

# Meg Tucker - Episode 758

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

women, female, athlete, conversation, first responder, coach, talk, crossfit, programming, military, symposium, big, individual, male, running, hard, training, people, point, absolutely

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00:00

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01:45

This episode is sponsored by a company I've used for well over a decade and that is 511. I wore their uniforms back in Anaheim, California and have used their products ever since. From their incredibly strong yet light footwear to their cut uniforms for both male and female responders. I found them hands down the best work were in all the departments that I've worked for. Outside of the fire service. I use their luggage for everything and I travel a lot and they are also now sponsoring the 7x team. As we embark around the world on the human performance project. We have Murph coming up in May and again I bought their plate carrier I ended up buying real ballistic plates rather than the fake weight plates. And that has been my ride or die through Murph the last few years as well. But one area I want to talk about that I haven't in previous sponsorship spots is their brick and mortar element. They were predominantly an online company up till more recently, but now they are approaching 100 stores all over the US. My local store is here in Gainesville, Florida and I've been multiple times. And the discounts you see online are applied also in the stores. So as I mentioned, 511 is offering you 15% off of every purchase that you make. But I do want to say more often than not they have an even deeper

discount, especially around holiday times. In fact, if you're listening to this in the months of April or May 511 days is coming up between May 9 and May 16th, you will get 20% off all gear and apparel. And that applies both online and in store. But if you use the code shield 15 That's S H I E L D one five, you will get 15% off your order or in the stores every time you make a purchase. And if you want to hear more about 511, who they stand for and who works with them. Listen to Episode 580 of behind the shield podcast with 511 Regional Director will air

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Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering. And this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show army captain and founder of the Valkyrie project Meg Tucker. So we discuss a host of topics from Meg's journey into the military. Her introduction into CrossFit, the numerous mistakes we were making programming the female tactical athlete, hormonal and physiological differences, the women's military symposium and so much more. Now, before we get to this incredible conversation, as I say, every week, please just take a moment go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast therefore making it easier for others to find. And this is a free library of well over 750 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women's stories so I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them. So that being said, I introduce to you Meg Tucker, enjoy

 05:16

Well, Meg, I want to start by saying thank you so much to Miguel for connecting me with yet another great human being and welcoming you to the behind the shield podcast today.

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Thank you for having having me and shout out to Miguel who is just like a remarkable human being, that the man's network is better than Spider Man's webs in New York City. And I don't know how he does it. Yeah, I still gotta speak of the spider man. So gotta nail him down to actually come on this show. He's connected me with so many people, but he's still waiting for the perfect time. I think there is no perfect time. So we could have done two or three by now. So I gotta, I gotta put the thumbscrews on him. All right, well, then we're on planet Earth. Are we finding you this fine evening.

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I am in North Carolina currently, where the weather is behaving a bit erratically. We keep tiptoeing back and forth between rainy winter weather and just onslaught of pollen to the face.

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Yeah, things are things are blooming earlier than one would expect, which is, you know, a bit red and indicative of our current state of affairs and in conversations about global warming and

sad and indicative of our current state of affairs and in conversations about global warming and whatnot, but, you know, it is what it is. We got daffodils in February. So yeah, yeah, that's what happens with human interaction, we change our environment, and we go to God, you know, nine year old is going through puberty with, you know, all these chemicals that this poor kids are ingesting. So that's another whole conversation.

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All right, well, then let's start at the very beginning of your company, your timeline, then. So tell me where you were born. And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic, what your parents did, and how many siblings.

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I was born in Charleston, South Carolina, to a navy dad. And

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my mom did some civilian contracted work with the Navy on and off during their marriage. But yeah, grew up, up until I was nine on a Navy base, and had an older brother and a younger sister. And the barriers of our universe were defined by how far we could go out to play in the evening before dad's ear splitting whistle would carry over the treetops and let us know it was time to come home for dinner.

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Spent a lot of time at my grandparents house, my father's parents house in that area as well. So

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it was kind of the dynamic up to the age of nine.

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And my parents split up at that age. And so my dad then continuing on with his active duty service in the Navy, had some intermittent postings out to Rhode Island in Virginia and a couple of places. And we stayed fairly stationary with my mom, my sister and I did

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in a suburb of the Charleston area, basically, until I graduate, graduated high school and went off to college,



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which also is a beautiful city, I spent there as a tourist purely as a tourist. But I mean, you know, the actual architecture itself. I mean, obviously, some of the beautiful positive history, some of the dark history, and I think the slave Museum is an absolute must see for everyone that passes through Charleston. When you talk about your dad's naval career, was he deployed in any combat zones during that time?



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Yeah, I should know this. And I'm, I'm a little embarrassed to say that I don't but from what I understood his his, and from a narrow scope of being a child, right, my narrow scope of understanding his deployments were always what I would consider in comparison to like a rotational status, you'd have to like, go out for six months, come back for six months, that kind of thing. And so it wasn't, I don't believe necessarily always to a warzone. So much as you know, there is that need for



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US naval forces to maintain presence in certain international waters and certain waters that are not regulated by parameters of, you know, the centrally the authority of one country or another right, like there's, there's a lot of controversy right now surrounding the South China Sea and who gets to own what piece in international law. And so it's part of the Navy's mission, as I understand it, to continue, you know, patrolling of those international waters in certain postures, partly for presidents and partly for humanitarian assistance or whatever they have to do. So. He always came back with fun stories, you know, going to all kinds of really cool ports of call and he would come back with it



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really international treasures like music boxes and jewelry and things like that. And he has a lot of pretty hilarious drunk sailor stories from, from his escapades with other sailors in those times. So, um,



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so he had, he had a good experience overall, I think that it was very hard for him to be away from us for a long period of time, for sure. Well, we know that obviously, a lot of us in uniform, that can be a challenge to relationships, especially, I mean, my professional has gone every third day for you know, over a decade, but a lot of people in the military, they're gone for six, nine months a year, which is a completely different stressor. When you look back now, was that a contributing factor to the breakup of the marriage, or was it completely unrelated?



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You know, it's hard to say,



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I've gotten some side of the story, and in probably in other ways, not the full story, on what contributed to their split up.



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And out of respect for my parents, I probably won't go into like, too many deep details, but I will say that, you know, their, their divorce was, you know, based on a mutual inability to, you know, meet in the middle ground, I think on a number of different topics. And, you know, the years that followed, were definitely hard on all of us, it was hard enough for my dad anyway, to be gone as he was, but to Now, essentially, remotely parent and have to drive down often eight hours, on weekends and off time to come see us.



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You know, my, as folks who have been through that kind of thing know, essentially a divorce results in supporting the same number of people, but in two households instead of one. So, there was definitely a money struggle there, we were not what I would say, well off, or often, you know, felt like we were barely making ends meet.



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And that, that was hard for both of my parents. And it was hard for the kids to, and probably resulted in, you know, for reflecting on my own personality probably resulted in some tendencies that I carry forward to this day of,



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I hate to say the word people pleasing, because it can come with a negative stigma, but really, you know, there's, there's, there's research that indicates that kids who go through things like that at such a young age that don't necessarily understand the bigger picture, tend to,



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in an in an ignorant way, not you know, negative ignorant, but in a way, they just simply don't understand, they tend to absorb responsibility for whatever negative thing is happening that they can't control. So, you know, there becomes this narrative in their minds of it's my fault in

some way. And so something about my behavior that I can change, might fix this, or might make my parent more happy, or might make my parent have an easier life. And, and, of course, when we grow up, you know, that's not the case.



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But I spent a lot of time.



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I've also been accused of being an old soul. So I spent a lot of time maybe having conversations with my parents or their future spouses that were probably far too advanced for where I was in life. But I wanted to help and make things better and participate in the solution and not the problem. So it's, you know, it was, it was hard in the sense of feeling like I grew up way too fast, in a lot of ways. But in other ways, it gave me I think, a set of tools, and skills that have been useful



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in my later life. But of course, the challenge there is not allowing myself to invest too much personal value in others, you know, opinions are liking of me, or, you know, their attitude or behavior towards me, right. There's a tendency sometimes to



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invest myself too much, and how can I make this other person feel better, or, you know, see me in a different light, and some variables are just out of your control? And I've that's been a hard lesson to teach myself. And it's been a habit that I've had to unlearn. Over the years, it's been easier to unlearn through military service about, you know,



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doing less feeling protection, and more. Very



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direct communication. That's still respectful, if that makes sense. No, it does complete and it's just an interesting perspective. And thank you for sharing that because when we talk about the mental health conversation, especially in military and first responders, there's never really a discussion on what happened before you put the uniform on and whether it's an acute trauma like so many, many people on here have talked about or you know, maybe perceived lesser trauma I want me I was product divorce as well, you know, and it's is a compounding factor.



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And, you know, validation from your parents self worth, you know, seeking, seeking validation. Like we said, these are all things that you're going to take in, you know, and you may yearn for that kind of cohesion and a family, you may not learn for that tribe in, you know, whichever branch you're in. And sometimes you'll find it, which I did in front, some fire departments, and sometimes you'll be betrayed by that organization. And that will, you know, take you back to whatever was going on when you were young as well. So I think it's important that we have these conversations.



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Absolutely. I've read in several different forums, that people have a tendency when they have been traumatized in such a way to revert back in the moment in their emotions, they revert back to that, that time when they were traumatized as a child, so kind of, you know, a panicky feeling, a feeling of not being accepted and feeling of, you know, being unsafe and needing to frantically sort of do housekeeping in the situation in order to make things Okay, when in reality, there might not be a way to make it, okay, it might not be a fix to it, it just it is what it is, and you have to sit with the discomfort.



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So I think that's a valid point, for sure. Well, speaking of HR, on the positive side, we're going to talk a lot about, you know, tactical athletes and fitness and strength conditioning. What were you doing and playing when you were in the school ages.



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So that's kind of a funny story. I was not a sporty kid. I was not outdoorsy, I was the kid that spent a lot of time indoors playing with dolls and a lot of time coloring and drawing. I wasn't still am pretty artistic.



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So I, I enjoyed being indoors and coloring and playing with my dolls and doing you know, what might be considered stereotypical little girl things, or common little girl activities. I didn't spend much time outside really, other than just playing with friends. But



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I didn't discover athleticism or my potential for human performance really, until it was time to go to high school. I was in eighth grade living with my mom and stepdad. And my stepdad had a friend that was a client of his, who had a daughter in ninth grade. And there was essentially a conversation between them about you know, me assimilating into high school and making friends and having a group of friends to land in because my middle school was very small and

high school was enormous. So between them, they cooked up this idea of will, you know, Katie runs cross country and track maybe Meghan could get into that too. And so on the left is just the sole purpose of making friends, I started showing up to cross country practice for my first year in high school, and was just like a skinny noodle of a human being not a scrap of muscle on me, not a scrap of athleticism. And at first it was just surviving the the onslaught of soreness that comes with, you know, training an untrained body. But then I discovered that I had a love for it, and probably more, more specific to the lifelong drive. It was, I felt powerful. I had never been expected to even be capable of running eight miles at a time and, you know, eventually got to that point of, you know, around, varying between seven and nine miles a day



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in a fairly competitive high school program. And it just felt great. It felt great to improve. And I felt powerful in my ability to keep pushing the boundaries and seeing what my body could do. I'll never forget it. The one time I got like, in trouble, if you could even call it that was my girlfriend and I on the cross country team signed up for the weightlifting class for our high school.



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Just just because and the coach was our coach was very adamant about us doing



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how high repetition and low weight weight training because he wanted muscle endurance. He didn't want like strength bulky runners. And so we started going to this weightlifting class, which I'm convinced by the way it was designed purely to give the football players an opportunity to work out during the day because we had like the best football team in the state.



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So they're me and my skinny, scrawny cross country girlfriend and I are in this like big weight room full of hulking football playing dudes and like we're trying to figure out how to do pull ups and figuring out how to back squat and all this stuff. And



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we were complaining about being sore from lifting one day at practice and the coach yelled at us he's like you're supposed to be doing low weights and high volume I told that I told that weightlifting teacher that's what I wanted you guys



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is doing and, but we wanted to keep lifting heavy because it was fun. And again, you know, it



taps into that desire to feel powerful. And really the, the joy and awe of watching yourself, develop, you know, not just not just from a performance aspect, but in a physical aspect like watching my muscles grow in the mirror was fun.



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You know, my mom was like, you're starting to look like a boy. And I took that as a compliment, because I enjoyed it.



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Well, you talk about the playing with the dolls and this gender and you know, how you identify is such a kind of hypersensitive conversation at the time, but I understand some of the biases that used to exist, oh, you're a girl, we're gonna put pigtails in, you're gonna just you and paint, you're gonna play with dolls. But now, I mean, there's a very easy fix there. But like, there was a point where my son was into a show called descendants. And he was into some very, quote unquote, feminine stuff at that time, beautiful, he ended up becoming a cross country runner as well, which is what he does now. And he's all about his physicality, and very kind of, quote, unquote, masculine now, but none of those should be male or female. If you'd like dogs, you just like dogs, if you'd like lifting weights, you'd like lifting weights, and then it's funny, because I was raised with that whole myth that oh, if you lift heavy, you're gonna just you're gonna be big, like, I've been 170 pounds either side for my whole life, I've lifted all different types of ways. God has said James is going to be skinny, that's it strong, maybe skinny, but still skinny. So that fallacy that so many people were told that they are, oh, I don't want to lift heavy because I don't want to, you know, get too big. Trust me, bro, you're not gonna hear male or female, unless you lift a certain way and eat shitloads of food and maybe stick a needle in your ass once in a while, you're not gonna get crazy big. So I think that's one of the the old myths still sadly survives today.



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Yeah, I think too, there's a dynamic of the values that you inherit from your parents or your role models growing up. And the way that your own values can change based on other outside influences. For example, you know, my mom ran cross country in high school as well. But it was never a big prerogative of hers to, you know, try and get her little girls into sports. And, you know, my dad grew up with baseball, but I don't think it ever occurred to him necessarily, like, maybe I should encourage this, and, you know, go toss the ball outside with the girls instead of just, you know, my brother all the time. And I'm not, you know, criticizing their approach. But I think you're also talking about, like, just societal parameters that shift and adjust over time. And I think it's an exciting time to talk about women in sport, or really anyone in sport, because of, you know, some of the social paradigm shifts that are making it okay for someone to be, you know, effeminate and athletic, and express those things in different ways. Or, you know, maybe more of a masculine personality by birth, or, you know, by upbringing, but that don't prioritize lifting in the gym every single day, and you know, can go home and paint a beautiful picture, whatever the case may be. I think that, you know, modernization of the world is creating more venues for people to explore what it means to be a human being and what makes them happy, honestly. And I think that conversation to have the changing dynamic of little girls in sport, I

mean, it's been really exciting to see girls become more involved in sports, that would have been odd for me to participate in when I was younger. And so that, you know, opens up new paradigms and new opportunities for them to not only develop as athletes, but to learn about themselves, right? Like, it's hard to, it's hard to not learn something about yourself, when you suddenly have to learn to become a good team player or learn to become a good communicator, whether it's on a baseball diamond or on the soccer field.



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Or even in an individual more individuals for like, cross country, you know, there's a bit of a team dynamic in,



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in encouraging each other at practice, we're pushing each other practice competing with each other practice or being a supportive person for teammates that might be struggling, you know, there's still a dynamic there. There's a lot to be learned from that. And it's exciting to me to see that, you know, little girls have more access to those kinds of things. Because it just, you know, just goes to show the sky's the limit. We don't know what the peak of human performance is, because we've never reached it for anyone, women or otherwise. What's been really interesting watching, I've been in the CrossFit space now for about 1516 years, so and then I've always loved martial arts as well. So as we've seen this progression, you know, there's women that I trained with that can kick my ass and a number of different movements. There are certainly women in jujitsu class that can murder me in 1000 different ways. So



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So it's become this great, you know, you can't argue with the facts. Now it is what it is, you know, female A and female B just are excelling, you know, most of surpassing 95% of men in, you know, in what they do. But if you turn this whole perception around the other thing that I've talked about recently, is the whole manly man, you know, the, the facade, the fiction, the fairy tales, that was masculinity that I grew up with, is, I think, behind a lot of why specially people in uniform struggle, because we start to slip into this identity that we are a Marine, we're a firefighter or a cop, where man leave, you know, suck it up, rub some dirt in there. And we forget that what took us into these professions more often than not, was the kindness and compassion, it was the soft side, it was the I always get us back in the Yang, I think, are the Yin, maybe it's the Yin. And then yes, there's times when you have to actually be in the more kind of quote unquote, masculine state, you know, running it was into a burning building or towards bullets or whatever it is. But then again, that self reflection should be soft after you know, if you lost someone, you have to allow yourself to grieve, you have to allow that that soft power again, to kick in. So the same way that now we're seeing the masculine side flourish, and a lot of our women, I'm hoping that we'll start seeing the feminine side flourish and a lot of our men, because we've really allowed ourselves and the irony is it's through, ultimately, through Hollywood. And most of the people that we used to hold up on a pedestal, haven't done much of anything, when it comes to manliness they didn't serve in uniform, they were actors. And

they'll say the actors aren't great people. But these were fictional characters that we held up as our role models for a long time. So, you know, it's interesting seeing this metamorphosis on the female side, but we need to unpack that in reverse on the male side as well.

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Absolutely. And I do think there's also some unpacking to be done when we talk about what it means to be masculine, or what it means to be feminine.

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And I think part of that unpacking lends to an insight into, for example, why,

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in recent years, I've seen a resurgence, if you can call it that of interest, or a surge in interest in cultures like Viking culture, and Norse culture. And, of course, there's, you know, the, the more commonly known and off depicted in Hollywood paradigm of masculinity in that culture that says, you know, rape, kill pillage, you know, you're gonna go wreck this town and take it for your own. And that's how it's done. That's what masculinity means. But there's actually a lot of evidence in those ancient writings, you know, what a lot of people would call them Norse mythology,

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that indicates, you know, these, these Viking men were caring, and loving, and they had really deep bonds with their brethren. And, you know, they all had this mentality of until Valhalla, and wasn't, you know, exclusively defined to just like a destructive, masculine paradigm. Like, there was a, there was a second side, I think that people miss. And maybe that's, that's partly why there's interest now.

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You know, researching in the potential that these ancient cultures have to teach us about, you know, what ancient masculinity and femininity meant, ancient femininity had a lot to do, you know, there are multiple cultures that indicate a female goddess that is not only a representation of hearth and home, and motherhood and you know, loving kindness and care, but they would simultaneously be like the goddess of the hunt, or of war, you know, you've got Freya and Diana. And so I think there's some, there's some fun introspection we can do, looking at those older archetypes, and having a conversation about you know, what, what nuance of masculinity and femininity have we lost by ascribing to like Hollywood depictions of these cultures? And what can actual ancient cultures teach us about the duality of feminine and masculine and I would argue that each of us has both of those in us, but some we just have a tendency often to express one more than the other. And it becomes about expressing it in a healthy way.



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Absolutely. Well, even we look at the Samurai, you know, again, fearsome warriors, but they're also musicians, and they're doing tea ceremonies and all kinds of other things to calligraphy. So yeah, I think it's that tapping into that warrior poet rather than the psychopath that's running around just murdering everyone.



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Right, right, for sure. And, you know, a bit of a,



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a personal story. I've been working with particular



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Our tactical athlete coach, Michael ban, I got to host him on a panel at our symposium a few weeks ago. And he's just a remarkably brilliant, talented coach who's also extremely masculine, but also extremely down to earth. And we've discussed this interplay between masculine and feminine. And one of the observations that he had, that I agreed with was that



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my, my time and service, in a lot of ways probably contributed to a hyper masculinization of my own personality that maybe isn't



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natural to how I'm wired, naturally, you know, in a vacuum, I'm more artistic, and, you know, big, big picture ideas, not super aggressive, with action, so much as you know, taking calculated steps and measuring weighing things.



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But being in the military, created these outcomes in my personality, where, you know, I'd have to be decisive all day long, or sometimes for six months in a row decisive and in charge of a group of men, and come home and just be not only physically wrecked, because, you know, like this, this reverberation of psychosomatic effects, right, you know, mental stress has a physical toll on the body, that it'd be physically mentally exhausted.



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Just feeling like I was what I said to a Viking in an actual practicing Vikings friend of mine, a practicing pagan friend of mine, I said,



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it often felt like I was wearing a suit of armor all the time that wasn't made for me. And I couldn't take it off. Just like heavy, heavy, heavy, uncomfortable, I can't move.



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And so I think there's something to unpack there. And all of us, you know, how much? What pieces of your personality do you think are masculine or feminine? And is your is your definition still useful for you? Right? Because if it's not, then it's worth revisiting. And I think the beauty of that conversation is to we have the all of us have an opportunity to look into those definitions and make them what we kind of what we need them to be, of course, you know, broader society has ideas about buzzwords, toxic masculinity, toxic femininity, have been like bumper stickers, like in Spanish around to add to say, like, basically, in Spanish, they say like, Oh, my girlfriend's toxic. And I'm like, this became funny or cool at some point. And I feel like, because I don't get it, but no, doesn't have to be toxic. You can, you can need to be masculine and seminal moments are decisive, and like you said, running towards the gunfire instead of away from it. And in other moments, when you know, you're comforting a friend or trying to take care of yourself, so you can continue to take care of others, then those more traditional feminine aspects are not only needed, but productive.



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Absolutely, I got accused of toxic positivity once, which was a new one. I'm like, I don't have to look up the urban dictionary for that one. But anyway, someone's always gonna get, you know, offended by something. But anyway. So we're talking about the, you know, the warrior side, you ended up in the military while you were in the high school age. Was that what you were always thinking about? Was this something else before?



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Oh, no. So my, my trajectory into the military was so random.



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I was, like I said, artistic growing up.



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I always had talent in that area. And so when I went to college, I actually got my basketball

I always had talent in that arena. And so when I went to college, I actually got my bachelor's degree, started out as an interior design major, because it required a lot of art, but I thought it would be more useful than just like a straight art degree, right?

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For those out there that are interested in astrology, I'm a Capricorn. So supposedly, that means that I'm like, ambitious or calculated or something. But

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I went interior design because I wanted to be able to, you know, have an income while also being in a creative space too. And then partway through that degree program, I realized how flooded that market was just talking with other you know, women in that program that had gotten out of school and we're struggling to find work still. So I decided to switch to something else that interested me. So I ended up getting my bachelor's in Spanish. So I was always good at it. And I was like, I like teaching and instructing and coaching people. So maybe I could be like a Spanish professor in a university like academia, this would be a good fit. Gotcha, got the bachelors in Spanish.

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And to keep the story from getting like way too long winded,

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essentially,

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finally appreciated the volume of my student loan debts and was like I need some kind of income. So I was basically going to go into the National Guard

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via Officer Candidate School I ended up deciding to get a masters in Spanish while I was in ROTC because the bachelors wasn't enough to be able to teach.

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So did two years of ROTC while I was in grad school, got my Master's in Spanish, then commissioned.



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And partway partway through that process, I was talking to my older brother, who was



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essentially starting fighter pilot training in the Air Force at that time. And he was like, Well, you have really good grades and perfect vision. Have you thought about trying out for aviation? And I was just like, No, gee, this sounds kind of cool. Let's check this out.



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So I went for it. And you know, my first job in the army was as a Kiowa warrior pilot, which 58 D,



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highly, highly educated and deeply in debt, and like in the wrong topics, you know, like, the Spanish didn't get useful to later so that



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I can interpret bumper stickers. Yes, that's about it.



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Yeah, so



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flew for a while. And then



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my airframe was divested, it was too old to keep in the army inventory, and they were tired of and trying to invest in it for improvements. It was an older airframe. So they were all dissolved out to our allied nations. And



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at that point, I didn't want to wait for Human Resources command to figure their stuff out, because they weren't doing a very good job, in my opinion of finding a home for all of us.



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Non captain's career course qualified, first lieutenants. So I dropped a packet for special operations. And



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I eventually got to use my Spanish on a deployment.



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So with that, the question, I asked people, and again, I know that you know, you're still in in those areas that we can't discuss. So I'm just gonna open the door and see where you go. So before we do,



37:08

did you find yourself on this journey at any point deployed to an actual combat zone? Yes. Okay. So the question I love to ask anyone who's served has actually seen combat is we got a very polarized view of war, the civilians of the world, myself included, and especially in the States, either kilomole, like, Gods sought them out, or they're all a bunch of baby killers. And then the real men and women or you could argue almost children that we send over to fight for us. They have their own real world boots on the ground story. So it's two part question. The first part was there a point where you found yourself, regardless of the politics that sent there sent you there that you found yourself witnessing, for example, the trustees, and you realize there were some horrific people that needed to be taken care of.



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I already believed that



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atrocities were real and that some people needed to be taken care of before that deployment, just because, you know, in my early days of being a pilot, all of the human atrocities of ISIS were ramping up around that time, you know, all the the beheadings that were put on on YouTube and whatnot.



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So I had already invested in that a bit.





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And that was reinforced.



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In a deployed paradigm for sure.



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I will say, you know, my role was a lot more admitted, administrative, and I will not make any claims to be like, the operator with like, all the kit and the nods, and a rifle running around. Like, that wasn't my that wasn't my role. But certainly, I was in close proximity to that. And oftentimes, when people are in charge, I was in charge with even closer proximity to those paradigms. And



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it's, it's challenging,



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and



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not to, I hope, I'm hope I'm answering the question sufficiently for what you were looking for. But it wasn't so hard for me to go away and realize that there were atrocities as it was to come home and feel like no one in my family, or any of my friends would ever understand anything that had happened. And the you know, thank God, I still have the people that I went with, to be able to,



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you know, to relate to and have as a tribe, right? Because it was just such a singular experience.



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for better for worse, and it was it was really difficult to come home and

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be sitting around the Thanksgiving table and you know, have my loved ones sharing opinions that were just deeply, deeply uninformed. And it was hard not to lose my temper or you know, be offensive and it took a lot of patience to say you know,

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I

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Can't make anyone understand what this is like if they haven't been. So I'm just gonna try and be understanding and love them and find something else to talk about. But that's also very isolating. Right? Because you, you, you rely on those folks, a lot of times for that kind of support, and it's really hard when they when they don't understand and they can't understand.

 40:21

Well, I think that's the thing is so jarring. Obviously, it's a daily occurrence for a lot of us first responders. I mean, I've had it literally where I've been cutting someone out of a car at 2am. And then at 9am, my neighbors bitching about me bitched behind me, they didn't put my trash cans out that day, you know, and I'm just, you know, my fist is ready to destroy his face, and then have to take a deep breath and just go out my house and close the door behind. And then I had a lot of guests on the show, obviously, I'm not military myself, but they were like, it's, it's crazy. You know, I was in Baghdad 24 hours prior or Volusia or wherever, and now I'm in the Publix and in the supermarket. I mean, you know, wherever, like you said, a Thanksgiving dinner. And whether or not things are said inappropriately, you're just literally like time travel to a neighborhood in a country where people are oblivious to what is actually going on behind the curtain, whether it's an international curtain wall, whether it's a first responder curtain When Everyone's Asleep in their beds, and it's very, very jarring. So how did you deal with that.

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And so a lot of processing between my own two years,

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I tend to deconstruct things and be a little more analytically minded when it comes to my own experiences, because I will say there was a time in my early like bachelor's degree years where I was just behaving irresponsibly, and

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not really,



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not really invested in taking a hard look in the mirror, because it was just like,



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live fast, have fun.



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But, and I think part of that was also you know, a result of difficult childhood where like, first taste of freedom, we're going to do whatever I want.



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Even if it means, you know, getting poor grades, and, you know,



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being inebriated too much of the time in college, but



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I think



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I think I reached a point, partway through my master's degree where



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I realized, I wasn't doing myself any favors by not having the hard conversations with myself.



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And I realized I discovered the freedom that exists in



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knowing yourself deeply. And that means engaging with lies you might have been telling yourself or engaging with ideas that



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are there to protect your ego, but don't serve you in the long run or serve anyone that you love in the long run. And so a lot of that unpacking from that deployment, was spent just processing some of the things that couldn't be explained.



43:12

Not being able to



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understand why certain things happen the way they did.



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In some, in many cases, not understanding why our partner force behaved the way that they did, in certain aspects,



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was very difficult. And it's like you share living spaces with these folks on work that will work with them on a day to day basis. And sometimes



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there are choices that they make that are that are hard to



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accept.



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And in many cases, your hands are tied, and you can't do anything about that. Right. So I just spent a lot of time chewing, you know, how do I actually feel about this? You know, what,



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what was it all for? Did we actually do anything? Do we accomplish something? And if I'm completely honest, I still don't know that we, I don't know if I can say for for certain that



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the goals were met.



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But the same time I was being paid to do a job, and I did it. And that has to be enough, especially when I can't make sense of a lot of what, what happened.



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Well, Afghanistan, for example, again, not assuming any, any presence there, but a lot of the stories that I've heard, I mean, I've had some of the Afghani commandos and interpreters that work with us that are now living in the US.



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What you hear is even though the mission which from a lot of the SF community I hear the same thing we should have gone in we should have taken out the key targets we should have shut down the training camps and then we should the left and this was



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As expanded, you know, way, way too long. But I hear a lot of people struggling with that particular, you know, withdrawal and the same thing, you know, with with, with Iraq, you know, a lot of these people that are fighting and somebody's very famous conflicts now those, you know, areas have been taken back. But it's the it's the difference that they made in that town at that time. And so that's actually a good transition for the other side of this question I asked, through all the places that you've been so far, Were there moments of kindness and compassion amid some of these very, very dangerous, you know, battle zones for lack of a better word, that you remember, because we always see the horrors of war, but there's some beautiful humanitarian things that happen to



45:42

absolutely.



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I hate to quote Mr. Rogers, but you know, his mother, I believe the quote was, his mother said, there are always people helping, whenever something terrible happens, look for the helpers. And it is absolutely true in every situation I've been involved in.



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Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And, and you sometimes are also surprised by



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people's individual desire to, to level with you in a more human way. I think as Americans, we tend sometimes to be so hyper focused on mission accomplishment, that we often glaze over the human element that is really, it should be more important, I think in our work, but also is often very important in other cultures, where you make a lot more headway by sharing a meal with someone by breaking bread with someone than you do by sitting around a big desk in a meeting room, the way that we that we tend to do in, you know, in our dance standard day to day, planning and whatnot.



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There was a moment where an all in all female element had told one of my team members that they wanted to meet me, they heard that they had a woman detachment commander, and they wanted to meet me. So I traveled out to this location.



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And when I, you know, I was in like, task accomplishment mode, like, what are we doing here? What are you guys? What do you need? What's up? How can I help?



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And literally, her only response is a roomful of other women was, I just wanted to see that you exist, it



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makes me feel good to know that there's like, a woman somewhere in this organization. And that's, you know, I don't bring that up to be like, rah, rah women. You know, I know that a lot of those topics are, you know, things we're touching on today. But she, you know, she just wanted to see some reflection of herself in the organization that was, you know, arguably on her land in her country. Right. And that's, that's the human aspect. It's important to people. And honestly, I think that human aspect has been a really big part of why in my opinions, Alinsky and Ukraine

have had a success in terms of the Information Operations space, they've been so astute at humanizing their own fighting force, and capturing snapshots of day to day life of human beings being human beings throughout the conflict in a way that, you know,

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a closed state, such as Russia can't, can't compare to or, you know, the, the focus of their, their campaigning and effort to foster support for what they're doing is so off course, because it's coming from an autocratic and dehumanizing place at all times. And I think Solinsky and his planners have been brilliant as commanders have been brilliant in their ability to make a connection with people that are 1000s and 1000s of miles away by showing those images of life and showing, you know, old people than women picking up arms, civilians, picking up arms, people helping each other. There's the obvious aspect to have, you got to advertise bad stuff the other guy's doing to make them look bad, right? You have to delegitimize the opponent when you can, of course, it's just good. That's just good information ops practice. But

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I think it's really inspiring to see humanity still continue on in those kinds of moments.

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It's interesting, I'm not well versed in the history of that conflict. And I've had people say, you know that he's a tyrant too, but that's what I'm seeing. I'm seeing the footage of the firefighters, you know, fighting the lease fires while they're being shelled. I'm seeing you know, these civilians rescuing people from the rubble like we did in Syria, too. And then I see exactly what you're talking about. And the other side, I mentioned this at the very beginning of this whole thing.

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We have got a new boogeyman, the boogeyman is Russia. Well, as I point out, you think that Ivan the farmer

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It's like, oh, you know what, after I'm back at the stables I'd love to invader, you know, Ukraine? Of course not. So and we saw protests early on, suddenly the footage went away of the Russian people protesting that very movement. So, you know, I think that by creating that two dimensional element, they've probably eliminated all the organic opposition to what's going on by the Russian people themselves.

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Yeah. And it's also, I certainly think that's, that's true if you're, you're dominating the narrative already, right? Because I think Zielinski and his commanders put their put their best foot forward early on in terms of controlling the narrative about the conflict.



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Looking internal to each state, right.



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Ukraine is a democratic state with relatively open



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communication, relatively open media relatively open. I mean, certainly, you could make the argument in it's true that there, there are some biased outlets and whatnot, or some some, some new news outlets that, you know, strongly or in support of a Russian regime and etc. But countries like Russia and China, where everything is internally controlled, not only what gets out, but what other what citizens can share with one another. Certainly, that's a degree of control that we're not accustomed to seeing in places like the United States,



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which you all also makes me giggle a little. I hope you don't catch any flack for this. But I'll say something controversial, it makes me giggle a little when folks are like, well, everything's so censored, and everything's so controlled, and it feels that way, certainly, when you're in it. And this is your experience, it feels that way. But comparatively, we are so much freer to say what we think are so much more free to communicate.



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I think part of the reason that we haven't seen more opposition from Russian citizens about the conflict is to some degree, they don't know, to another degree, some don't want to know. And to a third degree, the population that is in opposition is being suppressed actively, and very deliberately. It's, it's, it's calculated, it's not by accident. Yeah, no, I absolutely. Think to flip that lens around. Shame on us for having freedom of speech, having the ability to share news. And what do we have two polarizing opposing mainstream media's that don't have news, they have opinion pieces, 24 hours a day. And they're more concerned about, you know, the the transgender athlete or some fucking Chinese spy balloon than actually disseminating good advice that will elevate the whole conversation, elevate the whole nation, excuse me. So the problem is, we have free speech, and we fucking completely abused it. And that's even sadder than not having free speech, in my opinion.



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Absolutely. 100%. I stopped paying attention to polarizing news outlets a long time ago, except to employ as teaching points.



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You know, hey, let's look at this one event, being wildly differently reported by two different outlets, you know, of course, it's hard to find the truth.



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To certainly that's, that's room for improvement. And I hope that, you know, there's, there's this theory that that goes, society goes through shifts in the pendulum, you know, will be extreme conservative values one day and extreme liberal, the next and that's wildly oversimplifying what we what is clearly a complex system. However, you can choose indications sometimes.



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And I hope that will the pendulum will swing from, you know, a taste in the American population. For polarized news, I hope that the pendulum swings back to a taste and demand for neutral, unbiased, straight reporting. And there's a couple companies out there doing it. I'm daily, giving like a free plug. Now, I'm a daily subscriber to 1440. And it's, it's everything I need, and it's in my inbox. And you know, if I want to go get opinions, I can find those you easily on the other news outlets, but I don't go look,



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because it's just the facts. So I hope that now if that people increase their demand signal for that kind of reporting. Absolutely. Well, thank you for that perspective. We've gone super philosophical and some of these conversations, I want to steer us to, you know, the bulk of what you're passionate about, aside from the things we just discussed. So as you progress through your military career, obviously you're exposed to you know, the higher tier of upper



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later as well talk to me about the genesis of you as a tactical athlete. And then when you started realizing that maybe there was some areas that needed improvement specially in the female tactical athlete. Sure, I was going into my training pipeline. And I was essentially, to use a buzzer buzzer we're breaking up with my toxic boyfriend CrossFit. I don't hate on anybody that enjoys CrossFit. I used to love it and competed it myself. But it started disagreeing with my body. And really I had for so long fought hard to be a competitor, and never could get that edge to get me really good.



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I qualified for regionals in Asia before it was hard, like



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it's just it is what it is. But you know, I was, I was a junior captain, in a new job. That was heavy emphasis on ruck marching and running and being durable for carrying heavy loads over a long distance. And so I'll never forget, I tell the story a lot because it was really powerful. But I was in a in like a human performance class, these folks came to talk to my class. And they were talking about optimizing human performance and what their program does and how they could help us. And at the end of it, I overheard this male Captain talking to one of the



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discussion leaders and saying, How can I get back into? How can I get back in love with running marathons, I used to love to run marathons. And it felt great, it was my favorite thing. It was my escape. It was my passion. But now, you know, like, I've had a wife and some kids, and I'm on this track. And I'm just having a really hard time finding that passion again. And you know, how can I do that. And what the specialist said to him was, it sounds like you are still very attached to the identity of being a marathon runner. And maybe you should explore other ways to express your fitness that are more conducive to your priorities and values right now.



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And basically, he was inviting him, he was giving him permission to set aside his marathon runner identity and look for something else that was joyful to him. And that just hit me like a ton of bricks because I had been treading like a mouse in cream, you know, trying to trying to make butter with CrossFit. And I just, I couldn't get that competitive edge. And I was becoming busier and busier the further end of my career, I got, you know, deployments ramping up and things like this. My body was starting to not cooperate, you know, headed have shoulder surgery. So it got to a point of like, wow, I really just needed to hear you say,



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you have permission to look for something else, you have permission to express your fitness in a different way. Oh, by the way, there are ways to do that, that translate better for your job functionality now.



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No, I didn't. I've never needed to be able to do muscle ups in order to be good at my job, never an added time, it helped me be a slightly more competitive competitor.





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So anyway, in that moment, I was like, Wow, thank you for that free pass, to let go of it. And now I can focus on something else. And so that focus became



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essentially becoming the best tactical athlete that I could. At the time I was, once again,



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one of the few women in an extremely male dominated military job. And



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at the time, I was very bad at ruck marching that was a big struggle for me was moving long distances for a long time under load. And I wanted to improve my fitness to the point that I could lead my men from the front, not from the middle, or the back.



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I didn't, I didn't feel like I could be proud of myself as, as an officer leading these enlisted males have never been responsible for a female soldier.



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At least not hadn't been for a long time, but



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I want her to perform as well or better. And,



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you know, you see a lot of really powerful athletes when you're going through an Assessment and Selection cycle, and it's like, okay, the competition's high. So anyway, I started looking for options for tactical athlete training



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that would be conducive to getting me in that kind of shape that I would feel proud of leading from the front. And I looked around for tactical athlete training and found a lot of solutions that were marketed and directed at men but basically nothing marketed and directed at women

were marketed and directed at men, but basically nothing marketed and directed at women.

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And, and at the time, I didn't know enough about the biological and physiological differences to appreciate that that was more important.

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I was more so just like, I'd be happy if I found one of these programs online and had like a PDF with a chick at the top instead of a dude. And it's like, here's your six week program to get your work time down or whatever.

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And I just couldn't find it. I

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I

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ordered a t shirt from a company that specialized in male tech athletes stuff. And you know, an owner of that company, I still consider to be a friend. And

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when I received that T shirt that I ordered in the mail, it came with, like, a condom, with like, a joke written on the wrapper, like a was like a play on words, like, always be a safe operator or something like that. was like it was funny. If I was like a dude freshly and special operations, I'd probably go that's hilarious and even more funny, but what it made me realize was like, Wow, man, this, this is really not branded for me. So where's the brand designed for me? Where what brand Am I the target audience for?

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And I just couldn't find it. So I basically went to my tactical athlete coach at that time, that I've been working with for a while

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and said, no one's doing this. How about you and I do it. And he said, Okay. So initially I was

and said, no one's doing this. How about you and I do it. And he said, Okay. So initially, I was the, the, the marketing and branding for Victory Project, which at the time, had more of a focus on apparel than was probably necessary. And he was writing all the workout programming. And

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after a handful of months, he decided that you had other bigger things going on. And we didn't really have the time or energy to invest in Docker project anymore. So at that point, I was on my own. And so rather than giving up on the dream of making this female tech athlete brand that gives good workout programming for women, I went and shopped around for certifications to train myself to write programming, so that I could do it myself. And I did.

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And in that process, I discovered Dr. Stacey Sims, who is probably best known for her viral TED Talk, women are not small men. Or excuse me, her TED talk is I forget the title, but it's related to nutrition. But her her general tagline is women are not small men. And what what I learned discovering her was there are so many factors that are overlooked in training women, that, if understood, well could really optimize female tactical athlete performance. I'm not just saying pointing out the differences, like oh, you know, women bleed once a month, and it hurts and they get moody, and then don't like we're not talking about like that basic level shit, talking about like, you can literally optimize performance, if you're paying attention to these systems, and you understand these factors. So incorporated that into VPS. Programming, and incorporate those factors. To the extent we can anyway, and, you know, we're still training female tech athletes in a monthly membership format. And I've recently dissolved the LLC, and we're standing up a nonprofit to make this thing do more and help more people.

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So let's unpack some of the differences. I just have Emily on who is actually helping Greg Glassman write his CrossFit book, but she's, you know, got an incredible resume. She has been a journalist for a long time. And she did some some pieces on this very thing and talking about, like, for example, one of the ironies is, when you look at all the physiological changes, you're actually optimal, I think it was during or just post menopausal. But obviously, you know, again, we've got a lot of factors that contribute to a more intensified, you know, pain and in some women, so it might be debilitating in that area, but she was talking about those hormonal changes. And there's some times where you will be at peak level is sometimes where it will be, you know, poor time to try and do those kind of red line workouts. So what was some of the real kind of standout aha moments for you when it came to separating the two? I'm terrified to use the word genders now, but you know, the physiological differences? Well, if we're talking about biology, I prefer to use the word sex. So let's do it. Sex. Some people are uncomfortable with that word, too. So who knows? Yeah.

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Yeah, there's big sex differences. And, you know, speaking specifically about hormonal changes. You know, the



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the female hormonal cycle has a purpose of creating an eye



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optimally,



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not fertile per se, but essentially ready to receive a zygote ready to receive, you know, a fertilized egg, right. And if it doesn't receive that, then the cycle starts over. And this is where we get the monthly thing, right, it's a necessary part of human biology for reproduction. But what that means is those hormonal increases and decreases create opportunities for essentially what you know, Stacey Sims has referred to and I have taken as a golden rule for programming for women as



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it's essentially building periodization, like micro periodization, into a woman's programming based on her cycle. So what we know is that on day one, which is when bleeding happens, or when it starts,



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you have about, you know, cycle lengths vary, but you have about two weeks of this low hormonal window, where you are more, quote, unquote, female hormones are lower.



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In which, as Dr. Sam says, you know, I learned all this from her. So I'm going to give her lots of credit,



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in which you're by body is more resilient to stress,



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all kinds of stress. And for anyone that doesn't know physical exercise is a type of stress. It's in, in most cases, a use stress and EU stress, if you're using it properly, it creates good

adaptations and outcomes getting stronger, getting faster, etc, being more explosive, more endurance.



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So during that two week window is an optimal time. For a woman that's not on hormonal birth control.



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It's an optimal time to go for heavy lifts, go for explosive lifts, work on more lactic threshold type work, work that requires longer recovery periods because of the intensity that's met.



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This is where we're working towards, you know, building that number up for one rep max or increasing speed.



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And then



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we know also, based on research that around



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ovulation, there's a tendency for sometimes more injury in in women's knees. And so you know, depending on how conservative you are, as a coach, or depending on the athlete and what you know, of them, you can make adjustments there or not. But then in that after ovulation phase, is essentially the micro periodization opportunity to decrease intensity, and work on more long, slow, steady state aerobic work to reinforce movement patterns and work at more moderate weight sets with slightly less explosive or intense movements.



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And that's the general gist of it is like, hey, you know, you have a naturally cycling, cycling female athlete, that's not being influenced by, you know, a hormonal pill, or any otherwise delivered hormone.



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You don't have to build in a D load week, every four weeks necessarily, if you're just alternating the intensity every two weeks, or, you know, however long her cycle turns out to be because it's different for some folks.



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And it's a pretty surprising, it's a surprising thing to experiment with that and to see it go well, and to see it go really well. I stopped doing hormonal birth control.



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Over right around the time I discovered Stacey Sims in order to see how high my peaks could go. And I was shocked at some of the barriers I was able to break through some, you know, years long platforms of performance, never being able to get past X wait for my deadlift or whatever.



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So it creates a lot of opportunity to optimize the athlete and work around their own individual cycles. Whereas if you're not doing that, you're you're running a number of risks, but one probably the bigger ones is



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impacting detrimentally impacting that female athletes



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perspective on her own performance. When it's like, it's go time Why do you suck today so bad? You slept for eight hours and like, you know, you got the right nutrition? Why are you dragging? If no one's considering that hormonal aspect, then we're essentially asking for more on a slightly less full tank. We wouldn't, you know, if we're doing the right things as coaches, we wouldn't do that for females, right? Because it's just about understanding what the individual what the individual aspects are, and really that circles back to a bigger overarching point for training where the individual approach is always going to be more nuanced. So whether you are looking at the training age of an athlete or previous injuries or



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their nutrition, their lifestyle habits, how much sleep they're getting, how much stress they face, both at home and work. All of those factors contribute to a coach creating an intuitive program that gets the outcome of the athlete wants and the athlete needs. So, you know, from



my perspective, considering the cycle is not so much



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like, throwing my fist in the air and like demanding a big feminist movement, so much as it is like just this is a, this is a best practice for an individual approach, if you're a coach. Simple as that, you know, you would make adjustments for a male athlete who



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I don't know, let's say has, you know, a shoulder problem that you have to work around, sometimes it's somewhere for the female athlete, or if you know, he's gotten better sleep on Monday, Tuesday's an opportunity for higher intensity, it's the same for the female athlete, right? So and a lot of that, too, is me indirectly, saying and also I'll say it directly now like D stigmatizing the conversation around



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women's bodily functions, and how those functions not only can give us opportunities in athleticism and performance, but really that they're that they're markers of good health.



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I believe someone published recently I forget which outlet but it was published that it's essentially a vital sign for a woman to have normal menses



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in the same way that you know, you would go to a doctor's office and they would take your pulse, check a blood pressure, those are vital signs.



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And so part of it is also changing the conversation to say, you know, we're we're overlooking a huge opportunity here to coach are women better? Absolutely. What if you got women coming off the pill you sending an IUD with your T shirts now?



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Can you imagine? Oh, man, so many people will be confused. That'd be nice. It's a keychain.





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All right. Well, then speaking of that, you touched on sleep deprivation, that's a huge issue for the first responder population. Talk to me about the impact of that on the cycle and the female athlete.



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I think just universally, you can say that it's it's kind of a kind of a golden rule that everyone needs sleep. And if you're not getting enough, you're going to struggle



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more specific to the conversation about women and how, you know, working in in tandem with their cycles.



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Overtraining can lead to sleep issues, sleep disturbances and sleep deprivation, right? So we're trying to keep a female tech athlete, you know, who's not on hormones, performing at a very high level and demanding, you know, in that like 90 to 100%, one rep max range, for example, in that luteal phase, we could be accidentally imposing sleep deprivation, potentially.



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There's also general knowledge aspects, for example, that women's body temperatures tend to run higher during their luteal phase, which is after ovulation. So some women experience sleep disturbance, just because it's that time in their cycle for the last two weeks. And so



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as a coach, if you're aware of that you can implement measures and protocols, for example, like recommending a magnesium sleep supplement.



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And if it's not a habit, if it's not a regular habit to take that then maybe recommend it for her just during those times when sleep is harder, because the body temperature is higher. And we do all know that human bodies drop a couple of degrees when it's time to go to sleep. And that's why so many folks, when we're talking about sleep hygiene, recommend turning the AC down. It's better to be a little cool and a little warm. So you're kind of working against that slightly warmer for a couple of weeks, right?



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Yep. I hope that answered your question. No, it did. Absolutely. Like I said, I'm fascinated because I'm personally not a female sex if I'm using the right terminology, but I mean, there's so many women out there that are gonna listen Yeah, surprisingly.

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But a lot of people are gonna get you know, get a lot out of this, but I'm trying to kind of try and think what questions we want to be asked another one, this is my own personal experience. Now coming through the academic exercise physiology path through higher education myself. One thing I remember I'd love you to tell me if this is right or wrong, or a gray area I remember being taught that male to female lower body strength is almost one to one but upper body was like one the point seven five. So is there an anatomical difference between a male and a female and then again, how does programming affect that?

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You know, I've seen

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research that lends it lends to both sides, or at least it lends to, you know, someone's towards will pound for pound, were the same. I don't think that's the case. In the other camp is kind of an in determined thing. I would say that

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generally what I've seen in female tech athletes that I think is reinforced by other coaches working in this space, and certainly by, you know, my own coach who I consider to be a mentor who's been coaching for nearly 20 years, right?

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There's kind of a consensus there that women do tend to need more emphasis in the upper body strength arena, in order to be able to produce the same output. As men, we tend to need to work harder on the benchpress, or harder on pull ups,

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harder on dips in order to perform at the same level as our male counterparts.

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I just I think it's a mistake to make a blanket statement that all women will struggle more with upper body than all men, because when when we start looking, like I said it individual variables and factors and we then we can defeat that claim.

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Certainly, a female, that was a former collegiate gymnast can probably out pull up a lot of dudes in the gym. And certainly, you know, there are cases where

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some people in general just show up with good genes, and they're better than everyone at basically everything.

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But in general, there seems to be a consensus that women overall need more emphasis on upper body strength building in order to do the same outcome. But as long as the trainings intuitive, and again, the coach is taking an individualized approach, then, you know, it would be a mistake to sit down and say, well, this woman a is never going to be able to do the same thing that man B can do. And if I may, you know, take this opportunity to reinforce a narrative that we presented at the symposium. I've mentioned the symposium a couple times, few weeks ago of afgri project, in conjunction with some other folks

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hosted a military women's symposium in order to shed light on some lesser known things, one of which was aspects of physical training, that could be improved upon so that military, female service members would have a better experience when they go to the gym and trainers.

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There seems to be a narrative around female and male service members that emphasizes this

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battle of the sexes, right, the the social media and news outlets covering things like the first two female rangers and the first female Greenbrae. And the first special tactics, Airmen. And all these folks, they're often folks that come out of the woodwork and you know, we can call them trolls, if we like, right, that that leave comments and say, Well, I'm sure the lowered the standards and, you know, women don't belong in special operations, and women don't belong and this and that, and, and certainly, I think some of that's just plain ignorant. But you know, I think there are also just generally good, otherwise level headed people that have fallen for the idea that, you know, somehow we should qualify, or, you know, men are better or women are

better in and that's not the conversation we should be having, especially in a space, like the military or in a first responder community where it doesn't fucking matter who's better, because the organization doesn't want the best necessarily, they want the person that can do it. Because not everyone can. Not everyone is qualified or capable of raising their right hand, or signing, signing up for the fire firefighter training or, you know, forgive my poor vocabulary and talking about other people's expertise.



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But we need to drop this narrative of, we have to prove that men are better than women or vice versa, because it's not what it's about.



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If you have a heart for service, and an able bodied, in my opinion, in the United States, you should have access to provide your service. And, you know, when we go downrange, and people are shooting at us, and we're trying to survive, maybe I don't need to be able to do 120 Push ups, maybe 100 is enough. And as long as my trigger finger works, then I've met the objective and we should stop competing and just let people serve.



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Absolutely, I agree completely. And that goes back to the individual. Like we said, the beautiful thing that we have in the fire service is we're head to toe and gear. So when you're in a fire when you're on a scene, there's only two types of people that you can see people that can people that can't that's the only president has a very valuable prejudice that has



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You know, a meaning has a true meaning if someone's just running around like a chicken with the head cut off, or they're hiding behind a fire engine, whoever's under that gear has no business being there. But if you look behind you and someone's holding the hose or or foot in the ladder, okay, it's go time and doesn't matter if you're male, female, gay, straight, you know, polka dot, whatever it is, where two firefighters that are gonna get the job done. Yeah, can I use this metaphor? When we do our next symposium, I want to use this example. Because I love that metaphor of like, man, let's say uniforms on I can't see your face, I can't see what's underneath it matters if if you can, or you can't. And I think that's really the big place, we need to emphasize instead of trying to like, reinforce some kind of competition or prove that one sex is better than the other. It's just, it's just not useful, especially in in a first responder or military line of work. Absolutely. Well, I know looking at your website, 2016 was a pivotal time in the army as far as opening more doors. So talk to me about that. And then I'm assuming there was a void in there where you're filling now where some of these female Tasker athletes are like, wow, okay, now I can actually go on this track to how do I prepare. So I have to, I have to go back and make that edit because I planned this symposium in conjunction with my good friend Shay, who was one of the first to female Rangers, and she corrected me based on her proximity to this particular policy issue.



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2016 was around the time that there were a lot of



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research findings being published in the different services about what a transition for all women, women into all jobs would look like. And so there was essentially a reinvigorated effort in 2016, to bring this effort back to bring it back to light and essentially say right services, you've done your research on integrating women in every job, and school, now do it. But in reality,



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it was 2013, where the actual policy documents in the memorandums were distributed among the Joint Chiefs and whatnot. So, but it changed without a lot of fanfare, the official rules changed without a lot of fanfare and 2013 to 2023. January was actually the 10 year anniversary of the combat exclusion rule, revocation



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which is what it was called. So can you remind me the second half of your question?



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I Oh, yeah. So so my was making an assumption, which, obviously, I guess, is somewhat 10 years old now. But when the doors are open for the female tactical athlete, then I get I'm assuming there was more of a need then for the training that we're talking about now. Okay. Now, I am a female tactical athlete, there's a lot of very



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male based training programs out there. So I mean, are you seeing an increase in the number of people that are needing the programming that you're offering now?



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The demand signal, from my perspective seems to generally be fairly consistent, it spiked a little bit around the time that the army changed its army physical fitness test to the Army combat fitness test, which invite by all measures was a harder test is a harder test.



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So it's a lot more varied and specified for combat profiles.



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So I saw a spike, you know, in interest for what we're providing around that time.



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Otherwise, I think the the demand signal is generally the same from my perspective, specifically in the VP realm. But what I am seeing is more spaces being developed that can appreciate what we're trying to do and and we do hope to continue to get their attention. For example, a number of services have implemented holistic training programs and holistic approaches to human performance that incorporate not only the fitness aspect, but the mental aspect and the spiritual aspect, kind of bring, you know, that provide physical therapy without you know, access, waiting for appointments and things like that. So it's trying to bring all these resources together into convergence to, you know, make the super soldier or the super airmen are whatever it is.



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But they still, they, they they still are not talking enough, I think about how women's biology impacts or biology and physiology impacts or training or how it can be optimized.



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That's still kind of lacking in the conversation. And I think that's partly due to the fact that



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you know, the vast majority of senior leadership in the military



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is comprised of males. And you don't know what you can't see, and you don't know what you can't understand in some ways, and I've seen a lot of leadership,



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really passionately pursue opportunities to bring value added for, for female and male service members alike and others, that it's just like, you know, giving you specialized programming is not even on my radar, right? So there's a variance there, and you have to take it on a case by

case basis, like, what you know what leadership is doing what to make improvements.

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But certainly, there's also a bigger conversation to be had,

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in terms of the fitness industry, and the lack of research, that, I mean, it's just, it's a pure and simple fact that the body of work for female athletes is not as large as a body of work for males, most of what we know, that's been published in common household names for training anyone, not just tactical athletes, right? Like any of these certifications, you can go out and get to be

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a strength and conditioning coach, or, or even

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individual trainer, what have you. Those certifications are based on research done in often college aged males, that are doing collegiate sports. And that's very different from female tech athletes. And from a broader society perspective, we know, you know, if we know, if we know 10 gallons about men and how they exercise, we know one drop about menopausal women, which was a really big section of the army that came out with concerns when this ACFT was changed. They're like, how on earth are you going to get me to do that?

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It's not to say they're less capable.

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But when you've had three kids, and you're still being impacted by a condition, potentially diastasis recti, where your abdominal muscles separate, based on pregnancy, you never receive treatment from a specialist afterward, that can help you rehabilitate from that, and it's still hard to do sit ups, and now you have to go do a leg tuck, which they got rid of.

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That's, that's arduous, at best. And so I think, you know, the spaces for opportunity aren't just a military thing. This is part of a broader conversation in society about, you know,





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investing in research that benefits women overall, it just, it hasn't been there.



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I had Leah bato on the show who's from birth fit. And it was fascinating hearing. And seeing this myself, like I've coached I've been in the CrossFit for 1516 years I've coached for I mean, in the CrossFit gym, specifically, I think it's been like six or seven years now. And watched in my gym owner have how many she had three children get pregnant, get fit, again, get pregnant get fit again, the same with so many members. And then you look at the average woman and the information they get. And it's you know, it's socially acceptable to pile on a whole bunch of weight, there's no discussion about, you know, prehab for pregnancy, mental and physical. And then pelvic floors and you know, all these things working around a PCR to me all these these anatomical changes, and this trauma that happens to the female body, how do we get it back? I mean, there were cultures around the world that don't just walk around, you know, damage, you know, they the movement, and the things that are around that I think naturally puts the human body back to where it needs to be. So the fact that we have women giving birth and not able to do anything, you know, I mean, there was like the whole women, female athletes peeing themselves in CrossFit Games became like a running joke. No, that's, that's not normal, you should be able to control your bladder and everything should be working again, if you're actually understanding the changes before the birth, you know, the the actual birthing process, and then the exercises that need to be done on the other side. So I know if you have any opinion on that at all, but talk to me about your perspective of pregnancy and post post pregnancy when it comes to empowering women that a yes, you can exercise when you're pregnant in this, there's some adaptations to make. And that, you know, you can get back to the new version of who you are on the other end as well. Yeah, I mean, there's a couple. There's a couple things that come to mind, but primarily,



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my first thought as best practices in general, for a coach, training an athlete in considerations to optimize that human being is



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pregnancy.



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And giving birth is essentially an injury that has to be recovered from, like you said, and that's reinforced by people like Dr. Stacey Sims and Molly Galbraith that are working in these spaces to help give women resources



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Having a child is is a traumatic injury that your whole body has to recover from. And, and also, there are physiological changes that come with that, you know, after birth, the way that your hips sit and ride are a little bit different, right, so you have to acclimate to a change in your body. And that's not any different. I mean,



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conceptually, it's, it's the same as if a male individual were in a traumatic accident or had some kind of an injury to the soft tissue, you know, in the abdominal area, like, there's probably some considerable rehabilitation. And we would also have to assume that certainly, like you were alluding to before,



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a more fit human being,



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before x injury happens, is going to recover better than a less fit human being that endures the same traumatic event. Right. So certainly, there's a call to action in there about



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helping women find that fitness before pregnancy so that they can rebound better. But it's also, like you said about about building good habits, in a lot of cases, I think there's a lack of education in coaches, and there's a lack of research to give



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concrete evidence for folks that are, you know, that really need, like, there's some folks out there that



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do really well coaching people on an experimental basis, like, Alright, I've read a handful of things. But really, I have to do some trial and error with my individual athletes in order to know how best they're going to respond. And other coaches, you know, it's like, I need 10,000 pages of documentation on why something is going to work before I'll let my athlete do it, right. And those are very different approaches that you can take both



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rely on what is out there, because thankfully, that body of work is growing, there's a fantastic

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Instagram account called period of the period that's based solely on she was a doctoral candidate, I believe the woman that runs it now has actually received her PhD. But she's just this account does nothing but compile research based on female performance that incorporates these things so that you can have insights there.

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So yeah, you know, make the human optimal before the injury, if you can, and then provide the resources afterward. I would also say, you would, you'd made a comment about this misconception that it's okay for women to gain as much weight as they want during pregnancy.

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And I think and I hope that that misconception is gradually going away, we can see in some sectors of society where women are,

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at least I've seen a personal experience, right? I'm referring to personal experience now, but women that

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become sedentary. And you know, it's really more about like protection and being seated and not and not creating a dangerous situation, per se. I don't think that's necessarily the right approach. And in other examples, I've seen women are continuing to train as hard as they can, that their doctor thinks is feasible.

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To her to me if she's ever listening to this podcast, is a fucking Rockstar, and I've really enjoyed watching her exercise in the open as a pregnant woman. Like, it's just fun. So that, you know, that kind of runs the gamut. But I think the most persistent social problems that we can overcome our one, that the assumption is that all women are weaker, you just need some intelligent coaches with resources that know what they're doing, honestly.

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Or just generally assumption that they're less capable. But to you know, there is certainly



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a powerful inertia of social media and marketing that has that just lives to tell women get smaller, lose weight gets thinner, because smaller whose weight gets thinner. If I could show you my Instagram algorithms right now, you know, if I accidentally hover on like a bikini ad for point 707 of a second, I got a slew of really, really thin women, you know, filling my feed with ads about, you know, bathing suits and stuff like this. And, you know, not everyone's built that way. We know that it's common sense. Right. So I think we have to get away from



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the the assumption that weight loss is always the best solution. It's, I believe, Molly Galbreath. talks quite a bit about this in her certification Girls Gone strong, which is a great place to start for coaches that are looking to train women. Too many coaches assume that women want to lose weight. Before they even have a conversation about what your goals are. It's like right, I'm going to assume you want to do



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Drop 15% body fat or whatever it is.



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Someone don't want to some women don't need to. And I think it's a mistake to encourage a behavior that essentially says you should just continue disappearing continue getting smaller and taking up less space in the room. Especially, you know, from the military angle. When when research has shown I think they recently published findings from an army study that showed that larger women were stronger and did better in the ACF t because they were stronger. It's like, oh, no shit.



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I mean, they didn't know maybe there was more specification needed about like, you know, how much of that was muscle and how much of that was fat? And, you know, how much does that contribute to their overall functionality, right, like, there's some nuance there, we have to accept but



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yeah, I'm much more likely to be able to pick up 300 pounds in a deadlift three times. If I weigh 150, as opposed to from one 125. And, you know, there's so many women, there's so many stories of women that have served with that had to do incredible athletes great endurance and

strength athletes that performed really, really well in the PT test would have to starve themselves for weeks leading up to it because these body fat bar BMI measurements that that were being used as a standard just said, Hey, like,

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you got to drop a couple pounds. It's like, Man, she's, she's crushing the whole test. This is crazy. Yeah, well, the BMI is known to be an absolute ridiculous scale they as well, because you get these, you know, monster. I mean, some of them are bodybuilders, but in these huge, huge men and women with so little body fat, like, looks like you're morbidly obese, like really, like you said, when you're so myopically looking at the quote, unquote, studies. I love the phrase, don't wait for science to prove what you already know. I already know that you're not fat. Let's move on. You know, it's ridiculous. Right? Right. I hope I answered your question. No, you did. You did. Indeed. Now, you talked about the CrossFit journey. And this is one thing that's been interesting starting from oh six, as I've seen quite the journey, and I love talking to people that have been in this space before. One of the areas where I feel is incredible. You talked about to I mean, excelling in that space, but so many people just burn out, especially when they're focusing on the competitive side of CrossFit. And I love that Eastbound and Down thing being the best at working out. That's how I always saw it. I didn't compete. Because I loved CrossFit would make me strong as a firefighter made me stronger martial arts. So I use it as an application.

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But what I found for fire service specifically is where it lacks. And again, it's principles and philosophies. But most of the programming that I've seen in all the years I've trained, it lacks way over distance. Now as firefighters we push we pull we carry we climb. And those were were areas that were kind of needing extra stuff. So I actually use Julian pinos strong fit work to complement that with sleds and sandbags and carries and those kinds of things. Talk to me about the kind of tools that you use in the programming you offer online, you know, which which can move and practices do you like to hone in on? Yeah. So similarly, we focus on the, the functional need of the end user. functional need being not a general global reference to functional fitness, like is often used, but functional for the individual. So you know, as a firefighter, you recognized that there were certain movements that were functional for your purpose as a human being right, which means you had to push and carry and things like that. So with that in mind,

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the majority of our athletes are army athletes. I'm not sure if that's because the army is the biggest branch or just because my affiliation with the Army means that word got out faster that way, I'm not sure.

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But especially because of the new AC f2. We mostly had

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army athletes. And so what that means is, essentially, we try to find the middle ground for the three avatars, but they all get similar types of movements to reinforce their functionality. So there's a lot of variations on deadlifting in general reinforcement of like posterior chain work, because generally all of the services require some kind of ability to pick up heavy things, even if that doesn't necessarily up here in their PT test.

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Most of the schools that we find are more physically challenging or assessments and selections are that are most physically challenging for people to attend, require some kind of a heavy carry over a certain distance

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and probably you know

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The only I would say one aspect we don't look at quite as much as you know, talking about things like flight training that require, you know, the ability to get people in in a chamber to be hypoxic or something like that like

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talking about like, the the general, the general common threads between those schools and assessments require an ability to pick up heavy stuff and carry it for a long distance, and ability to put on a rock. So our workout programming does feature some rock marching.

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Sometimes it's more of an emphasis in certain cycles, sometimes it's less of an emphasis.

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But we also do have employee a variety of different aerobic cyclical work just because we do know that you don't necessarily have to run and rock every single day miles and miles and miles in order to become good at running and rucking you can reinforce those aerobic systems on an assault bike or on a rower, or through swimming or sandbag carry walks. So we incorporate those things.



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There's heavy, there's a heavy tendency towards more upper body strength stuff, like I was saying before, we've seen women have better results with that. So intermix



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work like push ups and benchpress. A lot of



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horizontal and vertical push and pull movements kind of intertwine throughout, weekly set. But we also generally make heavy use of



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daily undulating



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type of format as opposed to a more linear format.



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Because women also do tend to respond well to an undulating format.



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There's a lot of conversations that I feel like too, right now and in the fitness industry around whether you can actually prevent injury or not.



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It is kind of a buzzword to say, you know, well, this will prevent injury or it won't, and there's individual factors can't that can't always be accounted for.



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But we've tend to find tended to find that using daily undulating format for lifting and strength is responded to well in our cohorts in our population. So we do that.



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Using a different variety of things like close grip bench press will be an emphasis for, you know, the follicular weeks of an eight week cycle and then the next week, it'll be Dumbbell Bench Press or maybe a single arm kettlebell bottoms up



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bench press.



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Those types of things, lots of core work that both emphasizes anterior and posterior.



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And a lot of work that really focuses on



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reinforcing the chassis, strengthening the chassis, so joint stabilization types of things



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well, that mean I don't know what the current conversation is now or what I've learned through my own anatomy, my own you know, progress and strength training and injury is ultimately if you can control balance around joints that's going to minimize it the most he talks about the posterior chain so many of us are, you know, just so imbalanced and you know, our shoulder support forward or we got the anterior pelvic tilt. So by understanding how you maintain balance around a joint I think that you know, is certainly going to magnify the chance of or diminish the chance of injury I mean, you can never eliminate it completely a lot of us have you know got wear and tear especially as we get into the older tactical athlete but focusing on mobility and you know, lengthening and applying balanced kind of working on whatever is short and tight. will shorten weeks I say excuse me you know you can absolutely bulletproof is totally that you know abuse in the wrong word, but you can certainly



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increase the chance of resilience around some of the things that may have been injury prone before



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Yeah, absolutely agree in with in the past, like historically employed lots of different creative ways to incorporate that work like you know, prone weighted or unweighted scapular snow angels, and sometimes will prescribe cars which isn't normally something you see that pops up in workout programming, but I did it with a previous coach and I had good results with it. And it's become kind of a staple now is controlled, articulated rotations and shoulder joints and hip joints that seem to be good preparatory movements, but also reinforcing those joints.

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And yeah, you know, I won't, I won't pretend to be able to prevent injuries and everyone but

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certainly if I had to, if I had to distill down the couple of things that

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I think VP offers for women that others can't in terms of what could potentially prevent overuse injury, which is common for military folks, it's, you know, we keep the intensity around the follicular time and we keep the more steady state stuff and less explosive work in in the luteal time the second half of the cycle,

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we do incorporate a lot of joint stabilization work, there is heavy emphasis on upper body work, which women tend to need more. And really we ascribe to the idea that you don't have to, like I said, Run and rock all the time to be getting good at running and running. And I did learn that from my first tech athlete coach, who still has an excellent reputation in in the community.

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He basically got me better at running and rucking through lots and lots of rowing intervals, and intermixing. You know, run a mile, run a mile, run a mile, run a mile, and those are unusual paradigms. And sometimes we get some funny looks when we talk about these things with female tech athletes like well, if I want to be able to run 20 miles, I have to do 10 miles every day, and it's not necessarily the case, we can avoid some, we can potentially avoid some overuse injuries, by being more creative about the approach in and focusing those same muscle groups that require that building a muscle endurance and strength simultaneously, while also getting that aerobic factor. So if there's something I could leave for any of the female athletes listening, I would say, you know, look for some other cyclical work to do, you know, pounding the ground all the time, maybe isn't, isn't the best option.

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was speaking about that. I'm sure there's a lot of women listening that you know, would love to learn more, where are the best places to to learn more about our discussion today? And then how can they find Valkyrie project and the website.

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So I would say the best resources would I always start with Stacey, because she's just she's brilliant. Dr. Stacey Sims, find her content online.

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Our website is Valkyrie project. us.com. And the symposium that we hosted a few weekends ago is still, the recording is still up on our page under this symposium tab. It's an entirety, it's, it's it's a six hour recording, so you want to scrub through lunchtime a little bit. But those panels are outstanding. The first one is related to performance, the second one related to women's life course consideration, so things that we have to think about around childbirth times and menopause times.

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I would also say if you are the type of woman that likes to use technologies, you know, look into a cycle tracking technology that actually teaches you something about your body.

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That makes to what extent it can to what extent the AI can recommendations about your individual situation and certain phases of of your life.

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Flow is a good app. There's an app called natural cycles that comes highly recommended. And absolutely follow

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period of the period on Instagram, that content is just outstanding in terms of like, front running academic work in this space.

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And yeah, you can find us on Instagram as well. Sometimes on Twitter, we don't tweet a lot. We don't tweet a lot. I'll be honest, I haven't been able to get into the Twitter format. But we're we

got a pretty heavy emphasis or, excuse me a heavy presence on Instagram. So you can certainly find us there as well. Brilliant. Yeah, Instagrams, anyone I've had any luck with to be honest. I mean, the Facebook has just locked me out thinking I'm some business and no one sees my stuff. And then Twitter. I just, I mean, it seems like everyone who's it seems to be the platform for the biggest assholes in the world. So I just kind of deviate from that because I don't have anything that I can articulate in three sentences. But I can piss a lot of people off in three sentences. So I stay, I stay away from it. It's an old this ultimate polarizing platform. That was a criticism you made earlier. Right. Just just polarizing people all over the place. Yeah. I feel like we the things that we want to talk about, we can't do in three sentences.



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Exactly. Well talk to me again. So you are the Valkyrie Project website. What are the programs that are on offer for the women listening? So we have three monthly membership tracks right now.



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Gold, green and black. Gold is the avatar that we designed gold around is essentially it's for women that are in the military that would like help getting better at their individual service branch fitness test. So it's meant to bring that baseline up so this



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I'm sure would be, you can probably pass a fitness test, but you want to do better, maybe max a test. The avatar for green is a similar profile, but it's based on an athlete that is probably already maxing or close to maxing their individual service branch PT test, but want to get in the next level kind of shape that would help them be successful in a physically challenging job or school. So someone who's planning to go out for an advanced training or potentially an Assessment and Selection cycle, you'll see similar types of movements and golden green, and they do tend to mirror each other every cycle, but you will see higher volume in green, with longer duration for work. And typically, green will also incorporate things like weighted pull ups and dips that we would not assume a gold athlete could do right in generally, if you're struggling to do X number of push ups, and then odds are good that you're not going to be able to bang out 40, dips, or whatever. So that's kind of the difference there. And then black we designed for essentially, a woman who doesn't have any immediate goals, but just wants to stay in pretty darn good shape. And so there's definitely a there's a CrossFit flavor to the black track that tends to be more mixed modal, as opposed to looking and feeling more like a traditional strength and conditioning program, like the other two. So So blacks kind of the more like more fun, I just need a daily assignment kind of workouts where the other two are a little bit more directed in their in their goals. We do also offer individual programming for those that really want in need that specific attention.



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And that's essentially what we would set how we would set that up would be having a phone conversation with the athlete about what their goals are doing an assessment of previous

fitness history, you know, what is your training age? What injuries have you experienced? That kind of thing, getting a really more detailed look at the individual so we can maximize their training for whatever their goal is. So three tracks or individual is what we've got to offer. Beautiful. All right, well, thank you for that. So that's the Valkyrie Project website. I got a couple of closing questions to throw at you quickly if you got time. Sure. So the first one, is there a book or other books that you love to recommend? It can be related to our discussion today or completely unrelated.

 1:52:37

You know, in the spirit of staying on topic, I would recommend Angela Duckworth, grit.

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And I think the biggest thing that I took away from that book that I think would be useful for

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really anyone out there. But you know, maybe in particular, women that struggle with a bit of

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feeling a bit out of place in certain communities that tend to be more male dominated and maybe stereotypically have a

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masculine emphasis, like military jobs and police and first responders, firefighters, things like that. What's magical about Grit by Angela Duckworth is that there's all kinds of evidence throughout this book that shows that you can learn grit, you don't have to be born with it. It's not necessarily just some vague gift from the sky where you either have it or you don't grit can be learned and it can be trained. And if you're the type of person that has a heart for service, it's a really inspiring read. It's also backed by a lot of research that Dr. Duckworth did herself and gives some insights, you know, not only for personal application, but also if you're a leader, you know how how you can employ some tactics to to help your people

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show more grit, which is according to the book is employs a lot more of

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a passion aspect that people would expect. They hear the word grit and they think, just super

tough for no apparent reason like Chuck Norris, you know,



1:54:23

does a push up in the world moves or whatever. Not necessarily just that but there's also a passion aspect that's really important to grit and I think that's something that we can all take, take more of in the kind of line of work that we have. Absolutely, I've had that book recommended several times. So I appreciate it. I really love it. That's a good thing. That's a good one. This one is losses that's a bigger case for someone to actually go and buy it. So what about a movie and or a documentary that you love?



1:54:51

Can I recommend one that hasn't come out yet that I saw the trailer for it? Absolutely.



1:54:56

Okay.



1:54:58

There is a film called



1:55:00

coming out on an undisclosed platform. I'm not saying because I don't know, because we weren't allowed to now.



1:55:08

There's a film coming out called Guerrera, which is, you know, female version war fighter and Spanish language, G U, E, R R, A R Ara.



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I'm not sure if I spelled that right or not.



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People can say in the Google Mike Fang function so we can find it. Perfect. And this documentary is, I believe it's gonna be a mini series with a couple couple episodes, that



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is going to cover essentially, women doing their thing on the battlefield. And I do believe there's also a heavy aspect in there about



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the Afghan female



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fire teams that essentially were trained by



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American CSTs cultural support teams.



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So it's a kind of really unique look inside of like a niche aspect of war fighting.



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But I've seen the trailer promises to be really inspiring and really a beautiful tribute to those unsung heroes that, you know, haven't been doing their thing this whole time and just tend to be overlooked sometimes. Beautiful. I appreciate that sounds amazing. So I would definitely make sure I watched that was speaking of amazing people, is there a person that you recommend to come on this podcast as a guest to speak to the first responders, military and associated professionals of the world.



1:56:42

I feel like everyone that I would recommend already has their own podcast.



1:56:48

Um, you know, staying in the vein of the theme, you could talk to Stacey Sims, or you could talk to Molly Galbreath. They would both be examples of women that are doing really important work in this space that have a lot to say. And definitely deserve every minute of platform that they get.



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afford a lot from from both of them. Beautiful. Have you connected with them yourself now.



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I'm connected with both Stacey moreso than Molly, we tried to host Molly for our symposium. But she's got some other projects going that have not been released to the public yet. And we don't have any we don't have any special knowledge of them. But whatever, whatever she's got coming out next is going to be big, I'm sure.



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But yet again, Stacy's panel on the on the symposium. On our website, I was really humbled and inspired to get to host



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you know, a big girl crush basically, somebody that I learned so much from it was great to get to host her and she's got a lot of, she's got a wealth of knowledge to share, and has really been a groundbreaking person in in the women's performance arena. And I'm excited to continue to follow her and see what she does. Beautiful way if you're able to help me connect. I'd love to get her on. I think it'd be an amazing conversation. Absolutely. I'd be happy to. Fantastic. All right. Well then the very last question because we've already kind of talked about where people can find you. What do you do to decompress?



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I, I like to do a hot soak in the bathtub with some eucalyptus, eucalyptus scented Epsom salt.



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Water while sipping on a mag soothe beverage, it's like a magnesium powder. So just a little while before bedtime, like a nice ice cold mag soothe water and a hot bath. And then once I start to get snoozy I'll get out and blast myself in a cold shower. And by then it's just Zees time for sleep.



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Really, you know it's this supposedly it's good for your it's good for your immune system, right to do that to the alternate the hot and cold. So do that and it's also a nice little one two punch before bedtime because you get the muscle relaxing aspect of the hot bath and then the cold shower



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brings our body temperature back down so you can actually sleep we talked about sleep hygiene. How long do you stay in the cold shower before after the bath? Hmm, not terribly long. Some days. I can't tolerate that ice ice cold. Sometimes it's Saturday, just a little cold. Not a lot cold but



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usually about 10 minutes. Okay, so quite a while then.



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I mean, it's like it's like an in and out dance because you know, just to get to you got long hair. It's hard to wash in the tub. So you gotta wash it in the shower. Right? You're stepping in and out of the water stream.



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Brilliant. Well, I



2:00:00

Just want to say thank you so much. It's been an amazing conversation. As we said before, thank you to Miguel for connecting us. But, you know, this is obviously an area that I'm pretty naive to. But it's a very, very important conversation. And I've been proud to serve alongside some incredible women in my journey as a first responder. So I want to thank you so much for being so Jim Rison coming on the podcast today.



2:00:21

Absolutely, it's it's been such an honor and privilege and James, I would like to thank you for what you're doing. I know this podcast touches a lot of people and the the work that you're doing is important, and I appreciate it. And it's a privilege to get to share the time with you. So thanks