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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,820

This episode is brought to you by Thorne and I have some incredible news for any of you

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00:00:03,820 --> 00:00:07,960

that are in the military, first responder or medical professions.

3

00:00:07,960 --> 00:00:15,860

In an effort to give back, Thorne is now offering you an ongoing 35% off each and every one

4

00:00:15,860 --> 00:00:19,780

of your purchases of their incredible nutritional solutions.

5

00:00:19,780 --> 00:00:27,280

Now Thorne is the official supplement of CrossFit, the UFC, the Mayo Clinic, the Human Performance

6

00:00:27,280 --> 00:00:31,480

Project and multiple special operations organizations.

7

00:00:31,480 --> 00:00:36,440

I myself have used them for several years and that is why I brought them on as a sponsor.

8

00:00:36,440 --> 00:00:42,080

Some of my favorite products they have are their Multivitamin Elite, their Whey Protein,

9

00:00:42,080 --> 00:00:45,840

the Super EPA and then most recently, Cynaquil.

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00:00:45,840 --> 00:00:50,120

As a firefighter, a stuntman and a martial artist, I've had my share of brain trauma

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00:00:50,120 --> 00:00:55,520

and sleep deprivation and Cynaquil is their latest brain health supplement.

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00:00:55,520 --> 00:01:02,640

Now to qualify for the 35% off, go to thorn.com, T-H-O-R-N-E dot com.

13

00:01:02,640 --> 00:01:05,460

Click on sign in and then create a new account.

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00:01:05,460 --> 00:01:09,800

You will see the opportunity to register as a first responder or member of military.

15

00:01:09,800 --> 00:01:14,680

When you click on that, it will take you through verification with GovX.

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00:01:14,680 --> 00:01:19,000

You'll simply choose a profession, provide one piece of documentation and then you are

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00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:20,920

verified for life.

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00:01:20,920 --> 00:01:26,640

From that point onwards, you will continue to receive 35% off through Thorn.

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00:01:26,640 --> 00:01:33,120

Now for those of you who don't qualify, there is still the 10% off using the code BTS10,

20

00:01:33,120 --> 00:01:36,120

Behind the Shield 10 for a one time purchase.

21

00:01:36,120 --> 00:01:41,780

Now to learn more about Thorn, go to episode 323 of the Behind the Shield podcast with

22

00:01:41,780 --> 00:01:45,760

Joel Titoro and Wes Barnett.

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00:01:45,760 --> 00:01:50,760

This episode is sponsored by Inside Tracker and what makes me smile is before I even started

24

00:01:50,760 --> 00:01:56,520

my podcast 7 years ago, when listening to other wellness conversations, Inside Tracker

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00:01:56,520 --> 00:02:00,680

was always the company they recommended for comprehensive blood work.

26

00:02:00,680 --> 00:02:07,360

Now in 2024, they have begun to offer a brand new first responder panel, which will cover

27

00:02:07,360 --> 00:02:13,360

nine biomarkers hitting several of the pillars of health that affect us in uniform.

28

00:02:13,360 --> 00:02:18,320

Stress, heart health, metabolism and gut health.

29

00:02:18,320 --> 00:02:24,200

After a very simple intake form, a blood draw, you will get the results sent to your computer,

30

00:02:24,200 --> 00:02:30,400

smartwatch, phone, not only detailing where you are on the scale from poor to optimized,

31

00:02:30,400 --> 00:02:34,520

but also tips on how you can improve each of these markers.

32

00:02:34,520 --> 00:02:40,740

Now this panel is usually \$310, but they are also offering first responders 30% off any

33

00:02:40,740 --> 00:02:42,600

of their blood panels.

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00:02:42,600 --> 00:02:47,360

So that brings this specific panel down to only \$217.

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00:02:47,360 --> 00:02:51,820

Now I myself went through their ultimate, which is their comprehensive blood work, which

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00:02:51,820 --> 00:02:57,160

also includes micronutrients, hormones and other areas of overall health.

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00:02:57,160 --> 00:03:02,320

And I have to say I was absolutely amazed at firstly how easy it was, but secondly,

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00:03:02,320 --> 00:03:07,560

the comprehensive information I got and the actionable information on how to improve each

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00:03:07,560 --> 00:03:09,560

of my own biomarkers.

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00:03:09,560 --> 00:03:14,060

Now as with all my sponsors, if you want to hear more about Inside Tracker, you can hear

41

00:03:14,060 --> 00:03:20,680

my conversation with senior sales executive Jonathan Levitt on episode 887 of the Behind

42

00:03:20,680 --> 00:03:22,200

the Shield podcast.

43

00:03:22,200 --> 00:03:27,880

So to sign up or simply learn more, go to [insidetracker.com](https://insidetracker.com) and for the first responder

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00:03:27,880 --> 00:03:34,120

panel, the easiest way is to Google Inside Tracker first responder panel.

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00:03:34,120 --> 00:03:39,920

This episode is sponsored by a company I've used for well over a decade and that is 511.

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00:03:39,920 --> 00:03:45,320

I wore their uniforms back in Anaheim, California and have used their products ever since.

47

00:03:45,320 --> 00:03:51,520

From their incredibly strong yet light footwear to their cut uniforms for both male and female

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00:03:51,520 --> 00:03:56,760

responders, I found them hands down the best workwear in all the departments that I've

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00:03:56,760 --> 00:03:57,760

worked for.

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00:03:57,760 --> 00:04:02,280

Outside of the fire service, I use their luggage for everything and I travel a lot and they

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00:04:02,280 --> 00:04:08,360

are also now sponsoring the 7X team as we embark around the world on the Human Performance

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00:04:08,360 --> 00:04:09,440

Project.

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00:04:09,440 --> 00:04:13,640

We have Murph coming up in May and again I bought their plate carrier.

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00:04:13,640 --> 00:04:18,620

I ended up buying real ballistic plates rather than the fake weight plates and that has been

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00:04:18,620 --> 00:04:22,460

my ride or die through Murph the last few years as well.

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00:04:22,460 --> 00:04:26,400

One area I want to talk about that I haven't in previous sponsorship spots is their brick

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00:04:26,400 --> 00:04:28,240

and mortar element.

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00:04:28,240 --> 00:04:32,960

They were predominantly an online company up till more recently but now they are approaching

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00:04:32,960 --> 00:04:35,680

100 stores all over the US.

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00:04:35,680 --> 00:04:40,200

My local store is here in Gainesville Florida and I've been multiple times.

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00:04:40,200 --> 00:04:44,160

The discounts you see online are applied also in the stores.

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00:04:44,160 --> 00:04:50,480

As I mentioned, 511 is offering you 15% off every purchase that you make.

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00:04:50,480 --> 00:04:55,720

But I do want to say more often than not they have an even deeper discount especially around

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00:04:55,720 --> 00:04:57,320

holiday times.

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00:04:57,320 --> 00:05:07,280

And if you use the code SHIELD15 you will get 15% off your order or in the stores every

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00:05:07,280 --> 00:05:09,120

time you make a purchase.

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00:05:09,120 --> 00:05:14,420

And if you want to hear more about 511, who they stand for and who works with them, listen

68

00:05:14,420 --> 00:05:22,760

to episode 580 of Behind the Shield podcast with 511 regional director Will Ayers.

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00:05:22,760 --> 00:05:24,120

Welcome to the Behind the Shield podcast.

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00:05:24,120 --> 00:05:27,560

As always my name is James Gearing and this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on

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00:05:27,560 --> 00:05:35,440

the show firefighter, dispatcher, fire chief, city manager and member of the all-American

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00:05:35,440 --> 00:05:38,960

leadership team Jim Lydon.

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00:05:38,960 --> 00:05:43,200

As you can hear Jim has an incredibly storied career not only in the different ranks of

74

00:05:43,200 --> 00:05:49,160

the fire service but also overcoming an issue with his vision, his own powerful mental health

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00:05:49,160 --> 00:05:55,360

story and of course he extrapolates many areas of leadership through his career and the work

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00:05:55,360 --> 00:05:57,760

he does with all-American leadership.

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00:05:57,760 --> 00:06:02,720

Now before we get to this incredible conversation as I say every week please just take a moment.

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00:06:02,720 --> 00:06:07,600

Go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and

79

00:06:07,600 --> 00:06:09,560

leave a rating.

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00:06:09,560 --> 00:06:14,880

Every single five-star rating truly does elevate this podcast therefore making it easier for

81

00:06:14,880 --> 00:06:21,480

others to find and this is a free library of almost 900 episodes now.

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00:06:21,480 --> 00:06:27,000

So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women stories so

83

00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:32,220

I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them.

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00:06:32,220 --> 00:06:37,320

So with that being said I introduce to you Jim Lydon.

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00:06:37,320 --> 00:06:56,920

Enjoy.

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00:06:56,920 --> 00:07:02,520

Well Jim I want to start by saying firstly thank you to Rick Rushell for connecting us.

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00:07:02,520 --> 00:07:06,520

We had another great second conversation and obviously I had Rob Nielsen on as well from

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00:07:06,520 --> 00:07:12,080

all-American leadership but secondly I want to welcome you to the Behind the Shield podcast

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00:07:12,080 --> 00:07:13,080

today.

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00:07:13,080 --> 00:07:15,680

Thank you great to be here.

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00:07:15,680 --> 00:07:18,760

So where on planet earth are we finding you this afternoon?

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00:07:18,760 --> 00:07:26,160

I am in my house in lovely downtown San Diego California.

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00:07:26,160 --> 00:07:27,160

Beautiful so you're morning.

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00:07:27,160 --> 00:07:28,160

Yes morning here.

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00:07:28,160 --> 00:07:33,680

All right well I would love to start the very beginning kind of your origin story so tell

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00:07:33,680 --> 00:07:37,360

me where you were born and tell me a little bit about your family dynamic what your parents

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00:07:37,360 --> 00:07:40,280

did how many siblings.

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00:07:40,280 --> 00:07:46,440

So I was born in northern California grew up in the city of San Rafael which is just

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00:07:46,440 --> 00:07:53,840

a little bit north of the Golden Gate Bridge and I was the youngest of five children.

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00:07:53,840 --> 00:07:58,280

We had a family that I'll say was sort of separated into two groups.

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00:07:58,280 --> 00:08:04,920

I had three older siblings that are 10 to 13 or so years older than me and then I had

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00:08:04,920 --> 00:08:10,480

a brother that was four years older than me and we so he and I don't remember the other

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00:08:10,480 --> 00:08:14,640

three really living in the house type of thing right.

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00:08:14,640 --> 00:08:19,320

It was mostly what I have recollection of is my brother and myself and that type of

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00:08:19,320 --> 00:08:20,320

thing.

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00:08:20,320 --> 00:08:30,720

My parents were I'll say very service oriented community based my father was a orthotics

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00:08:30,720 --> 00:08:37,080

and prosthetics maker had his own business for many years so he was you know he was about

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00:08:37,080 --> 00:08:42,800

helping people and giving you know giving help to people who were disabled or whatever.

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00:08:42,800 --> 00:08:48,080

So I think I kind of got that service to others type of thing from him.

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00:08:48,080 --> 00:08:53,520

My mother was you know she was in sales at department store and then she went in the

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00:08:53,520 --> 00:09:00,000

insurance industry then she became more of a stay at home mom when I was in my teens

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00:09:00,000 --> 00:09:06,120

probably but she became very active in the community with senior citizens group and that

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00:09:06,120 --> 00:09:11,640

type of thing leading tours and helping them and that they were big in the neighborhood

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00:09:11,640 --> 00:09:17,200

car club you know they were always stepping up to take on positions on the board or those

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00:09:17,200 --> 00:09:22,280

types of things so very much about a service oriented type of a situation.

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00:09:22,280 --> 00:09:28,480

My childhood you know I grew up in a neighborhood we had a park large park directly across the

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00:09:28,480 --> 00:09:35,400

street from our front door and so you know we were in the park all day and we had lots

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00:09:35,400 --> 00:09:41,520

of kids in the neighborhood we played football on the grass there and basketball and baseball

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00:09:41,520 --> 00:09:47,880

whatever you know kind of a cool thing back then and you know this I guess the late 60s

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00:09:47,880 --> 00:09:54,760

and early 70s was at the park there was actually staff there during the week in the summertime

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00:09:54,760 --> 00:10:00,720

that ran recreation programs you know ran games organized trips etc. so you know just

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00:10:00,720 --> 00:10:07,200

something you don't see necessarily at the neighborhood park anymore today and so that

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00:10:07,200 --> 00:10:13,040

was kind of the family dynamic and where I grew up and that type of thing.

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00:10:13,040 --> 00:10:19,220

Well firstly with the prosthetics sadly we've seen you know obviously a complete paradigm

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00:10:19,220 --> 00:10:25,320

shift when it comes to amputees whether traumatic or congenital and the options are available

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00:10:25,320 --> 00:10:33,260

to them now and the incredible you know just the ability the athleticism all these things

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00:10:33,260 --> 00:10:37,520

that we're seeing from the adaptive community that sadly came out of you know the Afghan

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00:10:37,520 --> 00:10:40,300

and Iraq wars.

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00:10:40,300 --> 00:10:44,320

Have you had any conversations or did you have any conversations with your father about

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00:10:44,320 --> 00:10:48,320

the kind of metamorphosis of where we are now in the profession that he spent a whole

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00:10:48,320 --> 00:10:49,940

lifetime doing?

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00:10:49,940 --> 00:10:58,000

Well my father passed away in about 96 I think it was so long before that but I can tell

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00:10:58,000 --> 00:11:06,040

you I can remember sitting at the kitchen table you know this was probably was mid 70s

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00:11:06,040 --> 00:11:13,000

ish something like that and I can remember my father sitting there with a hand that he

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00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:20,960

was placing electrodes on his arm at the dinner table and trying to make that hand work you

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00:11:20,960 --> 00:11:25,520

know to pick up a glass or to pick up the fork you know that kind of thing so you know

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00:11:25,520 --> 00:11:31,520

they were definitely engaged in that type of activity throughout that time.

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00:11:31,520 --> 00:11:40,280

My oldest brother went into that business ran his own business for a number of years

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00:11:40,280 --> 00:11:47,080

retired a few years ago you know so he's probably seen some more of that more adaptive type

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00:11:47,080 --> 00:11:50,640

of stuff nowadays that we've seen.

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00:11:50,640 --> 00:11:55,320

Yeah it's amazing I mean you know again out of tragedy comes you know some beautiful things

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00:11:55,320 --> 00:12:02,480

you know as a positive element of a negative thing which was war but you know seeing just

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00:12:02,480 --> 00:12:07,440

the videos of the CrossFit athletes and you know the the Spartan races all the way through

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00:12:07,440 --> 00:12:13,680

to you know just as you said the robotic limbs now that are able to do so much and even just

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00:12:13,680 --> 00:12:18,240

you know other stuff you know the electric stimulation that helps people with Parkinson's

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00:12:18,240 --> 00:12:23,200

and you know some of the brain therapies that they're doing now it's when you and I were

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00:12:23,200 --> 00:12:28,160

young we're not too far apart I think you know the special needs adaptive communities

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00:12:28,160 --> 00:12:32,360

were kind of like oh you know well it's sad it is what it is and now I just posted today

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00:12:32,360 --> 00:12:40,120

a bodybuilder with Down syndrome an amazing amazing man in Canada but then you know the

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00:12:40,120 --> 00:12:44,360

the prosthesis it was just you know wooden arms and wooden legs back then and now you

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00:12:44,360 --> 00:12:48,960

know you're seeing these just uber athletes crushing it you know like one of them is on

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00:12:48,960 --> 00:12:54,760

the show Mark Ormrod triple amputee after an IED and I think it was Afghanistan and he

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00:12:54,760 --> 00:13:00,680

does jujitsu he's he's been in the Invictus Games I mean absolutely incredible so it is

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00:13:00,680 --> 00:13:05,440

a beautiful thing to see that industry specifically makes such a huge difference in some of these

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00:13:05,440 --> 00:13:10,920

men and women's lives yeah I mean it it truly was and even back then I mean I can

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00:13:10,920 --> 00:13:16,400

remember you know the success story shall we say you know that I would hear about from

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00:13:16,400 --> 00:13:21,800

my father you know talking about people that he had worked with or that type of thing well

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00:13:21,800 --> 00:13:25,800

you mentioned as well about the people work in the parks and that reminds me of conversations

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00:13:25,800 --> 00:13:31,240

I've had on the show and and I think it was people that were from overseas that was kind

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00:13:31,240 --> 00:13:36,520

of their observation and it was profound when I grew up it kind of was you know the the

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00:13:36,520 --> 00:13:41,160

dynamic that you're talking about maybe you know not someone in a park specifically but

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00:13:41,160 --> 00:13:46,320

we had these community leisure centers and they were you know the cost was minimal to

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00:13:46,320 --> 00:13:52,120

go but there was internal you know indoor football badminton volleyball all the sports

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00:13:52,120 --> 00:13:57,520

inside there was the football pitches outside there was a pool there was a weight room and

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00:13:57,520 --> 00:14:02,080

you didn't have to have very much money at all to access that and I'm sure they probably

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00:14:02,080 --> 00:14:07,880

had programs even if you were struggling that would allow you to but when you look at modern

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00:14:07,880 --> 00:14:12,840

all of recreation here in America you know you want to play on a court or a pitch you

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00:14:12,840 --> 00:14:17,720

have to pay you know there's a large fee and you got to get a whole bunch of people together

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00:14:17,720 --> 00:14:21,960

which has become a barrier to entry our fields are gorgeous but a lot of people just can't

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00:14:21,960 --> 00:14:28,520

afford to use it right yeah no it was like I said it was great right because it was every

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00:14:28,520 --> 00:14:34,960

summer and you know that generally speaking the the people that were working there were

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00:14:34,960 --> 00:14:39,800

older teenagers that you know were working for the recreation department and you know

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00:14:39,800 --> 00:14:46,120

they allowed the kids to come together and you know be engaged and have that sort of

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00:14:46,120 --> 00:14:51,840

community sense and things like that that you just don't see today unless you're unless

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00:14:51,840 --> 00:14:59,520

you're paying to go to the gymnastics facility or the you know wherever yeah exactly now



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00:14:59,520 --> 00:15:04,040

what about sports and athletics what were you doing when you were in school age school

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00:15:04,040 --> 00:15:11,600

age you know I played youth football American football I wasn't in chasing that little round

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00:15:11,600 --> 00:15:18,760

ball yet that wasn't something that was a big deal here then and a little bit of basketball

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00:15:18,760 --> 00:15:24,800

baseball that type of stuff pretty much through until I went to high school you know high

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00:15:24,800 --> 00:15:34,600

school I had a different focus and so it was basically those those components were were

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00:15:34,600 --> 00:15:42,280

what I played routinely as you know up till what 13 14 years old something like that now

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00:15:42,280 --> 00:15:46,920

I know you went to the fire service early but prior to that was that what you were dreaming

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00:15:46,920 --> 00:15:55,760

of becoming or was there something else in your mind I would say that I mean I didn't

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00:15:55,760 --> 00:16:00,400

obviously I didn't have you know like father wasn't a firefighter you know that type of

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00:16:00,400 --> 00:16:06,880

thing I wasn't I wasn't really exposed to that lifestyle at home I had a couple of friends

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00:16:06,880 --> 00:16:18,320

that whose fathers were firefighters locally in town I saw them never really I'll say dreamed

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00:16:18,320 --> 00:16:27,960

about it but but I talked about the park right and it was it was one of the part-time summertime

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00:16:27,960 --> 00:16:34,640

gardeners landscape maintenance people that worked in the park his father was the fire

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00:16:34,640 --> 00:16:41,440

marshal for the local fire department and he's the one he he was an as a teenager was

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00:16:41,440 --> 00:16:47,040

an explorer scout as well in the fire department he's the one that sort of like introduced

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00:16:47,040 --> 00:16:53,600

that concept to me and then I asked around a little bit more you know some of these fathers

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00:16:53,600 --> 00:16:59,920

of some of my friends and things like that kind of got introduced to it that way when

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00:16:59,920 --> 00:17:05,120

I have conversations about diversity on here in the fire service it just over and over

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00:17:05,120 --> 00:17:10,560

again the the answer seems to be mentorship and I there's an amazing program here between

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00:17:10,560 --> 00:17:14,440

Marion County you know Calo Calo was the ones that started it friend of mine named Chris

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00:17:14,440 --> 00:17:20,720

Hickman and they removed all the barrier to entry because absolutely department especially

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00:17:20,720 --> 00:17:27,480

historically you know were whether it was deliberate or just by geography were excluding

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00:17:27,480 --> 00:17:32,600

a lot of you know candidates some of which were it was a gender or a race for example

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00:17:32,600 --> 00:17:36,800

but what they've done is they've gone out into these communities and they've put their

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00:17:36,800 --> 00:17:41,440

their mentorship programs at a central fire station so all these kids have to do is

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00:17:41,440 --> 00:17:46,720

get there there's free training the scholarships to fire academies is there's definitely departments

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00:17:46,720 --> 00:17:53,480

on the other end screaming for for good candidates and so I'm absolutely you know it's a huge

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00:17:53,480 --> 00:17:57,880

huge element I think is the mentorship part whether you're in uniform whether you're

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00:17:57,880 --> 00:18:03,800

mentoring as we said earlier as a recreational you know sports coach whatever it is to being

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00:18:03,800 --> 00:18:08,640

part of the solution rather than pointing at you know fire administration or government

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00:18:08,640 --> 00:18:16,200

to fix your problems for you what was your experience as a young boy then in the mentorship

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00:18:16,200 --> 00:18:19,360

program that you found yourself in?

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00:18:19,360 --> 00:18:28,920

So to kind of circle just to put in a perspective on age I joined that program when I was 14

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00:18:28,920 --> 00:18:36,520

and so you know basically 14 years old went through some training that they required initially

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00:18:36,520 --> 00:18:41,240

you know it was all internal stuff you know basically how to be safe but eventually just

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00:18:41,240 --> 00:18:51,240

ended up at the firehouse and so I got to see I think from a variety of perspectives

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00:18:51,240 --> 00:18:57,000

because I hung around with different crews in different stations and things like that

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00:18:57,000 --> 00:19:02,320

so I got to see all kinds of different approaches to leadership within the small unit I got

214

00:19:02,320 --> 00:19:11,220

to see a lot of attitude towards the fire service whether it was good or bad but ultimately

215

00:19:11,220 --> 00:19:19,680

I had a few people who I'll say took me under their wing and taught me from their perspective

216

00:19:19,680 --> 00:19:29,000

what was important in the fire service things like you know control what you can control

217

00:19:29,000 --> 00:19:38,040

you know don't worry about what they're doing uptown you know we can only control what we're

218

00:19:38,040 --> 00:19:41,360

doing here in the fire station you know that type of thing.

219

00:19:41,360 --> 00:19:49,680

I learned a lot about teamwork at that point and you know camaraderie all of those elements

220

00:19:49,680 --> 00:19:55,260

that I think are you know key components to the profession.

221

00:19:55,260 --> 00:20:03,660

At the same time I was exposed to poor leadership or you know definitely saw definitely saw

222

00:20:03,660 --> 00:20:10,440

the difference between those that were engaged and those that were occupying a seat for lack

223

00:20:10,440 --> 00:20:13,760

of a better term.

224

00:20:13,760 --> 00:20:18,900

Interesting so how long did you remain in that program?

225

00:20:18,900 --> 00:20:25,520

So I was very active in that program for two years and by active I mean that as soon as

226

00:20:25,520 --> 00:20:33,300

summer hit because I had you know I had this one particular fire captain who took me under

227

00:20:33,300 --> 00:20:41,480

his wing I rode along 24 hours a day every day that that ship was on duty while I wasn't

228

00:20:41,480 --> 00:20:49,200

in school and then when I was in school I was there pretty much every Saturday at the

229

00:20:49,200 --> 00:20:55,680

fire station for 24 hour shift with whichever crew was on duty and so you know I got to

230

00:20:55,680 --> 00:21:00,760

do a lot of stuff I mean they allowed me to do things as a fire explorer that they probably

231

00:21:00,760 --> 00:21:07,360

shouldn't have right but certainly wouldn't do it today I don't think but things were

232

00:21:07,360 --> 00:21:08,360

definitely different.

233

00:21:08,360 --> 00:21:15,880

I mean I was you know actively on the fire line at vegetation fire you know if it was

234

00:21:15,880 --> 00:21:21,400

an exterior operation at a structure fire we were allowed to participate in the operation

235

00:21:21,400 --> 00:21:27,720

type of thing you know we our only limitation was you can't go inside a burning building

236

00:21:27,720 --> 00:21:35,680

so definitely got a lot of experience and exposure to things at the same time you know

237

00:21:35,680 --> 00:21:40,480

this is something I didn't realize at the time obviously and I've realized that now

238

00:21:40,480 --> 00:21:49,840

looking back is that's when trauma started you know because and I've spoken recently

239

00:21:49,840 --> 00:21:56,400

about this to another group I think we need to be more cognizant when we're mentoring

240

00:21:56,400 --> 00:22:03,280

or having these young teenagers coming into our profession as to what we expose them to

241

00:22:03,280 --> 00:22:10,760

so you know I went on every call with them right and went inside with them and you know

242

00:22:10,760 --> 00:22:17,600

saw the suicide attempt or successful suicide or the burn victim at a fire you know things

243

00:22:17,600 --> 00:22:27,920

like that that maybe most 14 to 16 year olds aren't ready to process and we probably need

244

00:22:27,920 --> 00:22:31,240

to address that when we're looking at these programs.

245

00:22:31,240 --> 00:22:36,640

Yeah no I agree completely I just had a guest on Bruce Shooter and he was interesting there

246

00:22:36,640 --> 00:22:41,240

was volunteer fire service where he grew up but there was also volunteer rescue so they

247

00:22:41,240 --> 00:22:45,600

were separate so he was actually doing the EMS so arguably probably running on more of

248

00:22:45,600 --> 00:22:51,560

the macabre than the fireside but when you hear the world of neuroscience now talking

249

00:22:51,560 --> 00:22:56,600

about you know when your brain matures especially in the cannabis conversation seems to come

250

00:22:56,600 --> 00:23:01,600

up for some reason if my memory serves me right it's mid-20s when our brain has finally

251

00:23:01,600 --> 00:23:06,920

evolved so then you think that you're exposing a 14 year old 15 year old to the levels of

252

00:23:06,920 --> 00:23:12,840

trauma that we see in our career I agree 100 percent how can they be part of the scene

253

00:23:12,840 --> 00:23:19,400

but in more of a support role so we're shielding them because when I was a young firefighter

254

00:23:19,400 --> 00:23:25,120

we had a horrendous call where two people were killed one was a man in the front and

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00:23:25,120 --> 00:23:32,080

then a three-year-old in the back was decapitated and my captain and engineer actually ordered

256

00:23:32,080 --> 00:23:36,480

the two firefighters myself and my partner to stay at the station we got called back

257

00:23:36,480 --> 00:23:41,320

to actually you know extricate the body for the coroner and his thing was you know you're

258

00:23:41,320 --> 00:23:45,040

going to see enough stuff in your life you don't need to add this to the to the call

259

00:23:45,040 --> 00:23:49,160

and I thought that was probably some of the best leadership I've ever seen my entire career

260

00:23:49,160 --> 00:23:54,240

but it was simply that like it doesn't take four people to remove this child they were

261

00:23:54,240 --> 00:23:59,600

you know literally a handful of months from retiring themselves so that was a calculated

262

00:23:59,600 --> 00:24:04,000

decision but this is you know these are two two men that were in their 20s by this point

263

00:24:04,000 --> 00:24:07,440

not a 14 year old.



264

00:24:07,440 --> 00:24:13,240

Okay so then kind of back to your your question you know how long did I do it I pretty much

265

00:24:13,240 --> 00:24:23,560

did that for two years and and then unbelievably at the age of 16 I was hired by the fire department

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00:24:23,560 --> 00:24:28,720

in a position they called fire cadet that was the fancy term for we were technically

267

00:24:28,720 --> 00:24:37,280

dispatchers and we worked on the fire department work schedule so every other day you know

268

00:24:37,280 --> 00:24:43,600

for three three shifts and then we had a four day break and we had it we had a dispatcher

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00:24:43,600 --> 00:24:49,600

that worked Monday through Friday eight to five and then we came in at five o'clock at

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00:24:49,600 --> 00:24:56,680

night on our shift schedule and if our shift day was on a Saturday Sunday or holiday we

271

00:24:56,680 --> 00:25:04,360

were there for 24 hours in the office and so I was a junior in high school I started

272

00:25:04,360 --> 00:25:10,960

you know February of my junior year in high school as a dispatcher we had a roll away

273

00:25:10,960 --> 00:25:16,200

bed that you know we pulled out of the bathroom and opened up in the in the office space and

274

00:25:16,200 --> 00:25:22,560

flopped out on that we were allowed to bed down at nine o'clock at night the evening

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00:25:22,560 --> 00:25:27,520

part you know five o'clock to eight o'clock you know we had some chores to do empty the

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00:25:27,520 --> 00:25:32,800

trash around the office things like that maybe type up some forms or you know something some

277

00:25:32,800 --> 00:25:41,320

little administrative type of thing but basically answer the phone take the information we had

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00:25:41,320 --> 00:25:48,040

a dispatch system that was all manual which wasn't computerized back then and we dispatched

279

00:25:48,040 --> 00:25:55,600

resources to calls and processed it and all of that and I did that for until I moved out

280

00:25:55,600 --> 00:26:04,240

on the floor as a firefighter I worked in that position and you know again I a tremendous

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00:26:04,240 --> 00:26:13,000

amount of responsibility for a 16 year old and you know sleep deprivation issues I know

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00:26:13,000 --> 00:26:18,120

that's something you talk about we can talk about that at some point but you know that's

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00:26:18,120 --> 00:26:22,920

when it started right you know I mean in addition to the Explorer Scout stuff you know but but

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00:26:22,920 --> 00:26:28,600

here I was you know at the time the department had seven stations and you know we probably

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00:26:28,600 --> 00:26:34,040

had we probably ran three thousand calls a year back then something like that but not

286

00:26:34,040 --> 00:26:40,440

uncommon to get two or three emergency calls during the night you know where you wake up

287

00:26:40,440 --> 00:26:45,640

from a dead sleep to answer the phone ask questions take the information process that

288

00:26:45,640 --> 00:26:50,920

dispatch it all that type of thing stay awake while the crews are out until they get back

289

00:26:50,920 --> 00:26:56,080

and then go back to sleep and then get up at you know seven six thirty seven o'clock

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00:26:56,080 --> 00:27:01,080

in the morning and get ready and go to school.

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00:27:01,080 --> 00:27:08,280

How did the seven station department not have full-time adult dispatches?

292

00:27:08,280 --> 00:27:14,640

It just you know just a situation I think in the early 80s that they could get away

293

00:27:14,640 --> 00:27:15,640

with.

294

00:27:15,640 --> 00:27:19,120

Mm-hmm yeah and that's the exact term and we're still obviously fighting that to this

295

00:27:19,120 --> 00:27:24,880

day and with I just I'm constantly blown away how you know there's volunteer departments

296

00:27:24,880 --> 00:27:30,440

in affluent suburban areas you know in the northeast like I absolutely get it when you

297

00:27:30,440 --> 00:27:34,180

know when you're in the middle of nowhere and you'll get a handful of you know calls

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00:27:34,180 --> 00:27:39,800

like you said a month a year whatever it is and yeah it's all hands then but yeah when

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00:27:39,800 --> 00:27:45,440

you've got that many people that you're protecting that are all taxpayers then it is just you

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00:27:45,440 --> 00:27:50,360

know getting away with it until we finally kind of step up and go enough is enough.

301

00:27:50,360 --> 00:27:56,680

Right it I mean I could still remember my first my first solo night my first night you

302

00:27:56,680 --> 00:28:03,680

know in in February of 81 that I work you know kind of a routine medically call stuff

303

00:28:03,680 --> 00:28:11,160

and then sometime in the early morning hours a significant structure fire and you know

304

00:28:11,160 --> 00:28:16,840

I was awake pretty much all night had a couple other calls through that process and I remember

305

00:28:16,840 --> 00:28:21,400

getting off in the morning thinking I'm going to school now I can't how's this gonna work

306

00:28:21,400 --> 00:28:28,760

right but it it worked out I'm very happy that I did it you know that I had the opportunity

307

00:28:28,760 --> 00:28:34,800

because it's set you know it just continued the path to where I where I went.

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00:28:34,800 --> 00:28:40,520

That must have been brutal though because I went to university here in America and I

309

00:28:40,520 --> 00:28:44,800

had to do it the moment I got off shift so you know as an older student as well sitting

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00:28:44,800 --> 00:28:51,520

in the back of a the back of UF and you know in the classrooms after God what was it basically

311

00:28:51,520 --> 00:28:58,820

almost a hundred mile drive from work to then listen to to dry dry you know presentations

312

00:28:58,820 --> 00:29:03,260

in the university and then try and you know not be so cross-eyed that I could complete

313

00:29:03,260 --> 00:29:07,780

the coursework and so I don't know how you did it at that age that's that's mind-blowing

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00:29:07,780 --> 00:29:11,280

you know most these teenagers can't function with eight hours sleep because they're growing

315

00:29:11,280 --> 00:29:12,280

so much.

316

00:29:12,280 --> 00:29:17,960

Right but it you know it's that was that was junior year when I was still I'll say you

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00:29:17,960 --> 00:29:24,400

know pretty much taking a full load in high school right I had six classes but I had focused

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00:29:24,400 --> 00:29:30,440

educationally you know from freshman year I didn't take any electives you know no shop

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00:29:30,440 --> 00:29:35,880

none of that kind of stuff I was hardcore you know courses and so by the time I finished

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00:29:35,880 --> 00:29:43,600

my junior year I had met all of the graduation requirements except for you know there was

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00:29:43,600 --> 00:29:48,360

like one class they required me to take for a semester in my senior year and then I just

322

00:29:48,360 --> 00:29:53,360

needed to pick up some units and and part of that I was able to get work experience

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00:29:53,360 --> 00:30:01,320

credit you know for the job and so in my senior year I was able to taper back right I had

324

00:30:01,320 --> 00:30:06,080

I had four classes and three of them were in my first semester and three of them were

325

00:30:06,080 --> 00:30:10,560

electives auto shop architectural drafting and I was a teacher's aide right so the only

326

00:30:10,560 --> 00:30:16,640

class I had was this government class that I took the first semester but it allowed me

327

00:30:16,640 --> 00:30:22,740

to to shift my schedule so I didn't go to school I think I started my first class was

328

00:30:22,740 --> 00:30:27,960

like close to 10 in the morning so I actually had you know I could get off work I could

329

00:30:27,960 --> 00:30:32,960

go have breakfast I could do things and then I went to school and then I got out in the

330

00:30:32,960 --> 00:30:37,960

early afternoon so it was my senior year was pretty easy.

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00:30:37,960 --> 00:30:43,400

Now did you transition to another department as a dispatcher?

332

00:30:43,400 --> 00:30:53,560

So many years later I worked a side job as I got hired as a dispatcher with the sheriff's

333

00:30:53,560 --> 00:31:00,920

office in a regional communication center type of atmosphere and I was still working

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00:31:00,920 --> 00:31:07,240

as a dispatcher for the fire department I applied for that job as a full-time job you

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00:31:07,240 --> 00:31:14,160

know I was gonna go do that because money you know was gonna pay better and when I went

336

00:31:14,160 --> 00:31:18,680

there they were looking they were hiring a full-time position but they also had just

337

00:31:18,680 --> 00:31:24,720

gotten approved for a part-time halftime position and so they asked me about that and I said

338

00:31:24,720 --> 00:31:31,320

well I'm not interested in that unless we can figure out how to do it around my fire

339

00:31:31,320 --> 00:31:37,640

department work schedule and I keep both positions and so that's what I did and so I I worked

340

00:31:37,640 --> 00:31:41,480

there for I actually worked there for two years part-time.

341

00:31:41,480 --> 00:31:46,480

The reason I ask I think the dispatchers are the kind of unsung heroes of the first responders

342

00:31:46,480 --> 00:31:51,200

and obviously there's that there's this tension between us sometimes you know we're all tired

343

00:31:51,200 --> 00:31:58,500

and overworked and underpaid as are they but I don't think we really realize the conditions

344

00:31:58,500 --> 00:32:03,000

that they work in firstly you know if it's a 12-hour shift they may arrive in darkness

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00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:06,380

and leave in darkness you know they're in a dark room themselves staring at screens

346

00:32:06,380 --> 00:32:12,980

all day but the other thing is and I've had dispatchers on here you know some of my friends

347

00:32:12,980 --> 00:32:17,400

and another one was Beth Bauer Sox who was the dispatcher for the Paradise Fire and she

348

00:32:17,400 --> 00:32:22,560

lived in Paradise so she heard her own community burning to the ground and she had the people

349

00:32:22,560 --> 00:32:27,960

calling you know begging for help and then the line would go dead and what I realized

350

00:32:27,960 --> 00:32:33,640

is that for us we get banged out on a structure fire then we pull hose and we throw ladders

351



00:32:33,640 --> 00:32:39,860

and we crawl and you know carry equipment we go to a vehicle you know a wreck and now

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00:32:39,860 --> 00:32:44,320

we're carrying extrication equipment but there's this physical offload with that stress

353

00:32:44,320 --> 00:32:50,640

just as you know adrenaline was made for fight the bear run etc but our dispatchers get exposed

354

00:32:50,640 --> 00:32:56,720

to this stress and just sit there so there's no offload did you have any kind of perspective

355

00:32:56,720 --> 00:33:03,000

on that side of it comparing the fire service that you were also in well I can I can I won't

356

00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:10,520

talk about myself personally in this regard but when I got hired at the sheriff's office

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00:33:10,520 --> 00:33:19,320

the same day I got hired this other dispatcher got hired she would eventually become my wife

358

00:33:19,320 --> 00:33:26,840

and you know she worked there she worked in that profession for many years and she she

359

00:33:26,840 --> 00:33:34,560

left that she left that job in 2001 I think it was about August because it was right before

360

00:33:34,560 --> 00:33:42,880

9-11 basically stress-induced you know we had some you know there was some significant

361

00:33:42,880 --> 00:33:49,960

events that occurred in the home front right behaviors that like indicated stress issues

362

00:33:49,960 --> 00:33:58,640

etc and and a lot of it was those unpacked issues right the you know taking the phone

363

00:33:58,640 --> 00:34:07,240

call for whatever traumatic event and no closure you know it wasn't until recently right that

364

00:34:07,240 --> 00:34:13,480

we we even thought to include the dispatchers in our peer counseling or our you know post

365

00:34:13,480 --> 00:34:19,340

incident debrief or you know that type of thing they were sort of a neglected aspect

366

00:34:19,340 --> 00:34:26,920

of of the situation and so so I saw it with her and I'll you know we've been married

367

00:34:26,920 --> 00:34:31,920

for quite a few years and you know some of the stuff we just haven't shared with each

368

00:34:31,920 --> 00:34:40,280

other right myself her her as well and I don't know maybe a year ago there's a documentary

369

00:34:40,280 --> 00:34:50,760

movie out PTSD 9-1-1 and we went to a viewing of that here locally and they had they had

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00:34:50,760 --> 00:34:55,240

the guy from Anaheim was there you know a couple other folks that were in the in the

371

00:34:55,240 --> 00:35:03,520

video and I convinced her to go with me and she wasn't you know she wasn't sure that

372

00:35:03,520 --> 00:35:09,240

even even when we sat down in there to watch the video she said to me I make it up and

373

00:35:09,240 --> 00:35:18,600

leave you know and and after after watching the video we came home and and that was probably

374

00:35:18,600 --> 00:35:24,040

the first time in many many years that we sat on the couch with each other and shared

375

00:35:24,040 --> 00:35:28,800

a few things right sort of talked about some of those things that were still lingering

376

00:35:28,800 --> 00:35:34,120

or that we never you know event that we dealt with that we never told the other about or

377

00:35:34,120 --> 00:35:36,160

you know that type of thing.

378

00:35:36,160 --> 00:35:41,960

Beautiful yeah Matty Furenzo was the Anaheim guy friend of mine but I forget the name of

379

00:35:41,960 --> 00:35:45,440

the guy who made the film because he did reach out.

380

00:35:45,440 --> 00:35:51,400

Yes he reached out a long time ago but then we I hadn't heard from him since but yeah

381

00:35:51,400 --> 00:35:55,800

it seems like that has become a great film and I'll if I speak to Matty I'll let them

382

00:35:55,800 --> 00:36:00,200

know because that's the whole point of those kind of projects is you know funny some people

383

00:36:00,200 --> 00:36:03,240

kind of focus on fundraising when it comes to mental health and I think they're missing

384

00:36:03,240 --> 00:36:08,840

the point you know of course if you're funding you know getting first responders to resources

385

00:36:08,840 --> 00:36:13,480

of course as a financial element but for most of us it's it's the conversation it's opening

386

00:36:13,480 --> 00:36:18,400

that door it's smashing the the facade of the weakness and all the things that you know

387

00:36:18,400 --> 00:36:24,120

a lot of us were raised with that that two-dimensional you know masculinity that's you know I think

388

00:36:24,120 --> 00:36:28,760

really you should that's that's what toxic masculinity should really be the facade that

389

00:36:28,760 --> 00:36:34,320

a lot of us were were raised on that we're this kind of RoboCop type individual rather

390

00:36:34,320 --> 00:36:39,120

than you know this yin and yang this kind compassionate person who went into a profession

391

00:36:39,120 --> 00:36:44,560

where at times we do have to be tough but then we have to give ourselves that same compassion

392

00:36:44,560 --> 00:36:46,560

after some of these calls.

393

00:36:46,560 --> 00:36:53,520

Yeah and and I you know probably will come up it might come up later but but before we

394

00:36:53,520 --> 00:36:58,920

lose it because you mentioned the the dispatcher in paradise and the local you know that kind

395

00:36:58,920 --> 00:37:06,040

of thing and I experienced that myself the you know there were incidents that occurred

396

00:37:06,040 --> 00:37:11,760

when I was a teenager you know working in the dispatch center car crash you know whatever

397

00:37:11,760 --> 00:37:16,040

the crews would come back and I'd gather up some information and pretty soon it's like

398

00:37:16,040 --> 00:37:22,920

oh I I know that kid that you know just got killed in that accident right and you know

399

00:37:22,920 --> 00:37:28,280

so there was some of that when I when I went out on the road as a firefighter you know

400

00:37:28,280 --> 00:37:33,600

it was that everybody talks about you know kind of the hometown boy makes good right

401

00:37:33,600 --> 00:37:40,760

got a job got a job in the hometown you know etc not so much because because it didn't

402

00:37:40,760 --> 00:37:45,840

take long for me to realize as I started running calls because I worked even though we had

403

00:37:45,840 --> 00:37:52,320

seven stations I worked most of my career at the headquarters station which was the

404

00:37:52,320 --> 00:37:58,480

neighborhood I grew up in and so you know going on calls all of a sudden it's either

405

00:37:58,480 --> 00:38:06,440

the parents of my friends from school it's my my parents friends in some cases some relatives

406

00:38:06,440 --> 00:38:13,720

you know I we had this feature was sort of unique but but probably a little bit disturbing

407

00:38:13,720 --> 00:38:19,040

when you know when I was a dispatcher it was before this 911 system even existed right

408

00:38:19,040 --> 00:38:24,760

it didn't come into play till about the mid 80s for us but we had a switch in the dispatch

409

00:38:24,760 --> 00:38:30,280

office and and we could turn that switch on and turn the overhead speakers on in the station

410

00:38:30,280 --> 00:38:35,440

and the crews in the station could actually listen to the phone call that I was taking

411

00:38:35,440 --> 00:38:40,520

right so they could hear the address the nature of the call if it was in their district they

412

00:38:40,520 --> 00:38:46,600

could start moving long before I finished asking all the questions well with that you

413

00:38:46,600 --> 00:38:54,440

know I my parents lived in town my father had a number of medical emergencies that occurred

414

00:38:54,440 --> 00:38:59,560

and I can remember being in the station on times you know when I was working as a firefighter

415

00:38:59,560 --> 00:39:03,600

and you hear the speakers come on and all of a sudden they say oh I recognize that voice

416

00:39:03,600 --> 00:39:14,320

that's my mom you know and and I was off on a medical thing in the 90s 96 when my father

417

00:39:14,320 --> 00:39:20,640

passed away but the crew that I would have been working with that day ran that cardiac

418

00:39:20,640 --> 00:39:29,280

arrest so you know it's those those things is a is definitely a you know a trauma that

419

00:39:29,280 --> 00:39:33,800

needs to be addressed when you have a local person and you know I had a young firefighter

420

00:39:33,800 --> 00:39:39,840

that came on to the department who I grew up with his brother but when he came on he

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00:39:39,840 --> 00:39:45,280

was in that situation I was in right the family's still in town lots of friends and when he

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00:39:45,280 --> 00:39:48,960

came to my crew the first day that was one of the things I talked to him about was you

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00:39:48,960 --> 00:39:54,240

need to be prepared for this and you need to be understanding this and hey we've got

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00:39:54,240 --> 00:39:59,320

things in place now that can help you navigate that.

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00:39:59,320 --> 00:40:03,360

It seems like that's most prominent with the volunteer fire departments because a lot of

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00:40:03,360 --> 00:40:07,440

them are working in their town so not only are they running on their neighbors and their

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00:40:07,440 --> 00:40:12,240

friends but also they live and work in the same place so they're reminded I mean if I

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00:40:12,240 --> 00:40:16,520

go to Orlando man there's bodies everywhere in my mind you know all the street corners

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00:40:16,520 --> 00:40:22,280

and dumpsters and you name it but you know when I come back home here in Ocala I've never

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00:40:22,280 --> 00:40:26,560

worked here I mean I take that back I was a medic student here so a bit of a bit of

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00:40:26,560 --> 00:40:30,600

a reaper a bit of a black cloud so there are some even locally here from my time there

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00:40:30,600 --> 00:40:36,480

but it's not the same as working you know year in year out in the same place that you

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00:40:36,480 --> 00:40:42,760

live and you know just dreading that that whatever colored car wasn't your teenage daughter

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00:40:42,760 --> 00:40:47,800

or son that just wrapped themselves around a you know a telegraph pole so it is something

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00:40:47,800 --> 00:40:51,280

that I think we need to acknowledge especially in the volunteer fire service where they don't

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00:40:51,280 --> 00:40:54,800

get as much support and conversations like this.

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00:40:54,800 --> 00:41:06,280

Right yeah it's definitely you know wasn't something I was thinking about you know at

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00:41:06,280 --> 00:41:09,000  
the time.

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00:41:09,000 --> 00:41:13,240

So you end up becoming you know full-time firefighter and ultimately you climb through

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00:41:13,240 --> 00:41:18,880

the ranks to BC in that department if I'm understanding that right what as you progress

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00:41:18,880 --> 00:41:23,520

through your career what was some of the career calls that you that you had were wearing that

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00:41:23,520 --> 00:41:24,520

uniform?

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00:41:24,520 --> 00:41:41,600

Yeah so I you know on the floor firefighter you know I would say you know a number of

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00:41:41,600 --> 00:41:55,800

large fires I went to were basically normal right but I did have a fire in you know it

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00:41:55,800 --> 00:42:04,240

was in our first in district and I use a slide a picture I have of that building when I talked

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00:42:04,240 --> 00:42:11,880

to people about being prepared for the unexpected you know fires had become so routine that

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00:42:11,880 --> 00:42:15,720

you know say we're gonna go there we're gonna pull hose we're gonna put the fire out etc

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00:42:15,720 --> 00:42:21,720

right and in no way did I expect to pull up in front of this place that night and see

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00:42:21,720 --> 00:42:30,600

a woman hanging out the window on an upper story and it's like oh you know and so that

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00:42:30,600 --> 00:42:35,400

was the first time I you know ever you hear people talk about you know going on the scene

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00:42:35,400 --> 00:42:43,080

and going directly into the rescue mode and everything else you know doesn't doesn't matter

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00:42:43,080 --> 00:42:49,800

it unfortunately the station I worked at we had my my engine company in a medic ambulance

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00:42:49,800 --> 00:42:55,120

you know firefighter paramedic ambulance so when we pulled up you know it was the firefighter

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00:42:55,120 --> 00:43:00,580

medics on the ambulance were able to you know quickly come up grab a ladder go get the ladder

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00:43:00,580 --> 00:43:06,040

up you know and we had a successful rescue and and that type of thing but it was one

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00:43:06,040 --> 00:43:11,440

of those you know career moments right not not everybody ever in their life as a firefighter

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00:43:11,440 --> 00:43:18,520

gets to say they had a dramatic grab right and and and I you know I can remember looking

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00:43:18,520 --> 00:43:23,760

at this woman you know as I'm running around out there I was a captain at the time right

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00:43:23,760 --> 00:43:31,320

I'm trying to put together a plan and you know she had superheated smoke rolling over

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00:43:31,320 --> 00:43:36,320

the top of her head she was leaning against her thighs you know hanging out the window

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00:43:36,320 --> 00:43:43,080

and and and I have to think you know she was wondering probably at what point do I go and

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00:43:43,080 --> 00:43:47,280

you know we got the ladder up there successfully brought her down the ladder so you know that

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00:43:47,280 --> 00:43:55,200

was definitely a career mark I would say beautiful now what about the concept of leadership I

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00:43:55,200 --> 00:43:59,760

know we're going to talk about that you know with with the company work with now but when

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00:43:59,760 --> 00:44:06,760

you look at the the rungs of the firefighters ladder career-wise most of the progressions

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00:44:06,760 --> 00:44:13,840

involve testing and within that testing that isn't necessarily actual leadership knowledge

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00:44:13,840 --> 00:44:19,680

gained so what have been your observations as you've climbed all these ranks of the the

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00:44:19,680 --> 00:44:32,960

officer classes versus actual leadership knowledge and wisdom being imparted

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00:44:32,960 --> 00:44:43,360

but I'll talk about the the the testing process right and for me I believe the most critical

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00:44:43,360 --> 00:44:49,960

position in the fire services company officer in the fire station they have the fire chief

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00:44:49,960 --> 00:44:57,120

you know has very little influence over what goes on day in and day out in those fire stations

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00:44:57,120 --> 00:45:05,200

right it's the fire captains it's the it's the officers in there that that are the ones

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00:45:05,200 --> 00:45:12,240

that are dealing with the things that are going to alter the culture cause headaches

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00:45:12,240 --> 00:45:19,520

for the administration whatever it is right so one of the things I talk to people about

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00:45:19,520 --> 00:45:26,120

is and I say this you know everybody when we get into those testing processes what are

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00:45:26,120 --> 00:45:31,920

they focused on they focus on this silly tactical exercise that's going to be given to them

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00:45:31,920 --> 00:45:36,440

you know simulation etc they think I need to spend all this time practicing for that

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00:45:36,440 --> 00:45:40,400

I need to spend time sitting in the front seat of the fire engine and understanding

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00:45:40,400 --> 00:45:46,440

this whole call management you know etc and don't get me wrong those things are important

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00:45:46,440 --> 00:45:52,320

right we have to we have to make sure that that skill set is there but I tell people

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00:45:52,320 --> 00:45:57,600

that are preparing for promotional exams at that level I said look around your community

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00:45:57,600 --> 00:46:03,400

there's not a fire burning in your community at this point basically they've all gone out

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00:46:03,400 --> 00:46:10,520

we've we've put them out we have training and tactics and strategies etc to deal with

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00:46:10,520 --> 00:46:15,560

that but you know where the fires are burning in your community they're burning in your

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00:46:15,560 --> 00:46:23,640

firehouse they're burning in your crews and we're not preparing those company officers

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00:46:23,640 --> 00:46:28,880

to address those things to put those fires out to deal with those things that need to

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00:46:28,880 --> 00:46:36,080

be dealt with before they become a raging wildfire in the organization and I think that's

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00:46:36,080 --> 00:46:42,040

probably one of the biggest things that that we need to you know do a better job of now

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00:46:42,040 --> 00:46:46,160

what about tools I mean obviously we've got all-american leadership we've got Eshel on

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00:46:46,160 --> 00:46:51,560

front there's some great organizations excuse me organizations out there that are offering

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00:46:51,560 --> 00:46:56,200

this kind of training but they're not really deeply embedded in the fire service nationally

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00:46:56,200 --> 00:47:03,240

at least so what are you seeing as far as you know the give me some examples of good

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00:47:03,240 --> 00:47:06,660

fire departments that you've witnessed and then conversely you know what would be the

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00:47:06,660 --> 00:47:17,960

opposite of that well I I think the good organizations are ones where the senior leadership is engaged

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00:47:17,960 --> 00:47:23,840

has their hands on the wheel and and it's really you know steering the bus and making

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00:47:23,840 --> 00:47:31,480

sure that we've got the right people on the bus that type of thing maybe a little bit

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00:47:31,480 --> 00:47:37,680

of a controversial statement here that I'll make you know one of the things and I'm sort

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00:47:37,680 --> 00:47:43,200

of I'll say semi-guilty because I work for an organization now and I bring my fire service

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00:47:43,200 --> 00:47:53,320

bias I'll say to things to some extent but one of the things that for me I made the decision

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00:47:53,320 --> 00:48:00,240

not to go to the National Fire Academy I chose to go get my master's degree at a university

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00:48:00,240 --> 00:48:08,880

instead and and the reason I did that was at the time I had reached this this conclusion

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00:48:08,880 --> 00:48:18,360

or this perspective that there was a lot of inbreeding taking place and and so that was

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00:48:18,360 --> 00:48:23,880

that was like this moment for me where I like okay I need to go out and and get a different

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00:48:23,880 --> 00:48:31,240

exposure and and I think I think we need to encourage that and and and what sparked it

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00:48:31,240 --> 00:48:37,780

for me was I was I was taking a baton cheese promotional exam and one of the exercises

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00:48:37,780 --> 00:48:43,320

was I had to write a paper on implementation of a new training program or something like

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00:48:43,320 --> 00:48:51,000

that and I and I wrote this paper and then I watched the process where it got evaluated

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00:48:51,000 --> 00:48:58,000

and who sits on the panel for a promotional exam for battalion chief a bunch of fire chiefs

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00:48:58,000 --> 00:49:05,520

and I remember as they reviewed my paper sitting there thinking okay well they'll understand

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00:49:05,520 --> 00:49:11,680

the content but where they get their education to be able to actually really evaluate my

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00:49:11,680 --> 00:49:16,480

writing ability and my skills in that regard you know that type of thing and and that was

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00:49:16,480 --> 00:49:22,440

sort of that moment where it's like oh I think there's something here that I need to go out

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00:49:22,440 --> 00:49:29,160

and explore deeper in a different arena so but back to your question I think the organizations

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00:49:29,160 --> 00:49:36,120

where I've seen you know success is is really where where the the senior leadership is is

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00:49:36,120 --> 00:49:41,440

modeling behaviors that are appropriate that are driving the organization the the rest

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00:49:41,440 --> 00:49:47,960

of the organization is sort of seeing that following that and guiding that and I'm a

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00:49:47,960 --> 00:49:55,160

big proponent of the certain leadership aspect you know I worked in that first organization

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00:49:55,160 --> 00:50:00,240

I worked in I'll say was very toxic the leader the senior leadership he was the fire chief

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00:50:00,240 --> 00:50:11,480

for 30 something years and you know a bully you know autocratic dictatorship you know

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00:50:11,480 --> 00:50:22,280

type of stuff I do never never you know there was no inspiration there was no inspiration

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00:50:22,280 --> 00:50:30,680

to aspire to that level right I can remember that saying that's what it's about why would

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00:50:30,680 --> 00:50:38,200

I do that right and it you know that was just his style now having said that he was also

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00:50:38,200 --> 00:50:44,680

a person and I was a beneficiary beneficiary of it he was also a person that you know if

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00:50:44,680 --> 00:50:53,680

you came forward and brought your issue to him he'd give you the shirt off his back to

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00:50:53,680 --> 00:51:00,320

help you get things squared away or you know take care of yourself or you know whatever



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00:51:00,320 --> 00:51:06,680

but you might have to pay the price at some point you know type of thing it's interesting

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00:51:06,680 --> 00:51:11,960

what you were saying about that kind of inbreeding when it came to you know I won't even pick

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00:51:11,960 --> 00:51:16,320

on that one organization just the fire service in general and this is one of the things that

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00:51:16,320 --> 00:51:20,960

was my aha moment for the podcast and people say oh you got a very diverse guest list I'm

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00:51:20,960 --> 00:51:27,200

like yes because I see these people as people not you know you need to be wearing a fire

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00:51:27,200 --> 00:51:31,120

uniform to come on the podcast you know humans are humans and leaders are leaders and athletes

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00:51:31,120 --> 00:51:37,400

are athletes and they're all you know walks of life so I wanted to find the experts in

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00:51:37,400 --> 00:51:41,800

the world some of which are firefighters you know and you know they're experts in their

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00:51:41,800 --> 00:51:48,240

own life story too so that's that in itself is valuable but if I'm gonna talk about leadership

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00:51:48,240 --> 00:51:52,040

then I also want to talk to Jocko Willink and Rick Rochelle and you know all these other

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00:51:52,040 --> 00:51:56,080

great leaders I've had on the show if I want to talk about firefighter fitness then I want

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00:51:56,080 --> 00:52:02,040

to talk to also you know Jim Wendler and Chris Henshaw and all these other incredible coaches

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00:52:02,040 --> 00:52:08,880

that are out there and when you look at the American Fire Service of which within as you

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00:52:08,880 --> 00:52:15,200

said there are some phenomenal departments some phenomenal leaders but nationally there's

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00:52:15,200 --> 00:52:20,100

overall there's an opposition to any sort of fitness standard we haven't adjusted work

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00:52:20,100 --> 00:52:25,960

week since we were literally pulling steamers from horses so you know we there's a lot of

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00:52:25,960 --> 00:52:31,140

chess beating admins and unions about how great we are but if you were from another

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00:52:31,140 --> 00:52:35,940

profession and you came with a fresh set of eyes and even economically the bleeding of

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00:52:35,940 --> 00:52:41,340

money because of the way we work our people you would be like all right we need to start

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00:52:41,340 --> 00:52:45,520

from scratch what the hell are you people doing but like you said there is that inbreeding

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00:52:45,520 --> 00:52:51,720

element where if we actually admit that we aren't doing as well as we are then we need

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00:52:51,720 --> 00:52:56,620

to put work in and we need to have some humility so this is what I think is refreshing when

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00:52:56,620 --> 00:53:02,320

I talk to either people like yourself or Roger Shai there are both first responders and in

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00:53:02,320 --> 00:53:08,220

these other organizations or simply people in the military and industries outside the

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00:53:08,220 --> 00:53:13,120

first responder professions is they can look objectively and go here's where you're failing

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00:53:13,120 --> 00:53:17,120

here's where you're getting it wrong and we need to hear that because you don't grow if

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00:53:17,120 --> 00:53:20,900

you think that you're doing everything right you don't grow as a nation if you keep saying

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00:53:20,900 --> 00:53:25,920

America is the greatest country on earth because it's not and it's not a competition either

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00:53:25,920 --> 00:53:29,900

you know what I mean there are countries that are doing certain things so much better than

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00:53:29,900 --> 00:53:34,820

us and we are doing certain things so much better than anyone else so the answer is having

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00:53:34,820 --> 00:53:40,720

humility finding the real experts of the world and knowledge sharing so that we can all you

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00:53:40,720 --> 00:53:45,440

know as they say the rising tide lifts all ships that's what we need to do but if we

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00:53:45,440 --> 00:53:51,220

allow ego and arrogance to get in the way of change we'll continue burying first responders

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00:53:51,220 --> 00:53:56,300

we'll continue having a hiring crisis and you know ultimately you know we won't have

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00:53:56,300 --> 00:54:02,740

an American fire service anymore yeah you know and I've heard some of your your previous

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00:54:02,740 --> 00:54:11,900

podcasts and we can talk about sleep deprivation some of that kind of stuff because I thought

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00:54:11,900 --> 00:54:16,260

it was bad when I was on the on the floor it was even worse I think when I was a fire

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00:54:16,260 --> 00:54:28,700

chief but the you know my generation in the fire service is responsible for some of the

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00:54:28,700 --> 00:54:35,740

dynamics of today and and I was I was the president of the labor group at one point

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00:54:35,740 --> 00:54:39,660

in my career right and and I was involved in the negotiations of some of this stuff

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00:54:39,660 --> 00:54:47,780

but when I first started we didn't have overtime overtime didn't occur it was unheard of and

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00:54:47,780 --> 00:54:54,820

and the reason was we had extra staff you know in my department we had three bodies

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00:54:54,820 --> 00:55:00,220

per ship that were there to cover for the days that people took off on vacation or called

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00:55:00,220 --> 00:55:08,140

in sick or you know whatever so it was sort of unheard of to get an overtime you know

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00:55:08,140 --> 00:55:14,060

if I had two maybe three overtime shifts in an entire year in the first probably decade

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00:55:14,060 --> 00:55:19,900

of my career I was doing great it but at the same time that caused me to have a second

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00:55:19,900 --> 00:55:25,940

job you know because I couldn't survive on you know what I was making as a firefighter

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00:55:25,940 --> 00:55:37,500

but but what happened is we we became greedy at some point and I can remember I can remember

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00:55:37,500 --> 00:55:41,100

a person in my department coming to me one day and said hey we should get rid of one

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00:55:41,100 --> 00:55:48,420

of those people on each ship and and I said yeah but the problem is if we do that because

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00:55:48,420 --> 00:55:54,220

we had three and we allowed three people off on vacation at time right it made sense and

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00:55:54,220 --> 00:55:59,300

and I said if we do that then that means I guarantee you that means on Christmas Day

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00:55:59,300 --> 00:56:04,100

there's going to be three people on vacation there's only two people on that shift somebody's

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00:56:04,100 --> 00:56:11,460

going to have to work Christmas Day that was planning to be off that day and through you

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00:56:11,460 --> 00:56:17,220

know other issues with budget cutting etc you know we eventually negotiated those extra

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00:56:17,220 --> 00:56:24,900

bodies away and started working overtime and and then and then and it wasn't bad at the

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00:56:24,900 --> 00:56:30,420

beginning because everybody you know it was sort of new and novel everybody was volunteering

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00:56:30,420 --> 00:56:37,500

to work but then as more demand and more demand and eventually then you got to like okay now

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00:56:37,500 --> 00:56:42,940

we're into all this mandatory over time and that type of thing so you know when I when

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00:56:42,940 --> 00:56:49,500

I talk to firefighters now that are you know coming on the job or they talk about it or

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00:56:49,500 --> 00:56:54,020

even in some of my leadership stuff you know it'll come up right and I'll raise my hand

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00:56:54,020 --> 00:56:58,940

and say okay let me let me jump on the sword here and say hey I have some responsibility

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00:56:58,940 --> 00:57:03,300

for what you're doing with today because I was part of the generation that negotiated

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00:57:03,300 --> 00:57:10,380

away those extra staff and and things that would have curbed some of that.

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00:57:10,380 --> 00:57:14,540

It's it's such a nuanced conversation it's not complicated because I hate that people

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00:57:14,540 --> 00:57:20,380

use that term to then you know get out of putting any work to fix it oh it's complicated

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00:57:20,380 --> 00:57:26,600

however I think what's made it such a hard thing to get everyone in the room talking

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00:57:26,600 --> 00:57:30,300

about the same thing is because we're all guilty and I've talked about this recently

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00:57:30,300 --> 00:57:34,460

you know I spent my whole career saying yeah I work one day on two days off it was only

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00:57:34,460 --> 00:57:39,300

recently that I had the epiphany that we make we work three days on one day off you know

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00:57:39,300 --> 00:57:44,240

three eight hour days crammed together that second that that third day bleeds into day

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00:57:44,240 --> 00:57:47,820

two so it's only day three that you actually get off so it's not ten days a month it's

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00:57:47,820 --> 00:57:53,420

thirty days a month so that's me you know that's my fault you know and then the last

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00:57:53,420 --> 00:58:00,580

place I worked they I've got a friend of mine who's a phenomenal human being he's from another

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00:58:00,580 --> 00:58:07,060

country he's a reservist here in the US as well just a great human being and he gets

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00:58:07,060 --> 00:58:11,980

asked hey you know when are you gonna do more military service so I can get your overtime

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00:58:11,980 --> 00:58:16,260

you know what I mean that's that's culturally so that's how that one department which you

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00:58:16,260 --> 00:58:21,940

know is my least favorite that I've ever worked in obviously you know that's their mentality

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00:58:21,940 --> 00:58:25,900

there it's all about the money so they don't want to hear about you know 24 72 they don't

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00:58:25,900 --> 00:58:28,980

want to hear about fitness standards they just want to figure out how they can get more

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00:58:28,980 --> 00:58:36,860

money and so culturally that needs to be completely rebooted but then you go up to you know obviously

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00:58:36,860 --> 00:58:41,620

admin and now you're asking a leader to be a leader and actually have the courage to

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00:58:41,620 --> 00:58:46,260

address their city their council and then you have the cities and council who we work

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00:58:46,260 --> 00:58:51,540

under who have no idea what we do and so shame on them for not learning what it actually

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00:58:51,540 --> 00:58:56,260

is like being a firefighter a police officer a dispatcher in their own city so it's all

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00:58:56,260 --> 00:59:02,060

the way through so you know with you you know telling us about your impact there the more

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00:59:02,060 --> 00:59:05,500

of us to put our hands up and go yeah I'm part of the solution I mean I'm part of the

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00:59:05,500 --> 00:59:10,740

problem too that's when we can finally have this this complete conversation put all the

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00:59:10,740 --> 00:59:15,540

pieces in line and then you know the from us all the way through the city council we're

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00:59:15,540 --> 00:59:19,600

like oh so it's more expensive the way we're working now because you know we've got medical

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00:59:19,600 --> 00:59:23,340

retirements and overtime and we keep losing people that we train and put through medic

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00:59:23,340 --> 00:59:27,460

school and they walk out the back door you know and then now everyone's on the same page

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00:59:27,460 --> 00:59:33,020

and the firefighters you know understand that yes the overtime is going to go away but overtime

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00:59:33,020 --> 00:59:37,420

you know working somewhere else is okay because you understand sleep now I'll go hang  
drywall

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00:59:37,420 --> 00:59:42,460

for eight hours but I'll go home to my children and I'll sleep in my own bed but it's until

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00:59:42,460 --> 00:59:48,620

we all kind of you know link arms and acknowledge our part of the problem and then demand  
the

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00:59:48,620 --> 00:59:55,020

solution that that's when we're going to move forward and that's where I challenge the leaders

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00:59:55,020 --> 00:59:59,900

of the American Fire Service whether you're you know a brand new pro be or whether you're

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00:59:59,900 --> 01:00:05,580

the fire chief we need to have this conversation to move it forward and I think you know your

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01:00:05,580 --> 01:00:10,020

experience with all American leadership you know it was definitely a piece of that puzzle

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01:00:10,020 --> 01:00:16,540

as we refined you know what true courageous leadership actually is.

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01:00:16,540 --> 01:00:23,140

Yeah I you know again part of the problem not maybe part of the solution right you know

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01:00:23,140 --> 01:00:33,100

I was you know most a lot of agencies in California worked 48 96 now and it's insane and I could

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01:00:33,100 --> 01:00:39,100

I could tell you that that I was I was you know one of the champions for that in my organization

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01:00:39,100 --> 01:00:44,660

when we when we went to it you know and I could make all the arguments as to why it

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01:00:44,660 --> 01:00:57,220

was beneficial and as as that particular organization has probably tripled the call volume and doubled

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01:00:57,220 --> 01:01:03,820

the call volume since since we went to that work schedule I can only imagine the impact

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01:01:03,820 --> 01:01:05,900  
that's having.

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01:01:05,900 --> 01:01:11,660

Yeah what is again is education the the genesis the nucleus of this podcast really came from

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01:01:11,660 --> 01:01:18,060

Dr. Kurt Parsley me listening to him on barbell shrug talking about him discovering the sleep

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01:01:18,060 --> 01:01:22,180

deprivation impact on the seals he was a seal went to med school came back as the seals

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01:01:22,180 --> 01:01:27,380

physician took him about a year to figure out what was going on and then was able to

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01:01:27,380 --> 01:01:32,740

change you know some of the night training used a supplement to get them off ambient

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01:01:32,740 --> 01:01:37,180

like they were all on ambient their blood work was in the toilet and then turned it

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01:01:37,180 --> 01:01:42,620

around so again is educating people on sleep deprivation because sleep deprivation is a

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01:01:42,620 --> 01:01:48,780

huge amplifier for mental ill health addiction suicide anxiety depression see deprivation

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01:01:48,780 --> 01:01:54,780

is a huge amplifier for cancer and strokes and heart disease and weight gain and you

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01:01:54,780 --> 01:02:01,200

know vulnerability to for example COVID-19 like it's everything but until you have that

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01:02:01,200 --> 01:02:05,180

knowledge you're just going to push kind of blindly against it because you don't understand

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01:02:05,180 --> 01:02:10,420

what it is once you're educated on just how detrimental shift work is that it is actually

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01:02:10,420 --> 01:02:16,340

a known carcinogen then you're going to focus on advocating for your work week and your

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01:02:16,340 --> 01:02:20,640

health and your time with your family rather than chasing overtime because you've kind

648

01:02:20,640 --> 01:02:26,700

of been melded into that being the the holy grail you know the dollar bill.

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01:02:26,700 --> 01:02:32,820

Yeah I think that's you know what we got to when I was you know before I became a fire

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01:02:32,820 --> 01:02:40,940

fighter what we got to was you know it was cyclical right it was this it was a vicious

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01:02:40,940 --> 01:02:49,900

cycle of just what you said you know I need I need time with my family over my four-day

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01:02:49,900 --> 01:02:56,500

break and the only way I can prevent getting mandatory to work overtime one of those days

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01:02:56,500 --> 01:03:01,660

is if I take a day off the day before because then I'm on leave and I'm not eligible for

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01:03:01,660 --> 01:03:07,940

mandatory right so I'm trying to achieve my family time and in order to do that I'm taking

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01:03:07,940 --> 01:03:13,380

a day off that's likely going to force somebody else to have to work you know against their

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01:03:13,380 --> 01:03:20,900

choice maybe to cover that day you know so it is a vicious cycle.

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01:03:20,900 --> 01:03:25,700

Absolutely well I know you ended up becoming a city manager as well so I mean you've literally

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01:03:25,700 --> 01:03:31,120

been in all all the seats now so were there any kind of aha moments or realizations when

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01:03:31,120 --> 01:03:34,660

you shifted from chief to that role?

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01:03:34,660 --> 01:03:45,100

Well you know even when I went to the fire chief's position right I mean just the I had

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01:03:45,100 --> 01:03:49,860

a fire chief once that you know was introducing promotions for something and you know he made

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01:03:49,860 --> 01:03:53,300

the comment that you know there's no instructions on the back of the badge to tell you how to

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01:03:53,300 --> 01:04:00,140

do the job right and in many cases you just you're just unprepared for the job when you

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01:04:00,140 --> 01:04:05,820

get that new badge and you sit in that seat and I think that was sort of the same thing

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01:04:05,820 --> 01:04:08,900

you know when I became the fire chief right.

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01:04:08,900 --> 01:04:13,860

I thought I kind of had a pretty good handle on things and you know but you know you get

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01:04:13,860 --> 01:04:18,140

into that next role and all of a sudden stuff starts dumping in your lap and you go oh where

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01:04:18,140 --> 01:04:20,900

did that come from?

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01:04:20,900 --> 01:04:26,580

And so I think when I moved to the city manager's office it just was a you know at a higher

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01:04:26,580 --> 01:04:34,660

level of that right because I was no longer just dealing with the fire department and

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01:04:34,660 --> 01:04:39,340

the role of the fire department within the municipality and you know I obviously had

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01:04:39,340 --> 01:04:46,180

some interaction but you know I was now you know dealing with the finance department and

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01:04:46,180 --> 01:04:54,340

HR and you know all these things at a much higher level and there's always going to what

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01:04:54,340 --> 01:05:03,140

I've found is there's always going to be this surprise thing that occurs sometime in the

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01:05:03,140 --> 01:05:10,260

early part of your tenure in a new role that you're just not expecting it and you have

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01:05:10,260 --> 01:05:20,620

to figure out how to navigate that right and so I talk about this I talk about my circle

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01:05:20,620 --> 01:05:31,740

and you know my circle I explained when I was that young teenage kid and the early firefighter

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01:05:31,740 --> 01:05:37,260

my circle was huge right the people that I interacted with and talked with you know that

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01:05:37,260 --> 01:05:44,420

I could you know get support from etc. it was huge but then I found as I started to

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01:05:44,420 --> 01:05:50,060

move up into various leadership roles leadership of the union right even there it's like okay

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01:05:50,060 --> 01:05:56,860

I needed to tighten that circle because I couldn't deal with all of everybody right

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01:05:56,860 --> 01:06:03,580

and when I became a captain and you know battalion chief well when you become the fire chief

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01:06:03,580 --> 01:06:07,380

your circle is pretty small because there's pretty much nobody in the organization you

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01:06:07,380 --> 01:06:13,740

can talk to you know and have you know you can talk to them but nobody within the organization

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01:06:13,740 --> 01:06:18,220

that you can go to for good counsel on like how to deal with things right so you got to

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01:06:18,220 --> 01:06:26,780

have those relationships outside of you your department to help you and so I and the same

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01:06:26,780 --> 01:06:31,060

thing when I was a city manager and I think what I encourage people is developing that

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01:06:31,060 --> 01:06:37,100

circle because you need to be able to pick up the phone and call a friend and say hey

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01:06:37,100 --> 01:06:44,660

I just got dealt this card I've never dealt with something like this help me help me walk

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01:06:44,660 --> 01:06:50,460

through this right give me some good guidance and things like that and so I exercised that

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01:06:50,460 --> 01:06:55,820

when I became the fire chief and I'll just tell a quick story you know my third week

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01:06:55,820 --> 01:07:01,660

on the job I get a phone call at two in the morning on a Saturday night Sunday morning

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01:07:01,660 --> 01:07:05,740

from the on-duty chief officer to inform me we had some nuisance fires the last couple

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01:07:05,740 --> 01:07:11,620

weekends and he says hey we we had those couple fires tonight the police department made an

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01:07:11,620 --> 01:07:17,300

arrest you know they they caught the guy guess what it's one of the volunteer firefighters

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01:07:17,300 --> 01:07:25,820

in the organization all right I'm on my way you know how do I navigate this right fortunately

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01:07:25,820 --> 01:07:31,420

I had a fire chief that I worked for who had had a pretty significant experience with that

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01:07:31,420 --> 01:07:35,420



type of situation and you know that was my first phone call in the morning hey how do

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01:07:35,420 --> 01:07:39,500

I navigate this you know that type of thing so when I became when I went into the city

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01:07:39,500 --> 01:07:46,460

manager's office it was the same thing you know I I wasn't there very long and got this

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01:07:46,460 --> 01:07:52,500

thing dropped in my lap and like oh and it was one of those hot potatoes and so how am

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01:07:52,500 --> 01:07:57,140

I going to navigate this well it's you go to that circle that you've developed and you

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01:07:57,140 --> 01:08:03,720

get some good counsel and some guidance on how to how to move through things beautiful

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01:08:03,720 --> 01:08:08,620

I see you wearing the behind the shield shirt by the way I had I had to I had to do it for

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01:08:08,620 --> 01:08:13,020

you thank you yeah yeah there I love them absolutely love them they're so comfortable

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01:08:13,020 --> 01:08:17,460

but uh you know self-care and sabotage that really resonates with me at the moment I just

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01:08:17,460 --> 01:08:21,180

had like two and a half weeks of no booze and then had a drink the last couple of days

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01:08:21,180 --> 01:08:31,180

so living it currently so going back to your journey before we progress into how you how

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01:08:31,180 --> 01:08:36,460

you found all-american leadership you talk about you know some issues with vision and

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01:08:36,460 --> 01:08:41,100

some of the struggles that you had so kind of walk me through you know where where your

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01:08:41,100 --> 01:08:45,020

struggles were where the lowest place was that you found yourself progressing through

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01:08:45,020 --> 01:08:53,260

your career um well you know trauma was a big thing you know kind of as I alluded to

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01:08:53,260 --> 01:08:59,060

earlier right probably stuff I didn't recognize at the time and and certainly stuff that has

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01:08:59,060 --> 01:09:06,460

come forward since then you know even that teenage exposure stuff that I that I experienced

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01:09:06,460 --> 01:09:12,380

but I had a couple of incidents early on in my career I had a next-door neighbor who was

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01:09:12,380 --> 01:09:17,100

a captain in the department that I had worked for for a while you know we were when I say

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01:09:17,100 --> 01:09:23,420

next-door neighbor either you know half a block down in the condo complex and and uh

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01:09:23,420 --> 01:09:27,340

you know one night I went and I was over there in the afternoon and called me up that evening

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01:09:27,340 --> 01:09:32,140

hey I'm not feeling good went over talked to him called the medics and talked to them

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01:09:32,140 --> 01:09:40,060

you know oh hypochondriac you know whatever indigestion ate something bad uh but you know

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01:09:40,060 --> 01:09:43,780

why don't you give him a ride to the hospital and you can get checked out you know so load

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01:09:43,780 --> 01:09:46,980

him up take him to the emergency room we're not in the emergency room five minutes he

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01:09:46,980 --> 01:09:52,500

goes into cardiac arrest um you know fortunately it didn't happen when we were in the car on

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01:09:52,500 --> 01:09:59,340

the highway you know type of thing um and and so that was a pretty dramatic event um

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01:09:59,340 --> 01:10:05,260

but what was the challenge was the the way the in my opinion um the way that the leadership

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01:10:05,260 --> 01:10:10,020

of the organization dealt with it and dealt with me and and didn't you know I didn't get

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01:10:10,020 --> 01:10:16,580

the I didn't get the the support I felt that probably I should have I had a lot of uh I

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01:10:16,580 --> 01:10:19,860

had some survivor's guilt uh because that individual had worked a trade for me the day

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01:10:19,860 --> 01:10:26,100

before um and been on fire you know that type of thing so yeah and he survived you know

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01:10:26,100 --> 01:10:29,700

that's he was resuscitated he survived he would he would go on to be the best man in

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01:10:29,700 --> 01:10:37,180

my wedding um you know but but uh you know just the that aspect um and a couple years

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01:10:37,180 --> 01:10:45,140

later I had a pediatric pediatric drowning um and at the time my daughter was pretty

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01:10:45,140 --> 01:10:50,340

much the same age right so as you've heard as I've heard other people talk about right

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01:10:50,340 --> 01:10:58,180

you know you look down you don't see you don't see that kid you see your kid and uh you know

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01:10:58,180 --> 01:11:03,940

and so went through that and she did not she did not survive and but it was a it was a

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01:11:03,940 --> 01:11:10,980

very dramatic event in the community um you know uh the the you know could we were probably

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01:11:10,980 --> 01:11:15,740

the pretty much the farthest from the hospital that you could have been type of a situation

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01:11:15,740 --> 01:11:21,180

right so the the transport through town with a police escort and you know all that type

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01:11:21,180 --> 01:11:26,980

of stuff I mean it was a pretty dramatic um and I remember coming back to the firehouse

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01:11:26,980 --> 01:11:33,140

walking in and a senior officer you know was sitting there in front of a group of people

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01:11:33,140 --> 01:11:39,700

like you know you guys you guys need to talk to somebody you need you know you need some

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01:11:39,700 --> 01:11:45,500

help or you know that kind of thing and we all spun around and walked out right um and

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01:11:45,500 --> 01:11:52,260

that night at the dinner table we sat in silence and eating dinner and finally one of the guys

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01:11:52,260 --> 01:11:58,660

on the crew spoke up and said hey something's wrong and and so we actually I remembered

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01:11:58,660 --> 01:12:02,900

an article that had been in the paper about some guy in a neighboring community that was

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01:12:02,900 --> 01:12:07,740

a psychologist a psychiatrist or whatever that was doing some of this post-traumatic

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01:12:07,740 --> 01:12:12,740

stress stuff or whatever I went and dug through the recycling bin found the article we made

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01:12:12,740 --> 01:12:18,620

a phone call or two um and we ended up having a pretty significant debriefing a couple days

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01:12:18,620 --> 01:12:24,900

later but again it was that organizational failure right it wasn't the organization didn't

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01:12:24,900 --> 01:12:31,180

make that happen the guys that were impacted had to make that happen um and so you know

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01:12:31,180 --> 01:12:37,980

so that that was kind of my introduction to trauma and and some of that type of stuff

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01:12:37,980 --> 01:12:43,340

I had known a little bit about Jeffrey Mitchell's work earlier you know but never really paid

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01:12:43,340 --> 01:12:48,980

much attention to it uh we had a we had a counselor in our organization it was a captain

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01:12:48,980 --> 01:12:53,060

in our department he dabbled a little bit here and there trying to to make some things

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01:12:53,060 --> 01:13:03,380

happen but but eventually we led to um you know a major breakthrough with having an organizational

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01:13:03,380 --> 01:13:08,500

structure with the peer support and all that kind of stuff that that occurred sort of as

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01:13:08,500 --> 01:13:15,500

a result of that um you know had some other you know pretty significant dramatic events

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01:13:15,500 --> 01:13:22,660

where again the organization just didn't didn't support back and so the community didn't back

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01:13:22,660 --> 01:13:30,420

back it um and it really it really led me to be a rebel um you know that that last one

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01:13:30,420 --> 01:13:36,580

was was related to trauma you know physical trauma of a vehicle accident that it basically

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01:13:36,580 --> 01:13:46,820

ended up driving our trauma system creation in the county um and uh you know again I was

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01:13:46,820 --> 01:13:53,060

working overtime as the dispatcher that night I wasn't even in the field but I was the one

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01:13:53,060 --> 01:13:56,780

that was making phone calls and trying to solve these problems and you know made a phone

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01:13:56,780 --> 01:14:01,660

call to a hospital and said hey we got this going on and somebody said hey don't bring

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01:14:01,660 --> 01:14:05,340

them here I said well they're too late they're already there they're pulling in your door

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01:14:05,340 --> 01:14:11,660

you know and I mean it was there was a big day in the newspapers and you know it was

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01:14:11,660 --> 01:14:17,740

there but but we were hung out to drive right um no no support you know that type of thing

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01:14:17,740 --> 01:14:23,340

and so I became a rebel you know just sort of did what I wanted to do and and and worked

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01:14:23,340 --> 01:14:32,140

through that um but but it was you know those types of traumas that I think impacted me

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01:14:32,140 --> 01:14:38,900

that also made me an advocate to get better systems in place in the other organizations

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01:14:38,900 --> 01:14:49,740

I worked in and things like that um yeah the eyesight thing excuse me um you know I had

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01:14:49,740 --> 01:14:55,860

this like floater in my eye one day and no big deal I didn't think and I went and they

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01:14:55,860 --> 01:15:01,220

said hey you got some abnormal blood vessels growing on your retina they did laser surgery

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01:15:01,220 --> 01:15:07,660

back in the late 80s cauterized around in my eyes and that kind of thing all right all

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01:15:07,660 --> 01:15:13,820

good then in the early 90s uh I had a blood vessel rupture in my right eye then it went

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01:15:13,820 --> 01:15:21,380

totally dark and I was off the job for three months pondering what am I going to do with

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01:15:21,380 --> 01:15:28,140

my life you know at the time I had probably three-year-old twins at home you know what's

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01:15:28,140 --> 01:15:33,540

this going to be like you know that type of thing um had a surgical procedure they cleaned

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01:15:33,540 --> 01:15:41,540

all that out restored the vision I went back to work everything was great uh 96 when I

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01:15:41,540 --> 01:15:49,620

talked about my father passing um uh I had had a retinal detachment in that eye and we

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01:15:49,620 --> 01:15:58,260

would go for probably a year or so uh significant surgeries to try to restore that um that vision

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01:15:58,260 --> 01:16:03,660

I was in medic school at the time because I decided to the department was sort of supporting

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01:16:03,660 --> 01:16:08,620

me to go to medic school and uh I thought well I better finish medic school because

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01:16:08,620 --> 01:16:13,860

I'm probably going to be working like in an er or something you know and and I need that

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01:16:13,860 --> 01:16:24,100

skill set but I kind of fought and proved to the department that well I don't have to



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01:16:24,100 --> 01:16:33,060

drive a vehicle that requires anything special California you know you can drive a vehicle

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01:16:33,060 --> 01:16:40,100

with one eye etc and so I fought and they let me stay on and I worked the rest of my

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01:16:40,100 --> 01:16:50,580

career with a fake eye basically um and vision at one eye and so you know there was that

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01:16:50,580 --> 01:16:55,460

traumatic part of you know I thought my career was over um but then I pushed through and

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01:16:55,460 --> 01:17:01,180

said I can prove that I can do this job and I learned how to start IVs with one eye you

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01:17:01,180 --> 01:17:07,580

know all that stuff uh and I was very successful.

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01:17:07,580 --> 01:17:13,900

Going back to firstly the the injury and also you know some of the calls the number of people

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01:17:13,900 --> 01:17:20,560

that I know that even if they felt like they were in a good department after you get hurt

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01:17:20,560 --> 01:17:25,860

um you know you find yourself on your own and the phone's not ringing anymore and that

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01:17:25,860 --> 01:17:31,340

organizational that that separation from tribe in itself can be crushing to people and I

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01:17:31,340 --> 01:17:34,940

think there's almost a parallel and I haven't experienced this because I never rose through

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01:17:34,940 --> 01:17:40,540

the ranks but I would imagine you know you're on a crew you're a captain or lieutenant um

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01:17:40,540 --> 01:17:45,260

and then one day you're a bc and now you're in the office on the other side and there's

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01:17:45,260 --> 01:17:49,860

got to also be an element of that where you don't feel like you have that same tribe anymore

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01:17:49,860 --> 01:17:56,420

there's there's definitely the them and us you know that takes place um you know I was

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01:17:56,420 --> 01:18:00,300

fortunate as a battalion chief that you know I still lived in the fire station and you

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01:18:00,300 --> 01:18:06,980

know ate with the crew and you know that kind of stuff um but but it's you know you're you

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01:18:06,980 --> 01:18:13,340

are different but I I tell people who have who are promoting to that position just what

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01:18:13,340 --> 01:18:17,740

you described and I said here's the here's the deal with you know becoming a battalion

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01:18:17,740 --> 01:18:22,260

chief now you're the captain on a fire engine you got three or four people on the engine

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01:18:22,260 --> 01:18:28,380

with you you go on a dramatic event whether it's you know the best fire that you went

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01:18:28,380 --> 01:18:34,620

to and you're all high-fiving afterwards or whatever you know versus that traumatic call

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01:18:34,620 --> 01:18:41,900

um the good news is you all get to get back on the fire engine and talk about it and start

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01:18:41,900 --> 01:18:48,500

that process right when you're the battalion chief you get in the car by yourself and you

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01:18:48,500 --> 01:18:57,260

drive away and you talk to yourself and and so it is very different and then with the

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01:18:57,260 --> 01:19:02,660

organizational betrayal in some of the cases that you had further back in your career I

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01:19:02,660 --> 01:19:08,620

think that's another under acknowledged part of the mental health conversation and I know

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01:19:08,620 --> 01:19:15,420

you know so many great firefighters some that work in this last department I worked that

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01:19:15,420 --> 01:19:21,260

their biggest trauma is simply the work environment they work for like for me um I've talked about

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01:19:21,260 --> 01:19:26,820

this a few times the last place I worked I got hired with a guy who ended up um succumbing

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01:19:26,820 --> 01:19:34,140

to an overdose accidental overdose and this particular crew when we went to the department

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01:19:34,140 --> 01:19:38,580

to the to the funeral and I volunteered were the rest of the people that were still there

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01:19:38,580 --> 01:19:43,820

were more concerned that they had to run extra calls while we were gone at this funeral than

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01:19:43,820 --> 01:19:50,300

the fact that they lost a brother in in uniform and that was by far one of my biggest traumas

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01:19:50,300 --> 01:19:54,820

of all the shit I've seen of all the stuff that happened with you when I was young being

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01:19:54,820 --> 01:19:59,740

part of supposedly part of a tribe you know joining a community that's supposed to be

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01:19:59,740 --> 01:20:07,740

selfless and service oriented and you realize that selfishness that cancer is in there that

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01:20:07,740 --> 01:20:13,180

was absolutely jarring to me so whether it's someone who's you know I've had people on

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01:20:13,180 --> 01:20:17,820

here that got her at work in their department you know terminated them after a year or whatever

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01:20:17,820 --> 01:20:25,020

it was when when that tribe that you've taken a vow to be a part of turns their back on

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01:20:25,020 --> 01:20:30,580

you whatever that looks like that is absolutely again crushing to some people and I think

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01:20:30,580 --> 01:20:36,700

sadly to some of them it was the final straw that you know made them complete suicide or

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01:20:36,700 --> 01:20:43,740

you know take that extra medication by accident then and now they're no longer with us.

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01:20:43,740 --> 01:20:49,300

Yeah it's you know there's a lot out there now about you know organizational betrayal

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01:20:49,300 --> 01:21:00,740

and moral trauma and things like that and I think it's pretty significant and it when

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01:21:00,740 --> 01:21:07,860

you get to the fire chiefs level you know people don't understand it happens at that

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01:21:07,860 --> 01:21:14,580

level too you know because you're doing what you believe are the right things for the right

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01:21:14,580 --> 01:21:20,900

reasons and you know protecting the community and your organization and that type of thing

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01:21:20,900 --> 01:21:32,300

and the politics of what's important above you is different and it so you end up you

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01:21:32,300 --> 01:21:38,020

know sometimes stepping on the wrong toes in the community or something like that and

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01:21:38,020 --> 01:21:44,380

then you find out quickly how much backing you have.

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01:21:44,380 --> 01:21:48,580

Now you mentioned about you know this compounding trauma from some of the stuff that you saw

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01:21:48,580 --> 01:21:53,580

as a young man through to you know later in your career where was the the darkest place

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01:21:53,580 --> 01:21:58,540

that you found yourself and then what was some of the tools that allowed you to start

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01:21:58,540 --> 01:22:03,280

growing from that trauma?

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01:22:03,280 --> 01:22:14,460

So I resorted to coping mechanisms of alcohol you know and you know I joke with people you

842

01:22:14,460 --> 01:22:22,940

know after a couple of those incidents that my fix was a six-pack in a dark room listening

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01:22:22,940 --> 01:22:33,860

to country music which we all know isn't the good fix right but even you know even I was

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01:22:33,860 --> 01:22:38,340

a battalion chief at the time and you know some of these like I said you know I had that

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01:22:38,340 --> 01:22:47,740

vehicle accident you know thing that led to sort of my rebel behavior in how I managed

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01:22:47,740 --> 01:22:55,380

incidents after that use of helicopters was sort of restricted and I refused to accept

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01:22:55,380 --> 01:23:01,140

that and I called for a helicopter anytime I could and then did everything I needed to

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01:23:01,140 --> 01:23:07,820

do to justify it and so I would end up in front of you know some people bureaucrats

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01:23:07,820 --> 01:23:12,980

whatever you know questioning me or and things and I remember telling one of them hey I'm

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01:23:12,980 --> 01:23:16,900

done talking about this stuff I'm going to do my job I'm going to do what's best for

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01:23:16,900 --> 01:23:22,380

the people but I'm this conversation is over the next conversation we have about this will

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01:23:22,380 --> 01:23:27,660

be at my dining room table with bottle of whiskey you know because you're bringing

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01:23:27,660 --> 01:23:35,820

up things that I need to suppress and you know so I think you know there was that period

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01:23:35,820 --> 01:23:46,580

of time where I resorted to the numbing effect of the alcohol for things like that and I

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01:23:46,580 --> 01:23:57,220

figured out how to curb that you know we were fortunate in in that organization you know

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01:23:57,220 --> 01:24:06,580

where I spent my lifetime basically there was a police officer who went on to get his

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01:24:06,580 --> 01:24:15,460

PhD in psychology and is the clinical director now for the west coast post trauma retreat

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01:24:15,460 --> 01:24:21,900

center and was a founder of the first responder support network you know he was a resource

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01:24:21,900 --> 01:24:31,380

right we started we started getting regular training from him you know that type of thing

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01:24:31,380 --> 01:24:36,460

and and started to learn how to deal with that and so he became a resource and somebody

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01:24:36,460 --> 01:24:42,420

that I called and you know I talked about that circle when I was the fire chief and

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01:24:42,420 --> 01:24:47,460

I had some things that came up not necessarily for me but you know people that I had in my

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01:24:47,460 --> 01:24:52,300

organization that needed to get something that was the phone call right you know I was

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01:24:52,300 --> 01:24:57,180

able to call him so so I think through through some of those changes we made in organization

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01:24:57,180 --> 01:25:09,780

I was able to get you know get what what I needed then but I don't believe that I truly

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01:25:09,780 --> 01:25:19,740

started to break out of the burden of all that until I retired.

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01:25:19,740 --> 01:25:23,420

What changed then?

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01:25:23,420 --> 01:25:32,700

Well just a I was separated from the job but I I discovered I discovered through my time

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01:25:32,700 --> 01:25:45,140

with all-american leadership the art of storytelling and the first time that I was able to present

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01:25:45,140 --> 01:25:51,700

my journey sort of from start to finish type of thing or whatever yes it was you know focused

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01:25:51,700 --> 01:25:58,060

on the concept of leadership but but I talked about a lot of this stuff that shaped me and

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01:25:58,060 --> 01:26:04,980

developed my compassion and empathy and things like that that changed who I was as a leader

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01:26:04,980 --> 01:26:12,740



later and and so it was through that process of you know starting to share my story and

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01:26:12,740 --> 01:26:20,400

things like that I then hooked up with a group called the power of our story and we meet

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01:26:20,400 --> 01:26:28,540

once a week and have a tribe and have an opportunity to unload and talk and share stories and things

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01:26:28,540 --> 01:26:35,860

like that and I think I think that's probably where I've made most of my traumatic growth

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01:26:35,860 --> 01:26:39,140

is through that storytelling process.

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01:26:39,140 --> 01:26:45,380

How did you come across some all-american leadership in the first place?

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01:26:45,380 --> 01:26:51,460

I was introduced so there's a retired navy seal guy and you know so I was the chief in

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01:26:51,460 --> 01:26:57,700

Coronado so you know obviously the seals are pretty prominent there and so but there was

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01:26:57,700 --> 01:27:07,860

a retired navy commander or commandant or whatever they called him for the seals and

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01:27:07,860 --> 01:27:12,260

he was in a local leadership group that I was involved with a kind of a community thing

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01:27:12,260 --> 01:27:19,060

and he said hey you ought to check this stuff out and so as it turned out he was he was

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01:27:19,060 --> 01:27:24,180

an affiliate of Rob's at all-american leadership and doing some teaching with them or whatever

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01:27:24,180 --> 01:27:30,220

and so he turned me on to the group I went to a workshop I got invited to sit at an executive

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01:27:30,220 --> 01:27:38,620

leadership table discussion that Rob held and that would have been in like maybe early

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01:27:38,620 --> 01:27:49,820

2020 I think early 2019 and I was impressed by what they did and so I hired him as a consultant

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01:27:49,820 --> 01:27:55,020

to come into the organization that I was working at and do some work with us and so I was a

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01:27:55,020 --> 01:28:03,860

client and and so I we worked and it was it was it was very important at the time because

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01:28:03,860 --> 01:28:11,100

it's what got us through COVID you know they were providing this online stuff once a month

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01:28:11,100 --> 01:28:17,420

on leadership at all levels of the organization I implemented it as you know some training

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01:28:17,420 --> 01:28:23,580

people were engaged in it you know that type of stuff it really gave us some stuff to focus

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01:28:23,580 --> 01:28:31,220

on as we as we worked our way through the COVID era and then when I retired and I will

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01:28:31,220 --> 01:28:39,940

be honest I retired sort of unexpectedly and unplanned and I remember calling Rob up and

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01:28:39,940 --> 01:28:43,140

saying hey you know just want to give you a heads up I got like a couple weeks left

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01:28:43,140 --> 01:28:49,460

I'm done and you know it's in the budget for next year I just don't know you know how what

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01:28:49,460 --> 01:28:54,380

the dynamic will be as I leave and and part way through that conversation he said I need

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01:28:54,380 --> 01:28:57,980

you to stop for a second I need to ask you a question and he said will you come to work

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01:28:57,980 --> 01:29:03,780

for me and so that was sort I said well I got some things to do and you know let me

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01:29:03,780 --> 01:29:09,420

you know circle back with you and so you know after I finished my cross-country bicycle

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01:29:09,420 --> 01:29:16,140

ride I got back and said hey okay I'm game talk to me you know that type of thing so

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01:29:16,140 --> 01:29:18,140

I've been with them since then.

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01:29:18,140 --> 01:29:23,020

I want to get to the bike riding here about that in a second but just before we do you

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01:29:23,020 --> 01:29:28,540

had all these different roles you know arguably leadership positions what was it that you

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01:29:28,540 --> 01:29:35,700

found all American leadership that maybe was missing up to that point?

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01:29:35,700 --> 01:29:44,020

I think that the basic fundamentals that they focus on within their curriculum you know

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01:29:44,020 --> 01:29:55,700

the development of trust alignment with values performance you know things that come and

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01:29:55,700 --> 01:30:06,380

accountability and so we talk about accountability right and what is accountability and they

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01:30:06,380 --> 01:30:12,600

somewhere in that process they shifted they shifted my thought process to change the word

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01:30:12,600 --> 01:30:22,660

accountability to ownership and create ownership and somebody in that group has made this comment

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01:30:22,660 --> 01:30:30,820

about think about ownership do you ever wash the rental car?

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01:30:30,820 --> 01:30:33,220

Probably not because you don't own it.

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01:30:33,220 --> 01:30:39,860

You don't care about it and so you know I started talking when I was still working as

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01:30:39,860 --> 01:30:45,980

the fire chief I started like okay we need to create an environment where there's ownership

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01:30:45,980 --> 01:30:51,420

where people are willing to wash the car you know they're going to take care of the organization

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01:30:51,420 --> 01:30:58,620

in such a way that they'd be willing to wash the car and you know just so much of that

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01:30:58,620 --> 01:31:04,060

stuff really kind of resonated with me right and then to circle back you know so I talked

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01:31:04,060 --> 01:31:10,180

about my you know getting a master's degree and I talked about my I discovered servant

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01:31:10,180 --> 01:31:13,900

leadership in a book in the early 90s.

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01:31:13,900 --> 01:31:18,340

It resonated with me I tried to like figure out well how do you how do you implement servant

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01:31:18,340 --> 01:31:24,060

leadership at the time when you're working in a toxic organization that's you know this

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01:31:24,060 --> 01:31:29,900

dictatorish type you know thing how do you how do you implement servant leadership so

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01:31:29,900 --> 01:31:33,900

you're bouncing against the wall there.

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01:31:33,900 --> 01:31:40,140

When I got my degree my master's it's in organizational leadership based on servant leadership and

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01:31:40,140 --> 01:31:47,700

and so I think a lot of what all-american leadership presents and supports and drives

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01:31:47,700 --> 01:31:53,980

is that same type of thing so I think there was just a synergy there.

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01:31:53,980 --> 01:31:58,540

Did you was the toxic environment the one that you have most your career in or was it

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01:31:58,540 --> 01:31:59,540

a different one?

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01:31:59,540 --> 01:32:07,060

So I had Jocko on the show and we were talking about you know the last place that I worked

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01:32:07,060 --> 01:32:13,100

and of course you know I've read his books and understand you know what extreme ownership

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01:32:13,100 --> 01:32:17,900

is and walk the walk and you know positively bring solutions or brought solutions to that

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01:32:17,900 --> 01:32:22,540

department and did trainings and all kinds of things but I asked him what do you do if

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01:32:22,540 --> 01:32:29,220

it's not changing if that culture is so toxic you know and my solution ultimately was it

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01:32:29,220 --> 01:32:34,460

was so detrimental that I you know through the universe throwing some things at me transitioned

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01:32:34,460 --> 01:32:38,860

out that department to fix it from the outside because from the inside wasn't going to happen

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01:32:38,860 --> 01:32:44,660

and just a cliff notes on the background operations chief at the time was a dispatcher never been

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01:32:44,660 --> 01:32:49,860

a firefighter the chief chief was a fire prevention guy never been a firefighter and then the other

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01:32:49,860 --> 01:32:55,460

ranks in at the chief level were all EMS never been firefighters and there you know again

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01:32:55,460 --> 01:33:00,540

with the egos didn't want to hear from any of us lowly firefighters what the issues actually

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01:33:00,540 --> 01:33:05,580

were and so you know you can do all the ownership in the world but there's a certain point where

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01:33:05,580 --> 01:33:09,640

you've also got to go and even I've heard Jocko and Leif talk about this they had an

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01:33:09,640 --> 01:33:15,820

officer where they basically had to you know turn rank on him so usually you know hopefully

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01:33:15,820 --> 01:33:20,420

you can you can affect change but I would argue that sometimes the actual changes that

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01:33:20,420 --> 01:33:24,720

you need to remove yourself from that how were you able to navigate that situation that

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01:33:24,720 --> 01:33:29,940

you were in?

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01:33:29,940 --> 01:33:33,540

So in you asked me like when I was in that toxic organization?

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01:33:33,540 --> 01:33:37,380

Yes yeah okay was there was there a way of changing it because like you said one of things

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01:33:37,380 --> 01:33:42,180

Jocko says you just got to play the long game and wait well this last place they were grooming

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01:33:42,180 --> 01:33:46,700

the next person to be the same exact individual so there was no long game.

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01:33:46,700 --> 01:33:54,120

I played the long game you know I had been like I mentioned earlier I was the labor president

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01:33:54,120 --> 01:33:59,540

you know for four years went toe-to-toe with that individual you know that type of thing

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01:33:59,540 --> 01:34:05,500

and don't get me wrong he brought a lot of great things to us right we got into hazmat

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01:34:05,500 --> 01:34:11,620

we got into USAR I mean we we did some some great things it just leadership style was

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01:34:11,620 --> 01:34:16,220

you know an issue and created toxicity in the organization and then there was this really

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01:34:16,220 --> 01:34:21,140

them and us relationship and you know that type of thing.

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01:34:21,140 --> 01:34:29,500

But unfortunately there was an event that occurred that we just couldn't we couldn't

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01:34:29,500 --> 01:34:38,380

live with anymore and the organization I was not I was not a union leader at the time but

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01:34:38,380 --> 01:34:47,220

I was I was a level-headed guy I would say and so there was you know like we're gonna

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01:34:47,220 --> 01:34:53,540

have this big this is it and I spent that weekend you know meeting and talking with



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01:34:53,540 --> 01:34:59,900

people and we got to a point where we all agreed that we would tone it down a bit but

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01:34:59,900 --> 01:35:04,780

we would we would write a letter and we would deliver the letter in a significant way to

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01:35:04,780 --> 01:35:12,700

City Hall to the city manager's office and and that was basically we had a it was it

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01:35:12,700 --> 01:35:15,940

was related to our USAR program and stuff and so all the guys that were involved in

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01:35:15,940 --> 01:35:24,100

the USAR group gathered with their gear and we marched to City Hall and myself and another

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01:35:24,100 --> 01:35:29,820

person went into the city manager's office and said hey the city manager here and so

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01:35:29,820 --> 01:35:37,420

he came out and handed him the letter and he read the letter and said hey you need to

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01:35:37,420 --> 01:35:43,020

take this letter back and and you know let me work on this I said I don't I don't have

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01:35:43,020 --> 01:35:46,300

the authority to do that but maybe if you come out here you can tell these other people

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01:35:46,300 --> 01:35:53,300

that and so he walked out and saw the the troops out in the lobby and realized what

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01:35:53,300 --> 01:35:59,620

the significant was and you know and so sometime shortly thereafter there was a exit strategy

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01:35:59,620 --> 01:36:04,660

you know that they came together and then the organization started to change we got

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01:36:04,660 --> 01:36:09,980

you know we had a couple temporary chiefs and we got a new fire chief that came in that

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01:36:09,980 --> 01:36:17,700

was was the epitome of a servant leader and it was that individual by then I was a battalion

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01:36:17,700 --> 01:36:24,940

chief when he came but it was that individual that really you know gave that opportunity

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01:36:24,940 --> 01:36:31,060

for that servant stuff to really launch and he's the one that came to me one day and said

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01:36:31,060 --> 01:36:35,020

I think you have the skills to be a fire chief you're not going to be the fire chief here

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01:36:35,020 --> 01:36:41,860

because I'm not leaving but I'll help you I'll help you get there and and you know and

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01:36:41,860 --> 01:36:48,340

that was that wow moment for me you know because here's a guy that's you know you're going

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01:36:48,340 --> 01:36:53,260

to give me the push to get to what I want to do.

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01:36:53,260 --> 01:36:57,580

Beautiful yeah but it still includes a coup which is what I know Jocko did with one of

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01:36:57,580 --> 01:37:01,740

their leaders you know so sometimes the ownership means getting your pitchforks and your torches

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01:37:01,740 --> 01:37:07,020

and you know forcing change that way as well so yeah brilliant all right well you talked

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01:37:07,020 --> 01:37:11,820

about cycling across the US before we wrap up tell me about that.

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01:37:11,820 --> 01:37:23,700

So to touch on like getting to the whole cycling thing you know 2000 I grew up in the area

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01:37:23,700 --> 01:37:29,300

in northern California where mountain biking was basically invented so as a kid you know

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01:37:29,300 --> 01:37:34,220

I learned how to take my own stingray and make it into a dirt bike and you know ride

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01:37:34,220 --> 01:37:39,420

on trails and things like that so got into mountain biking a bit but you know life came

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01:37:39,420 --> 01:37:48,340

and kids and work etc the bike went away and I found myself in in about 2015 thinking I

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01:37:48,340 --> 01:37:53,860

need to get some exercise I need to do some things sitting behind a desk as a fire chief

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01:37:53,860 --> 01:38:02,260

right and I was weighing mountain biking and I thought you know I know how I was I'm going

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01:38:02,260 --> 01:38:06,620

to throw myself down some trail smack a tree and you know all that I think I'll take my

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01:38:06,620 --> 01:38:12,980

chances with cars and so I got into road biking and I started road biking.

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01:38:12,980 --> 01:38:21,460

In 2019 I was diagnosed with job-related cancer and you know went through treatment went through

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01:38:21,460 --> 01:38:29,140

a diet change you know went to a plant-based diet etc but really upped the game on the

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01:38:29,140 --> 01:38:34,940

exercise and then I came across an organization called Firebello which is a cycling group

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01:38:34,940 --> 01:38:45,420

for firefighters and their whole their whole focus is on raising money for an awareness

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01:38:45,420 --> 01:38:50,500

about cancer and the fire service and mental wellness and so really kind of fit right into

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01:38:50,500 --> 01:38:58,060

what I was passionate about and things like that so in the my focus during my cancer treatment

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01:38:58,060 --> 01:39:11,180

in 2020 during COVID which was always interesting was positive attitude healthy diet good exercise

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01:39:11,180 --> 01:39:16,500

good medical support and a support network and I was going to get through this thing

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01:39:16,500 --> 01:39:22,700

and so the Firebello group does a bicycle ride from San Francisco to LA every summer

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01:39:22,700 --> 01:39:26,820

and I signed up for it and you know I was like okay I'm going to do this bike ride and

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01:39:26,820 --> 01:39:34,460

it's going to be the you know I was doing some chemo hormone treatment and then I was

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01:39:34,460 --> 01:39:37,980

going to start radiation treatment at the end of August and so it's like all right this

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01:39:37,980 --> 01:39:44,580

one week before my treatment I'm going to do this 500 mile bike ride down the coast

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01:39:44,580 --> 01:39:51,380

and so that was the game plan then kind of COVID cropped up hotel issues again you know

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01:39:51,380 --> 01:39:55,780

that type of stuff and so they cancelled the event I was pretty devastated because because

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01:39:55,780 --> 01:40:04,500

it was a there was a big piece of my my mental picture on on beating cancer etc and a buddy

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01:40:04,500 --> 01:40:10,140

of mine that I worked with in northern California had signed up to do the ride as well he called

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01:40:10,140 --> 01:40:15,700

me up and he said hey I talked to my wife I'm gonna do the ride anyway you know we can

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01:40:15,700 --> 01:40:21,500

I'm gonna book the hotel she's gonna be my sag you know maybe you could come up the coast

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01:40:21,500 --> 01:40:25,460

for the last day and you know ride with me on the last day or something like that I said

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01:40:25,460 --> 01:40:32,460

okay and by the next morning I called him up and said I'll meet you in San Francisco and

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01:40:32,460 --> 01:40:39,580

so the two of us rode down the coast with our wives as our support team and we did it

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01:40:39,580 --> 01:40:44,200

you know one week trip you know that kind of thing so so that was my my adventure my

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01:40:44,200 --> 01:40:50,020

connection to fire velo and then they came forward in you know and they were planning

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01:40:50,020 --> 01:40:57,940

at this point for a ride in 2021 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9-11 and that ride

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01:40:57,940 --> 01:41:04,420

was going to leave from Santa Monica and ride across the country stop at all of the memorials

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01:41:04,420 --> 01:41:14,380

and land in New York just prior to 9-11 and so I went to my boss at the time in January

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01:41:14,380 --> 01:41:23,500

so January or so of 2021 and I asked him I said hey how long is too long for a guy in

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01:41:23,500 --> 01:41:33,900

my position to be off work and you know because this was going to be six or seven weeks and

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01:41:33,900 --> 01:41:38,940

he said about a month and I said okay so I worked it out with the group I was going to

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01:41:38,940 --> 01:41:45,980

meet them in Indianapolis and I was going to ride the last 10 days of the route with

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01:41:45,980 --> 01:41:50,500

them my buddy that did the coastal ride with me was also going to go with me and we were

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01:41:50,500 --> 01:41:57,100

going to both meet up in Indianapolis and do the last 10 days with the group well then

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01:41:57,100 --> 01:42:05,260

lo and behold in June I you know made that rash decision that I was done and as soon

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01:42:05,260 --> 01:42:10,060

as I you know probably one of the second or third phone calls that I made after I made

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01:42:10,060 --> 01:42:15,980

that decision was to call the fire velo guys and say hey my schedule freed up can I do

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01:42:15,980 --> 01:42:22,460

the whole ride and so they said sure and so I did so we left we left the Santa Monica

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01:42:22,460 --> 01:42:33,220

Pier on August 1st we rode through the desert through Arizona New Mexico Northern Texas

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01:42:33,220 --> 01:42:40,380

into Oklahoma we stopped at the Oklahoma City bombing museum and we pretty much left there

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01:42:40,380 --> 01:42:46,580

and took a little diagonal all the way up to Pennsylvania went to the flight 93 Memorial

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01:42:46,580 --> 01:42:52,620

dropped down to the Pentagon and then and then went to New York it was a 40 day scheduled

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01:42:52,620 --> 01:43:00,740

trip and we were 34 days on the bicycle we averaged somewhere over 90 miles a day we

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01:43:00,740 --> 01:43:05,740

had one stretch where it was I think eight days straight without a day off and when I

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01:43:05,740 --> 01:43:10,360

say day off those days off weren't really days off because you were busy maintaining

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01:43:10,360 --> 01:43:17,980

your bike and going to stores to get supplies etc. you know that type of thing but some

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01:43:17,980 --> 01:43:22,460

some great adventure you know I tell people you see a lot of the countryside when you're

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01:43:22,460 --> 01:43:30,260

traveling at 15 miles an hour we spent most of a good part of our time riding on the you

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01:43:30,260 --> 01:43:37,180

know the actual pavement of old route 66 through some towns that have been wiped out you know

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01:43:37,180 --> 01:43:43,980

once they built the new highway and that type of thing it was a great opportunity you know

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01:43:43,980 --> 01:43:50,660

being separated from work you know having just retired you know so I spent the month

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01:43:50,660 --> 01:43:55,500

of July busy scrambling working out the logistics and getting all my stuff and you know figuring

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01:43:55,500 --> 01:43:59,420

out how I was going to be gone from home for seven weeks and you know all those things

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01:43:59,420 --> 01:44:06,100

that they go into play so I it really I wasn't able to really I didn't dwell on the fact

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01:44:06,100 --> 01:44:11,700

that my career had just ended and then going across the country you know a lot of time



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01:44:11,700 --> 01:44:17,940

on the bicycle a lot of times to think a lot of time to process and that type of thing

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01:44:17,940 --> 01:44:24,060

and then you know got to see some great things got to see some you know and you think about

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01:44:24,060 --> 01:44:31,860

what was going on in 2021 right in the summer and such you know I still got I got to see

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01:44:31,860 --> 01:44:40,580

a lot of Americana you know people coming out to celebrate us and support us and you

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01:44:40,580 --> 01:44:47,100

know even in communities that weren't well off you know people buying us and you know

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01:44:47,100 --> 01:44:52,140

we go to we go to a restaurant you know and there's 15 or 20 of us in there eating and

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01:44:52,140 --> 01:44:57,460

of course we had shirts on that advertised what we were doing or you know whatever by

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01:44:57,460 --> 01:45:03,200

the time by the time we finished our meal you know we'd get a note that oh some guy

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01:45:03,200 --> 01:45:07,820

at some table that left 20 minutes ago paid your bill you know that type of thing and

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01:45:07,820 --> 01:45:16,340

so it really restored you know some of that positive American stuff that was so fractured

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01:45:16,340 --> 01:45:23,680

at that time so I think that was I think that was a great adventure not without you know

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01:45:23,680 --> 01:45:29,420

personal emotional and physical challenge and all that type of thing I think one of

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01:45:29,420 --> 01:45:40,140

the best days was the Pentagon was still closed in September of 21 when we went there and

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01:45:40,140 --> 01:45:45,820

you know but we we felt you know we needed to go there you know we knew the memorial

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01:45:45,820 --> 01:45:50,340

was closed but we figured well we can get close enough to get a picture by the sign

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01:45:50,340 --> 01:45:57,260

or you know whatever and we were there and so we we cruised in there we're kind of milling

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01:45:57,260 --> 01:46:03,460

around trying to take some pictures well when that when there's 12 guys in tights and you

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01:46:03,460 --> 01:46:08,740

know funny looking clothes and bicycles milling around at the Pentagon eventually you attract

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01:46:08,740 --> 01:46:15,460

some attention it so a squad car pulls up and the sergeant gets out he comes over and

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01:46:15,460 --> 01:46:23,020

talks to us and then we tell him kind of what we're doing and he's like what he walked right

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01:46:23,020 --> 01:46:28,420

over the barriers he says grab your bikes move the barriers to come with me and he walked

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01:46:28,420 --> 01:46:34,580

us in and gave us a private walk through and tour and explain the whole memorial and you

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01:46:34,580 --> 01:46:39,420

know all that kind of stuff so that was that was a pretty cool event you know and he basically

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01:46:39,420 --> 01:46:44,540

said yeah if my boss found out that 12 guys rode their bicycle across the country here

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01:46:44,540 --> 01:46:49,340

landed here and you know I didn't do this for them you know probably wouldn't sit well

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01:46:49,340 --> 01:46:54,220

so that was our thing there.

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01:46:54,220 --> 01:46:59,340

I've had quite a few people on the show that have done the kinds of trips that you did

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01:46:59,340 --> 01:47:06,020

you know some memorial ride walk ruck etc and over and over and over again are these

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01:47:06,020 --> 01:47:11,380

stories of kindness and compassion you know offering up places to stay meals you know

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01:47:11,380 --> 01:47:17,540

equipment and I think this is this is the real America this is the real UK Australia

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01:47:17,540 --> 01:47:22,740

whatever you know country you want to insert that this is how humans really are you know

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01:47:22,740 --> 01:47:27,540

and sadly our screens are adorned with the bad people whether they're you know they found

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01:47:27,540 --> 01:47:32,260

themselves in the world of crime or they're you know heads of pharmaceutical and cigarette

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01:47:32,260 --> 01:47:36,860

companies whatever it is you know that's what we see the kind of misery and the division

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01:47:36,860 --> 01:47:41,980

but there's no better way of reminding yourself how good people really are is to kind of walk

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01:47:41,980 --> 01:47:46,740

outside your own front door and immerse yourself in your community and find find the helpers

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01:47:46,740 --> 01:47:50,900

isn't that what Mr. Rogers you know it's like you know look for the helpers and that's exactly

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01:47:50,900 --> 01:47:55,820

it but the helpers are everywhere the helpers are inside a lot of us but we're distracted

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01:47:55,820 --> 01:48:03,220

by work and bills and the news but that's over and over and over again I hear this inherent

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01:48:03,220 --> 01:48:07,980

goodness of most communities and it's so beautiful to hear every time someone's story tells about

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01:48:07,980 --> 01:48:16,340

that element of their journey yeah it like I said it was I want to say it was a once

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01:48:16,340 --> 01:48:22,020

in a lifetime thing but but I think you know there's some cheddar maybe doing a 25th anniversary

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01:48:22,020 --> 01:48:31,660

ride you know we'll see what happens with that but but yeah I mean it was just the other

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01:48:31,660 --> 01:48:39,660

piece of it was you know just the completion right the the the journey the feet you know

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01:48:39,660 --> 01:48:46,340

the challenge probably that I tell people that probably the the hardest day the hardest

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01:48:46,340 --> 01:48:51,980

day for me was the day we went to the flight 93 Memorial because it was about it was about

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01:48:51,980 --> 01:48:59,020

an hour ride from where we were staying so we got up in the morning and rode there it

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01:48:59,020 --> 01:49:05,660

was raining you know it was wet and you know you're riding your bike in the rain and wet

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01:49:05,660 --> 01:49:12,020

and we get there and there was a National Park Ranger that was there waiting for us

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01:49:12,020 --> 01:49:18,460

he he'd been in connection with the group for months you know that we were coming when

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01:49:18,460 --> 01:49:21,860

we were going to be there you want to make sure he was there he was I think one of the

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01:49:21,860 --> 01:49:28,820

original people from when the site opened and you know and there's a whole story behind

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01:49:28,820 --> 01:49:37,220

their their kind of motto logo that's associated with a I think it was an LA County firefighter

1100

01:49:37,220 --> 01:49:42,780

but you know he really wanted to be there talk to us and give us the tour and that kind

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01:49:42,780 --> 01:49:50,060

of thing and so it was we were there for about an hour but we were wet and by the time by

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01:49:50,060 --> 01:49:56,140

the time we finished you know besides the emotional aspect of going through the museum

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01:49:56,140 --> 01:50:03,620

and all that type of thing the cold wet you know was impacting and I remember walking

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01:50:03,620 --> 01:50:08,740

out getting you know ready to go and I looked over at the you know bicycles all lined up

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01:50:08,740 --> 01:50:13,340

there and I looked over the other side of the parking lot where our support vehicles

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01:50:13,340 --> 01:50:19,180

were in the RV and the trailer that were you know there I thought man I could just go put

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01:50:19,180 --> 01:50:24,740

my bike in that trailer and hop in the RV and be comfortable and warm for the day because

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01:50:24,740 --> 01:50:32,100

we had 90 miles to go and so I said I can't do that and so I ended up getting on my bicycle

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01:50:32,100 --> 01:50:37,380

and I went over to the other side of the parking lot looped around in circles etc. Well some

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01:50:37,380 --> 01:50:41,500

of the guys were going over to get some dry shirts or you know something that's like I

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01:50:41,500 --> 01:50:44,780

can't get anywhere near that van can't get anywhere near that trailer because I'll pack

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01:50:44,780 --> 01:50:50,300

it in you know I just need to stay over here and then and then we eventually got it all

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01:50:50,300 --> 01:50:54,620

together and took off from there but that was that you know that ability to overcome

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01:50:54,620 --> 01:51:01,660

that that challenge that that throwing in a towel kind of a thing.

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01:51:01,660 --> 01:51:06,740

Amazing well one last question before we wrap up you mentioned you know obviously overcoming

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01:51:06,740 --> 01:51:09,300

cancer what was the cancer that you had?

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01:51:09,300 --> 01:51:17,260

So I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and it was you know it was a fluke that I discovered

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01:51:17,260 --> 01:51:25,300

it right I went to the doctor for other reasons and he was going to do some blood work and

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01:51:25,300 --> 01:51:32,460

hey we'll do a PSA test and okay and so you know the number came back a little bit a little

1120

01:51:32,460 --> 01:51:38,300

bit elevated not you know dramatically elevated and of course you know Dr. Google you know

1121

01:51:38,300 --> 01:51:45,780

you start looking at Dr. Google what does that mean and and then looking at Dr. Google

1122

01:51:45,780 --> 01:51:52,100

I discovered that that some of the issues that might indicate or cause an elevation

1123

01:51:52,100 --> 01:51:59,460

of the PSA is heavy workout cycling you know some other things so I immediately tell the

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01:51:59,460 --> 01:52:06,420

doctor it's all good you know I just I did a hundred mile bike ride you know a couple

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01:52:06,420 --> 01:52:11,980

days ago and you know you didn't tell me not to work out before I worked out that morning

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01:52:11,980 --> 01:52:19,660

and you know I went it's so this has got to be nothing and he said okay well we're going

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01:52:19,660 --> 01:52:23,700

to repeat the test in a month and you're not going to do any of that stuff and we'll see

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01:52:23,700 --> 01:52:29,980

what it is and so the number had gone down but it was still up you know not dramatically

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01:52:29,980 --> 01:52:36,140

he said well we need to send you the you know urology for eval and that type of thing and

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01:52:36,140 --> 01:52:42,140

so I went and you know everything was unremarkable then nobody was really finding much but they

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01:52:42,140 --> 01:52:47,540

said we'll probably you know so they they requested they were going to do an MRI yeah

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01:52:47,540 --> 01:52:56,660

that was the next investigative thing in the insurance company denied the MRI and they

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01:52:56,660 --> 01:53:03,700

said that under their protocol whatever it is that that before you can have an MRI you



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01:53:03,700 --> 01:53:10,860

have to have a biopsy and I thought well wait a minute I have to have this invasive procedure

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01:53:10,860 --> 01:53:18,620

before I can have an you know a fancy x-ray but so that was what I did had the biopsy

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01:53:18,620 --> 01:53:25,980

and of course it came back with with a small you know location at the time of the cancer

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01:53:25,980 --> 01:53:33,420

and so then it was then it was off to the races it's like okay and so that the doctor

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01:53:33,420 --> 01:53:39,820

at the time and I had again done a lot of research and the doctor there was this thing

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01:53:39,820 --> 01:53:44,620

called active monitoring and so the doctor talked about active monitoring she thought

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01:53:44,620 --> 01:53:50,420

that was a reasonable approach and she said you know come back in six months and we'll

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01:53:50,420 --> 01:53:58,340

do an MRI and we'll do another biopsy maybe and sort of see where it's at I said okay

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01:53:58,340 --> 01:54:04,500

and I the next morning I I thought to myself I said you know don't you need an MRI today

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01:54:04,500 --> 01:54:13,620

to compare it to in six months and so I went for a second opinion and went to went to the

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01:54:13,620 --> 01:54:18,620

doc you know different doctor who was a surgeon you know he basically you know he was a hotshot

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01:54:18,620 --> 01:54:25,980

at University of California San Diego and I had researched him a bit and so and he was

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01:54:25,980 --> 01:54:32,140

like oh no we're gonna go in and get that thing and remove it and get it out of you

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01:54:32,140 --> 01:54:35,460

and all that kind of stuff and of course my only question to him was okay well how soon

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01:54:35,460 --> 01:54:43,140

can I get back on my bicycle you know and so so that was the that was the approach the

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01:54:43,140 --> 01:54:50,860

next thing I did was I filed my workers comp case and when I met with my attorney he had

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01:54:50,860 --> 01:54:57,980

had the same kind of cancer and he had had radiation treatment instead of surgery and

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01:54:57,980 --> 01:55:03,700

his partner had also had it but he had had surgery so he had seen sort of both things

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01:55:03,700 --> 01:55:10,100

and so he encouraged me to at least explore things and so I did and I went to the radiation

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01:55:10,100 --> 01:55:18,300

oncologist and I tell people I think he did a better sales job you know he presented me

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01:55:18,300 --> 01:55:23,820

with graphs and charts and data and you know all this kind of stuff and and gave me the

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01:55:23,820 --> 01:55:29,340

idea that he was pretty confident that he could take care of business with the radiation

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01:55:29,340 --> 01:55:35,140

treatment etc so that was the route I took and I did some hormone treatment and I did

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01:55:35,140 --> 01:55:43,740

some I did external radiation and I had seen implanting as well and that seemed to that

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01:55:43,740 --> 01:55:50,340

seemed to take care of the the cancer you know all the numbers are good now and you

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01:55:50,340 --> 01:55:54,620

know I still got I guess I think I have two years left until they you know quote unquote

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01:55:54,620 --> 01:56:00,820

say you're you're at that five-year mark and you're clean but I'm pretty confident in

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01:56:00,820 --> 01:56:07,940

stuff and and things that I did at the time because I've heard some of your your other

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01:56:07,940 --> 01:56:14,180

people talk about I was listening this morning to the one you just posted about inflammation

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01:56:14,180 --> 01:56:19,700

and you know all that kind of stuff and that's where I went with my diet right and still

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01:56:19,700 --> 01:56:27,180

am where I eliminated that inflammatory diet stuff and really focused on the health and

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01:56:27,180 --> 01:56:32,900

physical fitness and well-being and all those elements that I stuck with and so I think

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01:56:32,900 --> 01:56:40,780

I'm in a good spot the only the only battle I have now is here we are in 2024 I still

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01:56:40,780 --> 01:56:49,020

haven't managed to get the cities to sign off that this was a work comp thing and they

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01:56:49,020 --> 01:56:54,140

could actually give me a seven and so we're still we're still making still having that

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01:56:54,140 --> 01:57:01,420

fight and you know that's been a I mean they they tried to independent qualified medical

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01:57:01,420 --> 01:57:07,620

examiner when they deposed him they said hey because in addition to the the cancer which

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01:57:07,620 --> 01:57:14,620

is presumptive in California and I also had some hypertension that caused some cardiac

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01:57:14,620 --> 01:57:22,180

stuff so that again is a presumptive issue and so when the when the city attorneys deposed

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01:57:22,180 --> 01:57:29,840

the medical examiner guy they said well you know that that thickening of his ventricle

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01:57:29,840 --> 01:57:35,060

wall his heart it's not related to the hypertension good god he's an athlete he rode his bicycle

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01:57:35,060 --> 01:57:38,900

across the country he's got an athlete's heart that's what caused the thickening of his heart

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01:57:38,900 --> 01:57:43,740

it's not the it's not the hypertension oh and by the way all the all the side effects

1177

01:57:43,740 --> 01:57:49,220

from his cancer are because he sits on bicycle seat all day got nothing to do with the radiation

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01:57:49,220 --> 01:57:53,940

treatment that you did or you know the the damage from the cancer or whatever so that's

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01:57:53,940 --> 01:57:57,580

the that's the fight I'm dealing with right now

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01:57:57,580 --> 01:58:02,300

it's so maddening because you hear this over and over again even in you know states with

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01:58:02,300 --> 01:58:06,460

prevent presumption laws you know these these poor men and women are fighting which is adding

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01:58:06,460 --> 01:58:10,180

more stress and therefore breaking down their immune system and making them more likely

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01:58:10,180 --> 01:58:14,820

to get ill and I've literally had people say that they've been in the room where they've

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01:58:14,820 --> 01:58:20,860

heard members of these kind of you know legal teams say we'll just fight them until they

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01:58:20,860 --> 01:58:25,300

die they're gonna die first you know which is so disgusting and again goes back to the

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01:58:25,300 --> 01:58:30,060

leadership if we're hearing this over and over and over again clearly it's a truth I

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01:58:30,060 --> 01:58:36,100

mean every every department has stories of you know a firefighter who absolutely has

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01:58:36,100 --> 01:58:41,980

work related issues and ironically you know in in the the military you know it's it's

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01:58:41,980 --> 01:58:46,140

not that hard to prove that you know what you've got going on is related to your service

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01:58:46,140 --> 01:58:50,260

you know even I don't know if it's still the case but up until recently if it's changed

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01:58:50,260 --> 01:58:55,020

you could self-diagnose with PTSD for example you know now you have our first responders

1192

01:58:55,020 --> 01:59:00,700

who 24 hours at a time are being exposed to horrendous shit we know that sleep deprivation

1193

01:59:00,700 --> 01:59:06,260

is a carcinogen what breaks down you know mental health and yet these men and women

1194

01:59:06,260 --> 01:59:10,740

are having to jump through hoops to prove oh which fire was it well the last place I

1195

01:59:10,740 --> 01:59:17,140

worked hardly ever saw a fire but they ran all day and all night so they had sleep deprivation

1196

01:59:17,140 --> 01:59:22,000

so they can't point to a fire but their work is still contributing to the numerous cancer

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01:59:22,000 --> 01:59:27,180

deaths that departments had so you know again this is where leadership comes in from the

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01:59:27,180 --> 01:59:32,860

probie through to the chief and you know beyond is that we we need to refocus what's most

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01:59:32,860 --> 01:59:37,700

important you know and overtime is irrelevant if you don't make it to retirement you know

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01:59:37,700 --> 01:59:42,580

the only thing that we can really advocate the true currency is our health and our longevity

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01:59:42,580 --> 01:59:46,660

and our time with our families so you know thank you for sharing that because this is

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01:59:46,660 --> 01:59:52,420

just another layer into this conversation that I hope will finally gain a critical mass

1203

01:59:52,420 --> 02:00:00,140

and really you know get us away from the conversation always being on d-con when it comes to cancer

1204

02:00:00,140 --> 02:00:04,580

and widen our perspective the same way as you know what you saw on the job isn't your

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02:00:04,580 --> 02:00:09,660

entire mental health conversation so that that appalls me that you are going through

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02:00:09,660 --> 02:00:16,220

that with such a story career yourself yeah and you're right I mean I had that conversation

1207

02:00:16,220 --> 02:00:20,840

with my attorney I know I've said I know what the tactic is because because guess where

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02:00:20,840 --> 02:00:30,180

I used to sit you know and so I know what the tactic is delay delay delay right eventually

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02:00:30,180 --> 02:00:37,340

eventually they'll either give up or or they'll succumb to something and the and the payment

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02:00:37,340 --> 02:00:43,060

won't be there anymore you know or that kind of thing and so I know that and that's not

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02:00:43,060 --> 02:00:49,460

gonna happen for me I'm not giving up and I don't plan to die soon absolutely well and

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02:00:49,460 --> 02:00:54,100

also what's you know refreshing is through I'm sure your own self-discovery and hopefully

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02:00:54,100 --> 02:01:00,540

with some you know help from the medical professionals too you were thinking about diet you were

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02:01:00,540 --> 02:01:04,940

thinking about exercise a lot of people that get this diagnosis they're told about radiation

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02:01:04,940 --> 02:01:09,980

they're told about chemo but they're not told about all the lifestyle changes because you

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02:01:09,980 --> 02:01:16,340

know what was it that contributed to the development of cancer and how many of those can you change

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02:01:16,340 --> 02:01:22,260

that will improve the chance of a reversal and you know at least stop the growth right

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02:01:22,260 --> 02:01:29,340

and and that's you know I when I talk now to fire service professional I have the opportunity

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02:01:29,340 --> 02:01:37,980

too often to talk to recruit academy classes and things like that right and and I and I

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02:01:37,980 --> 02:01:42,700

I talked to them about this is the greatest profession ever right you know all the all

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02:01:42,700 --> 02:01:49,380

that stuff but then I shift and I say hey but I need you to understand some of the realities

1222

02:01:49,380 --> 02:01:53,060

you know when I first started in the fire department we took our turnouts home and

1223

02:01:53,060 --> 02:01:57,460

washed them in the washing machine at home with you know that we next washed the family

1224

02:01:57,460 --> 02:02:04,340

clothes in right you know and we did stuff you know that was stupid that exposed us and

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02:02:04,340 --> 02:02:09,580

in those types of things so you know long before I became diagnosed with cancer I was

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02:02:09,580 --> 02:02:14,900

a proponent for changing practices and you know exhaust systems and fire stations and

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02:02:14,900 --> 02:02:19,460

you know all those types of things that that reduce the risk and you know you're never

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02:02:19,460 --> 02:02:23,140

gonna we're never gonna eliminate it you know there's always going to be some level of risk

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02:02:23,140 --> 02:02:29,660

but but you know I was a proponent for making those changes and implementing things and

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02:02:29,660 --> 02:02:33,920

you know some of the simple stuff you know when I was working on the fire engine where

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02:02:33,920 --> 02:02:39,660

was every day we went on five or six medical calls right where was the medical equipment

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02:02:39,660 --> 02:02:45,580

was right above the exhaust pipe my whole career at last you know the one compartment

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02:02:45,580 --> 02:02:50,740

you're in and out of every day is right above the exhaust pipe right we're exposing ourselves

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02:02:50,740 --> 02:02:55,180

all day long and so you know making some of those types of changes and trying to address

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02:02:55,180 --> 02:03:00,420

those issues and and I talk about the traumatic stuff right you know the post-traumatic or

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02:03:00,420 --> 02:03:07,100

the trauma stress and you know dealing with that but but again I was passionate about

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02:03:07,100 --> 02:03:12,820

those things before my diagnosis but that's where I focus a lot of my talk now with people

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02:03:12,820 --> 02:03:18,140

you know they're entering the profession they learn from what we did you know pay attention

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02:03:18,140 --> 02:03:23,180

to the changes that are being recommended and and that type of thing it's you know it's

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02:03:23,180 --> 02:03:30,220

important and it will it will help you probably end your career maybe a little less scathe

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02:03:30,220 --> 02:03:36,180

than some of us beautiful well Jim I want to thank you we've been talking for two hours

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02:03:36,180 --> 02:03:41,540

now we've gone all over the place from dispatch to leadership to cancer and mental health

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02:03:41,540 --> 02:03:46,640

but it's been an incredible conversation so firstly if people out there want to reach

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02:03:46,640 --> 02:03:50,660

out to you or learn about the organizations that you're a part of now where are the best

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02:03:50,660 --> 02:03:58,300

places online to find you so I'm on LinkedIn that's probably you know that's that's the

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02:03:58,300 --> 02:04:04,740

I'll say the professional site you know I do a little bit on Instagram and Facebook

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02:04:04,740 --> 02:04:09,940

you know just I'll say family stuff you know that type of thing but but LinkedIn is probably

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02:04:09,940 --> 02:04:18,780

the spot you know I do work with All American Leadership which is AllAmericanLeadership.com

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02:04:18,780 --> 02:04:24,940

and you know one of our biggest projects is the Fire Service Leadership Academy we actually

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02:04:24,940 --> 02:04:32,140

launch a new academy next week with 36 participants so I'm pretty excited about that coming up

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02:04:32,140 --> 02:04:41,060

I also I work with first responder coaching where I provide coaching services for first

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02:04:41,060 --> 02:04:47,020

responders so you can find me on that website as well but if you want to make direct contact

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02:04:47,020 --> 02:04:52,860

with me you know LinkedIn would be the spot beautiful well again I want to thank you so

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02:04:52,860 --> 02:05:00,300

much not only for leading us through some of the the more educational and organizational

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02:05:00,300 --> 02:05:05,500

elements but also for the courageous vulnerability when you're talking about you know the the

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02:05:05,500 --> 02:05:10,340

trauma and the drinking and the cancer because that is what we really need to hear and we

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02:05:10,340 --> 02:05:15,860

talked earlier about toxic masculinity being the two-dimensional you know facade of a man

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02:05:15,860 --> 02:05:20,540

the more leaders I have on the show that are courageously vulnerable the more we dispel

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02:05:20,540 --> 02:05:24,460

that myth as well so I want to thank you so much for being so generous with your time

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02:05:24,460 --> 02:05:27,100

today and coming on the Behind the Shield podcast.

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02:05:27,100 --> 02:05:32,940

Thanks for having me and like I said the you know part of the healing process for me that

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02:05:32,940 --> 02:05:40,380

the discovery is is telling the story right sharing the story and that type of thing is

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02:05:40,380 --> 02:05:45,940

very helpful and in preparing you know preparing for the presentation or you know the discussion

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02:05:45,940 --> 02:05:53,620

of you know going through thinking about all that stuff and you know it's I don't fear

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02:05:53,620 --> 02:05:59,140

it anymore right you know it's not that's not to say I don't have some demons that crop

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02:05:59,140 --> 02:06:05,020

up every once in a while and mess up my night's sleep or something like that or or take me

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02:06:05,020 --> 02:06:10,180

down a path that I don't want to go down but but the the ability to kind of go back and

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02:06:10,180 --> 02:06:16,180

remember some things and oh yeah that was not great but this was the growth that came

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02:06:16,180 --> 02:06:40,740

out of it and I think that's the key.