father figure for a daughter is, is a really big one. And I think, I think it's something that people don't always realize, because it's like, oh, you know, fathers and daughters, they're not like super close, you know, daughters are closer to their mothers or things like that, but but it really is, because we need that we, all of us, we need to understand and have the love from that female archetype and that male archetype. So when we don't have it, we're really off balance in I think, I don't know, growing up that way, I definitely felt that

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James Geering 21:10

it was interesting. Now looking back at my relationship with my first wife. Because I mean, again, you took her Molly with generational trauma, her biological father packed up and left when she was five, just walked out the door started a new family from scratch. So a real piece of shit, to be honest, but her distorted perception of what a man should be was literally Prince Charming. I think when she met me, and I was English, and everything, there was this, oh, he's going to whisk me away, but in the relationship became very one sided. While you're here, I'm the princess now, you know, and so it doesn't matter, you know, whether you go the wrong way, and you end up with someone who's who's very abusive, or if you go into a relationship thinking, that's it. Now, I made, I don't have to do anything anymore, which is kind of how that was, which is also equally detrimental, firstly, to the marriage, especially when you then you know, the woman decides to go find another prince. Because it's, well, I guess it's become a toad or whatever it is. But um, but you know, but also, again, teaching these kids that relationship, a healthy relationship is a two way street. And of course, there's times where, you know, you raise your partner up, and vice versa. But But that's, that's in an ideal world. And I think this is the hardest thing. And again, to push back on that, well, if we just had families together, well, if we just, you know, stuck to insert religion here, values, everything will be fine. No, you can't happen. You can't change the past, you can definitely grow from it, and heal from it. But that's an entire, that's a child's entire reality that they know in those four walls, until they finally get to meet someone, or have an experience that makes them realize, Oh, my entire world was actually wrong in this particular area.

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22:52

Yeah, I think it's, I think it's so interesting, too, because now we're getting more familiarized with, you know, looking at looking at past trauma, or looking at how we grew up in. And then there's more language and there's more opportunities to, for people to try and actually do something about that. So we're not just like stuck there. And I think at that time, when my parents got together, they were two people that had really, really horrific childhoods and a ton

of trauma. And they were just these broken people that you didn't talk about it, you just move on, and you just try to make it work. And so them coming together. And having a little bit more knowledge of their background, it's, it's like that, that was almost never going to happen, you know, like that was never going to be a good situation, because they both were just bringing all of all of this trauma to a relationship, and not understanding even how that was manifesting in themselves. And it wasn't until years and years later, I'm you know, as a teenager, my mother started going to therapy and because she she was just having all this trouble and, and even therapy back then, like in the 90s and 80s. And 90s was definitely different than it is now I think people are understanding a lot more of how the brain works and you know, how it affects the body and all of this kind of stuff. And so, the way that she was being treated was just like it was more just, it was more unhealthy in my opinion, because it just flooded her with all of the negative and all of the trauma reliving it over and over again. And so a lot a lot of nights, you know, she I could just hear her crying in her room and she would just cry herself to sleep and and I knew that this was happening and I had little bits of information on And, you know, what, what happened to her as a as a kid. But um, so now I think it's so important that like, even before you approach a relationship, right, especially before children, I think there's a little bit more push to start going inward and figuring that stuff out before you start just giving it and you know, to your kids and putting it in the relationship, which is, which is positive, but does take a lot of work, and you never really quite know, like what you're getting into with another individual. In that sense, you know, you don't know if people are really doing the work or if they've just still got a lot buried. And because it takes a long time to get through all that.

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James Geering 25:50

I have a couple of conversations with people that are in the kind of birth fit space and some of the other kind of postpartum professionals. And when you get into the psychology and start unwrapping postpartum depression, there's a strong link again, with childhood trauma. So one of the things that they both were talking about is, if you're planning to have a child, obviously, there's the physical conditioning, and we'll get into that in a minute too. But also the psychological element, like if you, if you have things that you haven't faced, and you're planning on having children, that's the perfect time to finally address it. So that when you go through that, especially kind of with the Body Keeps the Score element of the physiological impact of trauma, that is then going to obviously increase the chance of you not only having a healthy pregnancy, but not struggling mentally on the other end.

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26:40

Yeah, absolutely. I think I think that was, that was something that I wasn't expecting, when I had my daughter, I, I a lot of stuff, like when you're raising a baby, or, you know, into into toddlerhood, and it brings back certain things in certain emotions that you had no idea were even there. So if you haven't addressed it already, before that, it's like a really rude awakening to all of a sudden be like, in front of this toddler who you're trying to reason with, or, you know, get them to do something. And that's just not going to happen. And it like triggers all this stuff from from when you were small. So you really do have to get in front of that stuff. Beforehand, for a much easier transition for everyone. You know, I, I remember that being a really big shock to me, like I didn't, I didn't want to deal with it. Because it was like, at certain times, it was just making it. All of this. All of these thoughts that I didn't quite understand were kind of flooding


in. And then it wasn't till much later that I was realizing that oh, that's because this is the age I was when I was facing this situation. And you know, I just couldn't handle it. So I just wanted to be away like I didn't even want to. I was like, give I gave it to her dad, like you take care of it. Like I couldn't do it, you know? So it was yeah, that it's a really interesting, it's a it's a real eye opener, when you have little ones that all of a sudden, like you're facing yourself, you know, at those ages.

 James Geering 28:25

It's It's amazing. These conversations are loving it. This is why this early part of life, you know, these interviews are so important, I think because it's who is what made us who we are today. So on that vein, obviously we're gonna get into strength and conditioning. When you were school age, what were you playing or doing as far as sports

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I was playing at home so I so growing up I was kind of in this like closed society, very religious based upbringing. And so I couldn't do sports. I wasn't allowed to like, do anything like that. I was I was very active as a child. And so I remember wanting to do I remember just dying to play soccer in school and in do gymnastics. I wanted to do that so bad. So I would do my own versions, you know, at home, like in the backyard. So I was I was really active kid. I was I was strong for a kid. I was a gangly, skinny little girl, but I was strong for my age. I remember one time when we were moving apartments. I had picked up a big box. And one of my mom's friends came over and like, picked it up to move it again. And he was like, you just pick this up? And I was like, yeah, why? You know, and so I think I just I, I maybe just had that genetically. I was just a strong kid, and could do a lot of things. And so I didn't get to, like be formally trained and much, but um, You know, I had fun trying to figure it out on my own.

 James Geering 30:04

So what about career aspirations? Again, school age, obviously, towards the end of it, you were in this in your mother, but what were you dreaming of becoming?

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I had, I had sights on, you know, maybe doing something in the art world or I remember wanting to be a mechanic for some reason. I didn't really know is what the answer is, I had a lot of really different interests, always, I've always had a lot of really varying interests. I remember really liking architecture and like taking a class on that, and just just all different kinds of things. So being raised high was careers were never really a big they weren't they, it was like, just do whatever to make money, like, it doesn't matter. Because, really, you're supposed to just serve God and put all your energy into that. So as a young adult, I was still in that religion. And that was really my main focus at the time. I've, I've always been a person that is if I'm doing something, or I believe something that I'm all in, I'm not like half assed about it. So I was I was really gung ho. In that way of thinking. So I didn't really have I did, I did a lot of different things. I, you know, I was a photographer for the real estate book for a while, I had my own

house cleaning business for a bit. I was a nanny for a long time. And I just kind of like went in and out of, you know, different kind of odd jobs for quite a while. And it wasn't until my daughter was How old was she, she was just a baby. And I went to hair school because my husband at the time had lost his job. And so I knew I needed to do something. And I always did my friends hair and stuff like that. So then I got into that and started doing that more full time.

 James Geering 32:14

So when did you start getting into strength conditioning? If you didn't have that traditional sports route?

 32:20

Yeah, um, I got into super, super Strangely, I guess, because I always I always exercise I'd always, you know, like, you're supposed to take care of yourself kind of thing. My mom, my mom struggled with her weight all through my adolescence. So she was always on yo yo diet, she was always doing, you know, whatever latest exercise trend was. And so I would do that with her. So I understood the premise of you have to exercise. I never had a weight problem as a kid or young, young adult, but wanted to stay healthy. So I did that for a while I went to some some different, you know, just regular little gyms around and then mostly just worked out at home. And it wasn't until was 2009 2010 I think I found wolf brigade. Through a friend of a friend. I was I was in a particularly tough time in my life. I had my husband and I had split up. And I had kind of just lost everything I was I was out of work because I was working for him at the time. And I was just in a really, really deep state of depression. And I knew that I needed to do something for myself because I had my little daughter that I needed to take care of. So it was there was never I wanted to just give up and quit and just go away. But I knew that I couldn't because I had this little daughter that I was responsible for. And at the time her dad was nowhere to be found. So I decided, okay, well if I if I eat healthy and exercise a bit, then maybe that will make me feel better. So it was it was just kind of a reach in the dark for anything. So I walked into wolf brigade, and right away I was like, I don't know what I'm doing here.

 James Geering 34:34

So I felt the first time I did um, I've been exercising for

 34:37

years. I think that's yeah, I think that's kind of the sentiment with everybody that walks in the doors. At the time, it was in this tiny room in this weird art building downtown. And I walk in and you know, I met Greg, I met a couple other people you know, everyone was very nice. Everybody was super excited. to see me and so I just kind of watched watched things for a little bit. And then, you know, Greg asked me some questions. And one of one of our members, Matt was assigned to explain to me what was going on. And I just remember being really confused. Because it looked really interesting. There was a lot of people in there that were all over the board and like skill level, and body type, and age, all of that. But everybody seemed to be

doing the same thing looks interesting. So that, that started me on my strength and conditioning path. I, I remember a few months in lifting something that I couldn't, that I had tried before and couldn't do, it was a deadlift. And it like, totally changed everything, how I saw about what strength was because I'd always been strong, I could do things, but I never knew I could get stronger. I never, that never like dawned on me. You know, before, when I was lifting weights or doing things, it was just like, oh, this is just good for my muscles. And so that was that was a real light bulb moment. And that was kind of like, oh, this is really cool. You can, you can get better at this. And even though it was just like exercising to me still, then it was catching my interest. Because I would, I would hear Greg cue someone, or he would cue me, he would tell me to do something a tiny bit different. And then all of a sudden, it would feel completely different than what I was doing before. Like I was doing a totally different movement, but just with a tiny detail applied. And I didn't understand it, I didn't understand what he was seeing. I didn't understand what he was looking at. And I wanted to because it was really interesting to me. So that was kind of like my my start into it. After that. I just, I started kind of hanging around in classes that I wasn't participating in, just to kind of watch, and listen and try to start figuring out what was happening. Because I just really had no clue what was so interesting to me. The the human body has always been a really, you know, powerful thing to me, like I've always been kind of amazed at what people can do. Why some people can do things and other people can't like how it moves, you know how it functions, the whole thing was always has always been kind of fascinating to me. So just being able to sit there and watch and listen and learn was was fascinating and really thrilling for me. So after a while, I think Greg just kind of started seeing my interest in it and that I wasn't the type to be like, I want to tell people what to do, which never makes a great trainer. So would have me go over to somebody and say and tell them what to do. You know, he'd say, Okay, go over to so and so and just let them know that they need to put their feet here. It's a bit okay. Okay, you know, and so I would go do that. And so it was it was kind of like this unofficial apprenticeship, you know, for a few years. And at the time I had, I didn't have a full like a full full time job. So I had more time to kind of help out at the gym, it was always just him at you know, at the gym, we had a few different you know, trainers kind of kind of come up and then they would leave or things wouldn't work out. And as we were growing, we moved locations a couple of times in that period, we just needed how and the place was important to me. And the things that I was learning about myself there were were life changing. And so I really felt indebted to the place and just wanted to do as much as I could for it. So that's kind of like how I got into it. I never had sights on becoming a coach or you know, leading strength and conditioning classes or anything like that. It just kind of really naturally happened because of where I was mentally and physically at the time and what what finding wolf brigade actually did for me

J James Geering 39:30

as you progress through and became not only a phenomenal athlete, but obviously coaching this this amazing system. You had very little traditional sporting background, you had obviously the fragility emotionally just because of the dynamic and ultimate losing your mother. Was there a sense of forging strength not only exteriorly but but interior as well.

o 39:57

Yeah, absolutely. The the But the flip side of the coin of, of sitting there and listening to class was listening to Greg's dictation of the board. But what the lesson kind of was for the day, back, then he would spend a minute or two with a concept or a thought that would apply mentally,

for us, and how we could maybe, you know, adapt that into our lives and help in other areas. And that's when I started to see that this training wasn't just we're keeping our bodies healthy it was it was showing us what we could do mentally, and what we could do with our lives outside of the gym doors. And that was the, that was the biggest hit for me, because I was in this place where I was totally lost, I was at rock bottom, I had no love for myself, no self confidence. And these little things that I was proving to myself in the training room that I could do hard things that I could learn, I could adapt, I could get through something tough, was starting to give me these building blocks on this foundation, where I could start to go outside of the gym and say, Okay, I don't really know where my life is going. And this is really tough, and this is really scary. But I know that I can do this other thing. So I might be able to figure this out too. So why not just start taking that step and giving it a try. And so that's the stuff that really stuck with me. And that's the stuff that I cared most about, you know, I would see other people come in that had, you know, anxiety issues, or, you know, these like, kind of debilitating, you know, mental things that they were dealing with, and over, over a period of a few months, and then a year, like, they were completely different individuals, you know, and, and that's what I cared about, I never cared about a six pack or, you know, looking a certain way or that, that, that physical exterior, it, like, that's nice, that's great. But what was important to me and why I love doing this is because it was like helping people in ways that like we just needed so badly in the society, you know, we just people are screaming practically to have an opportunity to prove to themselves that they can do something, you know, that they're that they're worthwhile in these ways. And and this is a way to do it. So that that's that's the part that really got me hooked forever. And and what I really love about this work because yeah, it's strength and conditioning, we lift weights, we do this, but it's it's really just so much more than that.

J

James Geering 43:14

When I started doing CrossFit, I was talking to Greg about this, it was think, Oh 607 I always forget which exact year but it was before it was cool, as they say. So when I first moved back to Florida, I was doing it in the YMCA getting all these funny looks from all these people and smirks from the high school kids with the cut off shirts and all that stuff. But then I ended up joining Iron Legion and obviously you know Ted and those guys that come up to convergence. And I finally realized, ah, this is actually what CrossFit is about. I've been doing it right ish some of the movements were not correct but not bad for someone just trying to pull it off YouTube at that time. But when I got into the CrossFit space not only Adam our coach at the time was phenomenon show me that you know, for example, my cleans are wrong first time he told me to keep it close to my body almost put my wiener off with the bar by mistake. So you learn through your pain, but but it was a tribal element it was that being a part of something which I find in jujitsu, obviously in the fire service as well. But when we transition out of these professions in uniform, it's important that we find that and I just don't think you get that from working your way through the machines with your headphones on in in a Globo gym if you want to use that term. Was that tribal elements a big part of your wolf brigade experiences? Well,

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44:35

it definitely was. Like I said, I was I was I had left the religion that I was in so that was my whole little circle. That was my whole bubble support. That was my community. And so when I decided to leave that I really had nothing I had in in in that situation, all of the friends All of the family chosen family that I had, my whole life was gone in an instant, because if you leave,

then you're gone. You're, no one will talk to you. So, you know, I had nothing, I had no one around me and these people that I was, you know, coming in and sweating with and laughing with, and then you know, going back home, you know, started really becoming this family that I needed. And the interesting part about it is, it's like, I think about it now. And, you know, it's fairly common for people in these gym communities, like the people that I'm closest with and have come to really become now my family are people that I would never have even talked to people that I don't really even have a lot of in common with most of the time, you know, and, but it's, it's, it's all the superficial stuff pushed aside, when you normally meet someone, it's like, oh, they kind of dress like I do, they like the same music, you know, we'll have something in common and it's like, that stuff, like matters so little, and really connecting with a human being. And so the stuff in here, when you're, when you are suffering through something, and you see that person next to you, and they look at you, and they're just like, okay, you know, like, we're gonna suffer through this together, and I've got you, that's, that's more meaningful, and you have more connection there than anything, you know, than any song that you both like, or anything like that. So the, that tribal that community that I found here, and then from here, going spreading elsewhere, like, like Iron Legion, you know, in Florida, and, you know, places in all over really, that we've found people that have that like mind and like spirit, like, all of a sudden your community has grown exponentially, and you have people all over, I think about traveling, I like to do road trips, and whenever I do that, I just look at the map and find all of these spots where I can kind of stop and visit friends. And it may not even be people that I've you know, really developed close relationships with, but I know that I can stop there and, and visit and have a nice time because we have this, this these like minds, we have the really important stuff in common. So that really opened up my world to instead of just like this really tiny little community now, I have this huge worldwide community that I could go and, and trust the people because there's also now you know, lines back, you know, there's that accountability. I know you he knows you. And so it's a it's a really, really beautiful thing to open up a world like that.

J

James Geering 48:06

I was telling Greg, when we did our interview that I was going to start doing wolfberg A programming which I have, it hasn't been as frequent as I would like, because life just kind of had you know, there's been a whole bunch of stuff going on with my wife, she's in med school and a lot of stress and some breakdowns and things but you know, consistently doing it and only doing it that and then the class that I teach it aren't Legion I always do that with my athletes as well. And the goal was to first test it at the hero challenge, which is a 911 tribute fundraising workout that one of my previous departments puts on and the firstly the programming was amazing amount I'm almost 50 Now my partner's that he helps KC 36. So we did it in the under 40s division because I refuse to go to the older one. You know, if you're a firefighter, you're a firefighter. You shouldn't have to have divisions. Yes, but it definitely it definitely paid off. But it wasn't it was kind of sometimes the programming is a lot more, you know, sandbags and sleds and a lot more firefighter base, something happened with this one where the dynamics stayed very CrossFit II in the end. So it was a lot of wobbles and barbell movements and stuff. So I don't think it really was a fair test of the programming specifically, but shared suffering in this building. There was 160 people, I think teams 106 people total. And you talk about camaraderie in the fire service. This is it. And you see that in Iron Legion. You see that in wolf brigade. And when you see the bar being lowered in first responder professions, and I know Greg's got some frustrations with some of the law enforcement people that walk through your doors, but also our rate, just just our environment. Now it's becoming less and less stressful, you know, the external stressors. I see that as hugely detrimental to community.

So talk to me about out that through your eyes, you know, as we've become more comfortable and how to interact less, I mean, not just recently, but over the last few decades, what have you witnessed about that, versus that shared suffering that you see people bound together by and Wolf brigade?



50:18

Yeah. I mean, it's, it's really becoming apparent nowadays, you know, you go to the grocery store, or you just walk down the street, and people are on attune to themselves to what's around them. Because we've gotten really accustomed to just not having to worry about much, which is nice, right, we don't want to have to be running for our lives every second. But we've we've gone almost so far over the over the edge that, you know, people just don't care about anything anymore, nothing is important. And the the difference that I see, you know, from people that I hang out with, or people that you know, from, from your gym, or other places that are doing this, this kind of work, they are crisp, they're aware, because your, your body and your mind, they go through all of these things in an hour, when, when you're when you're in this, in this environment, where you're working hard, you're putting your body in your mind through these things, like, you work through so many things, so that you have this appreciation, even when you're just walking down the street, or you have this awareness of self, and your environment and appreciation of others and of everything that's around you. And I think it's makes such a big difference, you know, like, someone from some art place is always going to hold the door open for somebody else, you know, they go somewhere, they're gonna help somebody, if they drop something there, they're going to engage in their community or in their environment, wherever they are. And you see that be the opposite. With everyone else, you know, people are looking at their phones, they're not even noticing that you're behind them there. They watch something terrible happen, you know? So you can put it on? Yeah, exactly. Stay away from it. They're there. They're viewing the world that they're living in almost like a TV show, and like, they're not part of it. And I think that's where the degradation of society is coming from. Because while that and a lot of other things, but when when you don't feel like you're a part of something, when you're not contributing anything to your environment, like why why would you care, you know, and so, we've become so far apart. And we're all in our little homes, and we're right next door to each other all feeling alone, and when really, we could just walk out the door and go check on your neighbor, or, you know, go give, you know, the guy down the street, you know, whatever he was looking for, you know, the week before or you know what I mean? Like, there's, there's no, there's just no engagement in community and the people around us, in general society anymore. And I think it's because they, they weren't comfortable. They don't do the hard stuff, and they don't have to engage. And so it just kind of shuts your senses down. And I think with what we're doing, it heightens those senses and you you start to feel and get engaged. And I think that's, that's a really, really, really important thing. And it's such a shame to lose that you think about society a long, long time ago, everyone was working together like it really was like Kim actual communities, it wasn't just like a family in their home on the same street as someone else. Like it was communities working together and and that's what we've lost but in here in these environments, you start to remember that and it gets fostered because we're all helping each other it's like oh, if after class if someone actually it was this this past winter I think one of our members went out to her car and her her tire was flat there was five people out there within a couple of minutes and change the tire got everything all squared away for her and and and like that's like such a beautiful tiny little example but it's so beautiful because if she was at Wegmans she not nobody would have helped her, you know, like, she would have had to wait

an hour for AAA to get there. And then, you know, figure it out. So yeah, I think what we're doing here translates into so much more than just physical fitness, it's, it's, it's our communities and way of life that's being, you know, brought into these really beautiful places.

J

James Geering 55:22

The real kind of right way of saying this, it's easy to say, you know, people today and the kind of tar a lot of people with the same brush, what I've realized, and there's so many videos of this is because people are so distracted, they just need that first person. And I've as someone actually said, great example, in a conversation a while ago, now the first follower, so you have the first person that says, let's do this, but it's the next person that then goes to them, that really opens the floodgates, because then there's two people in that, okay, let's all go. But you see that, you know, the car has rolled over and someone's trapped and the person goes over, and then all of a sudden, the people that were paralyzed for a second, go, and you've still got the asshole, it's just gonna stand there and film it or, you know, just for whatever reason, but I think most people do want that. And it just takes them looking up from their phone or snapping out from that paralyzed state, because there's a fight in front of them, rather than just banding together and pulling the two people apart. They just stand and watch and you know, film and cheer and, and that mob mentality can go the other way, like in schools. So for me, the more areas that are putting that leadership back, whether it's gyms, Jujitsu schools, you know, whatever is a progressive church that actually is asking the people to do the same things outside the walls, and they preach about inside. You know, that's what we need, again, because that's who we are as people, that's what human beings are. But when we have people that stand in DC, that are selfish assholes from both sides, what does that do to the rest of the population, it excuses them to act the same way. So we have to realize that back in the day, for example, the president or prime minister was a revered position. Now maybe actually, the one that you respect is your kid's jujitsu coach, or, you know, whoever it is your bank manager that's always kind to you, whatever those are, the real humans and a title doesn't necessarily mean leadership. It's the people that actually roll up their sleeves and try and do good in the world that we shouldn't be emulating.

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57:22

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, that that's, that is super clear today. I mean, people It boggles my mind that people are even arguing about, you know, politics, and, you know, all this kind of stuff, and this side, and that side, and it, because it's so clear, it's all the same thing, you know, who cares, I don't care if you're blue, or red, or whatever the hell, like, it's, it's not, it's not them against each other, it's not parties against each other, it's, it's them against us, it's, you know, it's the political leaders against, like society and regular normal people, because they're fine, there, they've got all they've got all their money, they've got their big houses, they're fine, they don't really care, they just want more of it. So they do whatever they need to. But it's, it's the people that are suffering from, from that hypocrisy and corruption, that that is rampant in the political world. So it really is time, like, I mean, I, I, you can almost see it, you know, in little facets, when you're looking around, like you can almost see a time, hopefully, when the majority of the people are starting to wake up and take action and like, not fall for these tricks anymore, but to like, really start assessing themselves and what their role is in society and starting to step up and starting to, you know, come into these come into these places. So I mean, that's my hope, obviously. Well, we'll see what comes. People can be interesting, in that

way, you know, like, even it doesn't matter how apparent something is sometimes people will just still put the blinders right on so So, and that's why I think it's important for you know, people like you and I and the people that can can see things and aren't afraid to just say, hey, you know, maybe think for yourself or maybe, you know, you can figure this out for yourself, don't be so reliant on the system and you know, all of the things like we're so capable of so many, like insane things. If we're together, you know, if we're separated, like they're keeping us then we can't really accomplish much but if we are together and work in harmony with each other, because all we want is the same thing, we want to be happy, we want to raise our families the way we want to. We want to be able to provide for ourselves. And like, I think that's the other thing that kind of gets me confused sometimes, because you have people, you have people, neighbors bickering and bickering fighting. And over over these things, and it's like, Where, where are the political leaders right now, they're, they're not anywhere even near you, like, you guys, can, you guys are wired the same thing. So it's just, it's just a matter of, I think, you know, putting our egos aside, which is also something that is easier learned in these environments. Because if you don't, it's, it gets really, really tough to get through anything, you know, in these in these walls. So you kind of have to put that that ego aside, and either you know, seal the weight, or, you know, do do whatever you need to do to be able to get through it. And so, that also helps translate into, you know, putting your ego aside outside of here and doing what you need to do to help others or be or be used in whatever way that you need to, to, like help the community, which I think is an important piece of that puzzle.

J

James Geering 1:01:28

Absolutely. Well, speaking of the community, let's dive into the actual wolf brigade philosophies and principles. I want to bring up the female athlete, not just because you're a female Coach, obviously, you know, you are able to lift a huge amount more than me, you're able to swing certainly heavier meses than me, there's a lot of female athletes that kick my ass in my gym on a daily basis. So it's not about that. But there are a lot of kind of prejudices that when I was young, oh, women can only do this, oh, don't don't lift weights, you get too big and all this bullshit, you know, before we started watching MMA fighters, destroying, you know, people are on screen and jujitsu, and you know, CrossFit, and all these other things, mud runs. And so what are some of the common myths that you see female athletes walk through the doors with, and then talk to me about some of the kind of the commonalities on their journeys.

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Um, the I think the most common things that I see people worried about are that they're, they're worried about hurting themselves one. This is looks scary and intimidating. And so very few people have the awareness of how strong they actually are, when they even work. First walk through the door, because of that stereotype. Women aren't strong, you know, women can't do certain things. And so even if we don't necessarily believe that, or having people tell us that, you grow up, like that, and thinking like that, so, you know, you see somebody moving something that looks like it's heavy, you automatically reject it, and like, people will pick up like, the tiniest kettlebell, and I'm, I just look at them and like, no, picked it. And they're like, I can't pick that up. And so I think under estimating just baseline strength, many times is the thing and then and then what you touched on is that, you know, women don't want to get bulky, they think they're gonna get big and muscley. And, you know, look like men. And so, combating that is usually pretty simple. Because none of those things are true. And, you know,

it just, it's, I usually don't go too far into like, a rant with things. I just say, No, that's not true. You know, like, it just isn't, you know, if, if a woman wants to look like a man, she, you have to do a whole lot of work to do that, you know, like, you've got to be, you've got to be lifting all the weights, you've got to be eating a ton, you've got to be, you know, supplementing all these crazy things, because our bodies just aren't going to do that naturally, you know, like, we'll get muscle Sure. But in I, it's, we're not going to look like men because we're women. So that won't happen and and I think the the first dispelling of your week, is I usually just have people pick something up that they don't think that they can not anything crazy, of course, but when when they first come in here for you know, private lessons or for or to like go through their introductory sessions, if they're joining the gym. It's a really good time to kind of see how people move and if people have a good understanding of what they're doing and we're practicing something, learning something that I'll have, I'll have them do it with something light, and then I'll be like, Okay, do it with this. And most of the time with women, they look at me and like, I'm crazy, I'm like, go ahead, you know, just with complete confidence, and they do it. And I think that surprise, that it's even, maybe doesn't even feel that heavy that they thought it would, like, gives them all the confidence that they need to be to, like, just kind of put that fear or that thought out of their head, you know, because it's you show that you show somebody wants, that they can do something that they never thought they could do. And it's, it's, it's over from there, you know, then sky's the limit. So that's a big one,

 James Geering 1:05:46

with the looking like a man thing I've been lifting and I'm 49 years old, and I still haven't got there yet. And I am a man. So for all the ladies out there, if you just try normally you're never gonna get there.

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Yeah, I mean, it really just are. I mean, despite what, you know, certain people tell you, women's bodies are different. And so we, you know, we respond to the stimulus. And, and it's, it's actually super, super needed. Because, you know, like, through aging, and you know, bone density and all this stuff, like, you need to lift weights, like everyone needs to lift weights, it's not even, like, an extracurricular activity that should be looked upon as like a, you know, a choice, you know, like, it shouldn't be a choice, like you need to lift weights, to keep your body moving, and stay healthy for as long as you possibly can. Otherwise, you're just gonna start deteriorating really early. And so I think I tried to, I think I tried to drive that point home that this isn't, this isn't, you know, like, some extra thing that is fun. I mean, it's fun, and you can do these things, but it should just be done. Everyone needs to do this so

 James Geering 1:07:05

well, with a lot of the more natural movements as well I found that in my class, I do sleds and sandbags. And I'll credit another firefighter who came in and did a straw man class for a few weeks. And it was just a case of try this one try this one and again, you know, the sandbag obviously the limiting factor is getting it off the floor once you can get it and that bear hug you can normally carry more but that dispels some of my oh this is as heavy as I can do. But the other day in the programming your programming, it was a double kettlebell clean two three

front squats and I'd never done that with any amount of real wait. So I started on like 40 fives. Okay, let me work up 5360 and then seven year on like holy shit, you know, double double seven is and then it was like if we had more I could probably have done he probably would have been the ceiling but we don't have them yet. And I've got to I got to start getting heavier and bows now especially for the the the deadlifts and those kinds of things. But again, male or female, that that belief and I see it so many times and don't get me wrong. If you're doing an overhead squat. Yes, go start with a PVC pipe if you can't move properly, don't even add way. But you know, a natural body movement and the sandbags one that I'll get people kind of be in policies about and I'll tell them alright, I'm gonna get a box. I'm going to put it on the box, pick it up and carry it and take it over there. And once you debunk that myth, in someone's mind, it opens this whole new kind of level that they now realize, okay, I did it. I didn't get her. And now there's 20% more confidence than I had, you know, 24 hours ago.



1:08:42

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's it's really really exciting to see people to see that light bulb go off and people you know, and then and then their their trust in you starts building because you're doing it in a safe way I hit yesterday I had one of our members sons I work with and he's 15 and he's real shy kid, he's doing hockey and he's he's awesome. He's so great. You listen so well. And just wanted wanted to come in because he just wants to be able to play hockey better and he wants to be stronger. And I think he's like a little bit on the smaller side of, you know, the, the class and stuff. So yesterday, he's been making remarkable strides since he's been coming in. And yesterday I had him do some do some kettlebell deadlift. So we started I was like, we're gonna do two at a time. And because he kind of he kind of get leans towards that, like, Oh, that's too heavy. You know, I can't do that. So I was like, Okay, we're gonna do two deadlifts at a time so we got up to, I think, I mean, he said he weighs like, he's like a little over 100 pounds. And so we got up to the 106 And he lifted it twice. And like the look on his face was like, because I pulled it out, and I put it in front of him. And he just looked at me like, What am I going to do with that? And I was like, Okay, do everything we just did with that 97 You know, like, put your brace on, make a fat belly, hold your breath. And he lifted it twice, and just kind of like laughed to himself, you know? And I said, Did you think you could do that? And he said, No, I said, You're really strong. You got to start realizing you're really strong. And he was just like, really kind of taken aback. And, but what that does for a person, you know, any age, it's remarkable, you know, like you had somebody proves to you that you are way stronger than you think you are. So what are you going to tell yourself next time you think you're not strong? You know, or, or in a situation that you think you can't handle? You know, because you probably can. So it's just a really, really cool light bulb to go off.



James Geering 1:11:01

With the social media side, you know, there's, for example, Wolf brigade, you know, there's never any of this, you know, look how much I can lift going on. It's just showing classes and movements. And you know, think the most recent one I've seen Matt doing is with a gallon full of war with all the movements are doing there. Yeah, but I also think that where Instagram really screws people up, is you get these elite performers forget even the bodybuilders because that's, you know, that's an entire separate group of people, but the elite performers, and you have these world champion Olympic lifters and these strong men and women and, and I think, sons to some that can inspire, but I think too many that will, that will never be able to do that.

So why even bother. So what I love about having that real world discovery in the gym, as you remind people look, though, that's been their whole life for 20 years, you're probably never gonna get there. And that's okay. But let's work on your capacity and get you to as strong as you can be with the work that you're willing to put in. Because I don't want to be in the gym all day. That sounds super boring to me. So exactly. I think the spelling, you know, that modern day, social media Insta highlight bullshit. And actually just showing a human being like when we pick up to under pound sandbags, and like, you just picked up a human being off the floor, pick them up into the to the air and walk 50 meters with them. It's not many people that can do that. So when you put it into that, they're like, oh, my god, that's amazing. And then I'll tell them, you know, Dragon dragon sleds is one of my favorite ones. Because I'll say, All right, you know, to most responders, you're pulling someone out of a fire, you're pulling your partner out of a fire, and I'll tell some of the people I know that just have breakups, and that you're pulling your ex into a fire, okay, use that as fuel. But either way, either way, you're, you're putting the human element on and you're making realize you're not just moving a piece of steel, when you put it into real world like that young boy, you just literally picked yourself off the floor twice. That that I think reframes it the same way, as you know, firsthand, Stan, or a rope climb in CrossFit, and so much more powerful than moving a pin one notch down in a bodybuilding gym.



1:13:09

Yeah, exactly. I mean, that that that does do a lot for people, I use that same analogy with another client of mine, she did a, she did a, I don't know, heavy sled drag. And it was about my weight. And she was kind of like, you know, that was really hard. I don't know why I'm doing this. And we had previously talked about going for a hike or something like that. And I said, I said, Well, now you know that if we go for that hike, and I break my leg, you can pull me back to where to the car. And she was like, oh, that's like, that's really useful. You know, like, that's a really useful skill. So I, I do, I like to think about things like that as well, just, like, equating that to a person or what they could do with that. Because I mean, to your point, people watch, watch Instagram, like, it's like, it's a TV show, and don't ever apply anything to themselves. And even when people are doing something remarkable, that is still just a person. It's just a person, like, they're not an alien. They're not they're not any different than you are i They just put the work in, they wanted to do something. So they put the work in that's it, you know, and it's yes, of course, there's, you know, exceptions to the rule and everything. There's some phenomenal people out there but but really in reality, if, you know, Jane walks in the door and really wants to be able to do something, you can do it. You just have to put the work in, you know, it's not like people aren't born this way. You know, it's just, you they work a really long time to be able to do stuff. So and that's same vein, I think what I what I like about, you know, at any given day in here, you know, there's, you know, people are working their ass off. And sometimes I'll like look over at Greg or another coach, and I'm just, like, make this face. And like point to the class, because it's a marvel to witness what's going on in there on a Tuesday, you know, people come in after work, like they've done all of their day, they're tired, and then they do these incredible things. And as math teachers and accountants, and you know, this, these aren't professional athletes, and this isn't happening other places, you know, and so it's just, I think, part of my joy about the community that we have in here is just being able to witness what happens here on a daily basis. And, and really take it in because it, it doesn't happen. In other places, you know, I think the people here and even I, myself, take it for granted sometimes that this really is a truly special place. And it this, people aren't doing this, you know, all over the world, you know, it's just little, little pockets. So to really be proud of that, you know, that you can be part of something like this and, and keep it going.

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James Geering 1:16:29

I had a moment when I was coaching on Monday, and that particular class is very, very dynamic. Sometimes I'll have, you know, 1012 people, and sometimes there'll be one, and this guy is a prison guard, he's an army reservists as well. So loving the beds, he always puts the work in. It's absolutely sucks that sandbag carries, I think, is his breathing. And he's built like a sparkplug. But there's something about semi he can deadlift, you know, I think like 500 or something. But 100 pound sandbag is in problems for 200 meters. But we're doing overhead yoke carries agenne done for a while. And we did the first lap, it's like 100 degrees out in Florida. And as we come around in the corner, there's a couple, one gentleman is smoking is a little bit overweight, the his wife or girlfriend is quite considerably heavier, super sweet. I think they're, you know, overseeing their kids in the gym. So massive kudos to them. But at that moment, I was like this either end of the spectrum. And the only difference and this is why I want to be so fair, because there's so many people out there that kind of look that down down their nose that well, if people just you know, would like me, then I'd be fit the environment. Again, we talked about, you know, the childhood and everything. Especially COVID COVID, underlying just how little people give a shit the moment about creating an environment for health, because they shut everything that made healthy down. And they delivered everything that was shipped to people's houses while they told them to stay inside. But the only difference like you said between those two humans and the humans that me and my partner that were doing the workout, the time was simply the journey that there'd be no up to that point. And that was really empathetically sad. Because those two people could easily have been the other two people in my class, you know what I mean? So this is this is what breaks my heart is such a, either a complete zero ownership conversation like they, they they need to everything for me or, again, it's all about discipline, if you just woke up at five, you'd be like me, which is also bullshit. But the environment that you put around people that then enables them to make healthier choices, because that's the majority of the choices in your town. It's all healthy in the local farms are being supported. The kids are doing Uber amounts of PE and recess. That is a huge part of the conversation that you don't hear people say so yeah, you can walk into CrossFit or wolf brigade and see phenomenal adults. But I would argue that most of us are healthy despite the environment, not because of it.

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1:18:58

No, yeah, I agree with that, you know, there's some people that here and just people that I know in general that really have to work hard to combat the environment that they are living in. And, and it's their choice, it's, it's, it's something that's in them that they decided to do. And I've seen the I've seen this, I've seen the opposite as well, you know, the People's people's friendships, you know, who they're hanging out with. The kind of people that they are associating with all the time, make a really, really big impact on them. And even when it means people's very lives, even when people are obese, sick, you know, all of these things where they could really fall into a life threatening illness or situation at any time. It is But it's one of the most heartbreaking experiences as a trainer to watch those people just be pulled back into that environment, knowing that they have support in this other environment, but they just don't choose to do it, you know, and whether it's still because of maybe, you know, more inner dialogue, because of how they grew up, or, you know, they haven't, they haven't healed from certain things. And don't, don't put the worth in themselves that that there should be, it's still heartbreaking, because, you know, when someone comes to me, and they have an issue like that, or anything, I'm here because I want to help. And when it becomes you care more about

that person than they do, then it's the scales are totally flipped, you know, and it, it becomes this really unhealthy relationship. And that's happened here, that's happened here a couple of times, and it's something that I've really had to learn from, you know, because I had to, I had to find my self worth, I had to figure that out for myself, too, you know, as we all do, at some point, and, you know, having the things that I had to deal with growing up, and you know, into my adulthood, it, you have to make a choice at some point, you know, it's always a choice, you make the choice for yourself, or you don't, and I'm always rooting for people that they will make the choice for themselves, because it's never too late. You know, like those two people that were sitting that were sitting there. You know, maybe they went home and decided, Hey, what are we doing, you know, like, we're in this place, like, wow, this is amazing, we need to start choosing ourselves, you know, we need to start doing something for ourselves better, and maybe be a better example for our son or whoever was in there. And so it's like, that's what I hope for, you know, like, when people walk in here, you know, they may be, you could smell smoke on him, this or that, or whatever. It's like, I never have that as like, Okay, well, they're there, you know, there's no use in them, or it's pointless to help them because you just never know what the catalyst is, that's going to help somebody start to choose themselves. And so I don't know, I think that's why we also, we have such a wide array of people in here, because that's kind of what's happened. You know,

 James Geering 1:22:41

that's one thing I've seen a lot in the kids have. A lot of the, the athletes and coaches are legion, they just watch them, emulating their parents. And it's beautiful. And they're constantly moving the swing on the ropes. And depending on the class going on, that's a good thing or a bad thing. But you know, but they end up just, you know, being a healthy child, and they're moving. And that doesn't mean that they're all jacked and everything but they're not overweight, and they're not hunched over at 12 years old. But then conversely, there's a lot of stories where the parents, like you said initially brought their children to to Iron Legion, and then ultimately, they dove in, and they ended up becoming in much better shape. So it was their kids that were leaders. So I agree with you completely. And that, again, underlines the environment conversation, the more exposure to positive health elements, whether it's farmers markets, whether it's, you know, the they built a exercise equipment around the lake that we have, where I live, and so there's now pull up bars and dip bars and all those and I see people using them, even if there's some other kind of wanqi, hydraulic ones that really don't do a whole lot. It's still it's getting people moving. So that is the environment conversation, you know, there will always be that whatever percent that come hell or high water, like the prisoners that do all the burpees, you know, they're in solitary, and they're still working out. That's that group. But the way you get the middle group is you create an environment that is encouraging for them to make better choices. You know, subconsciously, it's not even a deliberate thing. You know, if there's not McDonald's and liquor stores on every corner, there's a higher chance that you're actually going to make better choices because that is your choice.

 1:24:23

Yeah, yeah, exactly. I mean, and I think that's a big part of the problem is that, you know, the country has made it so easy to not have to do that, you know, like, there's there is literally just garbage at your fingertips. 24/7 So and having that era of anxiety and uncertainty and

depression and all of these things. You're you're gonna err on the side of the the easy, you know, delicious thing that's right there or you know, like the the computer game where you don't have to deal with people or because the world is it's really, really tough to deal with right now. So, it does it make it takes a conscious choice, but you know that that little step to, to kind of show somebody that okay, it's it's work Yes, but it's really really worth it and you feel way better you know, so it's a, it's it's, I always think about, you know, my daughter is 20 now and when she was a teenager, she, you know, like most teenagers you moody at times, and you know, you don't feel very good, you're tired, you know, she was tired all the time. And so I'm like, Well, you know, if you eat a little better, and you drink some more water, you're gonna start feeling better, you're gonna have more energy. And it's like, it sounds like the stupidest thing like, no, there's something wrong, there's something wrong, you know, like, and then I remember, you know, and I just kind of do what I do and you want she's at the age where you can't force feed them, you know, like meat and vegetables. It's like, okay, well, you're gonna figure this out at some point. And I remember she, I knew she was like, 18. And she came to me, she's like, Ma, I had, she got like, this giant water bottle for herself and with like, little markers, and she's like, I've been drinking this whole thing a day. She's like, I feel so much better. Just like, you know, oh, my God, I'm gonna wring your neck, you know? I'm like, Yeah, great. I'm so glad that you found that. So, sometimes it's just like, doing the things and like leaving the crumbs and then people start till you know, like, oh, maybe I'll try this. And then they actually see that oh, yeah, I do feel better. What do you know?

J

James Geering 1:26:50

I just said that when my wife went back in the day when she did CrossFit, I would give her a cue. And then I basically tell my coach friend like, Hey, Steve, when you go and tell Becky, this thing, he tells you exactly the same thing. Oh, thank you, Steve. Because you can talk to your wife, well, she just had some she's in med school, she kind of hit a wall, and bless her. Now she's got into breathwork and meditation. And she was like, I know, you've been telling me for years about this, but again, illustrates what you're saying. Exactly, yeah, you lay the framework and you don't push you just step back.

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1:27:22

And the same way though, I've I've fallen into the same traps, I had a lot of I have had a lot of anxiety, depression, my whole life, I had a lot of digestive issues my whole life. And so I think maybe last year, I or two years ago, I decided to work with this herbalist to see if she could help me with my, you know, digestion and my gut issues. And she was she's remarkable. absolutely remarkable. She's on Instagram has made whole fitness or made whole wellness. She, she does a phenomenal job at reading what you need and how to give you the information so that it's not too much. And everything that like friends had told me to do or try or this or that I eventually started doing because she would, she would she kind of gained my trust by saying, okay, you know, maybe try this first, just like a little tiny thing. And once that started working, I was like, okay, she knows what she's talking about. And it's helping so I'll do this other thing, and I'll do this other thing, you know, and, and I was just I laughing my was laughing at myself at the end of it, because it's all these things that you hear about all the time, you know, and it's not like, you know, magic or you know, anything like that it's just implementing these things into your daily routine, and then it actually works and you feel better. And I'm like, Man, I am just really stubborn. I would just never try it before, you know, you know, it's like, I'm not going

to do that. That's stupid, that's not going to work, you know, and, but so I mean, we all kind of fall into that, those traps all the time. And I fall into the same traps that I you know, our M coaching, you know, my clients about all the time. And so it just takes a minute to you know, stop and breathe and kind of go back and, you know, say oh, yeah, that's right. I can I need to do this. And I think we tend to complicate our own lives a little more than they need to be at times with that kind of stuff.

 James Geering 1:29:36

Absolutely. Well, I want to kind of shift over some closing questions a little bit, but one more area I want to hit. When it comes to the first responder population, male or female, the people that have walked through your doors that have used will forget and been very successful and got to the strength that they need to because arguably more petite women definitely need With more strength I've never been a large man myself so especially when I first entered the fire service it was my strength more than my endurance I had to work on what are some of the the journeys or stories or and or failures of the people that you've seen through your coaching experience?

 1:30:16

Yeah, it's interesting. So we, we do train a lot of cops here, we have, we have a handful of firefighters, cops that are more, you know, we've got a bunch of SWAT team here. So they're, they're doing a lot, you know, there's a lot of responsibility. So the handful that we have here, um, you know, really thrive in their careers, because they have the right mindset. They're go getters, they know what they need to do, they're able, they're capable, all this stuff. So I think people around them start to come in and, you know, like, Oh, what are you doing, I want to do that, you know, so, so we've had this influx of first responders come in. And it's always interesting, because you never can quite tell exactly how someone's going to be when they first come in. And, you know, you'll get, you'll get some people who are just totally gung ho, you know, natural natural athletes, we've had some that are just like, you know, very in shape strong, don't really see the need for for this, you know, like, they're, they're active, they're fit. But what's lacking is their, their mindset, you know, they don't have the mental endurance and strength that they need to for certain situations. And, and so they, they don't like to have to work hard, they don't want to have to, like put that to the test. So they leave. And then you find that we've also had people who are extremely weak, very vulnerable. Men and women, when I find out people are cops that are coming in, it's I tried to, like, relate it to okay, like, it's not nice out there, you know, I'm not a cop, I don't, I don't have to deal with any of that stuff. But you do, you know, and someone else's life is likely in your hands in these situations. So this is important. We've had, we've had some really great cases where people are super weak, lazy, and then they start doing this, and then all of a sudden really realize the benefit, because they might get into a situation. And then they were able to like defend themselves or, you know, do the job in a way that they would not have been able to do before. And they realize that so that kind of helps cement it in for them. And we've seen people make extremely remarkable transformations. Like I we've had, like just wet noodles come in here and have kind of those light bulb moments for themselves. And then now they're like, really valuable assets in their department, because they are applying themselves in all these ways. What we see more often than not, sadly, is the ones that just don't think they need it. Because they're gonna rely on their gun or their weapon or not doing the job, you know, they're just not going to go after what

they need to do. And, and that's always it's always it's really disheartening, you know, and we don't take it lightly, because if I'm in a job, or I'm given responsibility over someone else, like that takes precedence even over my own life, like if I have to take care of someone else's life, like, I'm going to do all that I can do, and I'm not anybody, you know, I'm just me, like, I don't have to do that. And so these people are signing up for this, and you see it more and more. And I think it's just more the, the organizational fault of the system, because they don't have to be any certain way. You know, they're the standards are so low and getting lowered, like every year, that like, they can do some crappy push ups and sit ups, you know, once a year and they're, they think they're fine. You know, like, if they make it in the time they do their whatever, you know, it's like okay, yeah, I can do that. And then they can just rely on the uniform. Firefighters a little different because, you know, you really do have to be able to pull someone out of a fire you have to be able to climb the ladder, you have to be able to carry those hoses, like you have to be able to do that stuff. You can't just sit there and have somebody else do it, you know. So, um, and surprising, surprisingly, we have very, we have a handful of, we have a few firefighters in here, and they're always trying to get, you know, their buddies to come in. But again, I mean, you would know this better than I like, there's not like a standard that they have to meet, you know, it's a very, very low bar. And so they think that if that's if they can kind of reach that bar, then they're fine. And I just don't think that, in general, their bosses or, you know, the departments are putting into perspective what that means, you know, it's, it's not that, oh, you can't really do a push up, it's, you can't help someone, you can't save someone's life, you can't, you know, do the job that you signed up for and took an oath to do you know, like, even, like, that's, it's not like, you're working at a computer somewhere, like you took an oath to do something. So, um, I mean, that's, that's what we see, you know, it's, it's either people, they don't, they don't quite get it, they come in here, they understand real quick, and Excel, or they just think that they're fine. And they're gonna rely on whatever, you know. So and so that's always a disappointment, because the, the, the first responders that are here are phenomenal people, they're not only remarkable at their job, but they've, they've become, like standout members in society, you know, like, they are a real contribution to the world in general. And it's too bad, because they could all be like that, you know, if they just, they don't have to come here, they just need to apply themselves, you know, and I think that's, that's where the frustration comes from, because there's a lot of old tiny, you know, like, Oh, we got to do things this way. And even if they don't work, you know, and, but we're sticking to it. And I think that's where we get a little frustrated. Greg, Greg is dealt a lot with that, you know, he's, he's done a lot with the police department here. And, um, you know, held a lot of classes and goes in and trains, trains, people, but um, you know, he kind of butts up against that a lot. You know, like, Well, yeah, what you're doing works, and that's great. But we do it like this, and it doesn't really work. But we're still going to do it like this. So it's like, you know, what you're gonna do?

J

James Geering 1:37:51

There's a phrase that gets thrown around a lot in the fire service, would you want you rescuing you? And I've always said, well, that's kind of that's all right, I guess. But that's putting yourself as the most important thing. Would you rescue me? My thing that I've always used in my mind is, how would you feel if your family died? Because the rescuer hadn't trained? Yeah. Now think of it that way. You're that rescue of the head and train and someone's your family died, because another version of you couldn't get to the top of the building or couldn't go into that school shooting or whatever it was, because they hadn't trained to me, that is all that needs to be said at every single rank for us to take seriously. But for some reason, that doesn't resonate with a lot of people.



1:38:33

Yeah, yeah, there. There's a there's a poster up in one of the offices that says, You can't train hard enough for a job that can kill you. And I mean, when you think about it, in those terms, yeah. Oh, my God, like, I would want to be training all the time, you know, I'm fine. I mean, it just, I think, again, just goes back to you know, where we are in society. And so, so just detached from it all. But um, but yeah, I mean, your job can quite literally at any moment kill you. And you have the power to be able to make the outcome different, you know, in certain situations, of course, but yeah, it's a tough one.



James Geering 1:39:21

I see it in my gym because the coach the class I coach every Monday 5pm In Iron Legion. Ocala is free for all first responders, all military dispatchers. And pretty much the people in those professions that show up are already members of our gym. So basically not a single person and people tell me they put emails out and not a single person. Now, to be fair, all of our local first responders work a lot. They're understaffed, so they get told they can't go home and have to work in the 24 hour shift. But there's a lot that don't and there's a complete refeed free resource. All you got to do is walk through. I was like, okay, it must just be me. I'm sure that These top coaches have all these responders. But then I talked to Greg and I talked to Jeff Nichols and I talked to all these other people. It's universal sheepdog response came to town. Right after the Parkland shooting, they happen to just be already scheduled and a Don anonymous donor donated, I mean, 10s of spots. So these were free spots for first responders. A lot of firefighters came to civilian one. And then in the civilian side, pretty much everyone that did day one and two, that was there day, three day ones, kind of like a pre day. And then two and three, were when you are grappling and shooting. On the first response on the screaming on the police side. Tim was saying Tim Kennedy, that I forget what their you know, their rate was, but I like 30% or so of officers didn't show up on day three. This is the problem, because I think that the you have, again, we talked about that the people that are going to show up regardless of people that get it, that's not who we're even trying to talk to. And then there's the bottom percent that should never be wearing the uniform in the first place. But that middle group, it's trying to get them to realize it's okay to look stupid, it's okay to have that realization that you're not as fit and strong as you were. Because showing up today, that's the first day of fixing it. But if you run away, and you hide, and you don't show up, the moment, you realize that you're not ready, is when someone's life, including yours is at stake.



1:41:26

Yeah, well, and I think that's the other part of the issue is that a lot of a lot of the guys that would come in here, they would, you know, they're these young, you know, you know, kind of bigger, you know, muscley kind of guys, and they're, they're looking around and they see smaller people or women, you know, like outworking them and out lifting them, and they don't want to see that, you know, they, they don't necessarily want it, they don't, they definitely don't want to do the work to not be that, but they don't want to in their face, you know, like they can, they can work out together at the Academy, and you know, bro each other up and think that they're doing something and then that like satisfies their ego, but there's too much

ego, to come into a place like this, where you are accountable only to yourself. And, you know, like, it's not, you're not going to be coddled here, you know, like you, you have to do the work just like everybody else does. And they don't want to see that. So I mean, unfortunately, you know, a lot of a lot of certain the certain situations that I that I've seen, where, you know, people are becoming, you know, officers or whatever they're doing it because their dad was, and you know, there's an expectation, they don't really care, they're, they're just, they're just there. And, you know, they can kind of hide behind those things, they don't really have to do a good job, because they're not going to get fired. And there's, there's really no consequence. So the ego aspect of that comes into play a lot. And, and it's always, it's always a little humorous, when it when it does come. There was there was a funny story about one kid who was particularly unpleasant and left in a in a kind of very disrespectful way. And so he was offered to either pay, pay the money that he needed, that he owed, or not pay any of the money. And if he could wrestle our one coach who was a female, and, you know, not not get submitted by her, and he would not he did not want to do that. Because he was that guy, he was that guy that was like, did not want to do the work, you know, did not want that didn't want to be shown that he couldn't hold up, you know, and so it's just in, that's always too bad. You know, it's, it's such a disappointment, because I feel like when we're in here, and most of the people here, like if there's something that you can't do, or, you know, this really big hole in the boat, that's all of a sudden shown, like, I get really excited when I find a weakness. I'm like, yes. Oh, cool, you know, I can't do that at all, you know, like, all right now I know what to work on. I'm gonna get better at that. I'm going to even out every you know, like it's, it's, it's a privilege and to be able to be in a place where you can find what's broken or where the hole in the boat is and then repair it, you know, because that's what we're looking for. We're not We're not here to just show off every day and do all the things that we're great at. We're here to find what we're bad at so that we can get better. That's the only way to progress. And it's always such a shame when And people don't see that, that positive aspect of of that, you know?

J

James Geering 1:45:05

Well again, I think it's humility. And I can tell you now as you get older, that boat that used to be fine now you look down one day and there's two oars in a rudder and you're like, shit what? The fucking boat? Yeah, so that's what's been so good. I told Greg I'm like I turned 50 In March, I'm not gonna do a shirtless. Well, 50 Feels great douchebag fucking post, I want to be like, my knees don't hurt anymore. My back is stronger. My shoulders are back where they're supposed to be. That's what I want. And so when I started doing the programming, and there was hollow rocks again, I'm like, Ah, there's my abs. I used to be really good. I used to do martial arts and get punched in the gut a lot and was good at this kind of stuff. But I lost it. You know, CrossFit is great. But with all the kipping, sometimes you lose that lose that raw strength. Another one that was a real aha moment for me. And I'd absolutely love this, I always was drawn to Turkish gaps, but we didn't program them much. And we've gone through several coaches, which is not a bad thing, that everyone has their kind of focus. And we used to do them a lot more than we do now. And so I started working up and again, very, very humbling at first you like I used to be good at these and then not anymore. But now back to using the seven is on the warm up. And again, when I get heavier, I'll be able to work towards that. But take it back now to jujitsu. Now as a retired firefighter, the chances that I am going to walk and run into a burning building a lot less the chances are that I'm going to get into a street fight or more so not more so now not firefighter but that's a bigger risk now overall because I'm not wearing uniform anymore. Being able to push away and shrimp, a human being away from me now be able to sit up with someone trying to push down and get side control. It's amazing and I know obviously martial arts can the nucleus of wolf brigade but again, these new movements that I wasn't good at, I

could do the kipping pull ups I could do the legless rope climbs and you know all this stuff, but I can't even do a basic Turkish get up comfortably with a 53. Now I'm finding those holes and then as you will attest, you saw how absolute white belt first day I was with a mace and it was the same thing. Brilliant. I am fucking awful at this. Let me get the one that has, you know, the ball bearing on the end. Let's work on that. And then we'll work up. So I think that's a difference between humility and arrogance as someone who's humble will look at those weaknesses and go beautiful because not only do you get to fix it, you get to play with different movements in different equipment, which I find exciting because 16 years in CrossFit, I love it. But the appeal of CrossFit was it was new movements, but now it's not. Now meses and you know, unilateral kettlebell movements and some of the other things that you guys do, even just throwing back a heavy jump rope or bought a heavy like Muay Thai jump rope, because I'm great a Dubs. But now, you know, let's change it up again. So I love that. That element of Yeah, find the weaknesses. Don't shy away from them, lean into them and fix them because that's how you'll be one of these eight year old men and women that you do see on Instagram. Still crushing it because they never ever let their their arrogance get in the way of their wealth and their excuse me their health, not that well.



1:48:20

Yeah, no, I mean, I mean, How bad must it be to like, know that you're gonna suck forever? Because you're just too arrogant to like, get better. You know? That sucks.



James Geering 1:48:33

So talk to me about that lens. Then we've talked you know, we've kind of addressed the tactical athlete with athlete a little bit. Kind of, are there any athletes that have walked through, physically kind of fucked up that you've watched? Address injuries? You watch refi mobility. You've watched unfurl the spine, for example.



1:48:56

Yeah, yeah, we, we've had a bunch of people like that. The biggest, the biggest thing I think we see is, you know, overhead mobility is a really tough one for a lot of people and especially what an older, you know, if you're sitting all the time, just having anything go above your head in any sort of straight manner. And then having any sort of non pain doing anything, is a really tough one. So we we've had, there's there's one guy in here, who's, he's uh, he's actually a retired cop. So he was sitting you know, a lot in his car and he, I mean, he couldn't lay down flat on a bench, like he was like almost doing like a hollow you know, because his his posture was so bad when he when he first started coming here and through some mace work and you know, mobility and just posture and positioning. You know, he has gotten And remarkably better, he still has a struggle with it a lot, because it's been a lot, a lot of years of building that, but it's, it's incredible, like, he will remark all the time, like, I can't believe that I can do this right now, you know, and, and then just what that's allowed him to do, you know, in his in, you know, with his grandkids and all that kind of stuff is really cool. But, um, yeah, I mean, we see people all the time that you know, just have really limited restrictions in a in a particular area. And just, it's really just applying the details, you know, getting those getting those positions, correct. moving with intention. And then we also have a phenomenal doctor out here, Dr. Rob Luckey,

of Pittsford performance care who we work with all the time, he's helped Greg, through the years, Greg found him pretty early on with, you know, his injuries and stuff. And he's just remarkable at connecting the brain to the body again. So he's, you know, under the title of a chiropractor, but it's really not, he does all of this neurological assessment and evaluation, and then starts getting the body to talk to the brain, and getting parts of the body that just aren't firing at all to fire and then work in together with the system. So a lot of times, we'll have people, if people come to us with with, you know, things like that, you know, we work with him together. And then you know, the two things together, really just put people back together again, he'll send us people. And then we sent him people. And just with that, it's really remarkable what what people are able to do again, or an even find, you know, especially, you know, we see a lot of now that we're learning a lot more about brain injuries and concussions and things like that, and how huge of a role they're really playing. Even even when they're, you know, years prior, he does what he does, he has a whole protocol for concussion, concussions and things like that, to just get people moving and working as like a whole unit again. And so that that's a that's a really it's a, it's a really, I'm honored to be able to be even just a tiny part of that process for people when they come in and are just like hurting and banged up because, you know, you tell them you go over and say okay, you know, put your feet here and then, you know, do this with your knees and they're like, oh my gosh, it doesn't hurt anymore, you know. And they're flabbergasted because they've gone to a million places a million doctors and million gyms and trainers and nobody tells them the basics. You know, like, knees out, had neutral, braced, like, those are the absolute like 101 in here. And I think Greg always laughs at me because I'm like, How do these people not under like, how have they never been told this and he's like, You don't understand. He's like, you've had it good. So um, it you know, just giving people those those basics so that they can actually move and do the things they want to again is really cool. We've seen it, we've seen a lot of progress in that area.

J

James Geering 1:53:45

Well, two things that I see is firstly, when people get hurt, there's a real fear of moving again. And then secondly, the way this happened to me when I hurt my back in the fire service. It was all surgery and pills were the options that were totally like not even told I almost ordered, which was really ridiculous from a frickin pa in a local clinic. But luckily, I dove into chiropractic and PT and then I found foundation training, which is amazing. And so the ability for movement to correct pain, you know, and Eric from foundation training talks about plantar fasciitis and Golf was the one that people get in their hands from typing. Oh, yeah, carpal tunnel tunnel. Yeah, and people get slice and dice in their hands. And it ends up being the route is actually in the neck or the shoulder so it never gets fixed. And now they've just destroyed their hand as well. So, you know, I think when people go into somewhere like Wolf brigade where there's a complete science behind it, and you know, the way that you're moving is putting these these joints back to where they're supposed to be in putting the balance back. All of a sudden, you don't feel that shoulder pain now because it's not pulled forward. It's back the way it's supposed to be or your your pelvis is not you know rotated in a way that's causing, you know, extra kind of was that I got hurt, but like I was like a pizza slice, you know, like a pinching on one end. And so when you left, it's only a matter of time before the ligaments tore, which is what happened to me. So that pelvic tilt. So we don't get that messaging anywhere near enough that yes, you get nailed by a bus, you probably don't need to go into surgery. But if you herniated a disc, the number of people I know that still have herniated discs that live completely pain free, because the muscular, you know, column around the spine is holding

them the way it's supposed to. So this, you don't understand, I had this I had that the guy who created foundation training, you look at his MRIs, it looks like it's terrible. And he's amazing. So I think this movement is medicine, conversation needs to get a lot more attention.

 1:55:49

I agree. It's, it's, it's far too common for people to just, you know, take the pill, you know, sit on the couch, don't do the thing anymore. You know, I mean, that we've literally had people come in and tell us that their doctor just said, Well, don't squat anymore. If it hurts, you know, don't don't do that anymore. If it hurts, and it's like, Are you kidding me? You know, like, that's the worst advice you could give to anyone. And, like we see like that just the atrophy of the body. And another reason why it's so important for everyone to strength train, because even if you are injured, your Installating those injuries is going to prevent further wear and tear on that and further injury. Down the line. Because it's in it's going to it's going to if if not toe, if not heal it, because it's it's getting what it needs. It's going to prevent it from getting way worse. And so I think that's the thing that people don't understand. It's like, no, like, I've had a few personal training clients that, you know, tell me that, they're, they'll do everything, but they won't squat because their knees hurt. And, you know, doctors have told them not to squat anymore. So that's the first thing we do. Like, okay, well, we're gonna squat today then. And they're like, No, I'm I'm not. And so we put them in their positions, you know, like, we do it, we do it baby steps, and then they do it. And they had one woman in particular, who was like, No, I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to go below, you know, parallel. And I was like, well, we'll do that today. And you'll and you'll feel great. And so we do some baby steps, of course, I'm loving, because I want them to understand, like, I don't want them to be afraid of it anymore. You know? And so we put them in the right position. And, you know, we raised it up and she was like, flabbergasted. She she looked at me like, like, looked around. Like there was something you know, like, somebody put a spell on her something. And I was like, No, it's just we've just, you're moving well, now, you know, you move wrong. And it's going to hurt, of course, but you're moving well, and now you're going to now you're going to be able to strengthen that up and you're gonna feel really good. You know, why would you? Why would you limit an entire movement pattern from your whole rest of your life? You know, like, that's the thing that boggles my mind. And people are just very willing to do it because the doctor told them to. So yeah, it's got to question everything.

 James Geering 1:58:16

Absolutely. Well, we talked about obviously, odd objects and mazes. When you were little you were talking about wanting to be an artist, talk to me how that's come full circle now on the basis that you sell.

 1:58:29

Yeah, the mazes. That's been a real surprise. And joy to be able to get into that it was a complete, just out of necessity, you know, Greg was, Greg was etching them, he was putting the, you know, WB NY on them. And he did you know, like the first you know, few 100 Mason's or so and then he was on a trip for a few weeks, and we are getting a ton of orders that those two weeks and so I just out of necessity was like maybe I can, you know, mimic what he does.

So I practiced on a little sample mace that we had, and was like, Okay, I think I can figure this out a little bit and then started you just get trying to get creative with it a little bit and make it look better and then figured out I could put pictures on there. And and then it was really it was funny. So I had made a couple of different things for some people here. And then Greg was like, well, maybe we could maybe we could offer like a custom mace. You know, if somebody wants to buy one now it's just like, nobody's gonna want that. You know, and, and I'm like, and I can't do anything, you know. So like, we put one offering we put one offering up on the website, and I remember somebody they get you know, get Any logo and so I was like, Okay, could could do that. And then, and then just the things that started piling up as people were like, oh, yeah, and people gave me like, portraits of people's faces and like all this crazy stuff and, like, pretty much for, like, a while every single one that came through, I was like, I can't do this, there's no way that I can do this, you know. And so I just kind of sit with it and try to figure it out rudimentary, like, really like, so. Like, it's funny now, like how I used to do it. But so it's just, it's just been able to, I've been able to refine it a little bit. And it's been a really great outlet. Because I, I always have been a creative person, and I like making things and so to be able to incorporate that onto something that is super meaningful for someone and like, is going to be able to help someone, you know, find out all these things about themselves and create strength and, you know, do all this hard work with is, it's like, it's a real honor, like I, I really do appreciate every single person that puts an order in and puts their trust in me to make it how they want because I really don't take it lightly at all. And I, I really kind of pour over those things. And when they leave, it's like, it's really weird. I have like a weird attachment to, to them. They're like my little babies. And sometimes when people bring them back, or, you know, like, they'll come for convergence, and people will bring ones and it's like, oh my gosh, you know, it's it's, it's really wild to just see him out there and seeing people really use them and enjoy them. It's like, it's such an honor to me. So I'm I'm really grateful that that kind of we stumbled upon that. And that's part of my job.

 James Geering 2:02:05

It's just, it's great. That's what again, I love about the early life stuff is so many times as things from early life, maybe even dreams or a class that someone took that decades later or circles around. You're like, oh, yeah, I never thought of it that way. Yeah, I was. That was that was where I was finally able to create was a giant metal ball with a pole on it.

 2:02:24

Yeah, yeah. Who the heck would have known? Yeah. Yeah, they're very, very different than I would have ever imagined. But um, yeah, I'm really enjoy it.

 James Geering 2:02:34

So I want to get to the closing question. Just one last thing about what was it three, six weeks ago now. The original wolf brigade Instagram page got shut down. Now I don't ever remember seeing anything, you know, that would warrant that. But you know, as we all know, you can't I mean, I can't even put the word suicide on a suicide awareness post, you know, something, positive mental health posts, because it no one will see it, you know, it'll just be so many as you


put, you know, COVID and all of a sudden, there's always banners and all that shit, too. So, talk to me about what happened. And let's just educate people where they can find the new page so we can get everyone back on there.

 2:03:13

Yeah, thank you. I'm really what it comes down to is we've we've been discriminated against by a certain group, you know, where we, we say, hard minded things. We have, you know, we're serious, we're, you know, we're powerful, we actually create change. So that's scary to people. So we've been discriminated by certain groups, and they have made it their life's mission to make sure that we don't reach people. So they've they've done it before with our cubs program and certain things and this was just another case of that, you know, it's really just, there's two minutes of scrolling, like you said, like, if you there's nothing on any of our content that is malicious or evil or, you know, bad in any way like we clearly Welcome everyone. This isn't for everyone, but it is not. We're not discriminating or you know, excluding anyone, we want to help everyone and so think there was just a mass reporting and Instagram just does what it does because it's a robot and shuts it down. So so we lost. We lost all of all, Greg lost all of the pages that he had. And, you know, just overnight with no explanation No, no way to combat it at all. We lost Like the majority of how we reach people, how we sell our products, you know, gone overnight. So you know that, that that's been a definitely a stressful situation. We, we are back up now at Wolf brigade gym. It's Wolf, underscore, brigade underscore gym, and on Instagram, so and we can't rely on that, you know, to be there forever, because Instagram is what it is. And you know, that might happen again. But for right now we're there. We also have W, B and y home base, or wolf brigade home base, I can't remember that one, we'll have to link it. Where that one that when I that one I control and you know, just kind of more put up what we're doing in the gym each day. And, I mean, I'm on there, but we do have our YouTube channel, Wolf brigade on YouTube, Greg has been utilizing a lot more lately. So that's another place to find us. And then Wolf brigade.com is our main site. And that can like pretty much take you to anywhere you need to or that you can get in contact with us there. So that's where we are now. And we'll just keep utilizing it for as long as we can. And if it gets bumped again, then we'll just figure out another way to get back on but um, yeah, so that's, you know, it's the the frustrations of the internet and a robotic world is is really tough, especially when you're a small business and you really rely on those things. It's a it's a necessary evil right now. But it is what it is.

 James Geering 2:06:56

What's scary as well that a competitor can basically just get a bunch of people to close someone down so they can take all the money then.

 2:07:05

Yeah, you see, you see, you see it happening all the time, people getting cancelled for like, just absolutely ridiculous reasons. And, and, and the thing that's most frustrating is that there's not even a reason, you know, for us, like we're we're not part of any like, you know, dicey underground thing, like, we're just trying to put good information out there to help others and, and we'll still keep doing that no matter what, you know, no matter no matter what we come up

against, or how many times you know, they may shut something down, or this or that, like, we're not going to stop, that's definitely not going to that's not going to like ever end this so well, we'll just keep finding ways to reach people and help people because that's what we do.

 James Geering 2:07:49

Brilliant. All right. Well, the first of the closing questions, is there a book? Or are there books that you love to recommend? It can be related to our discussion today? Or completely unrelated?

 2:08:02

Well, actually, I mean, it was kind of part of part of our topic I've recommended, the Body Keeps the Score to so many people, because I think it's like one of the most important things in understanding how our brains work and how other people's brains work. It how what once I read that, I saw a light bulb started clicking for me and just what I was going through, but then also like what other people are going through, because we all handle things in such different ways. And I think even in relationships, you know, your partner be maybe, maybe hand handling things one way, and you handle it another and then there's like this, like friction there. But then once you understand those things, it's so much easier to communicate so that that one is a that one is a really one that I've actually have recommended to a ton of people. Because it's kind of amazing. It's not an easy read for sure. It's not a light.

 James Geering 2:09:08


I'm doing the audio book and I'm actually I stopped halfway and I need to do it because I drive 300 miles, see my wife there and then 300 miles back so I have the opportunity to finish it. But I want to get the author on because tribe Sebastian Junger is one that so many people recommend. Atomic habits is actually another one that comes up a lot, but the body keeps score comes up over and over again. So I need to reach out to him when I'm done as well.

 2:09:31

Yeah, yeah. I mean, it's it's remarkable. The brain is a fascinating place.

 James Geering 2:09:37

Absolutely. All right. Well, then what about movies and or documentaries that you love? Oh,

 2:09:45

well, I am. I'm all over the place with movies. I really like it depends on what mood I'm in. But I can always watch the Neverending Story. And the Princess Bride Those are two, those are two movies that I grew up watching all the time. And, like, I can go back to those like anytime like it

when when I find somebody that hasn't seen The Princess Bride, like, I'm a little concerned, because I think that's a classic and you need to know that as well. Those are good ones. But I like. I mean, other than that, like, I'm kind of all over the place with movies. You know, it kind of depends on what I what mood I'm in. Because a lot of times I like to watch like like dramas and like things that like make me feel because I if I'm having a particularly tough time feeling something then like I just like want to dive in so but those aren't usually fun ones to watch.

 James Geering 2:10:47

Princess Bride, I think even to this day is revered in the stunt community, which has lived there for a long time. And even to the pain, that monologue I did for Universal Time. So yeah, I'm very, very familiar with that movie.

 2:11:03

Yeah, it's just so good. I don't know if you can get much better.

 James Geering 2:11:07

All right, well, then the next question, is there a person that you recommend to come on this podcast as a guest to speak to the first responders, military and associated professions of the world? That's a good question. I'm not sure. Tyson Shumway was on the show. And he mentioned that.

 2:11:26

Oh, yeah. Well, we have a we have Matt Pataki, who's a member here. He's been a member for a really long time. And, and he he's actually in Africa right now. He goes and teaches, you know, what he does is breaching so he goes and teaches some methods to other places, but he I mean, he, he's great. And he's actually the main person that is always bullying all of his workmates to come in and calling them babies. And sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't. But yeah, he's great. I mean, he's been in he's been in, you know that for all of his life. And he's a remarkable athlete. He's a, he's a remarkable person. He really knows the ins and outs of what's going on, and where things are failing. And you know, what needs to be changed. So he would, he would be great to have on, I'm sure that he wouldn't want to be on but he would be great to be on.

 James Geering 2:12:33

Well, I gotta know, that was Tyson suggestion. So yeah, let me know if there's any one that springs to mind when we're done them. Yeah, I will. I will think about that. Brilliant. All right. Well, then the last question before we make sure everyone knows where to find you and Wolf brigade? What do you do to decompress?

 2:12:50

I am I'm a, I'm a, I'm an introvert by nature. So like, I have to go into my little home bubble. So usually, to decompress, I go home or go outside. I will put my dogs I do some. I try to do breath work and you know, just sort of slowing everything back down. So outside to me is the most filling backup, if I can just be outside by myself. That that helps a lot. But just kind of like being home with my dogs in my own little bubble. And you know, just kind of concentrating on making malas is actually something that helps me decompress as well. Like just, you know, beating beating those malas actually is super therapeutic. So I do that as well.

 James Geering 2:13:47

What kind of dogs have you gotten?

 2:13:49

I've got two pitbulls they're the silliest boys ever. They're definitely my saviors though. They always make me laugh so wouldn't be able to live without them.

 James Geering 2:14:03

Yeah, my German shepherds out. I can see it from now. And this is funny this she knows that when I'm wrapping up like right now she's fast asleep. But the moment I say whatever the you know, the closing statement is she'll be looking at me through the glass like I totally understand. Yeah. All right. Well, then the very last question if people want to follow you on Instagram or learn more about wolf brigade, where are the best places?

 2:14:28

So I'm on Instagram as Macalester 13 I believe H Macalister 13. Wolf brigade, like I said is Wolf underscore brigade underscore gym. And then I also have a metalworks creative that's where you can find the meses on Instagram. Just just my work on mesas and then wolf brigade gym.com is where you can cut it I have the contact button on the website. I read those. So you can contact me there. If you're interested in training, or you know, any other questions that you have about about the gym or anything like that you can reach me there, the email comes to me

 James Geering 2:15:16

brilliant. And like I said, I think I'm four months into the programming now. And again, not as consistent as I like, but it's been amazing. And that is that subversive? fitness.com?

 2:15:25

Yes, yes, versa. fitness.com is our remote training site. So if you're interested in getting on getting involved with that programming. Matt and I are on there. Matt from Toronto, he and I

getting involved with that programming, Matt and I are on there, Matt from Toronto, he and I are on there, coaching, he's more on there. I have on there periodically, as much as I can, things get pretty busy. So he he does he does the brunt of of the coaching on there. But that's also a great a great way to get into the programming and with whatever you have. And then also, our what Matt's doing right now with the water bottle is he's he's describing or going over each of the public assistance days, if you have absolutely nothing, and nowhere to work out. That's still we've still got programming for you. So on our site, Wolf brigade.com, you can go down to the Public Assistance Program. And there's 30 days of workouts that you can do with anything that you have. And if you don't have anything, go get a water bottle. And that's what you work out with. And you'll get really, really good results with that as well. So any any circumstances we want people to be moving? So we tried to make that happen?

 James Geering 2:16:52

Brilliant. Well, Heather, I want to say thank you so much. Again, firstly, for you know, the the brief lesson that I got when you came down to Florida, I will be at convergence next year, as long as he doesn't fall on the part of July or I need to go to Japan or visit any any site out of that, then I'll be out there. But it's been an amazing conversation. Thank you for your vulnerability. So I think it's so important that all of us now kind of you know, talk about the places that were uncomfortable for us to talk about when we were young we weren't really encouraged to talk about but I think that's how we move the needle on the mental health side to but also the work that you're doing with Wolf grip brigade. I mean, my professions needed dive in. But as we said, as well, the longevity piece and there's so much to take from it. Anyone who's been in CrossFit for years. I recommend just try this for a while to be another, you know, adjunct if nothing else, so, I want to thank you so much for coming on the show and being so generous with your time today.

 2:17:47

Thank you so much. I really appreciate being here.