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

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

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00:00:11,120 --> 00:00:17,440

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

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00:00:17,440 --> 00:00:23,520

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

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00:00:23,520 --> 00:00:28,480

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

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

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

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00:00:40,720 --> 00:00:45,760

ballistic plates rather than the fake weight plates and that has been my ride or die through

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00:00:45,760 --> 00:00:50,640

Murph the last few years as well. But one area I want to talk about that I haven't in previous

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sponsorship spots is their brick and mortar element. They were predominantly an online

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company up till more recently but now they are approaching 100 stores all over the US.

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00:01:01,520 --> 00:01:07,040

My local store is here in Gainesville Florida and I've been multiple times and the discounts you see

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online are applied also in the stores. So as I mentioned 511 is offering you 15% off every

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00:01:14,640 --> 00:01:20,640

purchase that you make but I do want to say more often than not they have an even deeper discount

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00:01:20,640 --> 00:01:31,760

especially around holiday times. But if you use the code SHIELD15 you will get 15% off your order

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00:01:31,760 --> 00:01:37,840

or in the stores every time you make a purchase. And if you want to hear more about 511, who they

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00:01:37,840 --> 00:01:44,000

stand for and who works with them, listen to episode 580 of Behind the Shield podcast with

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00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:51,040

511 regional director Will Ayers. I'm extremely excited to announce a brand new sponsor for the

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00:01:51,040 --> 00:01:56,560

Behind the Shield podcast that is Transcend. Now for many of you listening you are probably

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00:01:56,560 --> 00:02:02,160

working the same brutal shifts that I did for 14 years. Suffering from sleep deprivation,

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00:02:02,160 --> 00:02:08,960

body composition challenges, mental health challenges, libido, hair loss etc. Now when it

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00:02:08,960 --> 00:02:13,280

comes to the world of hormone replacement and peptide therapy what I have seen is a shift from

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00:02:13,280 --> 00:02:17,600

doctors telling us that we were within normal limits which was definitely incorrect all the

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00:02:17,600 --> 00:02:23,760

way to the other way now where men's clinics are popping up left right and center. So I myself wanted

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00:02:23,760 --> 00:02:28,960

to find a reputable company that would do an analysis of my physiology and then offer

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00:02:28,960 --> 00:02:34,480

supplementations without ramming for example hormone replacement therapy down my throat.

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00:02:34,480 --> 00:02:39,440

Now I came across Transcend because they have an altruistic arm and they were a big reason why the

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7X project I was a part of was able to proceed because of their generous donations. They also

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have the Transcend foundations where they are actually putting military and first responders

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through some of their therapies at no cost to the individual. So my own personal journey so far

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00:02:55,920 --> 00:03:01,280

filled in the online form, went to Quest, got blood drawn and a few days later I'm talking to

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00:03:01,280 --> 00:03:05,920

one of their wellness professionals as they guide me through my results and the supplementation that

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00:03:05,920 --> 00:03:11,600

they suggest. In my case specifically because I transitioned out the fire service five years ago

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00:03:11,600 --> 00:03:17,760

and been very diligent with my health my testosterone was actually in a good place. So I went down the

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peptide route and some other supplements to try and maximize my physiology knowing full well the

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00:03:22,800 --> 00:03:27,680

damage that 14 years of shift work has done. Now I also want to underline because I think this is

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00:03:27,680 --> 00:03:33,120

very important that each of the therapies they offer they will talk about the pros and cons.

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00:03:33,120 --> 00:03:38,400

So for example a lot of first responders and shift work our testosterone will be low but sometimes

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00:03:38,400 --> 00:03:44,320

nutrition, exercise and sleep can offset that on its own. So this company is not going to try and

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00:03:44,320 --> 00:03:49,760

push you down a path especially if it's one that you can't come back from. So whether it's libido,

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00:03:49,760 --> 00:03:57,120

brain fog, inflammation, gut health, performance, sleep, this is definitely one of the most powerful

42

00:03:57,120 --> 00:04:05,360

tools in the toolbox. So to learn more go to transcendcompany.com or listen to episode 808

43

00:04:05,360 --> 00:04:11,200

of the Behind the Shield podcast with founder Ernie Colling. Welcome to the Behind the Shield

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00:04:11,200 --> 00:04:15,440

podcast as always my name is James Gearing and this week it is my absolute honor to welcome back

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00:04:15,440 --> 00:04:22,080

onto the show for the third time fire chief and author of Taking the Cape Off, Pat Kenny.

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00:04:22,080 --> 00:04:27,200

Now in this third conversation we discuss a host of topics from a recent fire that affected his own

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00:04:27,200 --> 00:04:34,800

family, a powerful trip back to Ireland revisiting multi-generational trauma, the hiring crisis in

48

00:04:34,800 --> 00:04:41,120

the fire service and so much more. Now before we get to this incredible and powerful conversation

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00:04:41,120 --> 00:04:45,920

as I say every week please just take a moment go to whichever app you listen to this on,

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00:04:45,920 --> 00:04:53,920

subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does

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00:04:53,920 --> 00:05:00,000

elevate this podcast therefore making it easier for others to find and this is a free library of

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00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:06,880

almost 900 episodes now so all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and

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00:05:06,880 --> 00:05:12,560

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

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00:05:12,560 --> 00:05:17,760

So with that being said I welcome back Pat Kenny enjoy.

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00:05:36,800 --> 00:05:41,280

Well Pat I want to start by saying firstly welcome back for the third time onto the

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00:05:41,280 --> 00:05:46,880

Behind the Shield podcast. I'm excited for that thanks for having me back again it really is an

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00:05:46,880 --> 00:05:53,040

honor. So we were talking before I hit record through a series of technical issues on the

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00:05:53,040 --> 00:05:59,920

podcast hosting site that I used to use I realized a lot of the old episodes really just weren't

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00:05:59,920 --> 00:06:05,760

available to anyone on Spotify and iTunes and all the main ones that they use so when this goes out

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00:06:05,760 --> 00:06:11,520

I would have also released the bonus episode because listening to our first conversation we've

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00:06:11,520 --> 00:06:17,200

done three now I realized what an incredible incredible conversation it was and obviously you

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00:06:17,200 --> 00:06:21,920

telling you know Sean and Eileen and all the you know the incredibly powerful story that you still

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00:06:21,920 --> 00:06:29,440

present with today so for people listening if you haven't heard episode 266 I advise you to hit pause

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00:06:29,440 --> 00:06:35,680

on this one go back and listen to that first and then jump into this but that being said

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as we sit here today it is supposed to have a massive storm here in Florida at the moment but

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00:06:40,000 --> 00:06:46,000

where are we finding you on planet earth? So I'm still in lovely Donors Grove Illinois we too have

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00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:54,480

a storm that's come through today was snow and sleet and rain and I always kind of smile when I

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00:06:54,480 --> 00:06:59,280

was the emergency manager for the village on at the fire chief we would see the weather forecast

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00:06:59,280 --> 00:07:04,480

and we would put together this great incident action plan for horrendous things and usually if

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00:07:04,480 --> 00:07:09,760

you put that plan together you got two inches of snow so I'm sure they went through that last night

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00:07:09,760 --> 00:07:17,040

it has not ended up outside right now as bad as they said it was going to be but it's January and

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00:07:17,040 --> 00:07:24,720

Illinois so it's kind of what you figure is going to happen so but good overall good. Good yeah they

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00:07:24,720 --> 00:07:29,680

they close the schools here and the schools are the shelters when we have hurricanes and massive

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00:07:29,680 --> 00:07:35,760

storms and it ended up going I think pretty much north of us and yeah so there's some questions

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00:07:35,760 --> 00:07:40,640

as to why they close it but again had it come through and they hadn't closed then people would

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00:07:40,640 --> 00:07:47,040

be demonizing people for not doing it right so I say kudos to them for being cautious and being

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00:07:47,040 --> 00:07:53,360

prepared and the kids had one night of you know good sleep today. Sure 100% that's that that's a

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00:07:53,360 --> 00:08:00,960

you can't win situation so you always want to err on I protected versus I took a chance 100% I agree

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00:08:00,960 --> 00:08:06,240

kudos to them. So we were talking before we hit record and I've talked about this a couple of

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00:08:06,240 --> 00:08:18,000

times now for me 2023 was I can't even describe almost everyone that I love struggled this last

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00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:23,760

year family close friends everyone was in was in some sort of hole and I was you know trying to

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00:08:23,760 --> 00:08:30,080

be there for a lot of them I flew back to England twice to to be there for two different family

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00:08:30,080 --> 00:08:36,240

members at one point and so I know that it's been a challenge for you before we get to the specifics

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00:08:36,240 --> 00:08:41,840

though of some of the challenges that you and your family have found I can't help but feel like that

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00:08:41,840 --> 00:08:47,520

is now the tidal wave the ripple effect of the pandemic I think the last conversation we have has

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00:08:47,520 --> 00:08:54,400

come towards the end of it by that point but now in when I look back and reflect on 2023 I feel like

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00:08:54,400 --> 00:09:01,200

that was really when it revealed itself what happens when you know people are you know told

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00:09:01,200 --> 00:09:06,000

to to stay in their house and separated from their family and friends and all the things that we were

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00:09:06,000 --> 00:09:12,000

told to do it's a real real virus absolutely but I don't know if it was handled the best way I can't

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00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:17,680

help but feel like that has been the ripple effect that we've seen this last year so before we go

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00:09:17,680 --> 00:09:23,040

into your specific family stuff which I'd love to dive into as well you are you know you've really

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00:09:23,040 --> 00:09:27,840

got your pulse on the mental health element especially when it comes to our profession

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00:09:27,840 --> 00:09:34,080

what have you observed as far as the ripple effect this last 12 18 months you know one one thing and

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00:09:34,080 --> 00:09:40,240

I don't know if it's tied to the pandemic we've had this discussion a lot in my travels but there's

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00:09:40,240 --> 00:09:45,920

a consistency to it no matter geographically where you're at it's really getting difficult to find

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00:09:46,480 --> 00:09:52,240

men and women who are interested in going into the fire service and going in ems and the kind

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00:09:52,240 --> 00:09:57,440

of the knee-jerk reaction has been well the pandemic did that there's because it brought in

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00:09:57,440 --> 00:10:02,560

the reality of not only were you putting your own life on the line which for most of us we were

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00:10:02,560 --> 00:10:08,160

always like okay as long as I'm not impacting anybody else I'm okay that's what I signed up for

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00:10:08,160 --> 00:10:13,520

but at that point with the pandemic you now were worried about bringing it home and bringing it to

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00:10:13,520 --> 00:10:19,360

your wife and your kids and significant other but I don't think that's what it is I'm sure that it

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00:10:19,360 --> 00:10:24,320

had some kind of an impact on it but I mean here in Illinois it used to be if you were running a

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00:10:24,320 --> 00:10:31,680

test for a full-time position in a department you'd have a couple hundred candidates now there have

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00:10:31,680 --> 00:10:36,480

literally been some tests that have been run in the last six months here where they had nobody

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00:10:36,480 --> 00:10:44,400

and so the pandemic I think yes more awareness but what I'm seeing more of is the offshoot of

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00:10:44,400 --> 00:10:50,400

the pandemic that's not ems is people really started to value their family time together

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00:10:51,520 --> 00:10:57,120

kind of ironic sometimes you were forced into a family situation and maybe you were like okay

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00:10:57,120 --> 00:11:00,560

this this was nice in the beginning but this is going on a little too long we're on each other's

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00:11:00,560 --> 00:11:06,720

nerves and kind of the human part of it but I think that value of sitting around the kitchen table

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00:11:06,720 --> 00:11:14,320

that value of playing a game together that value of having mom and dad around kind of cemented that

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00:11:14,320 --> 00:11:19,520

family stability and so now all of a sudden you're going back into the real world and it was that

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00:11:20,400 --> 00:11:26,400

trauma of people being told to go back into their offices well you were you were had an option maybe

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00:11:26,400 --> 00:11:31,680

if you were in that kind of environment to work from home and a lot of businesses have altered

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00:11:31,680 --> 00:11:36,480

their model and to allow people to do that unfortunately you can't work a full arrest from

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00:11:36,480 --> 00:11:43,360

home and you can't work a working fire from home and so you have to be in a building and you have

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00:11:43,360 --> 00:11:49,360

to be available for 24 hours or whatever your shift would be and a number of the younger people

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00:11:49,360 --> 00:11:56,880

are are not really up for that they want that family time when I came in it was a security was

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00:11:56,880 --> 00:12:00,560

really a big part of this profession it's what you got it you weren't going to get rich you

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00:12:00,560 --> 00:12:05,600

weren't going to get a bonus for doing a great job but you were looking forward to a pension at the

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00:12:05,600 --> 00:12:10,400

end that you would be able to lead a decent life when you retired because you knew your body was

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00:12:10,400 --> 00:12:15,440

going to be beat up by the time you were you're in your mid-50s and now the pension is not really

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00:12:15,440 --> 00:12:23,360

that important now it's we can go make a living usually you're having both parents working so

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00:12:23,360 --> 00:12:29,680

there's there's enough finance coming in to have a decent living and if I'm not real comfortable

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00:12:29,680 --> 00:12:34,400

with the job I'm doing and I have a chance to have more family flexibility by going to x

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00:12:34,960 --> 00:12:43,280

I go to x and so I see in our service the fallout is finding people who are going to be

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00:12:43,280 --> 00:12:50,080

finding people who are comfortable with the downside of the profession as opposed to coming

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00:12:50,080 --> 00:12:57,600

to the glorified side of it and then running that seesaw balance of okay yeah I am going to be

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00:12:57,600 --> 00:13:04,480

working on Christmas Day and I am going to be working on my wedding anniversary however I'm

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00:13:04,480 --> 00:13:08,800

also going to have time off that I could take the kids to the zoo on a Tuesday afternoon that some

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00:13:08,800 --> 00:13:15,440

other dad wouldn't have the pleasure and I'm still getting enough benefit emotionally like that

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00:13:15,440 --> 00:13:21,520

emotional bank account is getting enough deposits about feeling like I'm making a difference that

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00:13:21,520 --> 00:13:26,400

I'm willing to take the other side the downside and live with it which I think you do in any

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00:13:26,400 --> 00:13:31,680

profession and that's been going on for a few hundred years but I really think ours came under

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00:13:31,680 --> 00:13:36,800

the microscope with that whole work environment and I know there are departments out there they're

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00:13:36,800 --> 00:13:42,880

doing research now about you know forget the 24 48 forget that any kind of a model where you're

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00:13:42,880 --> 00:13:49,040

gone for an entire day can you break it up so that mom or dad is home for breakfast to see the kids

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00:13:49,040 --> 00:13:53,520

off to school or home for dinner and how do you do that with staffing models how do you do that

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00:13:53,520 --> 00:13:58,240

with the budget impact I know they're creatively trying to do it because they're finding that

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00:13:58,240 --> 00:14:04,320

their staffing is beginning to be drastically overburdened because what used to be a nice

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00:14:04,320 --> 00:14:08,880

overtime shift to have some additional money to buy kids gifts at their birthday or Christmas

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00:14:09,280 --> 00:14:14,560

now is like too much I'm living in that fire station and that's not healthy either.

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00:14:15,680 --> 00:14:21,600

No I think I mean you hit the nail on the head I don't think that you know the pandemic itself

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00:14:21,600 --> 00:14:26,160

specifically has certainly revealed in some departments you know a lack of support from a

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00:14:26,160 --> 00:14:30,720

department the moment there were vaccine mandates and things like that you know you're part of this

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00:14:30,720 --> 00:14:35,520

tribe and you know you literally will die for that badge that's on your chest you know performing the

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00:14:35,520 --> 00:14:40,240

service that you signed up for but then when that tribe turns their back on you obviously when you

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00:14:40,240 --> 00:14:45,120

talk about mental health organizational betrayal that's a whole other conversation but I think

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00:14:45,120 --> 00:14:51,360

you're absolutely right when firefighters were sitting around truly playing cards waiting for a

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00:14:51,360 --> 00:14:58,480

fire specifically the old schedule was fine it just was you know but in 2023 with our men and women

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00:14:58,480 --> 00:15:05,440

running you know literally 24 hours the answer is not I don't think it's even to break up the day

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00:15:05,440 --> 00:15:10,000

because the the swing shifts and all those ones are awful I mean look at our cops look at our

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00:15:10,000 --> 00:15:14,800

doctors and nurses they work those shifts you know but to give them more rest and recovery in between

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00:15:15,280 --> 00:15:21,360

and I think that the hiring crisis that we're seeing is more so that absolutely rightly so

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00:15:21,360 --> 00:15:26,240

there was an inertia from the pandemic a lot of people didn't work for a while and we're trying

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00:15:26,240 --> 00:15:32,160

to get them fired up again but now you can research what does it actually look like to be

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00:15:32,160 --> 00:15:36,320

a firefighter and like you said back in the day prior to me coming on you know the generation

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00:15:36,320 --> 00:15:42,640

before me they had a good pension they had you know medical insurance so they carried through

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00:15:42,640 --> 00:15:47,680

their entire retirement then when I came on they were cutting pensions the medical insurance went

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00:15:47,680 --> 00:15:52,320

away it was cobra for a year after you leave you know so some of those kind of carrots on the sticks

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00:15:52,320 --> 00:15:59,280

went away but you still want to serve so you're still not as worried but then you start seeing

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00:15:59,840 --> 00:16:06,080

all the things that happen to us when we work 10 15 20 years and now that's you know out there

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00:16:06,080 --> 00:16:10,320

on the internet so a young candidate is going to research now and be like wait a second when

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00:16:10,320 --> 00:16:14,480

they're understaffed they tell me that I can't go home you know and you've seen this more and more

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00:16:14,480 --> 00:16:19,760

and more so we're in this vicious circle so I agree with you a thousand percent until we turn

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00:16:19,760 --> 00:16:25,040

it around and invest in our men and women and give them more rest and recovery so the 24 72 I think

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00:16:25,040 --> 00:16:30,640

is the gold standard I think 24 is fine for a fire station when you have beds but you've got to give

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00:16:30,640 --> 00:16:35,760

people more time off if you're going to stay up all night you have to give them the time to recover

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00:16:35,760 --> 00:16:40,480

before the next shift and that is how we get people lining up outside our profession wanting

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00:16:40,480 --> 00:16:46,320

to do the job again the desire is there but they're not idiots they also understand that this looks

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00:16:46,320 --> 00:16:51,040

absolutely awful at the moment it's up to us as a profession to fix it so we can bring people back

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00:16:51,840 --> 00:16:59,440

and I think it's the the um the fear of that you're going to destroy the culture by just making

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00:16:59,440 --> 00:17:05,680

changes that for our for our benefits and I don't see it that way at all I would have a Chicago

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00:17:05,680 --> 00:17:12,480

training chief um Pete Van Dorp who one one time when I was getting ready to do Sean's talk he was

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00:17:12,480 --> 00:17:15,600

like Pat just tell me that you're not going to be another one of these guys that stands up there and

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00:17:15,600 --> 00:17:21,520

goes we've got to change our culture so I'm so sick of hearing that he goes I see that we need to

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00:17:21,520 --> 00:17:26,880

improve our culture so that means we hang on to the things that are still worthwhile and valuable

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00:17:27,440 --> 00:17:31,440

and then we improve them just like when we started you know you weren't riding on the tailboard you

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00:17:31,440 --> 00:17:35,600

started wearing air packs you weren't wearing three-quarter boots and I really give him credit

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00:17:35,600 --> 00:17:39,600

for that because I use it all the time anymore and say especially when you're dealing with your

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00:17:39,600 --> 00:17:47,120

health we know now things that we just didn't know before um that sleep deprivation every time I read

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00:17:47,120 --> 00:17:54,160

a sleep study it makes me a little nauseous because I think of how much I pushed myself through and

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00:17:54,160 --> 00:17:59,600

without knowing it um and that realizing what some of the long terms effect are when you get to be

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00:17:59,600 --> 00:18:05,120

I'll be 67 in May when you get to this point when you start to forget where your keys are and I can't

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00:18:05,120 --> 00:18:11,360

I've got 412 pairs of these you know cheaters because I lose them you really begin to fear

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00:18:11,360 --> 00:18:17,200

is this dementia am I am I is this what's happened to me and as opposed to okay I'm 67 you're going

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00:18:17,200 --> 00:18:23,920

to forget it sometimes we didn't know now and you hit right on it they do and I really push

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00:18:23,920 --> 00:18:30,240

departments when you're doing your orientation not hiring when you're doing your orientation

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00:18:30,240 --> 00:18:37,360

hiring when you're doing your orientation do you hit head on the challenges these men and women

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00:18:37,360 --> 00:18:42,960

are signing up for did they walk into the year in orientation watching Chicago Fire and they're like

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00:18:42,960 --> 00:18:48,560

whoa this is this is amazing and yes there are parts of the job that are absolute you can't even

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00:18:48,560 --> 00:18:54,720

describe them even tv doesn't do them justice however do you tell them that at some point

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00:18:55,440 --> 00:18:59,200

they're going to come across a call that is just going to go right through their heart

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00:18:59,200 --> 00:19:06,160

because we the irony is in every country the number one ingredient of a good firefighter is

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00:19:06,160 --> 00:19:10,960

get somebody who cares then we expose them to the worst situation you could ever expose them to and

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00:19:10,960 --> 00:19:16,720

we act shocked that it bothers them so do you tell them up front do you invite their significant

196

00:19:16,720 --> 00:19:21,200

other to come to the orientation and say hey you're going to see some stuff that nobody should ever

197

00:19:21,200 --> 00:19:26,960

have to see some smells that you're never going to forget and when that happens that's normal

198

00:19:26,960 --> 00:19:34,240

and here's what we have in place because we know that's going to occur to help take care of you

199

00:19:34,240 --> 00:19:38,640

to get you back hold to bring you back to your loved ones whole so whether that's what we're

200

00:19:38,640 --> 00:19:44,080

going to do additional sleep we're going to look at nutrition we're going to have our own psychiatrist

201

00:19:44,080 --> 00:19:49,760

who's part of our response team but whatever that would be you need to tell them up front what's the

202

00:19:49,760 --> 00:19:56,400

challenge and then more importantly here's what we're going to do if your loved one wants to join

203

00:19:56,400 --> 00:20:02,880

our family here's how we're going to go about it instead we ignore it until it hits the fan and then

204

00:20:02,880 --> 00:20:08,320

it's like oh my god but we're in emergency crisis mode and the people have done their homework ahead

205

00:20:08,320 --> 00:20:14,160

of time have got to be sitting in the orientation going so every day is nirvana in this job for 30

206

00:20:14,160 --> 00:20:19,760

years nothing ever goes wrong you're never sad you're never pissed that you're here you're never

207

00:20:20,640 --> 00:20:24,960

no that's not reality well they're not telling me the truth so i'll go do something where they

208

00:20:24,960 --> 00:20:32,160

tell me the truth and we pride ourselves on our value of honesty let me in your home on your worst

209

00:20:32,160 --> 00:20:36,880

day and you're not looking over your shoulder if i'm taking your rolex watch or if i'm doing

210

00:20:36,880 --> 00:20:42,960

something i shouldn't be doing because you know i'm honest but we don't start off right away with

211

00:20:42,960 --> 00:20:47,360

being honest with them when they walk in the door and god bless them if they choose after they walk

212

00:20:47,360 --> 00:20:53,600

out of their orientation to go boy this wasn't what i thought it was it's not for me or your

213

00:20:53,600 --> 00:20:58,960

significant other and this is a true story what would be a year ago of december a number one

214

00:20:58,960 --> 00:21:05,360

candidate went through an academy flew through flying colors valedictorian came out of an academy

215

00:21:05,360 --> 00:21:10,560

first day on shift was in december the shift was talking about yeah you know we drew the holiday

216

00:21:10,560 --> 00:21:15,360

draw this year so you'll learn how this goes kid but if you get new year's eve you'll get christmas

217

00:21:15,360 --> 00:21:19,520

eve you'll get it just kind of and then next year it'll rotate out but we do a family thing our

218

00:21:19,520 --> 00:21:23,920

department's very involved on holidays so the families come down cook dinner together and

219

00:21:23,920 --> 00:21:29,440

this kid's just staring at him and they're like what's the matter said you mean i have to work

220

00:21:29,440 --> 00:21:36,480

christmas day they're like well yeah i thought he was kidding the whole day so well yeah you

221

00:21:36,480 --> 00:21:40,160

don't get to go home for a few hours no the whole day but then you'll be off the next couple days

222

00:21:40,160 --> 00:21:44,400

blah blah well this young man went home and had a discussion with his significant other that was

223

00:21:44,400 --> 00:21:53,040

just husband and wife and on that following monday he resigned and the chief was shocked and and also

224

00:21:53,040 --> 00:21:58,160

whatever every other consideration as a chief you would have about staffing and financial impact and

225

00:21:58,160 --> 00:22:04,400

it's like what do you mean and he said i didn't realize that i had to work 24 hours on holidays

226

00:22:04,400 --> 00:22:12,880

and my wife wants no part of that now that took a lot of courage to do um but it's it's a reality

227

00:22:12,880 --> 00:22:17,920

and if they had said and the significant other was invited during the orientation

228

00:22:19,040 --> 00:22:24,240

they could have shortcut it what ended up being a very difficult decision for a family and i always

229

00:22:24,240 --> 00:22:28,560

use the analogy when i have about the cape going you hand a man or woman the cape when they walk

230

00:22:28,560 --> 00:22:33,840

in the door of the academy they're not giving it back even if they should based on their significant

231

00:22:33,840 --> 00:22:38,640

other impact or what it does to them they're not giving it back you're either going to take it from

232

00:22:38,640 --> 00:22:44,480

them by firing them or they're going to wear it through that entire career and be full of holes

233

00:22:44,480 --> 00:22:49,200

some of which you can never fix and i think that that's one of those areas we we're just missing

234

00:22:49,200 --> 00:22:53,920

the ball and and i respond a lot of chiefs will sometimes get upset with me when i said that and

235

00:22:53,920 --> 00:22:58,400

go hey pat do you realize how hard it is for us to get somebody in the door and now you want us to

236

00:22:58,400 --> 00:23:04,800

tell them all this stuff at orientation yes i do because if they're not leaving in the beginning

237

00:23:04,800 --> 00:23:10,000

when they should they're going to be a problem at some point along the way and you will have

238

00:23:10,000 --> 00:23:15,760

contributed to injuring them and you as a chief have said your number one thing is to protect

239

00:23:15,760 --> 00:23:21,200

your people well start before they ever get hired i love that i mean talking about the

240

00:23:21,200 --> 00:23:27,200

honesties i have literally put a kind of call to action this new year for courage in the fire

241

00:23:27,200 --> 00:23:30,640

service and when you you know you talk about courage immediately like what are you talking

242

00:23:30,640 --> 00:23:34,720

about we go into burning buildings we cut people from cars we hang off cliffs on ropes whatever

243

00:23:34,720 --> 00:23:41,520

it is and it's like yeah we do but where is the courage for us advocating for the work environment

244

00:23:41,520 --> 00:23:46,800

that will not only benefit us physically and mentally but also benefit our family dynamic

245

00:23:46,800 --> 00:23:52,240

we're absolute cowards because what happens when you talk about the 2472 oh that'll never happen

246

00:23:52,240 --> 00:23:57,840

they'll never go for it well excuse my language what a pussy attitude that is i thought you were

247

00:23:57,840 --> 00:24:02,000

you know a courageous warrior and yet when it comes to your own wellness you're not willing

248

00:24:02,000 --> 00:24:09,040

to put up a fight at all you know there is no sense whatsoever that the people making decisions

249

00:24:09,040 --> 00:24:15,520

about when you work work 40 hours and go home to their own bed every night but you're trying to

250

00:24:15,520 --> 00:24:19,840

you know you're saying it's not worth the fight to push back on why you work 56 hours a week

251

00:24:19,840 --> 00:24:26,160

80 with a mandatory that week you know this is the problem is that we've become so um god what's the

252

00:24:26,160 --> 00:24:33,840

right word uh castrated basically you know we're so beat down we're so tired that we don't have to

253

00:24:33,840 --> 00:24:39,120

fight where it actually matters and we talk about it's for them well let's not forget the more we're

254

00:24:39,120 --> 00:24:44,480

beaten down physically and mentally the worst firefighters we become so we're not only advocating

255

00:24:44,480 --> 00:24:49,840

for ourselves and our family which should be number one before the job even but we're actually

256

00:24:49,840 --> 00:24:54,800

pushing against the very thing that will make us fitter that will make us be able to think faster

257

00:24:54,800 --> 00:25:00,160

on our feet and assess a fire or perform a you know a cardiac algorithm or whatever it is

258

00:25:00,880 --> 00:25:05,200

and so we're beating our chest saying it's for them and it's not it's for them the people in

259

00:25:05,200 --> 00:25:10,240

the cities and the counties which is a complete false economy too because they're bleeding money

260

00:25:10,240 --> 00:25:14,960

because all of us are falling apart because of the way that we're worked no that's a great point and

261

00:25:14,960 --> 00:25:19,840

i i we've had some spirited discussions with a lot of chiefs so i have an incredible amount of respect

262

00:25:19,840 --> 00:25:25,360

for i said you know even if you don't want to take the moral view about you're taking care of your

263

00:25:25,360 --> 00:25:31,920

firefighter look at it from a total business sense investment you've put in that man or woman who
now

264

00:25:31,920 --> 00:25:37,360

starts to break down who starts to get injured both physically and mentally and now they're off
the

265

00:25:37,360 --> 00:25:42,240

job and you're bringing back people on overtime that you're depreciating their value as human

266

00:25:42,240 --> 00:25:47,120

beings because you got to force them back because you have no choice if you put the
investment in

267

00:25:47,120 --> 00:25:52,480

on a proactive side and yes we haven't studied it for a number of years to be able to show
exactly

268

00:25:52,480 --> 00:25:58,800

what that end savings would be but financially there's no doubt in my mind you would save on

269

00:25:58,800 --> 00:26:03,840

that and you would have a much more healthy crew one that would last longer one that the
morale

270

00:26:03,840 --> 00:26:09,840

would be but i mean there's so many positives about it but i do think we get into that rigidity of

271

00:26:09,840 --> 00:26:16,160

it's got to be this way and we're not taking enough time to read the studies because they're

272

00:26:16,160 --> 00:26:21,360

scary and it goes we have to change the way we do business well how are we going to do that

273

00:26:21,360 --> 00:26:26,160

well you're going to have to experiment and some of it's not going to work and that research and

274

00:26:26,160 --> 00:26:30,000

development is going to cost some money yeah but you're still doing it for your people and i can't

275

00:26:30,000 --> 00:26:35,200

help but think that the men and women who work in your department if they know you're trying things

276

00:26:35,200 --> 00:26:40,320

because you think it will improve their quality of life yeah every firefighter is going to find

277

00:26:40,320 --> 00:26:44,880

something wrong with everything it's me included but they're going to see and go we're going to

278

00:26:44,880 --> 00:26:50,160

give that a try because maybe that will make my home life better maybe it'll make me feel better

279

00:26:50,160 --> 00:26:54,720

maybe i won't have as many nightmares i've got somebody to talk to so many positives can come

280

00:26:54,720 --> 00:27:00,720

out of it and if we don't do it we're going to be forced to do it at some point and the whole model

281

00:27:01,280 --> 00:27:06,480

of how many people we send to a call what their proficiencies are and whatever we're going to let

282

00:27:06,480 --> 00:27:11,360

down the public that we took that oath and swore that we're going to protect we're not going to be

283

00:27:11,360 --> 00:27:18,240

as good as we were because we're just too depleted the one thing i get asked a lot is can you send me

284

00:27:18,240 --> 00:27:22,800

studies that prove that a 42-hour work week would be healthier than a 56-hour work week

285

00:27:23,360 --> 00:27:29,600

and i just look at them did you just ask me that you know do you want to study to show that if you

286

00:27:29,600 --> 00:27:34,400

stand in the middle of a freeway and you get hit by a car it's detrimental to your anatomy like

287

00:27:34,400 --> 00:27:39,280

where do we draw the line and i've said this a lot the other thing i would also put people is

288

00:27:39,280 --> 00:27:45,600

show send me something that justifies the fact that you don't think you're worthy for a 40-hour

289

00:27:45,600 --> 00:27:52,800

work week but the people in the offices are you get up all night you get up to save lives they push

290

00:27:52,800 --> 00:27:59,360

papers have you know parties in the office with cake and pizza no one is working you know all day

291

00:27:59,360 --> 00:28:04,160

every day no one any profession look go see a construction site they're not working all day

292

00:28:04,160 --> 00:28:09,040

the road digger is not working all day everyone has high you know times they're working and downtime

293

00:28:09,040 --> 00:28:14,960

as do firefighters but until someone can explain to me why a firefighter should work 56 but anyone

294

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

else should work 40 no one can because it's insanity we've devolved from the you know the

295

00:28:21,520 --> 00:28:27,280

cards and the dalmatian and you know the steamer you know this is where we're at now so this is the

296

00:28:27,280 --> 00:28:32,080

problem and i talked about this a lot i don't want to you know get on my soapbox and talk again again

297

00:28:32,080 --> 00:28:37,680

again but we have told ourselves a myth we have the most amazing schedule i work one day on i have

298

00:28:37,680 --> 00:28:43,840

two days off but we don't the work week is a work day in civilian world is nine hours with a one hour

299

00:28:43,840 --> 00:28:50,400

lunch so eight hours we work three hours shifts shoved together so we work three days on one day

300

00:28:50,400 --> 00:28:55,440

off so we don't work 10 days a month we work 30 days a month that's why when you add it up the

301

00:28:55,440 --> 00:29:01,760

math is like oh okay actually that's kind of shit now 24 72 would be a 42-hour work week it would be

302

00:29:01,760 --> 00:29:06,720

an extra 24-hour period because that second day you just got off shifts you worked eight hours

303

00:29:06,720 --> 00:29:10,240

when you get off so you've only got that third day it's even a day off that you're getting ready to

304

00:29:10,240 --> 00:29:15,840

go back on shift so that extra 24 would be life-changing for so many people and they'd

305

00:29:15,840 --> 00:29:21,920

start to be able to get a little closer to baseline when they come back and do the next shift so this

306

00:29:21,920 --> 00:29:28,960

is what's crazy is that no matter what the oh yeah but thing that comes back it's always nonsense

307

00:29:28,960 --> 00:29:34,160

the reality is the men and women in uniform deserve to have a work week that allows them to thrive

308

00:29:34,160 --> 00:29:38,160

and they deserve to be able to go home when they're done with their shift not be told that they have

309

00:29:38,160 --> 00:29:44,480

to stay shift after shift after shift well i think that word courage you brought up it it made me

310

00:29:44,480 --> 00:29:49,440

think when when it came up and i remember back being i was a young chief so this is in the

311

00:29:50,080 --> 00:29:56,480

early to mid 90s and um our shift the night before had been out on a on a working fire and

312

00:29:56,480 --> 00:30:01,760

had been up most of the night and the it just happened to be that the shift was coming on the

313

00:30:01,760 --> 00:30:05,920

next day and we were short we were small we're only five person shift this one tiny station

314

00:30:06,480 --> 00:30:11,280

and a couple of guys were were sick legitimately sick they'd been sick from their previous tour

315

00:30:11,280 --> 00:30:15,360

they didn't even come back for a fire and you know if a firefighter doesn't come back for a fire

316

00:30:15,360 --> 00:30:22,880

they're sick so we had two people who had to stay over and i remember it was lunchtime and

317

00:30:23,680 --> 00:30:29,760

both these guys were dead to the world in their chairs watching tv out cold and it was came to

318

00:30:29,760 --> 00:30:35,200

one o'clock and the lieutenant was like chief can i just leave them in the chairs i mean they're

319

00:30:35,200 --> 00:30:41,200

shot i'm like absolutely well about an hour later the village manager came down happened to walk

320

00:30:41,200 --> 00:30:46,480

through the day room saw two guys asleep in the chair at 1 30 in the afternoon and all of a sudden

321

00:30:46,480 --> 00:30:52,160

i had an irate boss in my office chewing me out about what what do you know what the public would

322

00:30:52,160 --> 00:30:57,520

think of this and i'm like the general public wasn't out there in those horrible conditions

323

00:30:57,520 --> 00:31:01,520

it was a freezing cold night those horrible conditions trying to save somebody's home and

324

00:31:01,520 --> 00:31:07,040

best yet save the neighbor's home have not slept at all and i go and do you want one of them working

325

00:31:07,040 --> 00:31:12,080

on your dad who's got a cardiac arrest 20 minutes from now who doesn't know one end of the box from

326

00:31:12,080 --> 00:31:16,880

another i go i'm okay with them sitting there and if you got to discipline anybody you can discipline

327

00:31:16,880 --> 00:31:24,800

me and we have to be okay with realizing that we're dealing with human bodies and what you're

328

00:31:24,800 --> 00:31:31,360

putting them through we are all i don't always like the athlete term because sometimes i think

329

00:31:31,360 --> 00:31:36,160

it gets taken in the other direction but but you absolutely are training to put your body

330

00:31:36,160 --> 00:31:42,000

to a stress point and to be at its maximum what it needs to be to keep yourself your partner and

331

00:31:42,000 --> 00:31:47,200

whoever you're responding to safe and realizing what it does to you and being okay with we're

332

00:31:47,200 --> 00:31:53,680

going to replenish sorry if you you don't like the visuals of it that's okay you'll really like the

333

00:31:53,680 --> 00:31:59,360

visuals when a great sharp crew shows up at your house in your worst moment and i think it takes

334

00:31:59,360 --> 00:32:04,960

courage as the leader to stand up and go that's what we're going to do and if that doesn't work

335

00:32:04,960 --> 00:32:08,960

for you i'm okay you really need to get another leader because then i can't look them in the eye

336

00:32:08,960 --> 00:32:16,800

and go i value your safety as a profession it appears that we've done a terrible job educating

337

00:32:16,800 --> 00:32:21,440

the public on what we do which is then why we have so many issues especially with these politicians

338

00:32:21,440 --> 00:32:26,560

you obviously have a much you know more veteran perspective than i do only at 14 years total in

339

00:32:26,560 --> 00:32:33,360

the fire service where have we gone wrong that to the fact that people are asking you know what are

340

00:32:33,360 --> 00:32:38,160

we buying you in the grocery store or complaining that there's a crew working out in a local gym or

341

00:32:39,360 --> 00:32:44,160

you know why is there a fire engine on my medical call when for example we've done ems a lot of us

342

00:32:44,160 --> 00:32:54,080

for 50 years now right i think there's the the fear of look behind the curtain um i think for so long

343

00:32:55,440 --> 00:33:00,880

our profession at least when i started the men who were in my fire station when i first

344

00:33:01,520 --> 00:33:07,760

went in we were doing 24 48s most of them had second jobs where they worked at least eight

345

00:33:07,760 --> 00:33:12,960

hours if not more on their two days off because that's where the income to support their family

346

00:33:12,960 --> 00:33:17,600

came from the fire service did not i was i was a high school teacher before i went to the fire

347

00:33:17,600 --> 00:33:23,680

service took a pay cut to go be a firefighter and so there was kind of this feeling of like

348

00:33:24,160 --> 00:33:29,200

well you didn't want to tell your neighbor that you had two incomes even though your neighbor's

349

00:33:29,200 --> 00:33:35,680

first income was more than you were making work in two jobs so there was this feeling of like

350

00:33:35,680 --> 00:33:43,440

we need to be very very quiet about what we do and why because it's going to sound like we're

351

00:33:44,240 --> 00:33:51,040

bragging instead of going out front and showing the public yeah this is what we do and why do we

352

00:33:51,040 --> 00:33:56,400

do some of the things you might look and go well i can't go shopping in my job what why i know

353

00:33:56,400 --> 00:34:02,400

there was a fire chief that ran into this this is years ago and um a lot of pushback and he sat with

354

00:34:02,400 --> 00:34:08,400

the union said no no problem i'm not going to give into that and have people not go to the store

355

00:34:08,400 --> 00:34:11,840

because i'm okay with that but i want you to do when you go to the stores because i want you to

356

00:34:11,840 --> 00:34:16,240

have a card table in the back of the emails and then when you go in and have somebody set it outside

357

00:34:16,240 --> 00:34:20,880

the store with the card table and offer to give away free pub ed stuff and do blood pressures

358

00:34:20,880 --> 00:34:24,560

so you're only going to be in there for half an hour just do that and let's see what happens

359

00:34:25,200 --> 00:34:31,360

and the response was amazing from the people in the public going holy cow i saw that fire truck

360

00:34:31,360 --> 00:34:36,240

parked there and it always used to bother me but they put my kin on or they took my mother's blood

361

00:34:36,240 --> 00:34:41,360

pressure whatever it was we were afraid to do so that inspired me we had an open house once

362

00:34:41,920 --> 00:34:46,400

and i said guys we're going to do a fashion show well immediately you know where their heads went

363

00:34:47,360 --> 00:34:51,760

relax not that kind of fashion show here's what i want you to do i said we're going to get people

364

00:34:51,760 --> 00:34:56,480

to come out and when the open house is busiest and first you're going to walk out in your turnout

365

00:34:56,480 --> 00:35:00,800

gear then you're going to walk out and just your ems with a scatoscope then you're going to walk

366

00:35:00,800 --> 00:35:05,840

out with your dive suit then you're going to walk out in a hands-med suit and so we then we did

367

00:35:05,840 --> 00:35:11,280

technical rescue must add 11 different outfits that people walked out in and when they were all

368

00:35:11,280 --> 00:35:15,920

standing out then we were a very small department we only had 35 people i said every one of the

369

00:35:15,920 --> 00:35:23,440

people you see who works here can do all those functions now in your business is there anybody

370

00:35:23,440 --> 00:35:29,120

in your business that can do that many functions that at the at the snap of a finger has to be able

371

00:35:29,120 --> 00:35:34,720

to jump into that function i said that's why these people do what they do that's why they have to

372

00:35:34,720 --> 00:35:38,640

have the time off that they have to have because many times when they're off they're also going

373

00:35:38,640 --> 00:35:43,760

to school because most of these professions require continuing education do you have a

374

00:35:43,760 --> 00:35:49,760

continuing education in your job that you'll lose it if you don't do it they do my medics do

375

00:35:49,760 --> 00:35:58,320

and it's their job and in james it was the reaction again simple thing i mean but people were like

376

00:35:58,320 --> 00:36:04,080

amazed going up shaking the guy's hands going oh my god i never knew this and the feedback from the

377

00:36:04,080 --> 00:36:10,640

guys was well we just thought they knew i mean if they call for a dive rescue who do they think

378

00:36:10,640 --> 00:36:16,560

somebody from alabama's coming i'm like they don't know and it's our fault we need to be okay with

379

00:36:16,560 --> 00:36:20,720

blowing our own horn you know you know how this is you want to embarrass the firefighter you give

380

00:36:20,720 --> 00:36:26,240

them an award especially at a board meeting we don't want to blow our own horn but you need to do

381

00:36:26,240 --> 00:36:31,520

that in order to let people know otherwise if you want to blame somebody then you got to look in the

382

00:36:31,520 --> 00:36:37,120

mirror because we just didn't tell them and i think that's where we've missed the boat and i think

383

00:36:37,120 --> 00:36:42,000

that's also why we're struggling with the recruiting is we're still not telling people all the neat

384

00:36:42,000 --> 00:36:47,360

things that we do including then what do we do when we have to handle the things that are difficult

385

00:36:47,360 --> 00:36:54,320

and traumatic to take care of ourselves absolutely yeah i've had some of the professions that in the

386

00:36:54,320 --> 00:36:58,400

special operations community that aren't known for writing books obviously the seals everyone tongue

387

00:36:58,400 --> 00:37:02,960

in cheek said every seal writes a book but you know you hear this this term the quiet professional

388

00:37:02,960 --> 00:37:07,600

the silent professional and absolutely i mean obviously you're not going to want to know the

389

00:37:07,600 --> 00:37:12,880

things that you shouldn't know about that group but there's so much value in the lessons that

390

00:37:12,880 --> 00:37:17,840

they learn and some of the storytelling and now you know some of the delta guys and green berets

391

00:37:17,840 --> 00:37:24,720

and pj's are out you know writing about their you know stories and being more public because otherwise

392

00:37:24,720 --> 00:37:29,840

like you said we don't know what they do and there's a lot of value to us knowing parts of what these

393

00:37:29,840 --> 00:37:33,680

people do and it's the same with the fire service and i always point this out who is the jocco

394

00:37:33,680 --> 00:37:38,880

willing of the fire service yeah you know what i mean who is our spokesperson who is the who is

395

00:37:38,880 --> 00:37:44,560

the one that's out there you know we don't have that so again if you aren't educating the public

396

00:37:44,560 --> 00:37:49,920

then they just get to make up their own stories and then that's bolstered by us walking around

397

00:37:49,920 --> 00:37:54,960

going oh my god it's the best job in the world you know we only work eight days a month you know so

398

00:37:54,960 --> 00:38:00,240

we feed into this this fantasy oh yeah so i think you know whether it's the the people writing books

399

00:38:00,240 --> 00:38:04,000

and i'm writing my second one now and i'm hoping that it's going to get made into a show because

400

00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:09,680

i want to i want to show the real side and i don't mean that to be doom and gloom but the grittiness

401

00:38:09,680 --> 00:38:15,040

of what it actually is is like to be a firefighter the inability to save sometimes all these things

402

00:38:15,040 --> 00:38:19,600

that just don't make it to you know chicago fire and i had chick on the show and i know

403

00:38:20,480 --> 00:38:25,920

the result of the script isn't always what he's written you know it's then taken by hollywood and

404

00:38:25,920 --> 00:38:30,320

ah let's let's make it a happy ending kind of thing so you know where is the representation

405

00:38:30,320 --> 00:38:35,440

we've got ladder 49 we got only the brave we've got a handful of shows that kind of touch on it

406

00:38:35,440 --> 00:38:41,040

a little bit but we as a profession individually and nationally need to do a much better job

407

00:38:41,040 --> 00:38:44,240

of educating like you said not just to the public understands what we do

408

00:38:45,040 --> 00:38:51,760

but the real recruits the real candidates can see this is the good this is the kind of shit side

409

00:38:51,760 --> 00:38:59,600

you know are you ready let's go right no and i think though um one of the things that i

410

00:38:59,600 --> 00:39:05,280

run across that's interesting to me is do you know who does sometimes the best job of their

411

00:39:05,280 --> 00:39:12,160

own advertising our volunteer fire departments not your career organizations ones who run

412

00:39:13,120 --> 00:39:16,800

god bless them who have a five thousand dollar budget and that includes everything that they're

413

00:39:16,800 --> 00:39:23,360

going to have for the entire year and might run 25 calls a year but they depend on the community

414

00:39:23,360 --> 00:39:29,520

to fund them and they fill the community in on exactly what they're trained to do how many hours

415

00:39:29,520 --> 00:39:33,920

they train what they train on and the other thing they do that's that's enlightening to me

416

00:39:33,920 --> 00:39:39,280

is they tell them the truth do you know if you get if you call at three o'clock in the afternoon

417

00:39:39,600 --> 00:39:43,920

we only have two people in town who are able to come back to go out with that crew because

418

00:39:44,080 --> 00:39:49,040

all of the rest of us are working out of the community so just realize that that's what's

419

00:39:49,040 --> 00:39:53,920

happening do you think if you work from home now you might be available to come in and would you

420

00:39:53,920 --> 00:40:00,080

like to join our special team or and they've really struggled for the last 15 years on recruiting and

421

00:40:00,080 --> 00:40:06,720

retention but they're still holding their own because the community needs to know i have a chief

422

00:40:06,720 --> 00:40:11,840

who taught me very early in my career he said your job is to tell the village board what they don't

423

00:40:11,840 --> 00:40:17,120

want to hear not what they do want to hear if you really believe your staffing is too short if you

424

00:40:17,120 --> 00:40:22,960

believe your response time now has gotten impacted by traffic or whatever you need to make a report

425

00:40:22,960 --> 00:40:31,600

and not a there's a dead baby in the road report details statistics do your research and say you

426

00:40:31,600 --> 00:40:38,240

get to make the ultimate decision on what is the quality of care we provide i get that i don't i

427

00:40:38,240 --> 00:40:44,320

don't have the budget strings but if i don't tell you what we struggle with and where we need to go

428

00:40:44,320 --> 00:40:48,880

then that's on me because if i'm a village board member and that comes up at some point i'm going

429

00:40:48,880 --> 00:40:52,480

to go excuse me sir you've been in the fire service for 30 years you've been our chief for

430

00:40:52,480 --> 00:40:58,560

15 and you never told me that your people struggle with from sleep deprivation maybe you should have

431

00:40:58,560 --> 00:41:03,760

told me that and we have to sometimes believe in those folks to do the right thing too and so i

432

00:41:03,760 --> 00:41:09,600

think when leaders get they can also get pigeonholed and told well you none of you care about us i

433

00:41:09,600 --> 00:41:14,880

don't think that's true either i think we have to educate them and then give them a chance to care

434

00:41:14,880 --> 00:41:19,440

and i think sometimes we don't do that well i think another thing that i see when it comes to

435

00:41:19,440 --> 00:41:25,360

you know the the politician side as well is the tax cuts like when does anyone ever explain to

436

00:41:25,360 --> 00:41:32,480

a member of public that when we cut this tax you know that results in a minimum lower staffing or

437

00:41:32,480 --> 00:41:39,200

even a browning out or a closing of a station that you know yeah so the so the tax are being cut but

438

00:41:39,200 --> 00:41:43,840

the people aren't getting money back you know so as as the delivery of someone trying to say is as

439

00:41:43,840 --> 00:41:48,560

the delivery of service diminishes the public aren't getting a refund oh we're going to give

440

00:41:48,560 --> 00:41:52,800

oh we're going to give you crappy a service but here's you know five grand back this year

441

00:41:52,800 --> 00:41:57,600

they're not so they're not educated on the impact of some of these political decisions too

442

00:41:57,600 --> 00:42:03,840

and if a family knew or if it's say you know a community knew that by making this cut the

443

00:42:03,840 --> 00:42:10,000

nearest fire engine or rescue might be 10 miles away now instead of five that would change the

444

00:42:10,000 --> 00:42:14,880

way they think completely that would change the way they vote but again we don't do a good job of

445

00:42:14,880 --> 00:42:21,600

explaining to people nationally i would argue of the you know the the life safety impact of some

446

00:42:21,600 --> 00:42:28,400

of these budget decisions you know so i think that's another area is really getting people

447

00:42:28,400 --> 00:42:34,800

to understand that as you said like we're jack of all trades master of none if you call 911 or 999

448

00:42:34,800 --> 00:42:40,160

in england or you know with all the other numbers and the people you expect to come don't come

449

00:42:40,160 --> 00:42:45,440

your children are going to die i don't think there's anything more you know powerful than

450

00:42:45,440 --> 00:42:52,080

really storytelling and illustrating that point right and i think that when i've seen referendums

451

00:42:52,080 --> 00:42:58,080

go out um one of the fears i'll see when it doesn't look like they've educated about okay if this

452

00:42:58,080 --> 00:43:02,560

doesn't pass what's going to be the downside is well we don't want to be accused that we're

453

00:43:02,560 --> 00:43:09,120

trying to scare people so well you're not scaring them if you tell them the truth if you're lying

454

00:43:09,120 --> 00:43:13,040

about it and trying to get them to vote because you want to scare them then yeah you shouldn't

455

00:43:13,040 --> 00:43:18,880

even be in our business but telling them up front because nobody be included sitting in that booth

456

00:43:18,880 --> 00:43:25,040

going oh my god another tax hike for what we got to give you the for what and we also have to tell

457

00:43:25,040 --> 00:43:28,800

you then we didn't just walk in here because we're looking for more toys and we're looking for more

458

00:43:28,800 --> 00:43:34,480

people to fill a building we're looking for it because we've identified a risk that we can't

459

00:43:34,480 --> 00:43:40,640

handle and we need the resources to do that and then you leave it to them but most people just

460

00:43:40,640 --> 00:43:46,640

look at it when they see a referendum for a fire station and go no we got enough for that well

461

00:43:46,640 --> 00:43:52,640

that's because you haven't told them what happens if you don't absolutely well i want to circle back

462

00:43:52,640 --> 00:43:58,640

to 2023 then i know you know you had some you know some pretty traumatic issues and for people

463

00:43:58,640 --> 00:44:05,600

listening to episode uh what i say it was 2266 and then 676 if they heard that one as well um you

464

00:44:05,600 --> 00:44:10,240

know they'll know all the trauma that you had personally obviously some of the calls that you

465

00:44:10,240 --> 00:44:15,120

had through your career um talk to me about last year because obviously there's there's a couple of

466

00:44:15,120 --> 00:44:20,160

issues specifically that uh you know hit you pretty pretty hard for two different reasons

467

00:44:21,200 --> 00:44:28,000

yeah um i'll start with one that um i would have never believed would have happened so i retired in

468

00:44:28,000 --> 00:44:35,040

in january of 2021 i had the honor to work for two different fire departments hensdale fire department

469

00:44:35,040 --> 00:44:41,040

in western springs and i worked with some of the best men and women out there i i was incredibly

470

00:44:41,040 --> 00:44:45,520

blessed i always said i would have liked to have been the chief of a large department i had two

471

00:44:45,520 --> 00:44:51,520

small departments and found that it was a gift because i got to know everybody and got to know

472

00:44:51,520 --> 00:44:58,400

their families and and was the recipient of that support from both organizations it when shawn was

473

00:44:58,400 --> 00:45:05,520

sick and passed and then when eileen was sick and passed but on july the fifth of this past year

474

00:45:06,720 --> 00:45:12,320

my middle son patrick and my daughter liabby and my my two granddaughters the the absolute

475

00:45:12,320 --> 00:45:18,000

best things that have ever happened to me caroline and mave um only live about 20 or 25 minutes away

476

00:45:18,000 --> 00:45:23,920

from me and i got a call from my son there's a big storm coming through thunderstorm and about 6 30

477

00:45:23,920 --> 00:45:30,560

in the evening and uh so dad he goes the lightning hit and there's a power line down uh and it's

478

00:45:30,560 --> 00:45:37,200

arcng between the two garages um what what should we do and i go did you call 911 he said yeah i

479

00:45:37,200 --> 00:45:44,000

said well don't go outside stay in the house unless you smell smoke and as i'm saying and

480

00:45:44,000 --> 00:45:51,600

i'm praying i'm going please don't arc towards their home well it did and a few minutes later

481

00:45:51,600 --> 00:45:56,240

he called and said yeah it smells like smoke i think the garage is on fire and there was a knock

482

00:45:56,240 --> 00:46:00,160

at the door and it was the firefighters who had arrived that were evacuating them what had happened

483

00:46:00,160 --> 00:46:05,200

was it was a primary line that came down between could have gone either way to their garage or

484

00:46:05,200 --> 00:46:11,040

another ended up hitting their attached garage electrified the garage ran up into the soffit

485

00:46:11,040 --> 00:46:17,040

and literally electrified the whole home at one point the gutters are blowing off you so the

486

00:46:17,040 --> 00:46:23,360

responding units could not make entry until the electric company came to kill the power and i've

487

00:46:23,360 --> 00:46:28,400

had a couple of those fires in my career as an incident commander and there is no worse feeling

488

00:46:28,400 --> 00:46:33,680

than standing there with 20 or 30 people willing to go to work going to do whatever they want in

489

00:46:33,680 --> 00:46:40,320

the family watching you all stand there because there's nothing you can do so i get i get the

490

00:46:40,320 --> 00:46:46,000

call now for the first time in my life i'm responding it in we joke in our area a lot of

491

00:46:46,000 --> 00:46:51,200

times when fire chiefs retire all of a sudden they have more scanners and more radios than they were

492

00:46:51,200 --> 00:46:56,960

had in their entire life and they chase fires um i have not done that this was the first fire that

493

00:46:56,960 --> 00:47:04,000

had come in since i retired that was like i need to go so what was my first reaction downstairs in

494

00:47:04,000 --> 00:47:09,520

my basement right here behind me over my shoulders is the closet and in that closet was my bunker coat

495

00:47:09,520 --> 00:47:15,920

that i was given when i retired um wrapped in plastic up on the top shelf and i hung up the

496

00:47:15,920 --> 00:47:20,160

phone and i ran down the stairs and i tore the plastic open and i pulled the bunker coat out

497

00:47:21,040 --> 00:47:25,840

now i did it for in my mind i'm never going to get past the security line with the police because

498

00:47:25,840 --> 00:47:30,480

i don't have lights and sirens i got a private vehicle i don't have it i don't have any my gear

499

00:47:30,480 --> 00:47:37,440

anymore this might at least get me through the lines i believe that was part of it i also believe

500

00:47:37,440 --> 00:47:42,960

the other part of it was that was my i was going back to my cape like this is going to help how the

501

00:47:42,960 --> 00:47:49,840

hell who knows but it's going to help so i'm driving there now no radio so i have no idea

502

00:47:49,840 --> 00:47:56,080

where this is going have they knocked it have they not knocked it i'm i'm literally on my bluetooth

503

00:47:56,080 --> 00:48:01,840

calling every chief that i know responds to that on a mutual aid and they can't get an answer which

504

00:48:01,840 --> 00:48:07,760

is not a good time i pull around my son had texted me and said dad you're not going to get close to

505

00:48:07,760 --> 00:48:11,760

the house because the storm was so bad the streets were flooded you're going to have to park at least

506

00:48:11,760 --> 00:48:16,960

a block away and i remember i turned on the block and so i could see at the end of the block their

507

00:48:16,960 --> 00:48:23,920

home and i took one look and i went oh my god it's gone and they were just going to the roof at that

508

00:48:23,920 --> 00:48:29,760

point so it's probably 25 30 minutes into the incident before they're even starting to go put

509

00:48:29,760 --> 00:48:37,120

water on the fire it had run the whole roof line it was down into the first floor and i walked up

510

00:48:38,080 --> 00:48:45,120

first found my son and my daughter-in-law and uh there is absolutely nothing you can say at that

511

00:48:45,120 --> 00:48:50,560

moment other than i'm so glad you got out my two granddaughters thank goodness were at what are

512

00:48:50,560 --> 00:48:56,000

at a relative's house so they didn't go through the trauma of it but i said let me go find out

513

00:48:56,000 --> 00:49:01,440

where things are at so i walk up to the two chiefs that i both of whom i've known for 20 years

514

00:49:01,440 --> 00:49:07,920

and as i walk up they turn around and go well you finally started to chase fires and i went

515

00:49:08,640 --> 00:49:15,200

no i go that's my son's house and the one chief looked at me and said oh my god patty told me his

516

00:49:15,200 --> 00:49:20,880

dad was a firefighter he didn't say it was you they go so where are we at and so they gave me a rundown

517

00:49:20,880 --> 00:49:26,000

and said hey if there's anything you need to do or feel like you want to do here you just you just

518

00:49:26,000 --> 00:49:33,600

let us know we'll hand you a radio and i go it hit me at that moment and ironically everybody there

519

00:49:33,600 --> 00:49:40,560

all the all the white coats and there were loads of them all had yellow reflective trim my coat

520

00:49:40,560 --> 00:49:47,280

because it's an old old coat has red reflective trim and in the still pictures afterwards that

521

00:49:47,280 --> 00:49:54,080

somebody showed me said we could tell you were wearing your cape and i went back to my car and

522

00:49:54,080 --> 00:50:00,880

i took my coat off because i'm like i can't do anything and i'm thinking like what can i do and

523

00:50:00,880 --> 00:50:09,360

it's like i really think it was up above whispering to me you just need to be their dad and i went over

524

00:50:09,360 --> 00:50:14,800

and just hugged them and cried and watched as these guys just did a remarkable job to save what they

525

00:50:14,800 --> 00:50:20,960

could and and i watched the care they provided to them just going back and checking on them and

526

00:50:20,960 --> 00:50:24,320

filling them in where things were at and why they were doing what they were doing and then

527

00:50:24,880 --> 00:50:30,640

taking them through that horrible walkthrough afterwards where i things are toys are floating

528

00:50:30,640 --> 00:50:36,400

and clothes are all damaged and you see a crib that's full of the plaster that's come down from

529

00:50:36,400 --> 00:50:41,680

pulling the ceiling all that stuff that i'd seen loads of times in my 40-year career but none under

530

00:50:41,680 --> 00:50:50,240

these circumstances and i left feeling so empty like all those years and there was nothing i could

531

00:50:50,240 --> 00:50:56,080

do and i had to reframe okay yeah there is something you can do now you've got to do something going

532

00:50:56,080 --> 00:51:02,720

forward to help them with the process and you just need to be there and if that's all you can do

533

00:51:03,280 --> 00:51:10,320

that's okay because right now there's no other choice and for my friends who found out about it

534

00:51:10,320 --> 00:51:15,440

later in fact a number of them who saw something through social media called me with this very

535

00:51:15,440 --> 00:51:21,040

hesitant voice because they thought it was my house that burned down and they were like oh man

536

00:51:21,040 --> 00:51:25,280

this guy this guy he's got the biggest black cloud over his head and you have to have that

537

00:51:25,280 --> 00:51:30,960

conversation where you go well it's kind of a good news bad news the good news i guess is it wasn't

538

00:51:30,960 --> 00:51:37,200

my house the bad news is i wish it was my house because it was my son's and trying to rebuild

539

00:51:37,200 --> 00:51:43,120

through the summer and watching them go through the whole insurance process because we respond

540

00:51:43,120 --> 00:51:48,080

and we do the best we can in that acute situation and we leave it as good we can and then we leave

541

00:51:48,880 --> 00:51:52,640

and we don't really see the other trauma that goes on as they try to rebuild their lives whether

542

00:51:52,640 --> 00:51:58,400

you go to somebody and you get there and their parent is deceased or you have a house fire where

543

00:51:58,400 --> 00:52:05,760

they lose everything we're gone i now live through watching them go through the rest of this and

544

00:52:05,760 --> 00:52:13,360

their resiliency their courage we talked about that earlier was so inspiring to me that it kept

545

00:52:13,360 --> 00:52:20,800

me going because they were not going to let this beat them they were pleased their girls hadn't

546

00:52:20,800 --> 00:52:25,440

gone through the trauma so trying to explain to a four-year-old we're not going to be living here

547

00:52:25,440 --> 00:52:29,440

for a while but you're going to get to go back when you do you're going to get to pick the color

548

00:52:29,440 --> 00:52:34,400

we're going to paint your room we're going to reframing it even through all the lines that we

549

00:52:34,400 --> 00:52:40,800

had gone through it was like hey i got nothing to complain about here i just need to go is there

550

00:52:40,800 --> 00:52:44,720

anything else that i can do and and the other thing that came out of it that was powerful

551

00:52:45,520 --> 00:52:49,520

and and i struggle sometimes with and we had this discussion before we started like people

552

00:52:49,520 --> 00:52:54,560

always ask me okay you convinced me to take the cake off how do you put it back on again

553

00:52:54,560 --> 00:52:58,320

well whatever inspires you when you go through a trauma to want to get back in the ring
whether

554

00:52:58,320 --> 00:53:05,760

that's that's life in general or it's in our profession that night literally on the front

555

00:53:05,760 --> 00:53:11,200

lawn while it's pouring they had neighbors come over and it's a young family neighborhood

556

00:53:11,760 --> 00:53:18,240

neighbors come over who said our parents have summer homes in indiana or wisconsin or
whatever

557

00:53:18,240 --> 00:53:22,640

we're going to pack up our car right now and we're going to drive up there for a couple of weeks

558

00:53:22,640 --> 00:53:29,520

just go into our house till you get yourself settled do you see where i saw the best of humanity

559

00:53:29,520 --> 00:53:35,280

come out that night in the worst situation and it made me feel like yeah cape ain't working for me

560

00:53:35,840 --> 00:53:42,560

but that guy and that girl they've got the cape on because they've seen a trauma and they can
do

561

00:53:42,560 --> 00:53:49,040

something about it and just that support um was incredibly powerful and so we we've made our way

562

00:53:49,040 --> 00:53:53,920

through that we had a very nice christmas they're in a ironically they're in a home

563

00:53:53,920 --> 00:53:58,880

renting in the next community over from where their home was in western springs where i was

564

00:53:58,880 --> 00:54:04,240

the fire chief so they're kind of known that they're in the neighborhood and uh and people

565

00:54:04,240 --> 00:54:08,160

have been phenomenal there and by the end of summer they'll be back in their home and they'll

566

00:54:08,160 --> 00:54:13,760

be living in a wonderful neighborhood again in the grange park that they had before but it's the

567

00:54:13,760 --> 00:54:18,880

journey and uh the bumps in the journey something i would never would have anticipated being touched

568

00:54:18,880 --> 00:54:25,600

directly so that was the first one well just uh kind of reply to that one i think it mirrors

569

00:54:25,600 --> 00:54:32,000

what i've talked about somewhat recently which is the again we were saying what is not discussed

570

00:54:32,000 --> 00:54:36,080

when we're you know told about the fire service especially when we have our orientation and it's

571

00:54:36,080 --> 00:54:42,480

the inability to save and i have just been you talk about black cloud i have never saved a full

572

00:54:42,480 --> 00:54:48,160

arrest in 14 years i was just that that shit magnet everything that you could die from is what

573

00:54:48,160 --> 00:54:55,040

i you know the patients that i had from gi bleeds to you know aneurysms all the things um and it just

574

00:54:55,040 --> 00:55:00,080

is what it is and it was interesting as you were standing there you with the coat on but more so

575

00:55:00,640 --> 00:55:07,680

the crew that was on scene the that cape when you're when you make a save when you do the thing that

576

00:55:07,680 --> 00:55:14,800

you're known for is the thing of immense pride but when you are the paramedic or the firefighter and

577

00:55:14,800 --> 00:55:20,560

you can't save that person's child there's almost an element of shame wearing that cape because

578

00:55:20,560 --> 00:55:25,120

everyone at medic school and everyone in fire academy told me if you did a b and c you'd have

579

00:55:25,120 --> 00:55:30,960

an outcome d and here you are now standing in the street and some mother is screaming because their

580

00:55:30,960 --> 00:55:35,040

infant just died in your arms you know so i think that's a powerful you know perspective

581

00:55:35,040 --> 00:55:41,760

the other one that occurred um occurred on november 1st and that date is a real special

582

00:55:41,760 --> 00:55:47,280

date for me because that was the date um when eileen was getting close to making her

583

00:55:47,280 --> 00:55:53,200

journey to the other side and uh and sean appeared to her in our room and told her he was going to

584

00:55:53,200 --> 00:56:01,440

come get her so it's always been a very special day for me and uh this year it wasn't uh or 2023

585

00:56:01,440 --> 00:56:08,480

it wasn't so my my niece um her 40 year old husband um had a massive heart attack um in the

586

00:56:08,480 --> 00:56:17,440

morning and died leaving behind four kids um nine and under um this guy tony went one of the biggest

587

00:56:17,440 --> 00:56:22,880

the irony one of the biggest hearts of people that you would ever see um just a wonderful husband

588

00:56:22,880 --> 00:56:29,440

a great dad had taken his kids trick-or-treating the night before um and the next day he was

589

00:56:29,440 --> 00:56:37,920

gone and trying to get the courage um i don't know that i thought about in the moment about okay i

590

00:56:37,920 --> 00:56:43,200

gotta find somehow find a cape because i knew i couldn't save her i knew the pain she was in

591

00:56:43,200 --> 00:56:47,920

and gonna go through and there was nothing i could do about it but it was like trying to search for

592

00:56:48,800 --> 00:56:54,960

what do you do how do you how do you have this conversation and tremendous support from her

593

00:56:54,960 --> 00:57:01,600

they were very close family in-laws brother-in-laws everybody was one big family so they had built a

594

00:57:01,600 --> 00:57:07,040

phenomenal family unit that really they didn't realize they would need for this kind of event

595

00:57:07,040 --> 00:57:11,840

but they they were there and when i finally got a chance to talk to her

596

00:57:13,520 --> 00:57:19,760

i said we we have a common ground but we don't i said you went through three losses there in those

597

00:57:19,760 --> 00:57:28,800

minutes you lost the love of your life your spouse but you also lost the husband of your children

598

00:57:28,800 --> 00:57:35,760

the father of your children but you lost your best friend too and i go people don't realize

599

00:57:36,480 --> 00:57:43,200

what it's like that when you grieve you're grieving almost like in silos for for some of your moments

600

00:57:43,200 --> 00:57:50,160

i go you're going to be battling through that feeling that that injustice of we were going to

601

00:57:50,160 --> 00:57:54,080

have 40 years together and i lost my husband and then you're going to go into another room that's

602

00:57:54,080 --> 00:57:57,760

going to be how am i going to raise these four children and then you're going to go in another

603

00:57:57,760 --> 00:58:03,360

room like when i'm when i'm alone and tired and don't think i can go on the person i would talk

604

00:58:03,360 --> 00:58:12,400

to the most i can't talk directly to them and i don't think i i thought i was going to be

605

00:58:12,400 --> 00:58:18,240

i thought i felt really helpless on july 5th standing on that lawn i think talking to christina

606

00:58:18,880 --> 00:58:25,360

alone in a room and trying to find the right things to say was incredibly difficult and and

607

00:58:25,360 --> 00:58:30,080

i wrote about it in the book about when you run into that sometimes the best thing you can do is

608

00:58:30,080 --> 00:58:37,120

just hug somebody because you don't have anything verbally to make it better you just don't and and

609

00:58:37,120 --> 00:58:43,520

so i squeezed her and just said these people will be here they're not going to abandon you and and

610

00:58:43,520 --> 00:58:50,000

it's really going to suck and there's nothing else we can do at that point and she's been amazing

611

00:58:50,000 --> 00:58:56,080

her family's been amazing going through you can imagine going through the holidays um her oldest

612

00:58:56,080 --> 00:59:02,960

son had a birthday only a couple of weeks afterwards and she's an inspiration to me what she's done

613

00:59:02,960 --> 00:59:10,880

um she's trying to wear the cape and i'm sure more times than not feeling like she's she's not

614

00:59:10,880 --> 00:59:16,240

doing it but she's she's doing amazing and all the other people around her or family the people

615

00:59:16,240 --> 00:59:22,160

who love her friends are all trying to do what they can to to help but it's just another reality

616

00:59:22,160 --> 00:59:28,080

check of you think you have everything planned out and then something like that happens and i

617

00:59:28,080 --> 00:59:33,760

i think it wakes everybody up to go yeah tomorrow's not promised to everybody and you really do need

618

00:59:33,760 --> 00:59:38,880

to make a point of telling people you love them all the time and realizing when you're fortunate

619

00:59:38,880 --> 00:59:45,760

you have it that way because at some point you may not and how you adjust to that um like i told her

620

00:59:45,760 --> 00:59:50,000

i said if you get out of bed in the morning you have made an incredible accomplishment and you

621

00:59:50,000 --> 00:59:57,680

need to celebrate that because for this day that's the gold standard and eventually hopefully through

622

00:59:57,680 --> 01:00:02,720

help and assistance you're going to be able to climb a little bit higher but for right now

623

01:00:02,720 --> 01:00:08,480

the bar is set real low because you you couldn't be up against anything that i could imagine it

624

01:00:08,480 --> 01:00:12,960

could be any more difficult than what you're facing and i'm so proud of her and her family

625

01:00:13,920 --> 01:00:18,800

am i right in understanding he was a firefighter no no he was not he was not okay i must have must

626

01:00:18,800 --> 01:00:24,000

have misread that though it was his his brother is a firefighter okay that's what it was then

627

01:00:24,000 --> 01:00:30,080

our brother's a firefighter my nephew right so with you know all this trauma that you've had you know

628

01:00:30,080 --> 01:00:34,720

watching watching your son's house burn down and then you know losing this loved one as well and

629

01:00:34,720 --> 01:00:39,920

then trying to be there for your niece what was some of the things that you started leaning into

630

01:00:39,920 --> 01:00:44,160

yourself we talk about putting the cape on let's not even think about the cape specifically just

631

01:00:44,160 --> 01:00:50,480

your own self-care and all this you know grief being pulled up from the past as well i think i

632

01:00:50,480 --> 01:00:58,880

had to first of all become come face to face with limitations um because usually back to when we

633

01:00:58,880 --> 01:01:02,480

train the very beginning it's like there really isn't anything you can't do if you put your mind

634

01:01:02,480 --> 01:01:09,440

to it well not true uh if i could bring tony back i would have been done november 1st so what were

635

01:01:09,440 --> 01:01:18,800

what are my limitations um i found myself having flashbacks found myself having nightmares um and

636

01:01:18,800 --> 01:01:26,080

so immediately like i preach don't always follow um i called my counselor and said i need to come

637

01:01:26,080 --> 01:01:31,600

in and i need to talk to you um i've had a couple things happen and i go and i'm not in a good place

638

01:01:32,400 --> 01:01:37,360

and went in and had very frank discussions with her about what was going on and she's like

639

01:01:37,360 --> 01:01:44,320

yeah you're reliving it because what i didn't mention was november 1st tony went to heaven

640

01:01:44,320 --> 01:01:51,600

well eileen's anniversary is november 5th so it was that loss watching her pain

641

01:01:53,040 --> 01:02:00,160

having the services and then reliving the pain of seven what was seven years ago in november

642

01:02:01,200 --> 01:02:10,480

and realizing that i needed to still tell myself there were boundaries you can't bring him back

643

01:02:10,480 --> 01:02:16,880

you can't save the day here you can't make everybody happy so do what you can and realize

644

01:02:17,680 --> 01:02:23,600

when you're getting too close because there are plenty of other people who are with her who are

645

01:02:23,600 --> 01:02:29,760

more equipped to do what needs to be done than you are and be okay with that don't be helpless be

646

01:02:29,760 --> 01:02:36,880

her uncle be there be available be comfortable with the uncomfortable and that's far enough

647

01:02:36,880 --> 01:02:42,640

and then i really leaned into my faith and she has a tremendous amount of faith and i'm

648

01:02:43,520 --> 01:02:47,680

so thankful for it and i and i told her i go there's loads of times through this journey now

649

01:02:47,680 --> 01:02:53,280

where you're gonna go you're gonna question it and i go and that's okay you should question it but

650

01:02:53,840 --> 01:02:58,720

if you didn't have it if you didn't really believe he was somewhere safe that that he's

651

01:02:58,720 --> 01:03:03,520

gonna watch you and he's gonna try to take care of you from a different spot i said you wouldn't get

652

01:03:03,520 --> 01:03:10,160

out of that bed and you i said i wouldn't still be here if i didn't have my faith and so i i leaned

653

01:03:10,160 --> 01:03:14,320

back into that i talked to the pastor at our church and i said can you just pray for their

654

01:03:14,320 --> 01:03:18,960

family on a regular basis i don't even know what you can say but whatever you can do to have

655

01:03:18,960 --> 01:03:23,920

somebody up there listening if they can make their day just a little bit easier make one of the kids

656

01:03:23,920 --> 01:03:30,720

maybe smile to give a little bit of anything at all i go i'm all in whatever you can get do it um

657

01:03:30,720 --> 01:03:35,680

and that that helped and then obviously talking to my own family about it to the people in my

658

01:03:35,680 --> 01:03:40,880

inner circle about i don't know what to do and getting reinforcement for you doing the best you

659

01:03:40,880 --> 01:03:47,760

can um that that was and continues to be very helpful what you were talking about not having

660

01:03:47,760 --> 01:03:54,000

the words i think that's that's hard as a man you know because men i wanted to be fixers but then

661

01:03:54,000 --> 01:04:00,480

when you add in a male firefighter you know we're a fixer who fixes you know it's a double whammy it's

662

01:04:00,480 --> 01:04:06,240

it's a compounding effect that's something that i've i've had to learn is it's okay not to say

663

01:04:06,240 --> 01:04:11,680

anything it's okay to simply just as you said either sit down and be there and be quiet with

664

01:04:11,680 --> 01:04:17,920

someone or let them talk or you know just give them a hug and not try and offer a solution of

665

01:04:17,920 --> 01:04:23,840

something that can't be fixed just to simply be present and be there with them right right no and

666

01:04:23,840 --> 01:04:29,760

it was um those are those are the things i think when we go through in life whether you're you're a

667

01:04:29,760 --> 01:04:36,320

firefighter or whatever you're dealing with in life um when those traumas hit you first they knock

668

01:04:36,320 --> 01:04:42,000

you on your ass and then it's trying to get back up and figure out what's the first step you take

669

01:04:42,560 --> 01:04:48,960

how do i how do i get back moving forward because i can't just stay in this horrific spot

670

01:04:49,680 --> 01:04:55,280

and for most of the time you need help to get out of there you need somebody to throw you a line

671

01:04:55,280 --> 01:05:01,120

whether it's a counselor or it's a clergy or it's a really good friend or somebody to help pull you

672

01:05:01,120 --> 01:05:07,440

just inches forward and you may not even see or feel the progress until you look back a year later

673

01:05:07,440 --> 01:05:14,000

but somebody's got to intervene because we weren't created to live alone we were created to be part

674

01:05:14,000 --> 01:05:19,520

of this team and we forget about that sometimes and usually when you get hit with that trauma i

675

01:05:19,520 --> 01:05:26,960

think it knocks that team family concept totally out of your head and you need to lean on it even

676

01:05:26,960 --> 01:05:32,960

more that there are others who may provide what i just don't have right now and if you look at it

677

01:05:32,960 --> 01:05:38,960

that if they were in the situation you are wouldn't you want to try to help so give them a chance let

678

01:05:38,960 --> 01:05:43,200

them do whatever it is because that may be the one thing you need that particular day

679

01:05:43,200 --> 01:05:50,560

on a more macro perspective we touched on the pandemic you know and then obviously the the

680

01:05:50,560 --> 01:05:56,320

police issue and the covid and now you know ukraine and palestine you name it insert thing here

681

01:05:56,960 --> 01:06:02,480

i've watched the country become very divided deliberately from certain groups you know but

682

01:06:02,480 --> 01:06:08,080

then even if you look at the fire service we are very fragmented there's not a lot of communication

683

01:06:08,080 --> 01:06:13,840

between departments you know police and fire or county and city or whatever it is how whether

684

01:06:13,840 --> 01:06:19,040

within our profession or even nationally how do we rebuild that community and tribalism that we

685

01:06:19,040 --> 01:06:26,400

seem to have lost certainly the last eight plus years or so i think part of it is um what used to

686

01:06:26,400 --> 01:06:33,680

be the strength probably at least looked at that way by by most of the services were you were always

687

01:06:33,680 --> 01:06:38,560

kind of the old joke about well okay then you know if we're going to stop by the firehouse policemen

688

01:06:38,560 --> 01:06:41,920

are going to come in and they're going to look at your lazy boys and the firemen are going to

689

01:06:41,920 --> 01:06:46,000

wonder why you got powdered sugar on your shirt you know in the whole nine yards there and we

690

01:06:46,000 --> 01:06:52,000

kidded about that but we definitely had our pride of our barriers of what this is my culture this

691

01:06:52,000 --> 01:06:58,640

is your culture never the two shall match and i i always get a kick out of um sometimes when

692

01:06:58,640 --> 01:07:04,960

somebody will recruit me to be a speaker um they'll find out that i'm a firefighter and not a police

693

01:07:04,960 --> 01:07:09,040

officer and they'll be they'll say well this could be a difficult audience you could be talking to

694

01:07:09,040 --> 01:07:16,400

and i go why i said just because i i didn't wear that kind of badge um this is a huge i'm talking

695

01:07:16,400 --> 01:07:22,320

about a human problem not a fire service problem not a police problem it's and so i think we built

696

01:07:22,320 --> 01:07:29,760

those walls so i mean you look at fdny and nypd and 9-11 and and the discussions afterwards about

697

01:07:29,760 --> 01:07:34,640

the lack of communications and having all these barriers built that you couldn't get through to

698

01:07:34,640 --> 01:07:39,920

each other and the angst that that created and i've talked to some people from fdny and this is so this

699

01:07:39,920 --> 01:07:46,240

isn't you know gospel at all but it's like there's still so much frustration about them being able

700

01:07:46,240 --> 01:07:51,840

to communicate and that's certainly not just for them that goes that goes across the country even

701

01:07:51,840 --> 01:07:56,800

little rural departments that well we don't really respond with them well why not well some chief

702

01:07:56,800 --> 01:08:00,400

40 years ago pissed off the people in our organization so we don't we don't go it's like

703

01:08:01,040 --> 01:08:05,600

you you gotta be kidding me right like we need we need to drop those and realize

704

01:08:07,040 --> 01:08:13,120

we're all on the team the same team that's the human team and part of the human element and so

705

01:08:13,120 --> 01:08:19,200

working to build each other's team as opposed to making mine better than yours is where i think we

706

01:08:19,200 --> 01:08:27,360

need to go and so more conferences and education where we meet together so not so much the education

707

01:08:27,360 --> 01:08:31,360

the formal education you're getting is going to be the most important but the networking

708

01:08:32,400 --> 01:08:39,200

my brother-in-law god rest his soul bob passed away from als and we always used to kid about

709

01:08:40,320 --> 01:08:46,720

your i could never do your job he would say i would say to him and he'd go

710

01:08:46,720 --> 01:08:52,240

but i think i could do yours and i said why is that and he goes because i have to do mine by myself

711

01:08:52,240 --> 01:08:56,000

and he goes you're right you'd never last five minutes alone in a squad car by yourself but he

712

01:08:56,000 --> 01:09:01,360

goes i really like being part of a team so i think i could i think that's right and when we would talk

713

01:09:01,360 --> 01:09:09,120

about the similarities of what we went through 90 of it was the same 10 kind of unique to each

714

01:09:09,120 --> 01:09:13,360

profession but we're afraid to talk about that because you certainly didn't want some police

715

01:09:13,360 --> 01:09:18,080

officer to know that you thought like he did because there might be something wrong with them

716

01:09:18,080 --> 01:09:25,200

then i mean so so getting groups together and breaking down those walls that we we don't it's

717

01:09:25,200 --> 01:09:30,240

not your territory in my territory it's our territory and if we don't have each other's backs

718

01:09:30,240 --> 01:09:36,640

who will who's going to understand looking at the face of police officers at attention when a coffin

719

01:09:36,640 --> 01:09:41,600

goes by about a police officer who's been killed in the line of duty we know what that feels like

720

01:09:41,600 --> 01:09:46,720

but well that's no different so why are we not reaching out so that we're responding so that

721

01:09:46,720 --> 01:09:51,600

we're going to those funerals so that we're showing support that we're we're trying to promote training

722

01:09:51,600 --> 01:09:56,320

that brings all of the professions together some of the best places i've gone to speak that were

723

01:09:56,320 --> 01:10:01,200

the most i shouldn't say best but were to me the most fulfilling was when the audience was a mixed

724

01:10:01,200 --> 01:10:06,720

audience it was fire it was ems it was police it was dispatchers it was prison guards it was you

725

01:10:06,720 --> 01:10:11,760

name it and they were all invited because they were seen as the first responding profession you

726

01:10:11,760 --> 01:10:17,040

help people who are in trouble you protect the community okay well then it's one common voice

727

01:10:17,040 --> 01:10:21,520

it's a lot easier to discern the message than if i got to get it translated through the firewall

728

01:10:21,520 --> 01:10:26,720

the police wall the dispatch wall and i think but that's a concerted effort back to what we talked

729

01:10:26,720 --> 01:10:33,200

about with the educating the public and educating elected officials about work day and we it gets

730

01:10:33,200 --> 01:10:38,880

pushed way down yeah that's a good idea we'll do that someday and then it's like saying you're

731

01:10:38,880 --> 01:10:42,320

going to get together with your favorite couple and realizing a year's gone by and you're in a

732

01:10:42,320 --> 01:10:47,840

wake together and you never got together if you don't make a point of it and make it formal and

733

01:10:47,840 --> 01:10:52,960

have the leadership set up to do that it's just going to keep get a can kick down the alley

734

01:10:53,760 --> 01:10:59,120

absolutely well just as a side tangent you mentioned bob with als did he play football

735

01:10:59,120 --> 01:11:05,120

when he was younger basketball player oh so not because it just seemed like there was a correlation

736

01:11:05,120 --> 01:11:11,440

between head trauma and als later in life right i have read i read some of that no he was he was

737

01:11:13,200 --> 01:11:17,120

really good basketball player good athlete and just noticed that he had a numbness in his hand

738

01:11:17,120 --> 01:11:23,600

now his his life another one talk about inspiring like my niece um he was diagnosed and for nine

739

01:11:23,600 --> 01:11:30,160

years fought als he worked as a police sergeant he was due to be promoted to deputy chief told

740

01:11:30,160 --> 01:11:34,240

the chief i can't take it because i don't know how long i'm going to be here and how long i'm

741

01:11:34,240 --> 01:11:43,360

going to be um he one vow he had i am never going to spend a day in a wheelchair or in a hospital

742

01:11:43,360 --> 01:11:51,040

bed his so for nine years he battled als he was in the beginning still mobile started to lose the

743

01:11:51,040 --> 01:11:57,520

use of an arm and another hand and but still could his family was amazing the madden family

744

01:11:57,520 --> 01:12:05,360

his his wife buoy and his kids um all amazing would help him to bed everything and finally it

745

01:12:05,360 --> 01:12:09,760

had gotten really really bad his choking reflex was really difficult he had just retired from

746

01:12:09,760 --> 01:12:14,960

the police department his police chief was amazing in terms of supporting him so he could went to

747

01:12:14,960 --> 01:12:22,560

work every day and finally his wife buoy was like baba it's just too hard now to handle you

748

01:12:23,200 --> 01:12:27,520

we're gonna have to get a wheelchair and we're gonna get a hospital bed and it's gonna come on

749

01:12:27,520 --> 01:12:30,880

monday and i'm sorry but it's something we need to do and put in the living room and

750

01:12:31,600 --> 01:12:38,000

so eileen and i went over there that sunday and he was still in rare form i made some crack about

751

01:12:38,000 --> 01:12:46,000

police versus fire and he kicked me from the lazy boy he was in and uh great great next morning at

752

01:12:46,000 --> 01:12:51,840

six o'clock in the morning we get a phone call that he's passed the morning the bed and the

753

01:12:51,840 --> 01:12:56,880

wheelchair were supposed to be delivered now his wife buoy would go for a run in the morning that

754

01:12:56,880 --> 01:13:02,800

was her that was what kept her mental health and he was awake and she kissed him goodbye before

755

01:13:02,800 --> 01:13:08,320

she left and when she came back he had gone to heaven and one of the first people she called

756

01:13:08,320 --> 01:13:15,760

was my wife eileen who was her and bob were like this and when we got there there was no look

757

01:13:16,480 --> 01:13:22,880

of fear on his face but there was a look of determination and i knew that look from all

758

01:13:22,880 --> 01:13:29,200

those years i had known him and i really believe in that time she was gone he had a discussion

759

01:13:29,200 --> 01:13:34,400

with somebody on the other side and said for nine years i've never i never heard him complain i have

760

01:13:34,400 --> 01:13:38,640

never complained about this i told you if you're going to give this horrible illness to somebody

761

01:13:38,640 --> 01:13:43,680

in my family give it to me and you did but i am not going in that wheelchair and i am not going

762

01:13:43,680 --> 01:13:48,880

in that bed so you need to get me the hell out of here before my wife comes back and watches me pass

763

01:13:48,880 --> 01:13:54,560

and i i can't wait to get to heaven to find out if he goes typical you were wrong but i want to be

764

01:13:54,560 --> 01:14:00,560

able to have that conversation because i believe it he he he was done fighting and he was not going

765

01:14:00,560 --> 01:14:06,720

to go it's an amazing story because i don't believe in coincidences no coincidence that he

766

01:14:06,720 --> 01:14:11,360

passed that morning before that delivery came so that truck showed up and that stuff went back

767

01:14:11,360 --> 01:14:16,960

and he never spent a day in either one of those amazing story amazing man oh here's the other

768

01:14:16,960 --> 01:14:22,080

part that'll make you smile so it's a very sad story except so he had lost really was losing

769

01:14:22,080 --> 01:14:30,080

the ability to write every year on their wedding anniversary but he gets flowers and a handwritten

770

01:14:30,080 --> 01:14:37,200

card from him now that's continued over the past decade so he wrote those he set up with his son

771

01:14:37,200 --> 01:14:42,960

to make sure here's what you need in order to get the flowers for mom make sure that happens she

772

01:14:42,960 --> 01:14:49,040

lives for that day to get that handwritten note from and i will tell you bob was not mr romantic

773

01:14:49,040 --> 01:14:54,000

and he would be the first one to tell you that most romantic thing i've heard about in my life

774

01:14:54,000 --> 01:14:59,440

i always on her anniversary will go hey i'm anxious i'm anxious i'm not even getting anything today

775

01:14:59,440 --> 01:15:08,240

um powerful how the human spirit that resiliency that belief can carry you um and the love of other

776

01:15:08,240 --> 01:15:14,240

people can keep you in a traumatic situation inspired to say i'm going to give this a shot

777

01:15:14,240 --> 01:15:19,120

for one more day and uh yeah he's another one that will always be an inspiration to me

778

01:15:19,920 --> 01:15:26,000

beautiful story i'm so glad i asked now that was incredible yeah thank you that was that i forget

779

01:15:26,000 --> 01:15:31,920

about that sometimes and it's when i think of it it makes me smile absolutely well i think when we

780

01:15:31,920 --> 01:15:37,760

spoke last was when you you'd written the book um so taking the cape off what is great is i think

781

01:15:37,760 --> 01:15:42,640

since then you and i went back and forth with your audiobook um experience because i had to do that

782

01:15:42,640 --> 01:15:46,160

for mine and it was it was like pulling teeth i hated it was just funny because i talk on a

783

01:15:46,160 --> 01:15:51,920

microphone for a living now but when you have to just read this brewing um but there's another

784

01:15:51,920 --> 01:15:59,520

interesting story that starts in ireland talk to me about the documentary yeah this is another uh

785

01:16:00,320 --> 01:16:06,720

no no no such thing as a coincidence so elaine and i used to like like to go on saint patrick's day

786

01:16:06,720 --> 01:16:11,840

we'd always try and find a local pub that had a real band from ireland it's always funny you

787

01:16:11,840 --> 01:16:16,080

you can go in any neighborhood and there'll be five irish pubs and you walk in and and

788

01:16:16,800 --> 01:16:20,480

aerosmith is playing her deep purple on saint patrick's day it's not quite what i was looking

789

01:16:20,480 --> 01:16:26,320

for so um found a place called the irish legend that we used to go to and really enjoy irish music

790

01:16:26,320 --> 01:16:35,040

so um the year she was sick in 2016 we went she was undergoing chemo so we went on saint patrick's

791

01:16:35,040 --> 01:16:40,160

day to a very little quiet pub that we knew that there weren't going to be many people in so we

792

01:16:40,160 --> 01:16:44,720

could have a toast with family and friends because unfortunately we knew i don't think i acknowledged

793

01:16:44,720 --> 01:16:50,000

it that day in my head but i knew this would be the last saint patrick's day i would have her

794

01:16:50,560 --> 01:16:54,720

but we couldn't go back there because there were just too many people and chance of infection so

795

01:16:55,520 --> 01:17:02,240

we missed it the following year in 2017 when it was saint patrick's day um a number of friends

796

01:17:02,240 --> 01:17:07,040

from the firehouse couples we used to go to were like well we're going to the legend and i'm like

797

01:17:07,040 --> 01:17:12,480

not going like what do you mean you're not going i go can't i can't go there without her i just can't

798

01:17:12,480 --> 01:17:17,040

do it they're like well just just try it for a little while she would want you to go i go yeah i

799

01:17:17,040 --> 01:17:22,880

know what she wants i go i don't think it's good for me i don't think i should go 30 minutes give

800

01:17:22,880 --> 01:17:29,360

us 30 minutes and then you can okay fine so i go the great band from from ireland is in there

801

01:17:29,360 --> 01:17:35,040

they're playing and i'm not even conscious i'm just like okay is it 28 minutes yet is it 24

802

01:17:35,040 --> 01:17:39,200

minutes yet is it what am i getting out of here and all i could think about was the times that

803

01:17:39,200 --> 01:17:46,560

we had spent there and how now she wasn't and they took it happened to take a break like 20 minutes

804

01:17:46,560 --> 01:17:51,360

in so i go well okay that's 30 minutes i'm going they're like no no no no no 30 minutes of playing

805

01:17:51,360 --> 01:17:56,880

here he didn't play for 30 minutes and the one gentleman was was the lead singer said when he

806

01:17:56,880 --> 01:18:01,840

took a break he mentioned uh yeah he goes i want to introduce the guys in the band so he introduced

807

01:18:01,840 --> 01:18:07,040

the other four guys and uh said yeah i'm considered the outcast not the true irishman and he had a

808

01:18:07,040 --> 01:18:12,960

broke that was thick as can be and i'm thinking they actually talking about so i went up there

809

01:18:13,840 --> 01:18:18,400

don't know what motivated me to go up there i went up there and i introduced myself and i said i

810

01:18:18,400 --> 01:18:22,160

gotta ask you i said you got this great bro what do you mean you're not an irishman he said

811

01:18:22,160 --> 01:18:27,040

well i was born in new york he said and when i was 10 years old my dad was a construction worker and

812

01:18:27,040 --> 01:18:32,640

he was killed in a construction accident so my mom and myself my two younger brothers she was

813

01:18:32,640 --> 01:18:38,400

from ireland um there was no family really here in the states to lean on a lot of family there so

814

01:18:38,400 --> 01:18:44,800

she brought us back to ireland and we were raised there so there's my bro but you know i'm not

815

01:18:44,800 --> 01:18:49,680

naturally born there and these guys remind me of it all the time kind of a big joke and i said well

816

01:18:49,680 --> 01:18:56,960

my i said my both my parents were born in ireland i said do you ever think about your dad what he

817

01:18:56,960 --> 01:19:04,000

what he's seen you do what you what you missed and i said all the time i hope he's proud and

818

01:19:04,000 --> 01:19:09,840

i hope he's watching so i lost my dad i said he was an irish hurler i said when i was 14 and i go

819

01:19:10,400 --> 01:19:15,280

i wonder all the time too did you see me do this did you see me get married you see your grandkids

820

01:19:15,280 --> 01:19:22,240

uh i said i hope so too well the other guys in the band heard me talk about hurling they didn't

821

01:19:22,240 --> 01:19:26,880

really hear the story and said hi your dad was a hurler oh my good where did he putty play for

822

01:19:26,880 --> 01:19:32,240

blah blah blah blah and the lead singer said yeah he goes he like me he lost his dad when he was 14

823

01:19:33,200 --> 01:19:36,880

well by now i've been up there for like 10 minutes you know i'm supposed to be on this quick break

824

01:19:36,880 --> 01:19:42,400

and one of the wives who was sitting at the table got concerned because she saw these guys around me

825

01:19:42,400 --> 01:19:50,000

and was like oh no he must be telling the story about ireland so she starts to get up to come up

826

01:19:50,000 --> 01:19:55,280

and uh i said yeah i said i used to come here with my wife i said she passed away a couple months ago

827

01:19:55,280 --> 01:20:00,080

and uh they were like oh my goodness and i told them a little bit about the story and i said i'm

828

01:20:00,080 --> 01:20:07,280

sure she's listening and you guys are doing great and uh the the wife comes up now she thinks i've

829

01:20:07,280 --> 01:20:13,120

told them about shawn so she comes up hey guys how you doing uh like oh this great guy we've been

830

01:20:13,120 --> 01:20:19,120

we've never been a story but sad about his loss she said yeah you know horrible to have to bury

831

01:20:19,120 --> 01:20:25,680

your child and they're like what and he looked they looked at me and said you buried your child too and

832

01:20:25,680 --> 01:20:30,000

uh i said yeah now she's mortified because she realizes that you know that's not what we were

833

01:20:30,000 --> 01:20:34,160

talking about so we talk about that now you can imagine if you were sitting in the audience with

834

01:20:34,160 --> 01:20:39,920

your wife like who is this goof is he a groupie up there what's i mean there's a 20 minute break

835

01:20:39,920 --> 01:20:46,000

i came here to listen to them saying and um and they wanted to know more and so i did i told some

836

01:20:46,000 --> 01:20:50,720

of them that what we were doing and that we were going to be going to ireland in march i'm sorry in

837

01:20:50,720 --> 01:20:56,400

may uh to actually spread eileen's ashes and a couple of guys in the band said what date are

838

01:20:56,400 --> 01:21:00,720

you coming we're we're we're going to come greet you guys when you come with your family so

839

01:21:01,280 --> 01:21:07,680

that night when we landed in dublin one of them drove 90 minutes one way to meet us in the pub

840

01:21:07,680 --> 01:21:12,880

and have a cup of coffee and turn around and drive back because he knew how difficult this

841

01:21:12,880 --> 01:21:19,040

trip was the other the other gentleman lived in in uh in dublin so now i stayed in touch with those

842

01:21:19,040 --> 01:21:25,280

guys over the years so fast forward to a year ago april i get a phone call from noel who was one of

843

01:21:25,280 --> 01:21:31,040

the the two gentlemen he was the gentleman who drove 90 minutes that night and he said um
hey i'm

844

01:21:31,040 --> 01:21:36,560

thinking about doing something and he great songwriters we had written two children's books

845

01:21:36,560 --> 01:21:44,240

the bus driver so what are you gonna do he said um i'll make a documentary wow um why can't
you

846

01:21:44,240 --> 01:21:48,800

imagine you not being successful anything you do but that's a lot of a lot goes into that yeah i've

847

01:21:48,800 --> 01:21:53,040

been taking classes and um something i really want to do and i go that's great i go what are

848

01:21:53,040 --> 01:21:58,080

you going to do it on because i'm going to do it on your book what you're doing on my book

849

01:21:58,800 --> 01:22:05,360

i go how are you going to do that because i'm not sure yet he said but i had a dream i go okay
what

850

01:22:05,360 --> 01:22:10,960

was the dream he said your son and your wife came to me in the dream and said you're
supposed to do

851

01:22:10,960 --> 01:22:18,160

the documentary on his book well now i can't answer him right i'm like i'm sobbing and i'm like
are you

852

01:22:18,160 --> 01:22:25,760

sure and he said i've never been more sure about anything this is what i'm supposed to do so
okay

853

01:22:25,760 --> 01:22:29,680

i go you know how it is she told me write the book i go if she told you you better get on it you

854

01:22:29,680 --> 01:22:36,160

better get on it and so over the next few months we put together a program where he was going to

855

01:22:36,160 --> 01:22:43,440

come to the states in fall and interview eileen's friends two of shawn's best friends from high

856

01:22:43,440 --> 01:22:49,760

school people who worked with me to find out what was did they notice the impact of shawn's journey

857

01:22:49,760 --> 01:22:55,280

and eileen's journey on me as a leader and things like that but he said when you come to ireland in

858

01:22:55,280 --> 01:23:01,040

may i want to i want we're going to end up that we do interviews so where we're going to do the

859

01:23:01,040 --> 01:23:07,440

interviews at he said well your dad's house is still remaining and now this is where i'm going

860

01:23:07,440 --> 01:23:13,920

to chronologically jump for a second so this is actually in 2019 in 17 when i had gone over there

861

01:23:13,920 --> 01:23:19,200

to bury your ashes the last day i was there it was with all my cousins and all of them are women

862

01:23:19,200 --> 01:23:22,880

and at the end of this big dinner they're like we have a surprise for you and the gentleman walked

863

01:23:22,880 --> 01:23:28,320

in i go who's that they go it's your cousin so no i don't have any male cousins they go yeah you do

864

01:23:28,320 --> 01:23:33,840

that's on your dad's side never knew this gentleman existed didn't know anything about him and he came

865

01:23:33,840 --> 01:23:38,640

up and gave me a big hug and he said i live on your dad's farm and your dad's house is still

866

01:23:38,640 --> 01:23:43,360

standing you need to come see it and i said i can't i'm gonna leave it tomorrow morning if i ever come

867

01:23:43,360 --> 01:23:49,680

back i will so now we jump to 19 and noel tells me yeah i talked to your cousin we're gonna rig up

868

01:23:49,680 --> 01:23:53,520

so we have electricity and everything in there and we're gonna do your interview sitting in your

869

01:23:53,520 --> 01:24:03,200

dad's living room i'm like what so go to ireland go to his house we pull up in front of it and it's

870

01:24:03,200 --> 01:24:10,800

this old beat up but it's cement cinder block building that's still standing and and i almost

871

01:24:10,800 --> 01:24:16,240

couldn't get out of the car and i got out he said come on i want to take you around the back before

872

01:24:16,240 --> 01:24:22,080

you go in and the cousin took me around the back and there's a big three by three concrete pad

873

01:24:22,720 --> 01:24:28,560

almost like a pool that was set up behind the house and i said okay what's this and he said this is

874

01:24:28,560 --> 01:24:34,560

for to catch the rain water and my grandmother your grandmother would make they would make

875

01:24:34,560 --> 01:24:40,800

cooking and they would wash clothes out of here and i said oh he said put your hands on it so i

876

01:24:40,800 --> 01:24:46,640

did and he said that's the last thing your dad built before he came to ireland i mean before he

877

01:24:46,640 --> 01:24:54,160

came to the states he said he built that with his hands no forms he just took the concrete and molded

878

01:24:54,160 --> 01:24:59,200

all of that so he said keep your hands on there because he goes you're touching his hands and it

879

01:24:59,200 --> 01:25:05,840

was like i had this chill go through me and i'm like okay now you expect me to go in the house

880

01:25:05,840 --> 01:25:12,320

and have an interview are you kidding me they open the door and the fireplace is on and there's a

881

01:25:12,320 --> 01:25:18,240

kiddle hanging in there and there's a chair sitting there with a stool and i'm like and i walked in and

882

01:25:18,240 --> 01:25:25,520

i tears just streamed down my face i'm like oh my god he's here like this is where he grew up this

883

01:25:25,520 --> 01:25:31,680

is where it all started and so noel got me composed and we did did the interview and

884

01:25:31,680 --> 01:25:40,400

it was amazing i walked out of there and then my dad had my grandfather my dad's dad had taken his

885

01:25:40,400 --> 01:25:47,120

life when my dad was 18 he hung himself in the barn and my dad found him and had to cut him down

886

01:25:47,840 --> 01:25:52,160

and i always wondered when i was growing up my dad was very distant never really told me he loved

887

01:25:52,160 --> 01:25:56,960

me i never saw him put his arm around my mom or hold her hand but i knew he loved me and i knew

888

01:25:56,960 --> 01:26:04,640

he loved her and then i realized when i was told this story when i was 35 my mom told me i'm like

889

01:26:04,640 --> 01:26:11,200

no wonder so he got no counseling it was the worst sin you could do in ireland was to take your life

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01:26:11,200 --> 01:26:15,920

my grandfather was buried in a grave with no headstone his name was removed from the church

891

01:26:15,920 --> 01:26:22,880

book and my dad had to go through that and so he was never going to get close to anybody ever again

892

01:26:22,880 --> 01:26:29,600

even the people that he truly loved and i said to my cousin where's the barn and he said oh come on

893

01:26:29,600 --> 01:26:36,400

with me we went around the back and just beautiful very nice barn and i go no is there another barn

894

01:26:36,400 --> 01:26:41,840

here and he said well yeah the old barn but we don't use it anymore and i go can i go into that

895

01:26:41,840 --> 01:26:49,680

barn he said well sure and we walked around the back and there was this old dilapidated barn where

896

01:26:49,680 --> 01:26:55,840

the roof was only about probably 10 foot high and i pushed the door open and i turned to my right

897

01:26:56,480 --> 01:27:04,480

and you saw all the um um what am i trying to think of um all the timbers everything that made

898

01:27:04,480 --> 01:27:09,440

up the roof structure all of them were only maybe about seven feet off the off the ground

899

01:27:10,480 --> 01:27:16,480

and when i looked to my right it was if i was my dad again and i had a quick mental picture of

900

01:27:16,480 --> 01:27:21,600

somebody hanging there the first fatal call i ever went on was a mom who took her life then i cut her

901

01:27:21,600 --> 01:27:29,760

down and all of a sudden it was like he was with me and it was his dad and like almost like somebody

902

01:27:29,760 --> 01:27:34,800

had loaded a flash drive in my brain and everything that he had been through every emotion and things

903

01:27:34,800 --> 01:27:42,640

he had fought all loaded and i went oh my god i go now i get it dad i get it and i stopped and i froze

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01:27:42,640 --> 01:27:47,920

and my cousin was like well did you want to go in here for some reason and i said don't you know

905

01:27:48,640 --> 01:27:54,880

he said don't i know what i said well our grandfather i said he took his life right my dad's

906

01:27:54,880 --> 01:28:00,640

dad took his life he goes yeah i go did you know how he did it he went no we were never told and i

907

01:28:00,640 --> 01:28:09,360

went oh my god i go he did it in here and he was like what he had never heard the story and i backed

908

01:28:09,360 --> 01:28:14,080

out of there and i walked out and i remember i was kind of numb and i walked to the car and i got in

909

01:28:14,080 --> 01:28:21,520

it with noel and we drove to the cemetery and did some other shots later and i told noel i go if this

910

01:28:21,520 --> 01:28:28,080

documentary never gets made this is the reason i was supposed to come back here i go because the

911

01:28:28,080 --> 01:28:35,760

circle is now complete i felt my dad in that house i felt his pain in that barn and i realized this

912

01:28:35,760 --> 01:28:42,640

mission i've been on about telling people that mental illness is not a stigma or has a stigma it

913

01:28:42,640 --> 01:28:48,640

is not a character weakness or deficiency and you can't look at it that way my poor grandfather was

914

01:28:48,640 --> 01:28:55,760

ill enough that he took his life and what it did to my dad and now shawn sees my dad in heaven

915

01:28:55,760 --> 01:29:02,320

and then shawn comes to aileen it's the full circle i'm finally whole and i owe you for doing this well

916

01:29:02,320 --> 01:29:07,600

that didn't stop him he came to the states and did all these interviews and put together an amazing

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01:29:07,600 --> 01:29:13,840

documentary that he finished this past november and now it's out at some film festivals to be

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01:29:13,840 --> 01:29:20,080

viewed and see and it doesn't really matter about any of that if one person gets something out of it

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01:29:20,080 --> 01:29:28,480

it'll be amazing and his name is noel joyce and if nothing else he completed a circle for me

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01:29:28,480 --> 01:29:34,080

that i will owe him for the rest of my life because i got my dad back for a little while and it was

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01:29:34,480 --> 01:29:40,880

it was powerful amazing actually incredible absolutely incredible yeah it's interesting

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01:29:40,880 --> 01:29:45,040

because i'm writing my second book at the moment and it's about multi-generational trauma and it's

923

01:29:45,040 --> 01:29:51,520

going to start present day and it's going to go back in time and this is just it you know when you

924

01:29:51,520 --> 01:29:56,160

look at the struggles that your father had you know the struggles that then you know that you had

925

01:29:56,160 --> 01:30:01,680

and then sean had i mean if you reverse engineer you know it's not absolute but there's elements

926

01:30:01,680 --> 01:30:08,800

you know and these are dominoes and so by understanding this this part you can start to maybe

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01:30:09,440 --> 01:30:15,200

push against that domino so it doesn't go to your kids and their kids etc etc so it's so powerful

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01:30:15,200 --> 01:30:18,720

hearing not only you know the kind of grief journey in the mental health side but even

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01:30:19,680 --> 01:30:25,760

getting to really understand you know two three generations back yourself and and and literally

930

01:30:25,760 --> 01:30:30,560

live it for a second be there and get that flash and just have that immediate understanding of the

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01:30:30,560 --> 01:30:37,600

pain that two generations ago really endure i always people will sometimes ask me well you've

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01:30:37,600 --> 01:30:42,000

got a lot of strong faith so that means that you believe you got a lot of relatives and people love

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01:30:42,000 --> 01:30:47,520

you on the other side i'm like yeah they go why do you think it was your dad that sean saw why him

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01:30:47,520 --> 01:30:53,840

in particular once i went to ireland i knew because there was the person who sat there when he almost

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01:30:53,840 --> 01:31:00,480

lost his life the first time who sat there went i get it john i get the pain i saw the pain so you

936

01:31:00,480 --> 01:31:05,280

need to go back and that's why the next time he didn't have to stay he got to go back there and

937

01:31:05,280 --> 01:31:10,000

no doubt in my mind exactly what you said and that was nulls it's funny i didn't even tell you that

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01:31:10,000 --> 01:31:16,640

but you got it that was what he figured out about the message was i need to connect this journey

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01:31:16,640 --> 01:31:22,160

across the ocean of pain and this mental health and how it's progressed and then turn it around

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01:31:22,160 --> 01:31:28,320

and bring it back home and unite you and your dad this irishman that comes to the states who
an

941

01:31:28,320 --> 01:31:33,680

irish american comes back and makes the journey and it really is about that multi-generational

942

01:31:33,680 --> 01:31:39,200

and realize this is a disease that we should have had on our radar just as if i mean i because my

943

01:31:39,200 --> 01:31:45,040

dad died of stomach cancer i've had more colonoscopies than probably anybody in the world
and most of the

944

01:31:45,040 --> 01:31:50,320

nurses in illinois know what my butt looks like it hasn't gotten any better with age and but we're

945

01:31:50,320 --> 01:31:56,880

aware of it because we know that there's a chance if only we had known it wouldn't have saved

946

01:31:56,880 --> 01:32:02,720

shawn's life but it would have probably made it more on my radar when he first got sick instead
of

947

01:32:02,720 --> 01:32:08,720

me going no that that's just a stage he'll grow out of yeah i mean this is it it's just tools in

948

01:32:08,720 --> 01:32:13,120

the toolbox it's not saying like you said it was an absolute but it's another layer of understanding

949

01:32:13,120 --> 01:32:16,880

you know i think it's it's the same with uh i'll have a lot of conversations with people these days

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01:32:16,880 --> 01:32:22,960

about anything from addiction to you know being part of a gang whatever it is and we look at it

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01:32:22,960 --> 01:32:29,200

as which is kind of such an ironic perspective to have a lot of these faiths come from kindness and

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01:32:29,200 --> 01:32:34,240

compassion and people spend you know whatever day of the week it is and then they come out and then

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01:32:34,960 --> 01:32:43,200

extremely judgmental and you know unempathetic so the more we understand the layers of these human

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01:32:43,200 --> 01:32:47,920

elements i would like to think that the more compassion we as a community are going to start

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01:32:47,920 --> 01:32:53,040

showing people who are struggling whether that's you know again through some sort of crime because

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01:32:53,040 --> 01:32:57,120

that's all they knew it's all they grew up around or whether it's mental health or addiction or

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01:32:57,120 --> 01:33:02,800

obesity or whatever it is that you know there's there's a story and i talk about this a lot now

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01:33:03,520 --> 01:33:08,720

we were all babies once we were all a blank canvas and then life happened and obviously as we said

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01:33:08,720 --> 01:33:14,640

epigenetics sometimes we carried previous lives as we were first born so the more we understand the

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01:33:14,640 --> 01:33:20,720

more tools we have to look at the whole human being the higher the chance we can help people

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01:33:20,720 --> 01:33:28,000

heal and and thrive in their life and i think too when you when you try to understand where

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01:33:28,000 --> 01:33:32,560

somebody else has come from you don't do the judgment it almost frees you up a little bit to

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01:33:32,560 --> 01:33:39,360

do it for yourself because you get it or before when you're if you're too quick to judge that's

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01:33:39,360 --> 01:33:42,640

when that shame part comes in about yourself going well i should have known better i should

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01:33:42,640 --> 01:33:46,080

have handled this better i'm the one that should have fixed this why did i do that or that and

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01:33:46,720 --> 01:33:51,920

now you realize i always and i just one of the things i have told to my niece you're going to

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01:33:51,920 --> 01:33:57,680

learn to write yourself permission slips and it's okay to write the permission slip that i can't go

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01:33:57,680 --> 01:34:02,480

to that event or i need to leave early or today's just going to be a bad day because you realize

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01:34:02,480 --> 01:34:07,280

other people who are in similar situations you certainly would be the first one to hand them that

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01:34:07,280 --> 01:34:11,120

pad and go i'll just start writing them for you because you need to take care of yourself and you

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01:34:11,120 --> 01:34:15,840

need to be okay with who you are and love yourself and then it's a whole lot easier to love other

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01:34:15,840 --> 01:34:20,960

people once you figure it out that you're probably not such a bad soul yeah yeah which circles around

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01:34:20,960 --> 01:34:26,640

again to first responders advocating for their own wellness you know we do so much for other people

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01:34:26,640 --> 01:34:32,480

write yourself a permission slip that will benefit you and your family absolutely right

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01:34:32,800 --> 01:34:37,920

beautiful all right well i want to round this off firstly the documentary is there a title and where

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01:34:37,920 --> 01:34:42,880

can people start looking for it you know hoping that it's going to come to to their area or their

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01:34:42,880 --> 01:34:48,160

stream well it's called it's called taking the cape off i said so it was easy enough there wasn't a

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01:34:48,160 --> 01:34:54,160

whole lot of extra creativity that went into it um and right now the the way i understand it is

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01:34:54,160 --> 01:35:00,480

when it's being viewed by festivals it's not out for public viewing um i know noel has looked at

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01:35:00,480 --> 01:35:06,000

some other um youtube is probably where it'll go when it when it does come out um and we will

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01:35:06,000 --> 01:35:10,400

definitely let people know when that's going to occur that could happen in the next month or two

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01:35:10,400 --> 01:35:15,920

it depends on when it runs this the cycles and i'm not up to speed on i said that's your thing

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01:35:15,920 --> 01:35:22,160

this is your thing you get credit for i just was the mouth and you did all the work um and but i

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01:35:22,160 --> 01:35:27,520

but i expect that probably by the middle of next year it'll be available on youtube for people to

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01:35:27,520 --> 01:35:33,280

see it and i'll certainly let you know when that when that occurs um it's long i think that's

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01:35:33,280 --> 01:35:38,880

probably one of the challenges of it it's 90 minutes um and so people's attention span is

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01:35:38,880 --> 01:35:44,720

something that we we worried about in but you just couldn't get it in in any shorter of amount of

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01:35:44,720 --> 01:35:51,200

time to build both eileen and shawn's legacy and uh people who've seen it the ones who are allowed

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01:35:51,200 --> 01:35:56,480

to see it are the people who were interviewed on a secure link and many of them watched it with

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01:35:56,480 --> 01:36:02,240

their significant others who did not know what their involvement was with their husband or wife

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01:36:02,240 --> 01:36:10,560

and then what my story was in terms of saying it and doing it and they all were like boy that was

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01:36:10,560 --> 01:36:15,600

powerful so i'm i'm hoping that that's what people will uh will be impacted at least one person if

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01:36:15,600 --> 01:36:20,000

they walk away going i got a better understanding and i'm going to do a little bit about that to

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01:36:20,000 --> 01:36:24,800

help myself or somebody else we're good to go well firstly i don't think 90 minutes is that long

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01:36:25,440 --> 01:36:29,440

the first interview we did was two and a half hours so there we go people loved it so that

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01:36:30,160 --> 01:36:36,080

so just to appease that fear secondly the book you have obviously the the you know the paper

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01:36:36,080 --> 01:36:41,520

version the digital version and now the audio book as well where can people find that so you

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01:36:41,520 --> 01:36:46,800

can find it on amazon uh you can find it on barnes and noble amazon is probably the easiest
play

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01:36:46,800 --> 01:36:52,560

um there's also a direct link on on my web page patrickjkenney.com that you can go to and it'll

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01:36:52,560 --> 01:36:58,880

take you to it also um people have just been amazing and i the audible book if i go to speak

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01:36:58,880 --> 01:37:02,320

somewhere and somebody says they're going to order that i always ask them to send me an
email

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01:37:02,320 --> 01:37:07,040

afterwards because i literally as you know you have to listen to like four minutes of it before

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01:37:07,040 --> 01:37:11,840

it goes audible for them to put on i've never listened to more than the first four minutes

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01:37:11,840 --> 01:37:18,240

because i listened to it and went oh my god this is terrible um so i always wait to get their

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01:37:18,240 --> 01:37:23,360

feedback and they've been very kind in what they've sent back so i'm like as long as you

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01:37:23,360 --> 01:37:30,080

got something coherent out of it i'm good absolutely well you had a lot of great feedback from the

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01:37:30,080 --> 01:37:35,040

audio book as well i remember so obviously you did a good job yeah thank you yeah it's been

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01:37:35,040 --> 01:37:40,000

that's been more rewarding than i thought it would be well pat i want to thank you a third

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01:37:40,000 --> 01:37:46,080

conversation a great conversation again i think if people listen to the original you know chat that

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01:37:46,080 --> 01:37:50,640

we had and heard the you know the the story of eileen and sean and all the other things that

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01:37:50,640 --> 01:37:55,680

we discussed adding on this i mean obviously there's a part two as well but this conversation

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01:37:55,680 --> 01:38:01,440

has been so powerful knowing your story already so i want to thank you again for coming on the

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01:38:01,440 --> 01:38:06,400

behind the shield podcast and being so generous with your time today always an honor to talk to

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01:38:06,400 --> 01:38:17,280

my friend always love what you do and have done and continue to do