

# Jared Vermeulen - Episode 826

Sun, Sep 24, 2023 1:02PM 2:51:43

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

talk, work, fire department, fire, firemen, book, watch, firefighter, firehouse, part, call, family, good, understand, crew, leave, leader, department, leadership, fucking

## SPEAKERS

Jared Vermeulen, James Geering

---



James Geering 00:00

Welcome to the Behind the Shield Podcast. As always, my name is James Geering. And this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show, firefighter and author of the modern fire officer, Jared Vermeulen. Now this conversation I was able to do in person down in South Florida and we discuss a host of topics from Jarrett's early life. The Dutch and Sicilian influence on his childhood, his journey into the fire service, his unique perspective on leadership, his own powerful mental health story, unpacking the 2472 work schedule they have in his department, 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. 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, Jared Vermeulen enjoy. Jared, I want to start by saying thank you for welcoming me to your friend's studio here we are in an influencing space. So I feel very young and modern at the moment. But yeah, and also thank you for meeting me here to discuss not only your journey, but your new book.



Jared Vermeulen 01:55

Of course, man. This is fun that we get to do this in person. We're both 13. So it's exciting.



James Geering 02:00

Absolutely. So for people listening where on planet earth are we sitting right now?



02:03

Right now we're in Stuart, Florida. But I am a native of Jupiter, Florida. That's where I was born and raised. So we are in Florida.



James Geering 02:11

So starting in Jupiter, then tell me about your early life. Tell me what your parents did and how many siblings



02:17

so both my parents are direct descendants of 20th century immigrants. So my mom's side is they're all Sicilian. They all came through Ellis Island. My father's side, they're Dutch. That's where Vermaelen comes from. If you're wondering, most people think it's German, but it's Dutch. They came over mid century. So family of immigrants, they came with nothing. The Golden Road wasn't paid for them. They came from nothing and and put things together and made it happen. My both my parents came from broken homes, unfortunately, they got married young, and they had nothing. They worked hard. My dad worked his butt off. My mom worked her butt off. She was a seamstress and a drafter. So those listening that's before CAD, so there is no computer aided design. She had to have the big table with the glass front with the light through it and draw an entire house plan by hand. My dad was an electrician by trade he owned co owned Mako electric for a while and Jupiter. And then he left that went to the school board he was electrician most my life. Growing up were like I would say lower middle class. They moved to Jupiter from Fort Lauderdale they originally their families moved from the northeast. And then they moved away from there to kind of find cheaper housing and and find a place to start a family they had me I was a handful. I had a lot of food allergies, serious food allergies that would make me either extremely crazy hyperactive or violent. So it took my mom a while to figure that out because back then no one really understood what food coloring was for food dyes. And a lot of these issues that we're very aware of today, so and they were in everything so she had to start at square one. Okay, you can only eat this you can only eat this and then slowly put these things into my diet and then realize okay, holy moly. This has a super effect one of them was Sunny D pure orange juice. Isn't that your orange juice? That's pure orange. Oh, that was like rocket fuel if I got my hands on that man. Oh my god, a clump up onto the roof try to jump up I don't even know. But so they figure that out. But unfortunately because I was such a nut they'd only had me assume the only child so I wish I had a brother or a sister sibling you know to share that experience with but unfortunately I have some, you know, brothers and red like you, and the guys here at the influencing place are like brothers to me and, and good friends. But So growing up, my parents worked hard to make ends meet, I went to school and my dad would pick me up from school and we'd go to side work till around eight or nine at night, eat dinner, I go to bed and then a lot of times I do my homework on the bus, going back to school. So I grew up understanding what \$1 meant, a lot of times take to get stuff to play with as a kid, my mom would bring it to a thrift or thrifting thrift stores or garage sales on Saturday, and she'd give me \$1 And say, make make it work whatever you can get for that dollar. That's that you know, you can you can have for toys and stuff. And it sounds kind of mean or but they didn't have their little means but it taught me a lot taught me about what \$1 meant. And it taught me how to haggle. And I haggled the hell out of one of my greatest tackles was that was against somebody had a whole box of transformers. And I wanted them they were the old, old style, the real metal ones, the really nice ones. And I got that whole thing for \$1. Man, I wouldn't leave that dude alone, but But it taught me what work was it taught me what \$1 was. And my dad taught me how to use tools, so I could be helpful to him. We did some renovations together to make money for the family. And growing up, I didn't ever think

about being a fireman, or paramedic, never I'd watch shows like, er, and think to myself that I'm never doing that. That's for sure. You know, and watching, like some of the tragedy that would happen in those shows. And I thought to myself, yeah, that's not for me. No thanks. So it never crossed my mind. And as I got older, I was looking more to do industrial design, prototyping something with my hands, something with building. And I was actually enrolled at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale to do that. And then some friends of mine came to me and said, Hey, don't do that. You should become a fireman instead. And I told him, I never even thought about doing that. That's Tell me about it. And they said, Okay, well, this is a schedule. This is a benefit package. You'll start at this. You could spend time with your family during the week XYZ. And I said, I think I'll do that. You know, so they helped me to do that. And that's actually one of those was John Cuomo. I think you met him briefly. So he's been a friend of my family for a long time. I was actually the ring bearer at his wedding. Oh, wow. Yeah. So and his father actually gave my wedding talk. So at the time, it was going through fire academy, then I switch, you know, and EMT paramedic, other thing, but so when they when they first came to me and said, you know, do this, okay, what do I need to do? You know, those three things. So, I said, Okay, I put in my applications to EMT and Fire Academy. First EMT accepted me it was at PVCC at the time, Palm Beach Community College. So I went right away. I was 18. And like, 2004, I think and I did that loved it, weirdly enough. And then I went to try to get into fire paramedic and did not unfortunately, I didn't have enough points at the time this was but you know, before the meltdown, the economic meltdown, and it was hot for everyone was trying to become firemen at the time. So I took a year off, and I traveled everywhere that I could go i We made some money doing construction after all the hurricanes came through. And oh 405. And every time I'd come back from a trip, that hurricane would hit, and then we'd go around and help people fix things get paid, make make cash. And then I would go and travel some more. So I spent somewhere around three months in South America, spent a couple of months in Europe, spent time in Canada, and the Caribbean, Central America did a lot of travel and learned a lot. During that time. What I learned was that I better be appreciative of what I have. Because I tell you, we're in this living in this country, we get a little confused at what life is really like outside of it. And that's why people are trying to jump the border every day and I don't blame them. Because I'd be doing it too. If I knew it was on the other side. I'd be jumping that border with them and And what it taught me to do is appreciate what I had and to realize that I could be a lot more content. And that's an important part of life, obviously, that's, you know, purpose and meaning contentment and happiness. If you can find those things, then you're doing pretty dang good, you know. So that helped me a lot. It helped me definitely in my future, because it helped me that contentment gave me peace. And when you have peace, you're able to get things done a little bit easier, I would think. So I'm kind of digressing a bit on that. But so in between EMT fire, or what I've thought, I've tried to get into fire, I was traveling, traveling, traveling. And instead of getting into fire got into paramedic, next, so I went through paramedic, and met my soon to be wife. During that time, I were both young. And then I got into the fire academy. During Fire Academy, I started putting my apps out really before it even as soon as I got accepted, there was a few departments that if you were a paramedic already and you were accepted to go to fire academy, they would take your application, Volker was one of them. So I put it in. So my second day of Fire Academy at an oral interview at Boca Raton, and the guys at the Fire Academy, like you're not even a fireman yet.



11:32

Take an interview, what do you know about being a fireman? And I was like, hey, if they hire me, but you know, they love to bust my balls, but they're excited. They're excited for me, let me let me have the time off to go do it. And thank God because that job was essentially

waiting for me. You know, when I got into fire academy, our process is very long. So it was a couple of months after I was done with fire academy that actually got the the conditional offer. But, you know, I remember that day, because by then I was engaged. And I was working at a hospital as a medic, and I was working in Amr, as well. She's an ambulance company down here. And I was like, I can't survive doing this. To get hired and be able to, you know, support her and us as a family and and have a home and do all the stuff you know adults do. And yeah, when I got that call from from Boca, they said, Hey, do you want to work here? I said, Yes, I do. And 16 years later, here we are, kind of thing

 James Geering 12:33

where you ended up obviously working in one of the one of the most well known fire departments for a specific reason. And we'll get to that in a little bit. But I want to go all the way back in our credit, it was either Jim moss or Josh Chase. Thank you, Josh Chase, I listen to both of those on the way over here. You talked about the upbringing around the family table and the servitude through the Sicilian culture. Yes. Which I absolutely had in the UK and my upbringing as well. So I'd love to expand on that.

 13:04

Yeah. So with our family, we took care of my great grandmother, she stayed at our home. Later on in her life is like an assisted living type situation. But, you know, the Sicilians are tight, you can't, you can't send a Sicilian to an old folks home, you know, it's impossible, and it should be you should take care of your family. So she would make meal for 20 people every Sunday, with the stipulation that we had to clean it after, you know, obviously, after cooking for 20 people, she was in her 90s and 80s 90s. At the time, so, you know, she shouldn't have to clean it. So we did. But what that allowed us to do, because we were just a family of three, my parents and I and and, you know, she made for, you know, and then my grandmother, her daughter, my mom's mom, we can invite a lot of people and we did every Sunday, you know, either from our church from our congregation, or friends, you know, other family, whatever it is, but that table was packed. And it was like the old Sicilian style, where you have a table, it's only so long that you have like every other table that you have in the house attached to that table, and you're just throwing like sheets over it so that it all looks like a table and every chair in the house is pulled up, you know. And, you know, we did that every every Sunday, soup to nuts, you know, and it was special for me because at the time there's no smartphones, there's none of the things that take us away from human connection. So I got to learn from people that were older than me, people that I probably never would have talked to on the street people that are my age, you know, people maybe from a different walk of life. And that helped me immensely now in my career when And I, in a firehouse with different ethnicities, nationalities backgrounds, I have a better understanding of been around it more. But how that worked in a Sicilian household is is the host or hostess doted on on those that were there to eat that meal, you know, we're there to make sure you had everything you never sat, you never even looked at your food until every everybody on that table, had a plate of food in front of them and had a drink of their choice was comfortable, then maybe even after they had a second helping you sat, and then you you ate your food. So what that taught me was a servitude, that's not negative. Usually, when you hear servitude, that's all of a sudden negative alarm bells who, but it's not negative. It's it's, it's really beautiful in a lot of ways when you can do that, and have pride in that. Because you're doing it for someone that you love, or someone that you care

about. And you're you're making it comfortable for them. And then you can learn from them or have a conversation with them have a relationship with them. And it's a really amazing thing. And it's it's a piece of life that's I think missing now from from society, I think social media ticking away. And it's it's pervasive, and it's making its way into the firehouse right now. And and we have to fight against that.

**J** James Geering 16:23

Yeah, I mean, I think of you know, my time growing up on a British farm, especially on Sundays, for example, Sunday breakfast was a fry up. So you'd normally have it like about 11. And that was a whole ordeal in itself. And you'd sit and talk for, I mean, literally hours, and then that would bleed into kind of mid afternoon where we'd have Sunday lunch, the roast. And again, another entire thing. But I mean, we had all kinds of people that talked about this on the show, walking through our door, they may be gypsies, they may be member of extorted standard royal family, they may be the homeless guy that was living on a drive that we brought in. And you get to see, like you said, all walks of life. It's very rude to interrupt in person. So you learn to shut the fuck up and listen to you know, versus talking over someone or typing over someone. But it is it's it's the nucleus. It's where you offload the good, the bad, the storytelling, the learning. And what I've seen in the great fire houses is just like you said, if someone cooks than we are literally wrestling them away from the sink, and she even think about trying to

**o** 17:30

clear each other. Yeah. Tell my crew like guys, I don't want to write an injury. You clean now. Then you clean Okay, let's relax.

**J** James Geering 17:39

Yeah, yeah, but but it's the understanding that yeah, this person cooked we're gonna clean. But also Yeah, that it's not even so much. Yeah, there's that book leaders eat last it's not. You know, always making sure the last one is more out of coming out of caring that you said about serving? Yeah, not serving as in Oh, underneath you. But you know, I want to make sure everyone's okay. I'm proud of making this meal and proud of everyone having the food they want the drink they want right? Or is everyone good? All right. And now I'm going to join you. And then like I said, then you try and wash dishes and you get pinned to the floor and tell him to sit down while they do the work. But I think that's it. That's that dynamic. And you said in one of the interviews about, you know, the firehouse be in your home for 1020 30 years. And I agree that's you know, how you act in the firehouse should be how you act in your home. And if you don't talk to your family and you go to your separate rooms, you're always on devices that's going to bleed into the firehouse. Exactly.

**o** 18:37

You know, growing up I had that experience when I got to the firehouse I said I know how to do this. We're all here together and make fun of each other and yell and have fun sometimes. Maybe get a little negative maybe maybe a little motional whatever it is but it's all part of

maybe get a little negative maybe maybe a little emotional whatever it is, but it's an part of being a family and I really enjoy that that part of the firehouse you know and one day when I retire that's what I'll miss you know, it's never it's never the circus it's the clown so that you miss battle saying so.

 James Geering 19:07

With the TV. I used to drive me crazy when they'd leave the TV on in certain departments because you know, the

 19:13

night turn off at dinner the guys always look at me, I'm like, turn it off, man. I don't want I don't want to be advertised to. I don't want to hear any of that bullcrap. I just want it let's just have a good time.

 James Geering 19:23

Yeah, I promise you nothing on CNN or Fox is going to benefit your life and but it's going to get an argument going or get up or spiraling down. Exactly, exactly. So with the the upbringing, you have a Sicilian Mother, you have a Dutch father. Were there any kind of interesting differences between those two cultures that you can remember going with being in the same family?

 19:46

So my my dad's dad was extremely abusive. My dad left the house to escape that kind of abuse and I mean, like, abuse, he made them eat their own pet one time either and pet their own pet. Yes. Because he would, he would eat food in front of them. And like steaks and they would have the like bread and weird stuff like that. And they would always complain, like, why can't we have me too. So when they went on vacation one time, he they had a pet that he killed and cooked and they ate it and told them while they're eating it, that's what it was. So I'm talking about abuse. I don't know. And fortunately, I never met him. He was in jail my whole life. And he was soon as he got out of jail. He reached out to all of my father siblings, and they all said, town sand. And when they got to my dad, my dad said, Listen, I'll put you in a hotel to get on your feet, but you're not meeting my family. And he took off. And I think he went to the Philippines, and he passed away there. And I never met him. He was selling cocaine. So it was, so I gotta say, you know, my dad, I use him as an example a lot, because he is an example to me. But he is a person that was brought up in an environment where he could have been become that environment, he could have become that and he made a choice in his mind to never do that. Because his father was physically abusive to he pulled down his sister's pants in front of a group of people. And she was like, 17, and spanked her butt at the table in front of guests. He was a crazy person. So thank God, my dad got away from that. And he never became that. But he promised himself that he would never smacked me out of anger. Like if he ever had to, he would wait until he calmed down. And then most of the time didn't do that. Anyway, so But although I was allowed to speak, and so he did, he just faked me, but it wasn't an anger. But so, you know, he didn't have like a big culture. So to say he didn't learn culture

from from his father, unfortunately. So he latched on to my mom's family culture. So he's, he's like a Sicilian, really. And he loves that culture. He loves, like, the whole host thing. So there wasn't really anybody has, I think the, the Dutch people, I don't know, if you've been to Holland, they're easygoing. They're fun people. So if anything I could say about their culture, which is, I guess my culture, having the Dutch heritage is that they, they respect a lot other cultures and they and they like having a good time, which is a Sicilian way, in a lot of ways. Have a good time. You know, have a good time with your family, enjoy life, eat good food, make a loud lot of loud noises and yell.

**J** James Geering 23:13

I had a taekwondo coach who was also one of my exercise physiology professors when I was in university in North London, Willie Peter. And the best way to describe him was like an Asian Gold member. He was Batoche. He didn't have the yellow tracksuit, but gold Barber. It was the same kind of personality, same accent everything. So yeah, very fun people.

**i** 23:37

Yeah, good people.

**J** James Geering 23:39

All right. Well, then, I mean, that's an interesting observation. And your dad is an incredible man, because I'm my second book I'm writing now is highlighting that multi generational trauma. You know, and I think that's, that's it, having the foresight to realize what's happening and realize that it was going to then become your children's lives. That is, that is incredible human being because their truth was their childhoods to be able to step away from that, and actually self assess. And say, I'm not doing that because I have that in a in a very different way. And much, much smarter, not abusive so much, but I was spanked, out of anger a lot with whatever was close to hand. So Dr. Scholl's was in sandals, military canes and all kinds of stuff. But I ended up saying I can just slap my little boy on the thigh you know, when he was kind of toddler age, just a little pat. But then I was like, No, this is this is sending the wrong message like, you know, trying to resolve a an issue with violence, which is basically what it is, is kind of telling the kid the wrong thing. So I ended up when he was at the age where he could start to understand what I was saying just told him about kindness like what is what you're doing kind or is it unkind and that and that I never laid his hand on my son again. So I wasn't abused as a child, but it's okay to assess the way you were raised and go, alright, you know, whatever it is 2020 10 Do I still agree with the what I thought was parenting 27? You know, 22,007. And so having that constant reassessment and questioning the values that you thought were truths when you were raised? Oh, well, I was beat never did me any harm. But was it good? There was a kid being terrified that you're going to be physically abused by a parent? Is that the most healthy thing? You know? Maybe not. So for me, personally, I was able to navigate not ever spanking my child, you know, ever really, because before it was just a little tap on the thigh. And awesome. I think I did better than my dad in that situation. So, you know, we constantly evolve. So I think your dad's ability to overcome that pretty horrendous trauma is is admirable. Yeah.



25:53

Well, I mean, because of that, I had a really great upbringing had strong values in the family, my parents were still together, you know, kind of like the poster child for stability. Really, because I grew up in one house, we didn't move. They showed a lot of love. I did get spanked, though, I'm pretty sure when every Sicilian woman becomes a mother, they hand them the golden wooden spoon that they're supposed to beat their children. Think this is a Sicilian mom thing they get a wooden spoon to whack you with when you're when you're being bad, you know, but it wasn't, you know, abusive, obviously. Anyway.



James Geering 26:35

So you ended up becoming a firefighter, when you were school age, what were you doing as far as sports and exercise,



26:41

I was big into skating and surfing. So I did a ton I was on the surf team at Jupiter high just to pretty much get out of school because the surf team leader was the pottery teacher. And if there was good surf, he would just write you a note to say you could leave for the surf team and go surf. So it's like, boom, is amazing. It as I get on my my car and show him the note, go into the beach, you know, and shoot shoot to the water. And I worked in high school too, I did the work program actually worked in HR of all places for a development and I helped bring in a lot of foreign work and for the the restaurant and different things that they needed done on the on the property and properties. So that kind of another look at business, HR, that kind of thing. And then I did that until I got into EMT, paramedic and fire and then pretty much between that time i i worked construction on the side traveled worked AMR and worked at garden's hospital in the ER.



James Geering 27:55

So with the medic side when you were on the ambulance, and then in the ER, what are some of the career calls you remember from that portion of your life?



28:03

I would say the biggest impact that that time had on me was the actual hospital portion. Because one of the hospitals that I was more about the when I was in the paramedic stage, I did my ride time, so to speak, at Columbia Hospital, which was a psych ward. And that opened my eyes to a lot of the parts of society that no one talks about, that's not on the news that you don't get to see because it's behind locked doors. So I did a lot of time there during your paramedic time there, you have to write a certain amount of reports do a certain amount of skills, you know, all the things that get you ready to become a paramedic on the street get hired. I did. Almost all of it.



**J** James Geering 29:04  
We changed chairs.

**i** 29:07

I did all of it in the psychiatric ward really because it was so interesting and so raw. And man, I learned a lot in there, you know and just look at life. A perfect example. But at the time, I got drawn into a what they call that when they do the electrostatic shock therapy. I didn't know what it was. So I come into a room they have a bunch of people lined up in the beds. And they gave me a bag valve mask and they said listen, we're going to do electric shock therapy. And they're going to stop breathing you need to breathe for them until they get their their own respiratory drive back. So as I told him, No way this is a prank Come on. uh you know so the whole time I'm thinking this is a prank when when is this prank and end? The whole they bring this the wheel this card over looks like some Soviet oscilloscope like the there's like some parabolic lines going on this thing like calling the Kremlin. Yeah I'm looking at this like there's no way come on you know give up on this joke. They they put the lubricant on the on like the paddles and they put on the first person said, just search shocking this guy's like oh my god this is not a joke. So I'm holding the bag valve master like start bagging start bagging this guy, you're an EMT, right? I was like, yeah, so you know, now I'm bagging, this person is not breathing and they move on to the next one, they start prepping the next patient, I'm thinking to myself, Oh my God, how many are these? There's like, 20 people in I'm bagging and talk about growing up quick. And I was a kid. I was like, this exists. I thought it was in a horror film. You know, stuff like that opened my eyes to medicine and just being a paramedic and dealing with, you know, the unfortunate sides of society and the people that need help and, and all the different emotions that come with it. It's crazy. And and I tell you, at that point, I'm like, What did I get myself into here? A little bit. But obviously, we're not doing that on the street. You don't have a, you know, the oscilloscope to shock people on the back of a rescue. Although I think some medical directors probably pushing for things like they want us to do like everything now on the street, you know, different pads on the 10,000, double sequential defib to the temples. But yeah, I had some experiences like that at the psych ward where Yeah, I learned I learned a lot quick about just society, really people in general, what what goes on the the Lost broken toys. You know, that's a better way to put it.

**J** James Geering 32:14

There's a nursing home slash Hospital in Orlando. And I'd never been to this particular thought we'd be there a lot. And it was, you know, always like C diff. And just, you know, the worst case nursing home scenarios ever every person you went, there had rigor that the nurse told you, they just took vitals 20 minutes ago,

**i** 32:34

to see if you're coming down the hall with their hands on the patient. And then as soon as you turn the corner, start doing CPR.



**J** James Geering 32:39

Exactly, exactly like what Viola, did you get rectal temp as anything you would have 20 minutes ago. But um, but it was heartbreaking because we got caught and I can still see this poor kid's face now. And there was a ward like fifth floor, some I forget. And it was all special needs children, and like severely handicapped kids. And this one little boy who was five, I think by this point three, or fighting about five was a Shaken Baby, baby. And so this child, I think, had been in this care facility for five years, staring at a ceiling in this room, and started having respiratory problems. And this kid literally died in my arms at the hospital, which again, you could argue is that good or bad, depending on how you look at it. But it was the same exact thing that the Island of Misfit Toys this ward was all the children that had been discarded and forgotten about that society didn't want in their, in their for view. And so they were, you know, thank God they were being taken care of by someone. But these are the conversations that people don't want to have, you know, the mental health the the people with physical challenges, at least, there's now a much greater awakening of the adaptive community. And you know, a lot of these people now that are afflicted or have some, you know, some huge innovation and progress when it comes to acceptance by society. But there are still these places where people are kind of shoved under the carpet because society doesn't want to see them.

 34:09

That's the unfortunate truth. You know, the people don't want to they, they don't want to think about that kind of thing. They definitely don't want to see it, and they want to act like it doesn't exist. And that's extremely unfortunate. You know, because it hurts, it hurts. It's painful to see, you know, when when you go towards like that, and you see these poor children you see, I mean, even adults, it's it more than just tugs at your heartstrings. It makes you ill inside, you know, to look at that. Yeah. But it's something that has to be dealt with as a community. You know, as a society. It can't be just something that's, you know, pushed into a closet and the door locked 10 times. Yeah.

**J** James Geering 34:52

Well, it's about to your Sicilian dining room table. Imagine if they said you can't see here. Yeah, that's basically

 34:57

what we're doing. Right? Yeah.

**J** James Geering 35:01

So you come from the pure EMS route you go through fire academy you have a rare event where you literally have a child waiting on the other end which I commend you on by the way, walk me through Well firstly the Fire Academy you know you're a surfer so you know there's there's obviously an element of strength and fitness in that but it's not carrying weight over distance ascending stairs, etc. How did you do physically with a surfing background with the physical side of the fire service



35:27

I was pretty active. And I had a lot of friends that were a lot bigger than me. And so I had to hold my own a bunch growing up, you know, that is, you know, just boys wrestling and carrying on trying to beat each other up. But when I and I did a lot of soccer so I had pretty good cardio I think that's really helped me because when I first went to the academy to see Pat not blessed with a letter beginning my first name that's closer to a I was the last in the group to go so I'm just watching all these guys. Some of these guys I'm like, Dang, this guy is ripped. Or this dude looks like the lift the house and they're one by one failing to see Pat. Right? So I'm watching. Now I'm sweating. I'm like, oh my god, maybe I should have done something to like prep for this. And you know, they get off the Stairmaster start running with the hose and just fall right over your legs and your legs. And I was thinking rubber legs fall over. I was like, oh, man, I'm not gonna make it. But at least no one's gonna watch me fail because everyone's gone. The last guy, you know, Steve Xerxes



James Geering 36:33

behind



36:36

the x. So, yeah, so I go and I'm getting into it. And I'm like, Okay, I got this, I got this because because of the cardio, I'm not gonna say my legs weren't a little rubber here or there. But I'm not saying I wasn't, you know, pretty winded at the end, but I made it. And I think that's just from all the cardio. Because surfing is a lot of cardio it it's really like boxing, but you're laying on a board because you're punching the water for three hours. Really, you're paddling a board is serious cardio, especially in bigger, heavier serve. So I think that helped a lot and just helped being so active all the time, you know, back then there's no smartphones, what are you going to do, you know, sit, sit at home watch prices, right? There's nothing to do. You know, you had to get out there and do something. So being active helped a lot and having that cardio helped a lot, you know, not just the physical strength but but um, you can see me standing sitting here, I'm not a big guy. But that definitely helped a lot with with the physicality of it.



James Geering 37:41

You just took me back to Orange County when I tested for them. I've been I've always been the an athlete. So you know, I was aware of my strength and conditioning. But when I was in Anaheim getting ready to go back, I prepped I did time on the Stairmaster with holding a 45 pound plate to kind of prepare for it. I did a practice test in Anaheim, which is funny because the guys running it were like, no one ever leaves Anaheim, what are you doing? Well, I have to go back the other side of America, because I just had a little boy and my wife wants to be with with his family. And so then I go to Orange County, and I'm sitting there and as you know, you're on these chairs with your little Lego helmet. And you're, you're getting ready to put the vest on. And this guy who was ahead of me, he must have been to 26 to kind of Viking looking,

you know, genealogy was just talking to me about how he was going to crush the forcible entry prop in three hits. And he was gonna do this and do that. And that was like, you know, in different like, okay, good.



38:44

I'll be watching. So then



James Geering 38:45

I see, I think maybe he was too ahead of me. I must have been on it anyway, regardless, I think I was getting, you know, they put the vest on everything as if nice person is going through. So you're ready to get on the treadmill on the Stairmaster. And the same as like you said, he just got off the Stairmaster. And there's one more you drag the dry hose. It may as well have been a filled five inch away this dude, and he just fucking tapped out right there. And that was what I wrote about in the book about the bodybuilders that that I tested with down here when we did the one test for a bunch of departments. And it's amazing the peacocks Yeah, it is a certain



39:23

show muscles out there. And that is, yeah, you want the guy on the ground with him.



James Geering 39:27

Yep. Yeah. So this is a big thing is that you know, when you talk about strength conditioning, it's not about being calendar ready. You know, winning the World's Strongest Man, it's having that strength but that muscular endurance and, and the mindset, I mean, I had another guy, my fire academy, and the second it was firefighter two, he came in and the whole time was talking about how he's doing it for his kids. It's gonna be a firefight and he tapped out in the middle of the, you know, was basically the combat challenge about you know, before he got to the dummy, I'm like, so your mind isn't there. It wasn't for your kids. You're telling yourself it was But yeah, I mean, what we're asked to do is we don't Yeah, we don't look at ourselves, as you know, NFL stars or anything, but it's not easy. And if you're not preparing, right, then that's extremely arrogant. Because I know a lot of people that you know, we're strong Workfit that didn't make the CPAP.



40:17

It's not only that, it's that it's physically strenuous. But you have to think at the same time. Yeah, that's what people don't understand. Like, you could be a brother, if you're an athlete, which I know a lot of firemen like we're athletes in a way we are. But in a way, we have one thing over athletes that we have to think while we're doing what we're doing. It's not like we're running to catch a ball, we're crunching a number, possibly we could drag somebody out of a house, and then have to figure out what the drip rate is on medication. That's a whole nother story. When sleep deprived. Yeah, when sleep deprived, that's a whole nother story. And you

already did a CrossFit workout at the station and your guests. Yeah. You know, so yeah, that there's a whole nother side of that. And it's a lot to ask. And that's part of what we're facing, you know, and modern fire services, all those things that were asked to do.

**J** James Geering 41:15

Well, that we hit sleep deprivation. That was a good segue. So one of the things that bokeh is most famous for from outside, of course, there's there's so many things that you guys do is the schedule, right, and you guys have the schedule that I have argued for seven plus years now should be the industry standard in the fire service, at least Yes, which is 2472. So you walk into the front door of this, this department, talk to me about your experience. I mean, if you've got to contrast it with people in departments around you that didn't have that. And then, you know, lead me through how Boca Raton, Florida was able to secure. What I would argue is a very progressive yet needed shift schedule.

**o** 41:55

We had some very smart union leadership before I arrived. I don't know the exact history, but I know they fought for that. And they did give up some things. Some future benefits for that, that I'm sure we were able to recuperate later on down the road. But they were smart enough to see that, hey, you know, what's important. Sleep, you know, it's important, you know, physical health. And what a difference. I mean, what I think the biggest thing that people on a on the regular 2448 or 2448 72, Kelly day, doesn't understand is that day in the middle, where you're not either coming off shift or going back on that day is gold. And I try to explain that to people. Especially I get like a lot of calls. Somebody from BSO or somebody from whatever fire department and they say, Hey, you know, we're kind of toying around with this idea, but the guys don't want to lose their Kelly day. And I'm like, dude, forget that Kelly day, forget it. You have three days in between every every shift after is a long weekend, right? So you can actually recuperate if you get slammed on that day, like you said that 24 hours is like working three, eight hour days, you're working three days in a row, you need three days off to recuperate, where you can go to sleep, and you can get your health back up, you know, you can let all those cortisol levels escape, or whatever they do, you know, so you can refresh yourself. And there's it's so funny, there's such like, this latching on to that Kelly day, we're let it go, man, let it go and have all that time in between, you know, you take one day off, you have a full week off, right on an exchange. There's a lot of benefits to it. And but really that day in between it. And there's times where we like I've gotten smoked at work, just running all night, or if I'm on a 40 and getting smoked is now with kids, and you know, I'm not 20 anymore, I'll end up getting sick. After after 48 I get get beat up. At least I'll have time to recover. You know, I'll get like a snotty nose kind of thing. You know, where you're just you're rundown. And barely, that three days is enough to where I could go back to work and be like, Okay, I have I got reserve energy in the tank. Not that I'm running on fumes like I've actually recovered. And it's so important that three days, I don't see how you could recover in two days. I just don't

**J** James Geering 44:31

want even when people are. If you think about it, it's two days that you've got. Because we all have one day, because what time do you get off in the morning on the shift?



44:40

It's so our shift goes, Oh, 730 to 730.



James Geering 44:43

So you've worked seven and a half hours of that first day. So it isn't a day off. You worked a full day. So it's the fact that you get two days and this is what people struggle to understand. As you said we worked three hour days crammed together. The third of those eight are on that first part that's not enough. On the days between Yeah, so you only have a day of which most of us are thinking, I gotta wake up at five, I gotta get my gear, I got to shop for 24 hours worth of groceries, I got to clean my gym, you know, I got to do all that stuff. So this is it is like this is the one that the day that you have is only the only true day off for you. And that's the one that says you set the goal because that, that you get off the first day, that second day you wake up knowing that you don't have to go,



45:29

that's the mental health days. Because I know I'm not going back the next day, there's something about that, you know, when you get off, you're like, oh, this day, I'm like, wrecked? Can we go to bed. And then the next day, you're if you have a 2448 You're like, God, I gotta go back to work the next day. You never have that that day in between where you're just like, This is my day. I'm not, I'm not getting off duty, I'm not going back on duty, this is my day. And you get that between every one of your shifts?



James Geering 45:57

Well, I mean, even another thing that I get a lot was oh, well, you know, if we do that, we're gonna get paid less. And I always tell people look, if you went to training, you went 40 hours? Do they cut 16 of your hours? No, it's really hourly rate changes, but your salary stays the same. Yeah,



46:11

that's a silly argument to me, because in a career system, unless your city wants to have a crappy fire department, they're gonna have to have a competitive pay Fire Department. And that's all part of it, it has to be competitively paid, or otherwise people will leave it, it'll become a stepping stone, you know, to other departments, and they'll leave it and they'll go elsewhere, right, so they're gonna have to be competitive. And another competitive notch is having that schedule. And that's why Boca has been, you know, up until pretty recently pretty competitive is because we have that schedule. And we still have competitive pay and benefits. So people look at our department say, I want to work there. And then the benefit of that is, we can usually then take the cream off the top, when we have that. And if a city is smart, and administration is smart, the union is smart, they're gonna all come together, all three of those entities and say, You know what, we want to have great service in the city, we live in the city, maybe we should

do that. And that that pay thing to me, you're gonna pay get paid less? That's not I don't think that's true by any means. In a competitive market. Like if you want anyone to work there, it has to be somewhat equal pay.

**J** James Geering 47:33

Yeah, yeah. Well, and then that the financial side, which I know you and I talked about, and I've tried to kind of pull this out, I'd love to actually see if we can find some of the men and a woman that did for that change in Boca even if they've retired out just

 47:46

names. I know who did it beautiful.

**J** James Geering 47:49

Because the long term wastage of money by working people to death, you and I've had this from I mean, every industry, from military to Naval to aviation, they've all said the same thing. When they change to a more progressive environment where they invest in their people, they save all this money on injuries, workman's comp claims, you know, the list goes on and on and on. So there's your money. Just gonna have

 48:13

to wait for the return though. exactly the thing people it's instant gratification whether we put the money in where's the return? Well, you have to wait but the return will be huge. Yeah. Yeah, you put that investment in you give it a few 510 years if it even takes that long, and the return will be amazing, especially on that because our, our profession, fire, police, you know, dispatchers nursing, all of that. That's all that all directly impacts the community directly. And it's all human currency. So the more powerful you your human currency is, the better the better care you're gonna get and no one can escape it no one there's no one here that at least in the United States, unless you're extremely wealthy and you have an whole nother medical plan you call 911 That's what you're getting wherever you are. And unfortunately, that can change you know, depending on where you are, the level of service but you that's what you get. So if we can all invest better, what we did is better no matter where we are. And hopefully you know a rising tide will raise all ships on that where we can continually get better benefits that really matter. For Wellness. That way we can do that. And by wellness I mean you know mental health, all of it together mental health, physical health, nutritional health, health tracking, I think all those things, we're woefully behind. On all of those things. That's a package that needs to be a like legislated federally and and statewide it needs to be a requirement for any entity to provide emergency service, that should just be part of it. And I don't see how it's not really, when most sources would would agree that you have a better chance of dying from a heart attack, or even just suicide alone by double than the line of duty death. How much more proof do you need than that? I mean, if anytime there's a safety issue, it's fixed like that, right? If a department said, we don't have SCBAs people keep dying and fire from breathing. Smoke. They like what are you talking about? We're gonna SCBAs tomorrow. That's that's a department

standard immediately, because it's a safety issue. Why isn't suicide a safety issue? Why isn't it that kind of knee jerk reaction, put this wellness program in place? Immediately, it blows my mind. It we it? I understand that, unfortunately, the fire department is is reactionary in a lot of ways. But we're not even reacting, though. Now. We're not even reactionary. I don't I don't know what we are right now to that. And there's many reasons it's multifaceted. It's not a simple fix, per se, it will take a lot of it's not like you can just say, Tomorrow, we'll have this it will take footwork. But I definitely believe it needs to be from more of a legislative standpoint, from and that way it gives real firepower to unions administrations, so they can go to the cities and be like, if you really would like to continue emergency service for your city is now required to have this wellness program. And I think the the footwork is there, there's plenty of people working on it. There's different cities and different initiatives that are trying to do this. But it's not enough, it needs to be more more and fire departments group together more special interest groups put together more power forward. And and we need to get that those laws in place. So that, you know, again, the unions all these the initiatives, the administration's they have the firepower to say, not only are we getting a wellness system, but it's required. So it takes that whole thing away. And then what that does to is that, which we talked about before is, is it also is a stigma killer, because then it becomes mandatory. So if someone is, and you've made this point, before, we're you're, you mentioned that we could cut out polygraphs and psych tests and all the baloney of hiring and take that money and put it into something like therapy for or, you know, for, for new hires to meet with a therapist to say, Hey, this is what you're getting into. That ends that stigma, because they start their career doing that. At the same time, if we mandate it, that also ends a stigma. It's kind of a funny way to put it, but when when you turn 40 And you go to get the annual physical, you get the prostate checked, right? Firefighters don't like that very much. But it's mandatory, pretty much you know, for your health, people agree that it's important, so everyone does it. So even though the stigma of somebody putting a finger where it doesn't belong, goes away, because everyone's doing it, you know, and it's the same thing can be the same thing with with wellness with mental health, when it's when it's mandatory, it takes that stigma away, and a lot of ways because everyone's doing it, they have to do it. And hopefully people would want to benefit from it. If they're going, you know, they're not just going to fight it the whole time that they would actually benefit from it. But I think that we're we're not getting away with it anymore. The cancer has gone to the surface, so to speak, where you can't ignore suicide, right? You might have been able to ignore drinking, you might have been able to ignore substance abuse, although I'm not sure how, but you can't ignore suicide, and the cancer has hit the surface and it's ugly. And we're not reacting to it and not fast enough. And we're at a I think a part of a junction and the American fire service where we have a fork in the road where we could go one way or the other. And I liked him to to the economic crash in 2007 2007. There were signs that the crash was coming, right but people were like, Oh, we're still going though. You know? That's that's could be far the signs were there and then what happened? 2008 2009 Boom, you fall off a cliff right? economy collapses. I think we're there. We're the fire department in this way with wellness, that we at one side, we have this group of people that are doubling down on this idea that it's part of the job to have PTSD, it's part of the job to have divorce, you know, it's just all part of it just to man up and deal with it. And if you see, you know, somebody that commits suicide, that's that's part of it. Unfortunately, that's what we have to deal with. And that's just not true, that's a nother risk that we have to mitigate appropriately, just like every other risks that we face in the job. So there's a group that's doubling down on that, really, and that's the wrong way to go, we need to go the other way completely. And we need to understand this as an issue and start facing it immediately and with firepower.



And I think that's why we're also at a crossroads. And this is another sign that of impending doom that the application rates have dropped immensely. I've been hearing it across the nation listening to podcasts, talking to other departments, from the outreach with my book and everything that their applications are way down. I mean, I think when I was applying, there was 1000s of applicants. So people were fighting each other for these positions. Now they're not and why is that? I think it's because generations now are smart. And they have the tools to understand what this job means. I didn't know what this job meant, it took me 10 years to figure it out, took me 10 years to figure out that, hey, these calls hurt my well being not just my mind, you know, but my physical ability, you know, that that I'm fatigued, mentally, physically, you know, and those there has to be benefits there to overcome that. So when a new applicant, you know, is they're looking at a young person that a newer generation, they could be looking at applying for a fire department applying to become a fireman, right? They're gonna look at what it takes. Okay, I got to do XYZ yet to get all the schooling. But what do I get when I get there? Okay, so most Fire Department departments, you can't use cannabis products at all zero tolerance. So if I have a sleeping issue, I have an issue with PTSD, something like that. I can't even use CBD to help myself. And that's interesting. And my career is over like that. If I do, what else? Oh, I have a tattoo on my forearm. Now I'm gonna have to wear a cover over my forearm for 30 years long sleeves in the fray summer in the Florida summer for 30 years. You know, what else? I probably work somewhere on 60 hours a week. Okay, maybe this is a sound great. I want to help people. But that sounds kind of insane. Right? And that's because we're not progressing as a fire department. We're not resolved. We're devolving? Yeah, we're, we were stuck in the 40s or something. The Army has progressed past us. They're changing the way they teach their drill instructors, because they saw that numbers were down for applicants. So the army so they changed. Why are we not changing? Right? So that's scary, really. Because they're smart enough to say, hey, you know, maybe I'll do a different thing with my life. But what? What's scary about that is who have we lost already, right? What future great leaders have we already lost because they changed their mind that they were smart enough to know that maybe I shouldn't do this for my own physical well being for my mental health for my for my family. And now they're not in a position where they can be a great leader. Because we never even gave them the chance. You know? So that's, that's something to think about that with the fire department. We need to start progressing that way we need to keep up with private sector, private sector is doing all this all these things. Right. They understand that in order to get people into the door and to continue their business. They have to entice them in it's not pandering. I mean, some some do pander, but for us it I'm not talking about you know, fill in the firehouse full of beanbags and and a free lunch box and you know motional support dogs although I would like that to be back so I'm about Yeah, I mean I wouldn't complain if you want to give me free lunch and and sit me down and beanbag let me pet puppies. But I'm not saying we got we're going that extreme. But what I'm saying is we have to progress along with private sector because we're losing them to private sector right now. And this is just the beginning. This is the incipient stage. I feel like in the future it will get worse and worse. And a lot of people in the fire department like to discredit newer generations because they don't have a perceived skills said they never started a song. They never did construction like we did, okay. But they do have other strengths, it's stupid to think that they have no strengths, because they're smart enough to see that what we're doing hurts us mentally, we're killing ourselves. And they don't want to do that. Right. So they do have other strengths, they have higher emotional IQ, they there, they have the willingness to help their community. Well, we have to give them the tools to do that. mean, people that go into this profession are taking on the tragedy of the community, they're shouldering that. I mean, really think about that, you know, that they're shouldering tragedy of the community. All those little things that that are, you know, for people in the community that only affects them, they only

see that one little piece of their life, you know, this, this, this happened at the dinner table, you know, grandpa or dad or whoever had a heart attack. And on Christmas Eve, you know, we see that every Christmas Eve, for everybody in the community. And that's just one little thing. Car accidents, that's a big issue, you know, for you. And it's the same thing for me, because traveling, you see how hard it is to get a license anywhere else. And here, you can get all you need to get a license the United States as a face, so they could take a picture of it and put it on the card to hand you.

 James Geering 1:01:25

My son took his chest yesterday. So I got to see it again and trained him to be a good driver. But, you know, again, he was like, what do you do? Well, I parked into a parking spot, I backed up 20 feet, which I watched him do. And then you know, he drove around, he's like, went around neighborhood gets to like, stop and start parking thing. And he drove back. So I mean, 16 years old, yeah. And you're ready, you're ready for i 75, in the middle of a rainstorm in Florida,

 1:01:54

and all those accidents, because of that, they're all the things that we deal with, right? We shoulder that pain. And those people are seeing and understanding that because they're more well informed than we were. And they're deciding maybe, if they're not going to, you know, be able to help me through this with wellness program with allowing me to use CBD or show a tattoo or whatever, everything's a zero tolerance, my career is over and forget that,

 James Geering 1:02:28

well then flip the other side, too. And now it's okay to be obese and get hired as a firefighter, right? Because you can't go to a bid that you you know, you can set standards and maintain them every year and ask your firefighters to be in shape.

 1:02:40

Yeah, that's multifaceted. Yeah, the whole thing, there's just we have to put a lot of things aside and say, Okay, let's look to the future here. And we need to get the best that we can get in here. And I'm not saying that people that we've hired, you know, in the past 70 years, weren't any good. They're great. You know, but we have to keep making the fire department. Interesting and invaluable to those in the community that are willing to shoulder that responsibility. Right, are willing to leave their family and to go see tragedy. Every fourth day, every third day, every other day, every whatever your shift is

 James Geering 1:03:30

what you said about the ones that we hired were great. I always say and it's the same with people point out the kind of heavier guy that still kills it on the fire ground. It's like, Yeah, beautiful, but how much better? Could he or she be right? If they were actually in a good place?

beautiful, but how much better? Could he or she be right? If they were actually in a good place? Health wise as well? Yeah, they're amazing, you know, the bouncing hose and pulling ceiling. But then they have to go back to the station. And then they take the stand there, you know, you're not I mean, they have lockers and everything. So what I'm thinking about not just the fire ground, but right, you know, 1020 30 years after they retire, they get to play with their grandkids. Yeah. So what what irks me is, you know, there's a lot of conversation about all its customer service in the firehouse, well, I think that's a terrible word. Because your kindness and compassion as a firefighter is what's important. It's not customer, they're not customer. They're a human being having their worst day. And the altruistic element of first responders are addressing that person and trying to mitigate it. That's to me is it's not an HR issue.



1:04:30

It's a leadership issue. And I talk about that in the book a lot. Because as a leader, you have to be an example in that you can't ask someone to do something that you're not doing. If you're, you know, if you look like Jabba the Hutt and you suck down a bottle before you hit the door. How do you expect your crew to be any better than that? You know, in even in your personal life, if you're a total idiot outside of work, that's not beyond your crew. They know that if you're On social media doing some dumb stuff that doesn't evaporate, because you got into the right front seat of the truck, you know, they see that. So you're an example all the time. But there is such thing as tough love to, like, you have to say some things that are uncomfortable. You have to have conversations where, you know, you have to use some serious tact, but it's meaningful, and it's appropriate. And unfortunately, you know, sometimes weight gain is, could be a part of that, where, listen, I'm, this conversation is more about you, helping you, you know, and this crew, because it has to do with all of us, you know, if you can't, if you can barely pull your weight, literally, how can you know, you do anything for us if we need you. And you know, there, but again, you have to be the example that I can't be seriously overweight until you Hey, you could probably lose a few lbs. But you know. So, you know, that a lot of this stuff is is leadership to me, and it's it's station level leadership. And that's really why I wrote the book is because that's the funnel point. That's where the rubber meets the road. That's where you get, you're at that point where you're the one truly affecting the level of service, in my opinion, right, so you're the one that's hitting the gas and leaving that mark where the rubber meets the road, right, it could be a little, or it could be full of burnout, you know, that depends on you. And you're you're the one that's shouldering the directives, and the memos and the minutia. from on high right at the ivory tower admin just to throw some jokes their way. And you're the one that has to shoulder that and make it palatable to your crew and make it happen. At the same time, you have to be wise enough to know everyone has a boss. Right, so you can't discount what they're doing. They have a boss too, right. And they have bosses that don't understand what we do. Write, they have budgets, they have different things that they have to meet. So you have to be able to shoulder these things, you have to make it palatable, it takes a lot of work, and it takes it that comes from an inner strength, if you don't have an inner strength yourself, you need to build that first before you can lead anybody anywhere. If you can't lead yourself lead in anybody anywhere. And people will know that they you've seen it. When you see it, this guy's the leader, it looks like he just rolled out of a dumpster, you know, no way. I'm not following that guy anywhere. You know, are the guys, there's life's a mess. He's gonna come here and lead us somewhere? I don't think so. So, you know, leadership starts with the self, it starts with trying to find find your foundation work on qualities that make you a leader. And then once you've made yourself the best it can be, it's a fight to keep it that way. And then you can reach out and say, Hey, this is what I'd like our crew to be able to do. Can you follow me? Right? And part of that is knowing who your informal leader is. Right? Because that's

should be your first question, who's my formal leader? Because as soon as you leave the room, they're going to look at them say, What do you think about that? You know, and then once you're leading by example, and you're and you're creating that right atmosphere, all these things start to take place, and respect builds, and all these different things build that, that customer service, that internal customer service actually happens, not the the false baloney part, the actual, we care about each other. This is a family, we're a family at this table. Right? When we're eating, we're having a good time laughing. But if I say something that kind of, you know, hurts a little bit. It's because I love you, as a friend, as a brother as or whatever, it's because I want you to succeed. And you know that, right? It's not because I'm trying to step on you to get to another promoter position is none of that, you know, because you know, me and you know, my example, you know what I'm doing that when I say, hey, let's try to do this, we could do this better. You'll say, That dude is trying to help me. I'm gonna try to do that. Yeah, that's, that's where that strength comes from. And we need that now. That's why I use the word modern in the title. The modern fire officer is this is not the fire department of our fathers of our forefathers. We what we're expected to do, it goes beyond anything that they ever imagined, I believe, especially in a post 911 world. And again, most of the applicants were getting live in that world they were born after it. But for one of those aspects, just what we're expected to do, right when I first got hired, I got a like a small binders or EMS protocol. Listen, I was like, Oh my God, dude, look at all this medications, all these things, and now it's an EMS manual looks like the essentials of paramedic care. Right? It's just the protocols like oh my god, you know,



James Geering 1:10:10

Orange County's SOPs, right. It's like two yellow pages taped



1:10:15

together. And you're expected not only to do that, to memorize that, but to do it perfectly the first time. Right? And what does everyone have on seen a smartphone to record to see if you even did it? Right? So we have in a world of more liability in a litigious society, right, we have more and more extreme, since a extreme harder protocols to accomplish perfectly when everyone can record you. So that's one part of our modern fire service, right? The what we're able to do, it's amazing what we're able to do the advanced life support pre hospital, I mean, we're like a rolling hospital rolling er. But the stresses of that are immense. Right? Now we take that and we'll plug in the next thing, we'll plug in the calls that we're running. We're running more and more active shooters, right, we're running more and more pandemic type calls, where there's all these social pressures around. Where, you know, if you're wearing a mask, if you're not wearing a mask, if you're there's all these eyes on you, you know, when you're when you're running these calls, when your weather, I mean, the violence riots, social pressures, like all these different things, all these calls that, you know, it's, it's not just fires, it's all these thinking calls that that are have so much pressure and stress. And then you put on top of that the social aspect of it, where people are at each other's throats in the pandemic did not help that made it even worse, you think. So what I mean by that is, the social pressures that we're dealing with is, and this is my perspective, and people can get mad at me or not, if they want, but this is my look at what's been taking place in the past 10 years is that the Western world, I will just say, America, whatever isn't an identity crisis right now. They have less left Judeo Christian values behind and the principles and all that that was something that everyone

agreed upon, essentially, that these, these were the principles and values that we agree upon. And then they had some kind of common value to fall back on. They left that it's gone now. For better or for worse, but there was nothing to fill it there was nothing ready. Okay, this is gone. But we're going to add this in. Now. We all agree on this, that that didn't happen. What filled that void was the self, how I personally feel. Now that's true. That's truth, how I feel. And unfortunately, humans are pretty much pretty selfish. We're looking out for the self because we're, it's self preservation. And identity politics is seize that opportunity to jump in there and say, you know, what, not only are you right, but if anyone disagrees with you. That's a an act of aggression, a physical aggression. So everyone now they have just stirred the pot, you know what I mean, they kick the hornet's nest, and everyone is hates everyone. Now, and that that's made, it's made its way into the firehouse. We're not immune to that. That's coming into the firehouse to so the leadership in the firehouse, now we have to navigate this minefield of all that, and what does that take, you know, that takes a very strong leader to take someone that's first very self confident, but also cares about each one of his people, right to mitigate those little those little issues that form society. I mean, nothing was to me and modern times bigger than dealing with the pandemic at the station level. Should I you know, should you get the shot or not? You know, should you do this or not? I mean, everyone has their own story. You know, we have maybe someone, their family lost their family restaurant that they had for 100 years because it's shut down and now it's gone. So he's he or she is mad because of that. Another one maybe lost their grandmother, right to COVID or something like that. So you have to get the show. You have to shut down things. No, no, my family lost their, the restaurant, they love whatever you have. These are strongly held opinions. They make their way into the firehouse,

J

James Geering 1:14:43

justified and then they're justified like with so many argument, even like the obesity element, I talk a lot about our environment creates weight gain, it creates mental ill health. So you can't just demonize the fat firefighter, you have to bring in the environment. But this is the problem is The person who lost the restaurant has every reason to feel that way, the person who lost the grandmother has every reason to feel that way. And what leadership does is pull them all together and be like, both of you are right to feel the way you do, let's find that common ground. We're overall, we can mitigate losing businesses, we can mitigate the health of the people that are truly vulnerable. But we can also keep everything going. But what we saw from so many, specially, you know, leadership positions in larger government, state etc, was division, right? Like, oh, no, you know, why don't you throw rocks at him and you throw rocks at her. And then you can just basically pummel each other with your extreme views with winds. And then and then we don't fix anything.

i

1:15:46

And, you know, in a lot of ways, how you deal with that, as a leader is through validation, you validate each person's issue, yes, you are justified to feel that way. But then you still respect but you still respect each other. And it's easier in a healthier environment that you've already created. Right? Hopefully, you've created that environment before the pandemic hit before these issues hit. That's why it's so important to start now. And it takes work a lot of work. But not you have to validate those issues, show them how to respect and encourage them, you know, to respect each other. And it's not easy, it's very hard, it's very difficult to continue to

keep peace that way. But it is possible. And that's all part of that, that modern officer to hold all these things together. And, and really all these are just one piece, each of the puzzle. I mean, another side of it's the mental health side, in the book, as well, in the silent killers chapter I talk about my about with PTSD. But I believe that this is a leadership issue, in the firehouse that the officer has to be the example of talking about mental illness, about using benefits that are available to you. And making it making the stigma go away, by being the example of sharing and caring, you know, for lack of better term with your firemen, because they're going to look to you to see what you're doing, they're gonna look to your informal leader, see what you're doing, you know, if someone like from a peer support team comes to the station, guess who they're looking at? To see who's going to talk? First, they're gonna look at you, as a leader, they're gonna look at the informal leader, right? Show them how you should react to, to those situations, because it matters, it obviously matters. People are killing themselves. So be an example.

J

James Geering 1:17:51

Absolutely. Well, I want to get to your journey. For now side, obviously, this is an area that I like to discuss a lot, because I think that vulnerability is important for people to hear. Just going back, though, to what you were saying private sector versus what we're doing now. You know, we have some fire service leaders that talk about you know, we're like a business and my observation is okay, well, then, I don't think we're a business. But if that's the concept that you're taking beautiful, then don't model yourself on a sweatshop in the Philippines, Mother yourself on Google a virgin or someone who's very progressive, that understands the wellness, bring Richard Branson, exactly, oh, my god, he would smash it. That's one of my kind of guests to try and get one day. But it's true. Like, if you want to look at the business sector, and even now, as I'm sure you can imagine, this has really piqued my interest. There are a lot of progressive companies now that are gone to a four day workweek in the corporate sector, still in a nine hour day, eight hour day, whatever it is, but they realize that their employees were being as if not more efficient, in four days, getting the same amount if not work done, than they were in five. And then that gives us employees an extra day to be with their family. Then they come back fired up invigorated, and then off they go again. So if we're gonna model business, then pick the right fucking business,

U

1:19:09

right? I mean, you're much more productive when you're awake. You're sleepwalking, you're not gonna get any, you know, any productive tivity out of anybody, you know. So and the, the productivity you do get is not gonna be very good. You know, you know, that sleep deprivation is likened to being drunk. That's just one night. One night yeah, so that's scary man. And to me, you know, when I'm on duty, I'm not near my home. When my family calls 911 I don't want a bunch of drunk people showing up you know, I want someone that's got sleep knows what they're doing. is ready to go to work, you know has their wits about them to help my family. And if a wellness not if but a wellness program. I'm would ensure that better than what's being done now, you know, so we gotta get serious about giving firemen police dispatchers nurse all the stuff the right tools to be able to do their job correctly because it impacts us directly. This is not like years down the line. This is the next time someone calls 911. Yeah, you know,

**J** James Geering 1:20:23

I just interviewed Carly. Well, Pat, who was a or still is a high level volleyball player, first indoor than beach. But she had a couple of injuries that have taken her away from beach volleyball specifically. And so she got into the obstacle racing and I forget they call it now but DECA fit and all those ones. They're the kind of hybrid fitness competitions. And she's literally one of the fittest woman on planet Earth. But she had an interesting view because she went into the fire service just only like when during COVID Basically, which is an interesting thing. So worst time, they also ironically, their their fire academy burned down one of the first days that ever in Fire Academy. So they had to mitigate new tools and all kinds of stuff. But anyway. So but coming from an athlete's position, her whole thing was I had to step away again, because I couldn't function as an athlete. With the lack of sleep we were getting and it was it was LA. So again, 56 Hour Work Week. And she was just like I had to choose, I can go back to the fire service, I love the fire service, I'm sure she'll probably find one that's got a better work schedule. But at this point, if I want to be an athlete, I need to use my younger years, I can't be doing this no sleep business. But the thing is, and we talked about this, if you and I are asked to go 28 storeys up to the hotel that was right next to where I used to work in my last apartment with a high rise strip, which would be 100 pounds with a gear all in 28 floors up and then we start fighting fire and then we start doing searches, then maybe we pull them into the stairway and perform you know, mega code. Wouldn't you want those people to be able to operate at the highest level? Why is it that, you know, Jared wakes up at three in the morning is asked to do all those things. And we're okay with him working 56 Or you're obviously 42. But a lot of people around the country 5680 hours a week when you're athletes. I mean, there's no way Drew Brees is going to be like, Yeah, I won't sleep every third day, we'll be fine. We won't and we know that. So this is the thing, every every level that you look at whether it's you know, like you said, all the way down to the ability to hire and but physical performance, mental performance, likelihood of injury, likelihood of mental health challenges, cancer, heart disease, obesity, autoimmune disease, it's everything. Everything and I've had 800 Plus episodes now. And they've, you know, so much cross pollination from all kinds of industries going, you guys have lost your fucking mind. I don't know how you got there. But what the fuck are you doing? You are gonna get hurt, you are gonna gain weight, you are gonna have heart disease, you are more likely to get cancer and the mental health side don't even let me begin.

 1:23:02

It's just about not progressing. You know, like when we're instituting fire departments. Okay, yeah, you get out there to well, papers are coming out, right? Statistics research, hey, if you do these things, this is going to hurt you. If you don't do these things, this will hurt you, whatever it is. And we looked at it and said, throw it away. So we just ignored all the research, all these things coming out with the new truth came and said, Hey, this, this will help you do this. Like now we we do the fire department this way? Sorry. And, you know, we're getting confused with tradition and history is, you know, with that, I think you've mentioned that a few times in some of your podcasts, traditional history, like the difference, what should we venerate, and what should we leave behind? And then think of finely?

**J** James Geering 1:23:55

Absolutely. And this is the thing, you know, with the fire helmet, and I know, Jeremy Don's just put his spin on it and our conversation on his social media posts. But it is and I don't give a fuck about you know. Oh. you don't like me. because I'm not beatina mv chest about pistol arips and

leather helmets, then you're listening to the wrong podcast, you just go ahead and get your cancer and, you know, carry on. But for me, it represents the inability to progress. It's not about what it is. But, you know, it is leather and it absorbs all the carcinogens and I worked in the west coast and the smaller helmets, they're so much better. And that's just the same kind of helmet but smaller, right? Still work great still has things fall on my head. You know, it's a great helmet, but, but it's that it's that, you know, I care more about how I look, because I'm an American firefighter than progressing and finding more innovative ways. You know, and it's the same with mental health. Well, we've always been fine. I did it now these young guys should do it. Just because you did it just because in 1930 that was As the most progressive helmet doesn't mean that almost 100 years later you it's okay to go? Should we be doing something better? You know and ask yourself, Am I more worried about how I look than the ability to say that the technology that would be in this helmet, the fact that's not going to get knocked off my head when something hits the rim, or you can't look up because it hits my tank, all these things? It's, I'm out the fire, so I don't give a shit what anyone wears. But I'm certainly going to point out the ridiculousness of that mentality. And then, specially then when you ridicule other countries that have advanced, and making them seem like, they're stupid, because they look like space people. Like if you're saying that you really need to look in the fucking mirror and reevaluate your burning desire to serve. Because to me, you're worried about how you look? And that's not for them air quotes, that's for you,



1:25:50

right? No, I agree. I mean, we have to be willing to change and change for the right reasons. You know, we gotta be willing to look at truth, look at research, look at, you know, whatever it takes and say, Okay, I was wrong. This obviously doesn't work. I mean, one of the things for me, when, when I was getting into the fire service learning at the Fire Academy, you know, they always teach you you gotta come from the unburned side, you have to the fire could run into the house, and I'm thinking to myself, so fire gonna run into a house? What are you talking about? You know, when I, whenever I put a bucket of water on a campfire and run off into the woods, you know, and then now it's, we got to hit hard from the yard, you know, you got to darken it down from the outside for you go. And it's like, yeah, that makes a little bit more sense. You know, so as it's just, it's a funny thing. You know, departments are number one, their silos, no one ever talks to each other. I mean, during the pandemic, the neighboring department could have cured COVID, we will never know, because we don't talk to him, you know. So that's part of it is a communication issue. But at the same time, like, when research comes out, just listen to it. Somebody did the footwork, and because I know, pretty much a lot of the fire guys, I know, they're not doing any footwork on this other than the watch on YouTube, you know, so there is a bit of that inbred ness to it as well, we're, we're continually kicking this idea down the line, when at some point, someone's got to stop kicking it and say, Okay, what are we doing here? What is this? You know, like, why are we washing the wheels of this fire apparatus? Every time it comes in the bay? Why did we ever do that? Do we still need to do that, you know, so there's that that part to it. But that takes strong courageous leaders to do that, because they have to be the one that stand up and take the punches, and say, You're gonna beat me up, you know, I'm gonna get beat up this year on the budget, I'm gonna get beat up by the all the line members, whatever. But the research shows that this is what is going to help. And, you know, down the line, we're progressing Lee or not, people will say that was the best thing we've ever done, because you made a change. And it helped. On the flip side, if it doesn't, you're trying to be progressive, you're trying to get better.



 James Geering 1:28:11

And you can check it off and go, that wasn't the right way.

 1:28:14

That wasn't it. You know,

 James Geering 1:28:15

I think the biggest problem that I see is, like I said, the 1930s through till, you know, arguably, almost a turn of the century. The the helmet, for example, hadn't changed very much. technology hasn't changed, and it was still working. But I think there's a point where everything right ceases to be as, as effective as something else. So it's not saying, Oh, that was always stupid. It's like, okay, we've had that for X amount of time. Now it's time to go for it. Like I said to Jeremy. You know, if you if you're all in with the helmet, then why aren't you wearing, you know, three quarter length boots and a woolen tunic and the airbag? That's tradition. Unless it's not, because you realize you were getting burned. So you create a bunker gear you would searching scorching your lungs and dyin of emphysema. So you created the air pack. It's okay, the people, the heroes ahead of us that, you know, suck smoke through their beards and mustaches. Absolutely phenomenal. But then we saw those people dying, and we weren't able to get as close to some of the victims. And obviously, you know, our fires are so different now. But it's not saying Oh, you were wrong. It's just like drawing in line in the sand Maga. And that worked from 19 this to 2000 on this, and then we move forward. And it's the same with the mental health.

 1:29:34

Right? Well, there's a reason why people aren't commuting in a Model T.

 James Geering 1:29:37

Yeah, exactly. And then the Navy SEALs don't wear it in helmets, right? You know, would they want to go into Afghanistan with no nods? And no, you know, no. ballistic protection or anything else? Just you know, World War Two trench uniform. Now? Of course they wouldn't. So, but it's the same, like you said with even the workweek.

 1:29:53

It's a prevailing ideal, really, is that aversion to change? And it's a human condition. Yeah. So it's not It's not anything that the fire department has on lockdown. It's just the human condition. But again, it's it to me, it's a leadership issue, it's a, we have to get trained people, to be the leader to be the one that has the courage to do it. And we have to start now because we're really behind. And we have to make changes, aside from that, to to bring in people that will affect those those changes, too. And we have to do that by accepting that generations are

different than us. And they always have been, every generation is different, and that we need them so that we're going to have to meet them halfway, at least. And then anything that's a safety issue needs to be fixed immediately.

J

James Geering 1:30:48

Wave in the romanticization of previous generations, I believe, like everyone else, World War two greatest generation in the world, and they came back ticker tape, parades rolled up their sleeves, and they rebuilt America. And then you do 100 Plus episodes, and usually granddad or sometimes dad was a world war two veteran, and then you're like, oh, I don't think these veterans actually did very well at all. Number of granddad's that were drunks that were abusive, that whatever. And again, not criticizing the individual, this unaddressed trauma that filtered through and it became a generational trauma. You look back and like they were the greatest generation, there's not removing that at all. But there was at a cost, that they came back to an environment that very few were able to process. So we look back and go, Oh, yeah, the smoky years, the warriors and everything. A lot of those men at that time would look fast forward and go, Man, I wish we had that back then I wouldn't have lost, you know, Steve, and John and whoever, you know, so this is the thing, we can't look back and be like, Oh, that's when it was the best. Like you said, every generation is different. And our firefighter paramedics in America are getting their frickin asses handed to them 24 hours a day. That was not what fire houses in 1960s looked like. It wasn't. So it's different. They had different dangers. They had different color loads in certain areas. The Bronx, Brooklyn, you know, in the war years, were getting their asses handed to them with physical work and fires. But the modern firefighters an unending 2448 hour, like you said,



1:32:24

they never see the station. They jump on the truck. As soon as it comes back shift change, they kick back out and they never see it again. They're eatin hospital sandwiches, bologna sandwiches, Smuckers, snack, and energy drinks for 24 hours, you know, their pancreas is screaming from all the god knows what that's in those drinks. They're they're turned into a zombie because now they're they want to sleep but they can't. They get off duty. And then two days later, they got to do it again.

J

James Geering 1:32:51

Well, you mentioned chapter nine, I think one of the most amazing and you talk about the courage to address change. I mean, obviously, the the helmet thing, you know, again, if people are going to dislike the conversation, then good. I mean, I've been in this position for a long time, but seven years ago, people didn't want to hear about the mental health. You know, people didn't want to hear about questioning the war on drugs, you know, and these things and now here we are seven years, psychedelics, all these things are suddenly a big part of the conversation CBD seven years ago, oh, it's weed. Here we are now. So but you get a good fucking kick in at the beginning, you know? So. But anyway, my point being the mental health, vulnerability and courage in the storytelling these days is amazing. And you put that in your

book yourself. So walk me through your career, you know, where when you look back now, where that kind of began that kind of layering of trauma? And then, you know, where was the darkest place that took you to? And then how were you able to navigate out of that?



1:33:56

Well, you know, when you first at least, you know, 16 years ago, for me when I first got hired, PTSD was not I didn't even really know what that was, you know, that's not even on your mind. And it definitely wasn't when you got hired, there was no class on it. There was no Hey, watch out for these things. Now, you know, so you're, you're younger, you're looking for adrenaline, you know, you're adrenaline junkie, a lot of I mean, let's face a lot of firemen are nuts. You know, that's what makes them so fun. And so the ones running into a burning building and doing all this stuff, right? So you know, we're looking for adrenaline, we're, you know, the brotherhood and all that. And I think it's not till later when you're a little, everyone's different. So it might affect someone sooner or later. For me, it was about the 10 year mark. You know, I wasn't thinking about that at all. I had my truths, right that I didn't start I didn't make this mess. I'm only here to fix it. You know, it's one of the truths that we tell ourselves. It's not mine. Emergency, I'm just here to fix it, you know, I can do as good, you know, I didn't have a lot of guilt or anything that like there wasn't calls where I was like, Man, I killed that person, you know, I, I did this this was because I didn't follow the protocol. We have very strong crews in Boca, we're very good medical care, and we watch out for each other. So, I mean, it would have to be pretty bad if all of us miss something. So you know what I mean, if there wasn't a lot of reason for me to say to be guilty or have this this, you know, stress but the thing is have through vicarious you know, trauma and all that all these things that you're you're, we're holding this weight, you know, you're you have a certain size bucket for everyone is different. And for every time we see those things, we put something into that a pebble, whatever it is, sometimes it's a stone, sometimes it's a boulder. And at some point, it's filled. And most of the time, it's overfilled. And I didn't I didn't really understand that till it happened to me, you know, and, and I was in I was in a leadership role at the time, I was a captain at the time. So I ended up my career. And I just started to become angry. And I'm not an angry person, like, I'm half dead at this job because they're like, Dude, are you even alive right now. When I first got hired, funnily enough, I thought it was high, because I was so relaxed. But that's neither here nor there. But I started becoming aggressive kind of, I was, you know, snappy, like just unhappy and different. And finally, my wife was pulled me aside, she said, What's wrong with you? And you know, that, immediately you're defensive, like, what's wrong with me? What's wrong with you? You know, and at the time, I got a lot of stuff going on, we have two little kids, we, you know, they're one and three or four. And so I'm not sleeping at work, I'm not sleeping at home, not well. Luckily, we have a situation where my wife could be a stay at home mom, so she could try to let me sleep before shift, you know, I could put in earplugs and get sleep before I go on to duty because I'm responsible for people's lives. You know, so she worked really, but you know, there's fatigue is still there. So, you know, I'm thinking, life is tough right now. You know, we're dealing we got two little kids, we're trying to make ends meet, you know, we're, I got things going on at work, I'm trying to, you know, make my crew better. I'm trying, I'm trying to be better, you know, of course, I'm kind of on edge, but it'll go away. You know, this is just part of life. But it became apparent wasn't going away. And, and really, what what she taught me was that you have to be plugged in to know, right? She knew because she loves me, or she has a vested interest in me. So when I went off baseline, she knew what's wrong with you something is not right. And thankfully, I listened to her like the guard came down and I thought about and I said something is wrong sorry.

 1:38:20

My wife's gonna make fun of your sister when she's a very nice. So I had to come to terms, you know, with some stuff going on my life. And it was hard to do. Because, you know, you're thinking why can I deal with this? You know, I'm sorry.

 James Geering 1:38:47

This is the raw emotion that's behind these though. You don't need to apologize. I mean, this is this is the opposite of this fake stoicism where I'm fine this the moment we actually let that guard down. This is what's actually going on behind.

 1:39:01

Actually credit like this one. I got promoted captain. Everyone was like, dear God. I mean, it myself, but I take your time. So I had to do some soul searching, you know? And think to myself, Okay, what is it? You know, and she said, it's, you have PTSD. To her. It was clear. I mean, she's smart. She's got she's have, you know, I think two bachelor's degrees. So she's no dummy. So she knew what it was right away. And to me, I'm like PTSD, I've been on the department for 10 years. How do I have PTSD? You know, these guys are 30 years that and they're fine, you know? So I can't I can't be that. And then the more I thought about is like, you know what, it's true. I'm holding on to these things, you know, and it took a long time to figure out what it was and I think for everybody is different. Um, some sometimes it is like, it's a guilt that, you know, I did something wrong, I made that, you know, I could have done something better. But for me, it wasn't that at all. It wasn't guilt weirdly enough, like when I finally figured it out, she was gracious enough to work with me through this whole thing, because I was not fun to be around, you know? And, you know, just like most people do, when I was at work, I put on a happy face, because that's that was my role as an officer can't come in depressed. You can't come in and act and start crapping on people, you know, not if you want to get good work out of them. That is just not how it works. So when I finally figured it out, it was this guilt of being the one that was with someone when they died, and that their loved one. That's what was eating here. And it's, I don't know if I'm explaining it, right. But it's just, I don't know,

 James Geering 1:41:02

where you where you are. I know we talked about this before, you know, when we spoke a few weeks ago, but there's a I think, a misnomer, that what haunts us is the tragedy itself, the PERT, the mutilated person in the car, or the burned up body that we pull out. But to me, those aren't the things that I see and hear. I hear the voices of the loved ones screaming. Like I remember, it was a shooting in Anaheim at a park and escape. I was 15. And I went, I was the one that put the yellow sheet over him. And the moment I did, I mean this just chorus of whales, but the irony was that dark humor at the time was like, if I pull the sheet off, will they stop, and then I put it back on, they start and then you can have like a little jam session with this is I mean, totally, you know, inappropriate. But that was again, immediately me trying to find humor because it was so uncomfortable. Another one I had was doing, had a guy literally just drop dead in a kennel dropping his dog off. And he just had it ended up being a bleed. And

he just does the code went as well as any code have ever been. And he still died. And then my report I had to write and literally the family or where that couch is 10 feet away. And I'm there listening to them as they're being notified of the death and everything. That is why because and then you have that inability to save. And I've spoken about this a lot. As in 14 years in the fire service. I never had a code save. I know that I'm an anomaly, you are an



1:42:31

anomaly. So again, I mean, not that you save every code for far from it. But that is an anomaly.



James Geering 1:42:37

So So I've what I mean is I can understand how you feel because there's that what did I do wrong? And I look back and go, you know, I had the GI bleeds and the brain bleeds and you know, all these these deaths and had a lot of obviously pre code saves and other things. But it's that, like you said, I can think of one it was a I wasn't the lead medic, but it was a code. We got him back. We ended up putting the Pacer on my engineer who was the medic, the guy was complaining about the Pacer. So he turned it off. And I was like fuck, and I wasn't America at the time either. But I was wanting to be a medic, I was doing the studying. And the lady closed the doors. And then he tried to get the Pacer back on again last capture and that went into Yeah, to be fair. And so our faces were the last thing that dude ever saw. And do you think that haunts me? Absolutely. So I know exactly what you're talking about. Like



1:43:34

the pleading you can see it in their eyes. It's like a pleading, you know when they can't talk because their gurgling or their whatever you know is wrong with them. It's like something that is like haunting you know, but in the book again I talked about it's not about the seeing it it's about the feeling and it's about the smell it's about the you know all the senses you take the those things in and that's the memory of it. It's not just that you saw it because some some people like I saw the you know this picture or whatever on on the computer. Sorry, buddy. That ain't nothing like when you're when you're in it and you have it on you. And you feel it. You know, I had



James Geering 1:44:21

a drunk driver. It's three gay women and she was there. She came off the side of the freeway rolled the car. One was crushed immediately in the car. I worked the one who was ejected and the other one and now she was a jet she must have been injected as well. Driver she was fine. And sobbing and everything and then like you said while they're working with her I was the lone guy responding to this woman who was staring at me pleading gurgling and I watched it die. You know and it's just yeah, and it's you can't you can't describe that the smell of you know the dust from the airbags the king Pat troll, you know, I mean all That's the sound of the traffic that way in the background, you know, the first one that you saw that was crushed into the fucking

wheel well, will the foot? Well, I mean, that's, that's a fun McCobb and cyclist pedia of horrors that first responders around the world, like you said shoulder so that that community doesn't have to see it right?

 1:45:23

We got to give these people the tools to deal with it. You know, and I mean, that's really the, I would say, the main push of your podcast and getting away from the stigma of being able to share, you know, unfortunately, I'll be the first one to start crying like an idiot now, but

 James Geering 1:45:46

that's the thing. I mean, if I mean, there's so many people that have cried on this podcast, you know, I mean, I, I wish if I if it was reversed, and I was there, and I was talking, I mean, I that's a perfect example. Like yesterday was my son's birthday, I made a collage for social media of, you know, from birth to where he is now at 16. And I was sobbing uncontrollably. So I have it, you know, this is how human beings are. And sometimes we, we cry because we're proud and we miss those days. And you know, we realize that two years from now our kids going to be off to college, or we're crying because we're remembering something horrible, or we're grieving a divorce or whatever it is, but that's what fucking people do. You know, and it's this facade of masculinity, this facade of stoicism, when applied inappropriately is what's putting so many of our men or women in the ground.

 1:46:36

Right, yeah. And in a kind of a saying about that for leadership is where you have to have the confidence and courage to be honest and vulnerable. And that's exactly what it takes confidence and courage to be able to do that. Because when you're able to be vulnerable, you're not worried about what's coming back. If you have that competence, right? If someone doesn't like it, oh, well, I'm confident myself, I feel I have the courage to show it. Right. And that courage is is more is about you, right that you have it but it's more about for that other person to to show that they can have it.

 James Geering 1:47:20

Yeah, well, one thing I always point to, because I mean, you know, we're I'm older than you, but we're similar, you know, times, you know, we were raised on a lot of these facades of masculinity. I mean, masculinity is is an important thing. And I'm when people say toxic masculinity, I think of it as how men are told, a man is 2030 Yeah, that's toxic. You know, be holding a door isn't toxic, this has been kind, whatever your agenda, but you look at bandit brothers, some, arguably some of the most heroic warriors America has ever known. And watch the real man of Easy Company talking at the beginning and the end of each episode, they are in tears. That's, that's so you, you're not a pussy when you fucking cry. That's what real men and real women do. Now you get a paper cut, you burst into tears, maybe you need to do a little soul searching. But you know, if you're talking about things, you know, or even if you're crying for something like a paper cut, then you probably have got stuff going on, that you

haven't addressed. But this is you know, when we're born, we cry, this is a normal natural human emotion and the fact that we're told to suppress it. And then you have a profession where we're so good at putting on the mask of you know, of, I'm doing okay, because as you said, you can't walk into a fire station, or a full arrest, or a structure fire and be like, Oh, my God, you know, you have to have this.



1:48:41

We're gonna put it away. Exactly. That's, that's the



James Geering 1:48:45

heart of the yin and yang. But then after, you have to give yourself the kindness and compassion that you give to so many other people in uniform. Yeah,



1:48:54

that's the self care side. Now we have to figure out what that is for you, you know, to be able to deal with those things. Because you can't. And I tell I tell this to like my younger firemen. You can't go through the five stages of death for every every one that you see is impossible. You cannot do that you will not make it. So there will be repressed feelings. But you have to do self care, more than enough to deal with with those things. I used to think that the firehouse was kind of like a yin and yang, right where there had to be like, for all the bad stuff, there had to be just enough good stuff, right to overcome it. So if you know your whatever, it's hard times the fire is hard calls. Training was hard. All these things are hard, like it's not fun, right? You have to have enough fun stuff on the other side, like we're gonna play pickleball together. We're going to On our off duty day, we're gonna go do some fun escape from the room or some I don't know, go Gator hunting. We've done before. Florida man that you know, so, but I've come to realize that it's not a yin and yang, there has to be more good. It cannot be there is no balance there, it's not balanced, or good to overcome the bad.



James Geering 1:50:22

I agree with you 100%. So I didn't to step over you then. But then when I think and this is after I transitioned out, so I've got to look at this from the outside looking in. But then I think of going back to Sicilian upbringing, you know, the good firehouse to Anaheim, for example, we always had so many meals around the firehouse table that was so healing, and then you take that a perfect analogy that you just gave. But now the crews aren't allowed to eat eat around each other because of COVID. And you all got to wear masks. So you can't see facial expressions, and you can't play sports together at the moment, you've just destroyed the good part of your analogy, then. And all you've left as the bad and you've added extra stress. And you know, like I had la firefighter that was seeing a lot of deaths from COVID. So you've got that that dark side has now doubled. And you've you've halved the good side coping mechanism.



1:51:13

Yeah. And that's, that's where that leadership is so important. So I keep harping on that, you know, in and hopefully having the, the privilege of having a healthy fire house before that takes place. Because then you have an advantage in dealing with those situations. If not, you still got to do it. You know, you still got to make make your way through it. And, and really, that comes down to empathy. All of it. I talked about that a lot in the book, understanding and empathy and for a leader to show it to but to also understand it from those that are above you, because I you know, we all went through it, those that were, you know, in career positions, whatever they may be fire department, police, whatever it is. We just went through that, right. So for me, we got those same things. I'm in a leadership role over the fire department. I'm trying to keep my crew healthy in this time where people are trying to tear each other apart. We're getting memos that are telling us we can't shake hands. We can't have We can't sit at the same table together. We have to stay in our bunks. Right? When you read this. It is total nonsense. Literally. I mean, that it's impossible for that to happen at a firehouse. Yeah, we're cooking. We're in the truck together. We're not responding in separate suppression apparatus to, to the fire to the what car accident to the to. Right. It's that's not possible. Right. So how do you lead in that situation? Right? Well, you have to show your firemen that to have empathy for those that are making those rules, right? The world was going crazy. How do we know there was direction lines on the floor at Publix? Or at the grocery store? You could only go this way. If you went this way down the aisle. You don't get COVID Apparently, right. That's when we the collective has lost it. Right? We're making our way through this this new scary world. Well, so is everyone else, right? So as admin, so is their bosses, right? So you have to show them listen, look, admin is getting these directives from from the city, right? The city also has what garbageman they have street cleaners, they have whoever, right? The they work at the water utilities plant, they work at XYZ. All of them have to wear masks at their office, they can easily eat away from each other. Right? They can do all these things. It's no problem. This is just a directive to everybody. They don't understand what we do. Right? So when they tell admin you have to do this or will fire you that's that's the new policy admin has to then send that down the chain. Right? Try to, to educate them on that's not really what they do there. But we're, you know, we'll direct that message. So we have to have empathy for that and to understand what that is right at the same time that now on the city side, what was social media doing at that time? If they caught someone without a mask? heresy, right. So the city is thinking we if we get one of our firemen right there out here out about someone walks into a firehouse and sees these guys at a table with no mask on it. It'll make national maybe international news. That's what they're thinking. Right. So as a leader, you have to think like everybody, you have to think like your bosses. You have to think like their bosses and their bosses, the community you have to think like your firemen and you have To show them that, how we're gonna get through this, and to have some empathy for it all. And sometimes you have to break some rules, you know, I did. I won't say which ones. But but that's just how it works. Sometimes, you know, for the better good, because if you do do certain things that could get somebody hurt. And I think, and I believe in my heart, some of those things would have hurt more than it would have helped. But at the same time, you have to understand why. And you have to help your firemen understand why. And you have to help them to understand how to respect you, and how to respect those that are above you, otherwise, you'll get nowhere.

J

James Geering 1:55:45

I love that way of thinking as well, especially with the word empathy, because it's become more and more apparent to me, and we don't really think about this, you know, in a normal conversation that when we focus, for example, on mental health, that goes all the way up the



chain, just because you're a millionaire, or the President of the United States doesn't mean that you're, you know, in great mental health. And as you know, as I pointed out, you're the head of Purdue, and you're creating Oxycontin, and you're sleeping at night, and you're worried about your money knowing that 10s of 1000s people are dying. Arguably, that's a mental health issue, too. So the way that we allow that to continue is we we call them they, and we call us, us. And we go to each side of the field, and we get in our ditches and we throw graves at each other. But by creating empathy, and as many of people in between those two, that still are of sound mind, the more collective us becomes, the more chance you have of solving the problem. But the most destructive thing that I've seen and you know, unions are perfect example is, you know, it's you know, as admin, it's them as them as them. I'm not picking on humans, but just you know, that's usually how the conversation goes. And you end up with what I've seen in my career sometimes where a simple contract negotiation takes two years, for a roomful of fucking grownups to make a decision on X, Y, and Zed. We're at impasse in your contract, like a fucking kindergarten when little Johnny wants to play with Sarah's ball. And she won't learn. It's fucking embarrassing. So the more that as you said, the empathy, the more we realize and acknowledge, yes, you know, you have these challenges, we have these challenges. Let's meet in the middle, then I think it's a beautiful aspect.



1:57:34

And that's the humility part to where you have to be able to say, okay, it was wrong. All right, call a spade a spade it is this. That was your right. And I was wrong. You know, and really, people don't understand that you get more respect that way. You really do. It's not the other way around. It's not doubling down. On stupidity. No one respects that. No, that's stupid. So it's, it's coming to center, right? It's using that empathy, but it's also being able to have enough confidence and humility to do either say, you're right, I'm wrong on both sides. Okay, yeah, that didn't work. Obviously didn't work. Let's distance ourselves from that method. Try a new one. And then that goes into power empowerment. Right? Trust and empowerment, where you could go to someone and say, You're good at that, tell me how to do it better. Show me how to do it better. I mean, I do that all the time. At work, I'm not the best at everything. By far, I'm definitely not the strongest, right, but I go to someone that is, if I want great, you know, advice on the economy. I'll go to Warren Buffett, you know, I'm not gonna go to a homeless guy. You know, type thing, no know, where to get good advice, you know, no matter how great you are, and you have to use that to your advantage. And as a leader, what that means is, you have to know the strengths and weaknesses of your employees and then use them right, for whatever they are. And most, I'm not the strongest, I just know who is and then I trust them to do it. And then whatever their weaknesses, if I have that same weakness, I'm gonna say let's do this together, and we'll make ourselves better or I'll do I'll fix me first and then go to them and say, Hey, let's do this together. But that's really what span of control is when you see that in in like a book, right? And an officer book five to seven, you know, some some officer, I don't know 1920 Was the span of control is five to seven people, you know, tracks his pipe and and the in the smoking chair in front of all library books. Right? But, but no one really understands why it's just like we pulled that out of nowhere. I'll tell you why. Okay, because it's hard to know, to really know more than five to seven people. That's why. And if you're going to lead somebody, or a group of people, you better know them very well. their strengths, their weaknesses, their their history, their upbringing, what makes them tick, what makes them stop, right? That's why it's five to seven, not because of delegation power, you can delegate an army, it's not about that about the numbers, it's about knowing them to be able to lead them. That's what it means.

And then you limit your group to that amount, so that they can each have five to seven people that they really know. And then they can trust and empower to do things. And that's how you have a healthy department. That's how you have a healthy crew.

J James Geering 2:00:53

Yeah, I mean, humility is huge amounts of trust and power. You know, I look at the good leaders in my career, versus the poor ones. And, you know, I know that term micromanaging is kind of overused, but it's true. Like I know, people, and it was always fragile egos. They knew they didn't know what they're talking about, especially my last place that, you know, for a good reason that fire prevention was so good, they never really had any fires. So when it came to understanding the potential threats, they were just, I mean, just clueless. But the ego was so fragile, they wouldn't empower a lot of the good firefighter, especially that came from different departments that didn't even they'd have fire chiefs come to, you know, to run their department. And when they realized that they were actually telling them, this is what we need to do, they would fire him. We don't want to do that, you know, we're already wigger we don't even talk about target hazards and terrorism and stuff. So,

o 2:01:44

when I see a micromanager, I see someone scared. That's what they are there. They're scared. Because they're out of their, their element there, they're not smart enough, they're not talented enough, they're not skilled enough usually to be in that position. So what they do to make up for that is they try to control everything that they can, so they can push things into the the only way they know how to do something. If I make you do it exactly this way, I know that way works. I don't know, pretty much anything else. I just know, this way works, I'm gonna force you to do that. So I know that I can try to be successful. So that's what, that's what I see. When I see a micromanager. Someone's scared someone that's out of their element. That's not That's not ready.

J James Geering 2:02:24

Yep. Yeah, I know, Anaheim. For a perfect example, they trained us really well in the academy. And then they had the bar set extremely high, they would get rid of usually 2020, about 25% of us would get cut. By the time it got to the end, it wasn't to deliberately cut it was just, that's roughly how many people wouldn't be able to make the cut. And then that's the end of your first year. And then you go through, but people have been through that pipeline, and now engineers and captains and VCs, and it would be a case of because we were so well trained. And we'd gone through this crucible, you know, the, the captain would turn around and say, Alright, lay the bundles. That's an entire orchestrated evolution, but that's all you want. And the BC the good ones would be like, you know, my, my captain Terry, that was on the truck, you know, what do you need? Okay, go over there and take the roof. And it was it sort of needs to be said, none of this radio chatter, no monologue. But conversely, that micromanager saw in the last place, you know, like you said, this is how you do it, because I read it in the history book 12 years ago. And you know, it's just now you're not allowing these professionals to actually do their job. And so that creates terrible morale. And then as the staff



2:03:37

morale and it stops everyone from knowing their job, you know, it stops you from learning. You're not going to learn anything new if you force everyone to do it your way. I mean, most of the things that I've learned that I employ, I didn't I didn't make up. I learned it from somebody else. I let them do their thing. And then I was like, well, that that worked good. Okay. I'm going to start doing that from now on. And I'll tell them like, Dude, you, you nailed it, man, that's awesome. I'm going to do it from that way from now on, but you'll never know if you just don't let allow people to do their thing. Everyone is at the fire department for a reason. Right from from the chief to the guy that just got hired. They're there for a reason. They pass tests, they're smart enough to be there, they got something to add. So get over yourself and see what it is that they they're bringing to the table and everyone really in the best system should know everyone else's job. You know, as a step up, we call step up. So someone that can fulfill the role of a promoted position above them. That makes the best firefighter because you know what it's like to be in that role at that point. So if you're a driver and you step up for the day to become a captain, there's a vacancy. All of a sudden, hey, things are looking a little different. Now I know why he'd like me to park here. Now I know I, you know, XYZ, whatever. And the same thing all the way up the chain and all the way back down the chain. If we can open that door instead of close it with micromanagement, we can empower people to do these things, that it's an investment that the return will be amazing, not just morale, because now people can do what they're trained to do and feel good about the product that they've created. But they'll have empathy for those positions above and below them, they'll see what it really is like, right that, okay, you're not evil. You're just trying to get the job done with what you have, you know, and now I understand that, and, and then, when that's communicated with others, you know, now now we have a family, constantly, constantly look at the fire department, as a family, we're a family, like it or not, you know. And every family, there's some family members that you don't really like that much. And there's some that you love, but they're all your family. So get over it, and get along and figure it out. Because they're your family for the next 30 years, at least usually, you know, hopefully, if you want to have your career, extend that long, or whatever it is. And enjoy it. Enjoy the ride, you know, and don't burn bridges. You don't have the luxury to do that. This is like a world where you every show is some stupid revenge show. Right on TV, everything is tell that guy off and I told him off and I'm the better guy and all this crap. Forget that junk. That is total stupidity. For the weak minded



James Geering 2:06:37

me when you go in and there's a bar that's struggling and I wouldn't, I'm like you need to fuck it clean the kitchen. Yeah. Everything was successful. on steroids is one beat away from a heart attack. Just shout out you. Alright, got it.



2:06:53

But I'm going in the firehouse, you don't have that luxury to burn any bridges. Okay, in fact, you better become a build a bridge builder. Instead, even if no one's not building their side to you, you still gotta make it to them, especially in a leadership role. So you know, get over it, get over yourself, figure it out. But you know, it's all about about that crew, if if you have a crew that you know, leaves the fire station with a smile, the amount of work and what they'll be able to accomplish, it'll be second to none. I don't care how skilled or not they are, you could

have the most skilled fireman there ever was most skilled police officer, most skilled nurse, most skilled dispatcher, but if they hate their job, they're gonna suck at it, they're gonna be terrible. I'd much rather have day one probie with the best attitude knows not a thing, then the 30 year vet knows everything with a crappy attitude. Hands down?

J

James Geering 2:07:52

Well, I mean, one truth, through most of my career is, arguably the best firefighters I've ever worked with have been in the most brutal stations as far as the workload. And I think when I look back, there was the least opportunity to micromanage those crews, because they were just always out working. And so not only were they getting the reps and becoming better, and really having to lean on each other, because they were tired, and they were seeing some really horrible shit. But you know, the quiet stations is when you get the chef wars and all that stuff, or the chief could show up at these stations I'm talking about, show up all you want, we're not going to fucking be there. You can metal and get your check out to see if we use it. Maybe not, those PCs that were actually assigned in those stations would show up would take holes, you know, would do I mean, it's the same kind of human. So again, the people that will the wall, the people that are truly there that have that service drive and burning inside them that truly care about the family that is, you know, a lot of times the headquarters station or whatever it is, you know, that's the same kind of human and if you watch if they're well trained, and you empower them to do their job, it's a very hands off leadership approach.

o

2:09:07

Yep. I like in leadership too. Because I'm male to like a father, you know, and fathers have to keep authority. You're a father. But at the same time, you're a servant. I mean, Mike isn't make my lunch today before I brought him to me here. You know, I'm serving them. You know that. And I want them to succeed. And I know them, I know what they need. I know what they don't need, you know, and not to belittle firemen, because they're not children. I'm just saying that idea of servitude of why we're doing that is what needs to take place at a station level if we're going to succeed in modern times as a fire department or pretty much anywhere. I mean, servant leadership is not my idea. I didn't make it up. But that's how we get forward. That's we have to shun. Unfortunately, what society is telling us. Leadership is and realize that's not it. What it is, is servant leadership, it's leadership where those that are trying to lead to be in charge, put the crew first in front of everything. And it takes a lot of hard work. And it takes a lot of sacrifice and self control, and humility. Those things for me.

J

James Geering 2:10:37

Yeah, you apply those labels to the last two presidents, we've had humility, selfless service, etc. Right, you know, question that I mean, it's not it's not a politic political statement. It's just simply without See, we used to look as a leader, you know, and even there, so you

o

2:10:53

want to get behind someone that has those qualities, you look at that person and say, I want to be that that's how you know we're what a true leader is if you look at the people above you

be that that's how you know, we're what a true leader is, if you look at the people above you, right, and whoever that is, it could be your captain, it could be a lieutenant or battalion chief or sergeant, whatever your your hierarchy is, all the way up. When you look at those people, it's not about where you want to be. It's but who you want to be like, Yeah, I'd like to be the chief one day, that's different. I'm saying I want to be him. Yeah, that's who a leader is the guy you want to be not the position that he's in?

**J** James Geering 2:11:30

I think as well, the man or woman that's, you know, gives you a write command on a fire. And you don't think twice about it. Yeah, that's the leader. Yep. The person that gives you a command and you end up doing the opposite, because they're going to get you killed. You know, and it can be like you said, a life or death event, or it can be a medical corps when they've got no compassion. I mean, I've had times where I've had to take a patient away from an engine crew, because the lieutenant was such a fucking asshole, and having to do damage control on a person who's calling 911 Because they're, they're ill so so yeah, I mean, like you said, the person in that rank and again, boulder brothers, you salute the rank, not the person, you know, you I couldn't give a shit if you're a chief if you're an asshole. Um, as you said, with the probie, I'd much rather be with a firefighter as a good person. Yeah. And

 2:12:15

that's it's hard to do. Especially a leadership role. When you're always trying to set an example. You're trying to be something you're trying to be happy, you're trying to make your way in life. All this crap doesn't go away. Because, you know, you're, you're a leader now, you know, and there's almost zero help to become one. There's barely any mentorship programs.

**J** James Geering 2:12:34

Well, you think about even the educational route. It's not teaching you how to lead No,

 2:12:38

no, it's the people skills. And it's one of those things where you take a test, congratulations, you're a leader now. And by the way, you can't mess up should be perfect. Otherwise, there's possible litigation. So, you know, we have to band together to mentor what to teach to how to lead and, and all these things. And it's not like one person, either everyone can be a leader. And something even even day one guy can be a leader in something, there's something he knows that we don't know. Or she knows that we don't know.

**J** James Geering 2:13:16

That's why I always hated there was always the kind of rules for a pro be posted. It'd be a lot of place and it was like, you know, no one cares which department you were on before or where you came from,



2:13:25

right? Yeah, I do. I do too. I want to know, I want to know what the heck you did. You're a



James Geering 2:13:29

carpenter. You're gonna know a lot more about exact building construction than I do as a farm boy yep, I can teach you about you know, wrestling sheep



2:13:38

diver is a really good with with construction, electrical, all that stuff. So if we're on you know, some call we're trying to hunt down some electrical Gremlin and I Palace's some things sparked or whatever, I turned him loose. I'm like, go ahead, man. This is your, your day. You tell me what you want.



James Geering 2:13:55

You got the pediatric nurses on your crew that comes to PD calls, I'm not going to be like, I'll get the IV when you know if I need to, I will. But I mean, ideally, he's done. 1000 of them is far more likely to be successful. And if my ego isn't fragile, I'd be like, Brad, this is this is you if you want to I'll do it if you if you don't but



2:14:12

100% My idea of success is being a radio jockey. That's it. I go my truck is truck five, truck five and route we get there truck five arrival, whatever, you know, radio traffic that's necessary in between and then truck five and service and I don't have to say a thing because they know what to do. They're professional firemen, and paramedics. They're grownups unless, you know there's something I see a safety thing or whatever, you know, why should I get in their way of doing what they know how to do and that comes from trust that comes from training that comes from knowing that I have their back all those things together. You know, and that's what makes you know, a healthy crew. That's what makes this job so great. And that is what can help us to shoulder all of the things that we shoulder that come along with it. Because there's no reason to lie to ourselves about this job, to me, it's the greatest in the best job of the world. And it's the worst job in the world.



James Geering 2:15:19

That's the dichotomy of it. When you're trying to question stuff and make it better, it's like, well, it's like I've had it, I mean, once in a blue moon, so suddenly, like, why don't you just go back to England, because that would be the bitch move. Fixing it. And staying is what a true patriot does,



2:15:35

making it the best job in the world as much as possible believe 99% of the time, if not more, is, is what we want. Because there's times where it's not the best job in the world, when you're holding someone, a baby, a child, you know, and they're, they've either died or will die, that I'm sorry, but it's not the best job in the world. But we need to make it every other moment than that.



James Geering 2:16:07

Well, people listening I'm sure they're, they're kind of, you know, bought in now, as far as you as a leader in the fire service. It's not like you've been, you know, trying to sell people on it. But I can tell that you just are your book, the modern fire officer of what made you read it, and then kind of give people an overview of what they'll find between the cover.



2:16:26

So I had the privilege of helping people, mentor them to become officers. On my shift, and even cross shifts, I have a good working relationship with my battalion chief and I'm more established as a captain and I'm at our like, kind of a center busy station, we have a lot of stuff going on in our zone, very busy. Regional Airport, over 100,000 flights a year major jets for most of that. We have water utility plants, FAU, which is a major college, linear University, another college, a major mall, we have old folks who don't we have high rise, we have residential, we have like commercial, we have some light industrial of trains that go through, we we got everything going through the zone. So there's a lot to learn there. And there's a lot to be I want to say scared of, but to respect. So it's kind of one of those things where you want to get signed up as a captain, you pretty much need to end up there and go through your paces on on looking at these hazards and understanding all those things. So I just found myself saying like the same spiels over and over again. And what I realized is, is it wasn't about mitigating hazards. It wasn't about like the target hazards as much as it was the hazards within the firehouse. Because we do a lot of training on on those things on on how to pull lines and how to put fire out on how to work with cardiac arrest on how to whatever you know, but we don't do really any training on how to deal with people on how to be empathetic and how to how to really get the right perspective on on what we're doing on and to keep a positive perspective. And I talked about that too. In the book a little bit, I call it constant perspective realignment, where you have to understand that you're actually doing pretty good, somebody's got it worse. So just be happy for what you have. It's a contentment thing. So I'm saying the same things over and over again to each one of the guys that I'm that I'm helping sign off or doing their final sign off on becoming an officer. And I realized that I said, Why not put this in a book? You know? And then make them buy it? And



James Geering 2:18:53

then I'll be rich



2:18:55

100? Err, about how much? No, so I figured out I'll write it all down. And and I thought, Well, who am I? You know, to write a book on the department for 15 years, it means nothing. No one I mean, I'm not on social media, because I don't feel that it brings any, like, value to my life. So I'm not on it. And so no one knows who the heck I am. I'm not, you know, anyone, anyone were recognized. So I thought like, I mean, who would even read it. But I said Why wait, you know, and actually John Cuomo finished his book that leadership refined by fire, and gave me a copy and he and I read it and he kind of inspired me to, to do mine. And so I did and I put all those things that I had learned, I still have much more to learn. Like I said, I didn't create or, you know, find leadership. I just I'm trying to use these things that in my experience that it worked that that help It my method might not be for everybody. But I think there's many, many truths in there that people can take from. And it's an easy read. It's it's not a, it's not a large book, I made it that way on purpose. I didn't fill it full of war stories. I just wanted it, I wanted to firemen to be able to pick that up and say, I could read this, you know, it's not 4000 pages,



James Geering 2:20:25

which is an important point, because as we talked about with the sleep deprived mind, it was only after I retired, that I really started to be able to read again, like properly read. So is mine is the same. Mine's almost like 12 short stories, or chapters. But that was a



2:20:40

that was pretty much the same size as your boat. Yeah.



James Geering 2:20:43

I think it's a great idea. Because, yeah, you know, a 300 page book is just as daunting to start a daddy suite. Yeah.



2:20:51

So I, my, my hope is that the many firemen that want to become officers that don't have a mentorship program that are thirsting for some kind of knowledge, some kind of advice would read this book, and gain something from it. And, you know, and make something better. And, hopefully, you know, when they respond to emergencies in their, in their town, in their city, it makes a difference. Because, you know, I've I've used 911 before, you know, for my family, and it's a big deal. You know, and I and I would hope that we remember that and that we continue to not only give a high level of service, but have fun doing it, you know, try to find the fun and all of it because it is fun that a lot of it can be a good time, like, believe me, you're gonna call at 3am for you know, an older lady that her smoke alarm has been beeping for two weeks. Am I excited about it?



James Geering 2:21:58



Getting the old heart rate up, right? Not really, you know,



2:22:01

getting woke up or whatever it may be. But listen, look around our house. Okay. Oh, I saw you did this. So, you know, how was that in your life? And oh, yeah, I did that, you know, you're connecting with someone you're making a positive what could be a negative it says storming in there like we don't do that. You know, I'm not whatever getting pissed off about it, making it a negative experiences make it a positive experience, it takes work. But when you continually to do that, you can have fun doing this always right. And, and the idea of the book is that is how to create that, that atmosphere, that situation, how to make yourself the right person. Or better, because we can all get better. And then how to extend that into the firehouse environment. And then how to deal with problems as they arise because they will and and they are extras to like the things that we showed or the PTSD, the different things that that is a truth. It's not at an F but a win. Right? So it's all those things kind of wrapped into one a little piece of advice for me to you that hopefully helps. And I hope it does. And, you know, I've had to read it a bunch of times, you know, I did everything on that book myself. I took the picture for the cover. I did all the artwork, whatever the blurb did everything except the editing I paid to a a lady online that's part of read, see whatever to, to edit it for me, so I care about that book. I read it like 100 times before I published it. And you know, every time I did, I was like, Man, I gotta get better. You know, but But what I'm getting at is it's a work in progress. Everything's a work in progress. Enjoy the ride. You know, it's, it's the climb, right?



James Geering 2:24:01

Well, I think, yeah, there's a lot of people that have written books on leadership, some phenomenal, some got a bugle on their shirt and decided that now they're going to teach everyone else how to be as awesome as them. But I think what's really endearing to me is hearing your story and hearing the humility and hearing it's not about you know, the tenets this follows Step A, B, and C and YouTube can be a great aid you're using not only your lived experience, but also the vulnerability and like you said, the mental health side of things. If ever there's a leadership quality at the moment, it's courageous vulnerability, you know, and owning your mistakes and having the humility to to trust people that you work with to like you said to do their job. So I think you know, it's, it's, this conversation has pulled me into even you know, liking the book even more, but um, and like you said with the social media thing, just so you know, it's it's a great tool, but It's not anywhere near as powerful as people think I can tell you now with, you know, a pseudo large following word of mouth is the best thing, right. And if it's a good book, other people will tell it and it is the other people will tell other people and, you know, it'll, it'll go that way,



2:25:13

it's been received very well, I'm very appreciative to many people that have read it and have reached out to me and, and they really enjoyed it. And, and I'll say that, if you have read it, please leave me review. Whatever you feel is appropriate. And I read all of them, like too much.



**J** James Geering 2:25:37  
You definitely don't use social media.

**i** 2:25:40  
Social media, because I'm too emotional for that crap, you know, drives me nuts. But, but yeah, it's, you know, please, please leave a review. I hope you enjoy it, and hope it brings you some nugget, you know, that helps you and your career. That's my truth. I'm not perfect. I try to do those things that are in there, as best as I can. But life has a funny way of, you know, getting in the way here and there. It is what it is enjoy the ride, right?

**J** James Geering 2:26:15  
So where can people find the book?

**i** 2:26:18  
It's pretty much I think, on almost all major like retailers, Amazon, pretty much like I think everyone has Amazon has taken over the world, you can find it there. It's it's you can find it in Barnes and Nobles, you can find it on, I think in an audio form on almost any platform, I think too. But pretty much if you if you go to my website, modern fire officer.com There's plenty of links to different things for it on there. It's on Amazon, Barnes and Noble that all the major players, it'd be hard not to find it essentially view. And that thankfully, that's so easy now to be able to publish a book like that. It's kind of like taking the mysticism away. And you can, you know, get these get your voice out there. So just like this forum, you know, podcast, long form conversation. It's such like, a nice part of of, you know, modern publication. Absolutely. Did you self publish? self published? Yeah. Yeah. So as a venture?

**J** James Geering 2:27:21  
Yeah. Did you go through Amazon? KDP? Or, yeah, I

**i** 2:27:23  
went through KDP. Okay, because I,

**J** James Geering 2:27:25  
Barnes and Noble doesn't stop mind if you do the one word because you have the one where you're exclusive. Amazon and you did the other one way more open. Okay. Yeah, that's what I'm gonna have to switch to that. Because I think the initial way that I had is kind of dwindled down now. And it would just be kind of cool to go into a bookshop and be like, yes, my book

and take a lot of selfies and put on Instagram. All right, well, speaking of books, modern fire officer as yours. Are there any books that you love to recommend outside your own? It can be related to our discussion today, or completely unrelated.

 2:27:59

Okay. I would say, like a fire related book, I really enjoyed. I mean, I'm biased, obviously. But my, my buddy, John Cuomo, his book leadership refined by fire. I would say that that is like a coming of age of leadership is how I would describe that his kind of journey through it and what he learned and but it's really big brain reading, like he goes into different resources, like Tolstoy and Nietzsche and talks about, you know, Marcus Aurelius is writing. So it's a read, but it's worth the read. For Fire Department related, I would say, if you just want a book for now, and you're not scared of reading, I would go with Ray Dalio, the changing world order that is a great book. He really outlines societal cycles and where we are in it now and how that affects the economy and different things that we deal with day to day if you want to have a little bit more knowledge of the world around you. That's a great book. I'm reading that right now. Um, we're also reading Granite Mountain right now.

 James Geering 2:29:15

Oh, yeah. Brenda, Madonna.

 2:29:15

Yeah, that's that's good. And then, I mean, I got it. I'm kind of like a bookworm. The guys that work make fun of me all the time because I'm constantly reading I think I'm a wacko if you want like a good timepiece type book Shogun from James Cavell, that's a great

 James Geering 2:29:36

that's one of my favorite books ever. I love that. Isn't that amazing? Yeah.

 2:29:39

If you want like a good kind of more new new science, type, time travel, multiverse, dark matter is one of my favorites. That's a great book. I mean, my wife and I, we, we read a lot. I think we're in like this weird competition that we don't talk About. But shows are so dumb anymore. You know, it's nicer to read to me like, they haven't even they don't even call it art anymore. It's just called content. It's just filler.

 James Geering 2:30:13

Well, especially now with chat GBT, you can literally ask right to make my movie shit for



2:30:17

my next book The modern officer to I won't do that, I promise.



James Geering 2:30:24

Well, that's me talking about the medium. That's why my second book, I'm writing a novel, but the goal is to make it into a show or a film. Because that's how you access people and try and put something where when they hit stop, hopefully they walk away with a bunch of seeds sown on all kinds of things. Because yeah, I mean, how many times and you're talking about millions of dollars in the budget and you're like, that was fucking or perfect circle Backdraft to write you ever watch that. And I had chief Steve chick on the show who was behind Chicago Fire amazing guy, but I asked him about that too. And he just like no comment. But because he was somewhat affiliated that slightly but yeah, I mean, the thing. You just destroyed the potential of a beautiful Fire Service story by turning it into a god awful soap



2:31:12

operas. Everything is just content. Now it's filler, and they don't even act like it's anything else. And you can tell it's junk food.



James Geering 2:31:19

Yeah, exactly. Junk food for the mind. All right, well, then what about we were just talking about films? What about movies and documentaries, any that you do like



2:31:28

for documentaries? I'm really into like the search and rescue kind of stuff, because I did like kind of hazmat and special apps earlier in my career. So the Chilean minor documentary, I think it I want to say it's PBS but I don't know if it's PBS. It's a documentary that goes through what they did to get those Chilean miners out. And it is incredible. They just released a few documentaries, I think ones on prime and also shows that dramatize it. But the the soccer players kids in Thailand, the Thai cave rescue, man, they're I think Disney did a show prime did a show but there's also another I wish I knew the medium that did the documentary, it is worth the watch. And it's also worth watching the dramatic zation of the of that rescue. Yeah, it's it's if you're like me bring some tissues.



James Geering 2:32:40

That was a British firefight. And it was part.



2:33:17

11 2:32:42

Yeah, I know. And yeah, that what a talk about having the right thing at the right moment. There's like no one else that could do this,

J James Geering 2:32:51

literally. Well, I reached out to him and I got very abrasive response. But this was somewhat early on in the podcast somewhat, somewhat soon as

2:33:00

I might have been being, I think it invaded with

J James Geering 2:33:03

or he was dealing with the dramatic, so I want to soak around and see if I can find him. It'd be

2:33:09

amazing. Yeah. Talk to him about that's crazy.

J James Geering 2:33:12

Absolutely.

2:33:14

What else? deepest breath. Just God, I'm watching. My wife watched it. She tells me you have to watch this. It's insane.

J James Geering 2:33:23

But I can't tell you anything about it. Yeah.

2:33:27

I'm watching it. I won't say anything to ruin it. But I'm thinking to myself. What is going on here? Like, could you imagine being one of the paramedics are that you're going into it knowing what you're doing every time? Exactly. It's insane. Yeah, it's crazy.



**J** James Geering 2:33:42

Did you ever watch The Alpinist? Yeah, I mean movie. Yeah, it's

**i** 2:33:48

Yeah. Yeah, they're, they're very well done. Man for movies. I'm with Christopher Nolan fan. I gotta say, I mean, I love his movies. They're so smart. Interstellar I love I mean, Inception all

**J** James Geering 2:34:06

those are some joy tenant I just had this conversation with

**i** 2:34:09

you have a thing about 10 It is you have to be jam packed so much into those movies that if you are not like if you didn't do like a line of coke before and you're have like the most perfect concentration on the dialogue, you're gonna lose a lot. The best thing to do is when you watch that movie, you're thinking to yourself what just happened? It I mean, it's it's a it's a sight to see. Don't get me wrong. It's crazy the special effects and everything. But do yourself a favor and watch a YouTube video on what he actually did. And that's what someone's been watching again. Then you're like, oh my god, this is a work of art. This is insane. The scenes where he has them in reverse because there's a scene in there where he he rolls a pen on the desk and they talk about time either goes forward or back backwards, we always think in time movies that you're skipping, but in that movie showing you that it actually rolls forward or rolls backwards. So it's linear both ways. Okay? Right. So, in those scenes where they're one timeline, they're actually going forward linear one time, they are actually going backwards. Like in the fight scenes. You're literally watching them, right? If you watch those scenes on YouTube, where they put them together, and a split screen, it'll blow your mind. It's crazy what he was able to do in those movies. Yeah, that really made that movie for me. Looking back at at those,

**J** James Geering 2:35:37

I think the timing was what because it was literally I don't know if it was the same for other people out there. But for my wife and I, that was literally the first film that you could go to, right. Yeah. And watch after COVID. Florida, at least. So you know, you've been balled up and you've been exposed to Tiger King Alicia, it was just like you said, you know, it's like, you know, being being a baby coming out the womb and then finding yourself in a Hawaiian triathlon is

**i** 2:36:02

just too high. No, it was a funny story. I went saw that with my wife, too. And that happened. And it was, you know, it's like three and a half hours. And my wife has her limit, you know, so we're about an hour and a half in and I look over and she's looking at me, and, like, you can

pick me up after, she's like, I'm going home. I'll come back and get it she just straight left, you know, does watch the rest of the movie. I'm like, I knew her. I was like, if you want to go home, go ahead. She's like, I'm going home. I'll come back and get you. I was like, Okay, no problem.

**J** James Geering 2:36:38

Just remember, I think we pulled us in. So we were in gross, but I just remember at the end both looking at each other. Yeah. And she was like, What the fuck was that? We went yeah.

**i** 2:36:50

When it's it's but it's that's what that's art, though. Knew When did talk about it after? Yeah, exactly. You know, and what was that? We have to figure this out. We have to peel back the layers when there's layers to peel back. And then you're like, Well, this is this is pretty intense. Look what he was trying to say.

**J** James Geering 2:37:07

Yeah, yeah. And this is what I want with with what I'm doing is to do that, too. When I give you a perfect example, the movie Crash? Yeah, it wasn't just about a cop and racism and everything. You you actually watch it and I've watched that numerous times. And you see it. I mean, if ever there's a movie needed today, with all the hilarity and division watch crash, because it's not just a weight racist, white cop. You know, it's actually the nuances of everyone's human experience. So that you know, I love those movies. I just need to go back and maybe watch the YouTube

**i** 2:37:40

so I can understand of art has been hijacked. Oh, yeah. Cuz now you feel inadequate, correct. And bullshit, too. Yeah,

**J** James Geering 2:37:49

so All right. Well, then, Christopher Nolan. Speaking of great people, is there a person you'd recommend to come on this podcast as a guest to speak to the first responders, military and associated professionals of the world?

**i** 2:38:02

That's a good question. I would have to say again, John Cuomo is one of them. And he's he's

**J** James Geering 2:38:09

coming on. I think what he's writing a second book is PTSD. So when the

 2:38:14

legislature Yeah, so I think that's like a really good fit. My battalion chief is he's been in the fire department in the fire service a long time, like, since he was born. So we're gonna joke because he was like a kid when he got hired, you know, when they hired kid and kids, and I'm gonna make fun of them in the 50s. But he, he's very well versed in the fire department, he would know all about the history of our shift. Beautiful, what's his name? Scott Ward, Scott ward. So we'll make this happen. This is gonna have a smile on his face. He's been trying to get me to come over time cheap. And I keep saying, I like where I'm at have like romance that much to the chagrin, but he He's a good dude. And he's got a lot to say he's very smart with is definitely a good voice to spin some generations as well.

 James Geering 2:39:10

Perfect. Thank you. All right, within the last question, before we make sure everyone knows where to find you, even though it's not gonna be on social media. What do you do to decompress?

 2:39:20

So I have like a lot of hobbies. I'm not very good at maybe any one of them, per se, but I really enjoy. I mean, it's Florida. So when we actually do get surf, I'd love to go out and surf even even if it's there's barely anything out there. I'll just paddle out and enjoy the view. Really, just even if I'm alone, I just get to enjoy the water. It's mine. Or play music. I play guitar for a long time. I'm pretty good at that. And then I just pretty much learn drums and piano. That's, I'm learning that a lot more because that's my life. So Have cares is playing those things it's I think it's very good for your mind you know music in general but playing music is so good for your mind to help create better connections that makes any sense you know Miss synaptic level I'm not trying to get like No it does why not? I'm trying to say like I feel like I'm even smarter after I like if I before I did this interview I played piano because I feel like it it makes me like it makes the fog go away you know? So and then all the little like arts and crafts kind of stuff like that you know? That the shield Yeah, kind of

 James Geering 2:40:42


made me a leather shield with behind the shield on to put on my leather American helmet which I need to get because the problem is when you move fire departments like I did they they make you give the helmets back. Yeah, only Anaheim was able to secure you know, my bunker gear. So I still got my California helmet, but


 2:41:01


I just tried. I'm gonna like have a voracious appetite to do everything in anything like during COVID I just I learned how to bare slide. Actually, um, see you while it'd be rough. Oh, walk?





COVID I went I learned how to hang glide. Actually up near you while it'd be ranch. Oh, really? Yeah. I got my license doing that. Go like Gator hunting? That


 James Geering 2:41:21  
from a hang glider? Yeah.

 2:41:23  
Fully FWC. You can see that. Like anything. My buddy, one of my buddies at work, they hunt pythons in the Everglades. And I was like, Yeah, I'll go do that. My wife's like, You are insane. Why are you trying to do this, but I don't know if that's the spice of life just doing everything trying every I mean, I know. I'm not going to be good at everything. I'm not even close to it, but it's just still fun. You know, just to try it. And hopefully, you know, not get better and kill us. But it wouldn't be a cool story. You know what I mean? At least at the funeral that like the guy you know, he lived his life get killed by a Python. Yeah.

 James Geering 2:42:04  
A inches wide and 12 Yeah.

 2:42:07  
This thing still around me in the open casket? Yeah, I mean, that's that's my self care is like the little hobbies things like that. And doing that with my my boys trying to get them involved in having fun, like, you know, have them 3d print something like a new toy, have them tried to design it was me. We just like designed to a birdhouse. He wanted to make a birdhouse. So we did it together and CAD and then we've 3d printed it together and stuff like that. Just like to show them what I know. So I want them to be successful, you know, more than me?

 James Geering 2:42:38  
Does your mom get a kick out the fact that the kids are now doing 3d printing using the same kind of background that she did early on?

 2:42:47  
Yeah, yeah, she, my mom is like she, where I've learned a lot of this stuff is my for my parents, they did anything and everything. It was more out of a necessity, you know, to try to make ends meet. But I, they involve me in that. So I learned those things. But I mean, she's got this, like back room the size of this room that we're in. And I mean, any possible thing you can imagine doing is in there somewhere. Like if you wanted to do like make stained glass or

something, it's in there, if you wanted to do leather working, it's in there, if you wanted to make a dress, there's so many machines and textiles, I mean, anything that you could think of is in there. So she loves it. You know?

 James Geering 2:43:30

Brilliant. Well, you mentioned about not being on social media. So if people do want to reach out to you or learn more about you, where are the best places online,

 2:43:37

online, really the only places there is my website, modern fire officer.com It doesn't have the it's just modern fire officer.com. And there's a contact page on there that that actually goes to my actual email. So and I've already responded to a few people. There's a few people that asked me for, you know, some of our protocols and some of the things they heard me talk about on other podcasts that I got to them reach that reached out to me, which was great, like to be able to share some info. But yeah, I will respond to that, that, you know, it's that I'm not getting I'm not getting inundated with emails. I will respond to you if you'd like to reach out to me. And again, if you read my book you and you want to read leave a review. I'll definitely be reading that too. To my own detriment possibly try to be nice.

 James Geering 2:44:28

My friend Jason Casper is an author. He actually does a Instagram video of all the worst reviews you can think of is it review roulette? Yeah, just you know, pick up a new one and then read it and yeah, he's a pretty, pretty funny guy. But yeah, I mean, some of the nasty stuff

 2:44:44

that people write no, and the trolls are, they're out there looking.

 James Geering 2:44:48

They are indeed. Well, Jared, I want to say thank you so much. It's been an amazing conversation. I mean, we've been all over the place from you know, laughing about stuff in the fire service to your kind of powerful mental health story. One thing I didn't actually, before we close out, I never kind of pulled out from you. What was it that got you from that place your wife identified? You said she was a big part of your healing? What were the tools that you used to get away from that, you know, built up vicarious trauma and the anger that you were manifesting?

 2:45:18

First, first off, I was honest with myself, like, when I realized what it was, like I said, I have

PTSD. Like I have it. And it's okay, like, but then I also realized that if I have it, you know, what does that mean? I thought about it, like, then, you know, no one's gonna get away from this, this is something that the No, I also have to deal with being you know, a leader in the fire department, or just with my family in general, or just with anything. So the acceptance part is, it's kind of like the five stages of death a little bit, you know, where you have to accept it, you finally get to that point, but I had to kind of deal with some of those issues. Really, the biggest thing was was community was like, talking about it with with my wife, hopefully, I didn't put too much on her talking about it with people that I trusted the fire department, we didn't have, we have we had a CSM kind of system built in. But I wouldn't say it was robust. To be nice about that. We're working on a peer support team. Now that is much better.

 James Geering 2:46:27

I'm surprised you guys weren't more immersed in that with the Florida

 2:46:32

we're a little behind the ball, unfortunately. But we're we have a team that I'm trying to help. I'm not the coordinator or anything like that. I'm just trying to be a help and to be a peer support person that somebody could come to me if they want to hear me cry. That's like rule number one, don't don't cry, I guess I don't know. But for if you're the peer support person, I'm not sure how good I'm gonna be at this. But I'm trying to, you know, help the system, we didn't really have a robust system at the time, we had like a list of names, you could call and the some of the ones on there and like, you know, and that's okay, that it's not that they're not great or anything, it's just that that's not who I wanted to reach out to. So I reached out to the people that that I wanted to, that I could trust. And I had that luckily, I had that. Wish I could do that. And that with paired with, you know, with my wife helped me and under and listening to me and are standing me. And me being honest with her to where like if I was in that mode, I would tell her, I'm not feeling good today. And it's not, it's not because of you is because like I'm going through something it has to do with work, it has to do with something that I saw. I relived it this morning, and just I'm sorry, if I'm shorter for whatever it is like, okay, you know, and, you know, thankfully, we have a very strong relationship, you know, but but she's smart enough to know what that is. And I can't, and I don't think anyone should really burden their wives or spouses with every single thing you've ever gone through. It's not fair. But you have to be honest with them to let them know what you're going through and why. To a degree, you know, and hopefully they will respond by allowing certain outbursts or bad behavior to take place and a small amount. But she was she was a strength. And then, you know, peers, and just figuring out what it was. That was bothering me because there was about a year where like, I didn't know what it was, like, I kept trying to figure it out. And I couldn't figure it out. Because it was a weird to me a weird emotion to be guilty. overseeing some someone die. Because I'm not the person that should be with them. Like it's kind of a strange was a strange thing to me. But when it when it hit, it clicked. I was like, That's it.

 James Geering 2:48:58

But that shows huge empathy that you care that much about the person you lost, that you're even thinking about who they should have been with,



2:49:04

right? Because well, it's like that thing where they're like, staring at you, you know, those fleeting eyes and it's like, who am I? You know, really? And then think of like, who would I want to look at? It's not you not me?



James Geering 2:49:18

To look at this ugly mug.



2:49:20

I'm firemen looking at him. I want to look at my family, you know, I want to be around them when I die. Not that this guy you know, so I don't know, it was a weird thing for me. And but for everyone, it's going to be different. But once I figured that out, and you know, being honest with it, being open with it. I probably should have sought therapy. I didn't really know where to start. We didn't really have a program, you know, robust enough and and I was ill prepared. But being open about it, accepting it. And then leaning on that community my my wife and certain close friend That's, that's what helped me and then figuring it out, and then dealing with it and then understanding and then researching to like, Okay, I got to do self care, this is what takes this away, you know, and then communicating that with my wife, like, I need to do this. This is what makes me better. It's not like I'm just trying to get out, you know, watching the kids for a couple hours. Like, I'm not in a great place right now. You know, being being open and honest.



James Geering 2:50:29

Yeah, I mean, even last night, I, my wife's gone through some stuff the last few weeks, and then my son, you know, getting up to his birthday and everything. The fact that I was in tears more so than normal making that video and then last night, we were supposed to go see the GranTurismo film, right on his birthday. And I was like, can we go see it Tuesday? Like I am. I know me and I need to, I need to get some sleep.



2:50:53

Through the whole movie. Everyone's gonna be looking at what's wrong? Nothing sad or racing. But I'm thinking



James Geering 2:51:00

of Lightning McQueen. So Well, again, like I started saying before, it was an important segue though to to get your your toolbox that you found. It's been an amazing conversation. So I want to thank you for welcoming me here to your friend's studio and being so courageously vulnerable today and in the book. I mean, the book is amazing. So for everyone again, the modern fire officer, find it everywhere. But thank you so much.



2:51:26

Thank you, James.