

# Matt Hesse - Episode 776

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## SPEAKERS

Matt Hesse, James Geering


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James Geering 00:00

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flexibility. I've had to do a bunch of traveling I know you've had complex as well. So it's taken us a few weeks to make this happen. But I want to start by welcoming you to the behind the shield podcast today.

 Matt Hesse 03:36


I'm super happy to be here. James. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you and we adapted overcome got here.

 James Geering 03:43

So we were connected by a mutual friend, John Doolittle. So as an icebreaker, how did you meet John?

 03:50


Oh, man, everyone knows John. There probably 1000 different ways I could have met him I believe. I met him at the HTF symposium a few years ago. Trade doc. John, as you probably know, is was one of the first if not the first director of post if, after he left the military, or just as he was leaving the military. And so he's been, you know, encapsulated in that whole world of HP. And he and I started chatting, and pretty soon we're having having a couple of beers. And then we became friends. And he's been out to see us at the University of numerous times. And he's just a heck of a good dude.

 James Geering 04:30

You really? Yes, absolutely. All right, well, then, let's get to the very beginning of your story. I want to ask where you are, but that kind of ties into the very end of it. So starting at the beginning, tell me where you were born and tell me a little bit about your family dynamic. what your parents did and how many siblings?

 04:46

Sure. So I think my mom and dad were having sex on this on this. I'm not gonna

 James Geering 04:52

start. You can if you want. It might be perfect. We never know way back

 04:55

way back. I was born in Nebraska. My My parents met in right after college and my dad was grew up in a farm town in Nebraska and so I grew up on a farm in Nebraska and had about


eight years there as a kid turning wrenches on tractors and you know, just the farm life. Sadly, my parents divorced early in my life at age eight and I moved to Wyoming to take up bull riding and went back to Nebraska lots see my dad but but really pretty much a separated parents by the by age eight and I have three brothers and those brothers all came with me and one by one, they just trickled back to my to my dad and back where we grew up. And I stayed at my mom all the way through until I left for basic training.

 James Geering 05:52

So what did that dynamic have on the effect have on you, when you were younger? Obviously, you're working a lot of people now that transition, we all are starting to understand as men and women in uniform that before we put the uniform on is also an important part of our mental health story. So what are some of the AHA hours? Now when you look back?

 06:09

Well, you're gonna go straight to a James. All right. Yeah, so So I now have the benefit of looking back on my journey. And I think I know, having put, you know, nearly 1000 veterans through my program now that, that the journey for service really starts at childhood. And you're often called to serve from from situations as children where maybe you couldn't serve yourself, but you don't want other kids or other people to feel the way you felt and trauma in our lives, both as children, and then again, repeating itself through military service become safe and comfortable and normal, and also wanting to help others not experience it becomes part of the DNA of who you are. And so if you're built to serve from a young age, I think that's why a lot of us have a tough time transitioning into our new lives as civilians. Taking that uniform off may seem like a weight coming off, for some, but I actually think that it's more debilitating than you know, maybe not in your head, but in your heart. And so I've pretty firmly believe now that loss of purpose is the biggest challenge in transition. And identification of who you are, and why you want to serve in the first place, may open up Pandora's box inside of you that you're not ready to open sometimes. But it's the key to unlocking the direction that you want in your life. Because if you're made to serve, you've got to find a way to do that, or you'll feel lost.

 James Geering 07:41

So what do you identify within yours? I mean, for example, I kind of unwrap mine now. And my parents got divorced when I was kind of late teens. So I had this perception that well, they're not divorce, I'm almost a man. Now my parents gonna be married forever. And then there was this nuclear explosion. And I realized, oh, there's a lot of pipe. My childhood actually was completely wrong the way I perceived it. So you you have this divorce, when you're younger, you find yourself and your siblings kind of filtering back to your dad. You know, what were the pros and cons of that vulnerable child back then.

 08:18

Yeah, again, benefit of hindsight. I had a terribly traumatic childhood. I think, again, trauma of all kinds is prevalent in, in our population in the kids who are now serving and have served. If they look back in their childhood, it's pretty easy to trace back how this this beginning kernel of

they look back in their childhood, it's pretty easy to trace back how this this beginning rather of wanting to be somebody who mattered both to help others and to protect yourself. mine mine started at seven years old. I won't go into the kind of abuse that it was, but it was very bad. So bad that it was compartmentalised until I was about 30, meaning I had no access to the memories, military service layers more on top. And by the time i i started to peel it all back. There was definitely signs in along the way of, of this kind of trauma, having having been part of my life, but part of the I think the human beings ability to compartmentalize and we're certainly taught that in service, how do you how do you compartmentalize the traumatic things around you so that you can move forward and finish the job? That skill becomes somewhat somewhat of a detriment to someone who's trying to come out of of the unconscious behaviors that they're that they continue to display, because the unconscious behaviors are, are destroying their lives. And part of part of the wiring that's created at the at the time of trauma, especially pre 16 years old, where you're still building your wiring and framework for operations within your body. I'm the one that framework becomes when when a wire goes this way instead of that way, you literally operate on a different system. And I believe that that system predominantly is fear. And fear. Fear is, there's nothing wrong with fear, it can be an incredible tool to motivate and drive. In fact, a lot of successful people are successful because of the fear that they have inside of them. But it can also destroy your life in many ways. And most often, when you combine fear, and what is common in trauma, children, is a lack of self love. Because when you're traumatized as a child, I don't understand why this happens. But usually you blame yourself for it. And when you blame yourself, for that, you go through your whole life in some ways, despising who you are. And it's very easy to cover that up with I feel good from helping other people. And that, that mechanism of I'm going to help other people so that I don't feel bad inside about myself. And that's not a conscious thing, we don't decide that. We just do it. It's part of our wiring system. And so a lot of our work here, my work now is about helping service members understand how to look back in their past map out their, their, what I call origin story, who you are, where you came from, why you chose to serve, how you continue to serve now, all the sad memories, all the good memories, and then in a map or diagram, de emphasizing consciously choosing to de emphasize the things that are that are bad behavior and trauma based and emphasize the things in your life that you love, and enjoy that make you feel good about who you are. And so, you know, I think, to get back to the question, my my fear from having have happened, what happened to me was so bad that I compartmentalize it, but the mechanism of fear was was very big part of who I was. And so I was very driven. I've been incredibly successful in a lot of things because of that drive. But I was very sad, inside very angry. And I didn't really understand it, because I'm such a peaceful person in general. And so I went on a quest, I guess, to figure out why I torched every relationship that came to me why I was so hungry for success, because I'm not, you know, I like nice things for what it does for the people around me. But I could care less about having nice things for me. Again, that would make sense if you don't value yourself a whole lot. Why would you care about what you have. And so about, my mom died in a from a car accident when I was 36. And when she died, I had a full blown panic attack. And I'd never had one, I had had the beginnings of them like anxiety, I just didn't know what it was. I interpreted anxiety as energy, I gotta get it out, I got to work out I got to work harder my business. And so I kept again compartmentalize that anxiety for so long. But once I figured out that the, from the once once you have a panic attack, you'll know that that's actually what anxiety is. And it's really hard to come back from because it's such a debilitating. My mom died on a Friday, I was sitting in a board meeting with my entire board on the company I had started and sold on a Tuesday, you know, get back to work, just get through it. And I noticed my chest feeling tight. I started getting tingling in my arm. Both my arms actually, I couldn't breathe. And all of a sudden I was on the floor. And I thought I thought I was having a heart attack. I thought I was dying. And, and so you know, I didn't die, obviously. But I but I went home and was exhausted for a couple of days and going through the trauma losing

my mom and I was laying in bed thinking about you know, my my mom and my childhood and all those things. And I would sleep and the next day I met with my mentor. And I'm sitting at lunch with him telling him about, you know, how should you pass and what happened. And while I'm talking about that, a game of like, I can almost describe it as like a movie or Tetris where things are falling into place. All of a sudden all these images from my childhood started just coming back I started having like a full on like, like I was I was almost in two worlds. I'm having lunch and I'm also seeing all this stuff happening. And I didn't know it but I had started bawling at the table while I was talking to him and I was sort of like running to processors. I was still having a conversation, but I'm watching this horrific movie of all this trauma that happened to me as a child play out in my head and and and I started to have another panic attack. So, anyway, imagine losing your mom. And then having seen a movie of your childhood, four days later, where some unspeakable horrific things happen to you all happen all at once. And so I guess you would say I didn't have a nervous breakdown, I had an epiphany and a whole lot of conscious trauma happened at one time. And so, you know, I haven't looked back on my life, I could see all that stuff. Clearly now, like, why didn't I see it then. But when you when you're not ready to see things your body doesn't let you and I think that's what a lot of vets face in their lives. When they come out of service, the frustration that's inside of them anger that builds, is the subconscious unconscious coming to collision with each other. The conscious wants, the subconscious wants it out of the conscious doesn't want it out. And it just, it just creates a lot of frustration. And that frustration, honestly, I think leads often is what leads to suicide, because you don't want to put that burden on other people. Because that burden is heavy. And again, you're built to serve, why would you want to give bad things on to other people that don't deserve it. And so, I think that's why people will suffer in silence. And sometimes eventually, they sadly killed themselves. And so I guess to bring it full circle, my life is a Petri dish for you creating something good from the the challenging things that happened to me, all the ways that I've been poured into by people, mentors, and both in service and now sense, and wanting to build a faster way to get to happy self love, purpose and success in life through the work that we're now doing.

 James Geering 16:55

Well, firstly, I want to say thank you, I think this these are the vulnerable and extremely uncommon, uncomfortable conversations that people need to hear because one of the things that I believed in, like so many of us for a long, long time is our mental health struggles. Begin when we're in uniform, you know, what you see in combat what you see as a firefighter or a police officer. And then as I educate myself through listening to all these different people with all these different stories, you start to realize we never talk about what happened before we put the uniform on. And then you hear people like Jake Clark from save a warrior say, I think I forget that a huge percentage of people in uniform, their aces scores, their acute childhood experience score. I think the max is 15. And most of us are 12 to 15. And then I listen, I mean, 800 episodes now, the number of people that had sexual abuse, physical abuse, addiction, all these things. And yet, you know, now you go to a counselor and you sit in front of someone, you say, Oh, it must have been Felicia, this is why you're going through it, not the fact that you were, you know, preyed on as a seven year old child, and that's never addressed. So I think it's so important for us to hear the philosophy that you have to look at the entire holistic human being from birth to present day.

 18:12

Yeah, yeah, you're, you're spot on. And I think, what's also covering it up, James is, there's a lot of really well intended veteran nonprofits that are trying to raise money to help people, but they're doing it off the pity of service, and nobody who served wants any pity from anybody. And so we've we basically charged the 320 million people in our population who didn't serve up with this, oh, my God, he's a broken veteran, I need to help him. And anybody who is that I know that is served is proud of their service. Even if they didn't like the service, they're really proud that they raised their hand and wins. And so now, we've got to re educate civilians that we don't want any pity from you. We don't want anything from you on like, nothing other than potentially opportunities the same as anybody else would get them and don't stigmatize me. Like I'm a broken veteran, because I'm actually purpose built. I know how to lead. I'm a team. I'm a teammate. I am a good contributing member to society. And you should want me on your team because of that not because you feel sorry for me. Absolutely. That's that's a bigger, bigger battle the fight but it's it's it's going to be an important one in the future if we want kids to want to serve our country.

J

James Geering 19:32

100% Well, going back to your childhood for a little bit, not the stuff that we don't want to discuss, but bull riding. I had a guest on Curtis Anderson who's actually Canadian cowboy, and he, it wasn't actually a full it was the way the bull went back and forth. He ended up hitting its head when he was thrown forward and had a horrendous TBI. He went from literally barely be able to swallow to now years later, he's working on on running and I skating against he was a hockey player too. So talk to me about that sport, your experiences and if you had any of the the TBI element that is also another kind of elephant in the room in the mental health conversation.



20:13

Yeah. So I actually was a wrestler as well and I had a broken neck from that, in addition to a compound fracture fracture in my in my arm from bull riding, several several concussions, so I'm probably more bruised and battered in my head. And I remember that I and I remember from that as well. But I mean, I, I'm like a lot of service members. I'm an adrenaline junkie, I love doing fun shit, that that is like, pushing my own, you know, boundaries, I believe that fear again, and overcoming it puts you on a high and makes you makes you want to do awesome stuff. And so I find myself in when I was younger, I have kids now. So I'm not nearly as crazy as I was then. But I find myself wanting to do that kind of stuff. And so, you know, as kids, you don't think about those as like debilitating injuries, even my broken neck. I was, I was wrestling again within a year and a half not not competitively anymore. But I still, you know, I just didn't think I was, you know, now I would wouldn't dare I'll do jujitsu a little bit. But I wouldn't dare get into competing because I would I'd be like, I don't care. I'll break my neck. I want to win. So, but yeah, I think I think that that all of those things, again, trauma, childhoods create risky people with risky behaviors, risky behaviors, create more damage, more damage creates different wiring system. And sometimes, unfortunately, those risky behaviors then lead to you know, what I would call you know, self cutting, self mutilate mutilation, not not not necessarily cutting with a knife, but like mutilating yourself from inside, you want to suffer because you feel so shitty inside you, like I deserve to suffer. Masochist kind of mindset gives you some comfort. And if people out there listening to that, to this, I want to say that that just because it's safe and comfortable to you, because you've been around it your whole life doesn't mean that it

needs to be a part of your future, there is an absolute path out of that feeling. The journey to self-love when you've hated yourself for 20 years or 30 years is not an easy one. But you said the word earlier vulnerability is the beginning of that journey, being able to be vulnerable to somebody else, just to share your burdens and let them let them out. One of our psychologists here says the things that you let out, don't come back in the same way. And, and meaning once you hear yourself, say them, the subconscious may get courage and the conscious may let it out. Once it comes out, it's part of your conscious operating system. And then you can do something about it. And so just getting it out and sharing it is a really important part of that journey.

 James Geering 23:11

So stay on the riskier behavior. Talk to me about your career aspirations were younger, and then how a boxing match led you into the military.

 23:23

You know, I, when I was my parents divorced, and my my brothers all left and I was my mom, I was in this sort of caregiver type of thing at you know, 10 years old, which is, you know, the wrong thing for a kid to be doing at 10 years old. But it was who I was because of what happened to me. I had always been a sensitive kid that wanted other people to be okay. I was never the biggest kid but I was always the kid that would take a fight for somebody else. And I think that, that I continue that journey through my whole youth with my mom and I just always took care of her. And I think that that the journey through taking care of her. It created this sort of like I don't care what happens to me as long as she's okay. And then, you know, going into the military happened because I was I had gotten into some trouble. And I was doing community service or something I remember what it was. And I was on my lunch break walking around a Walmart store actually back then it was called permite I think and I saw a soldier and I think again subconscious is so powerful and Pete powerful and people I'd probably watched a movie or something anyway, I was curious. I started following him around. And you know what happens when you follow a recruiter around the recruiter starts following you around. So I was in the pellet gun aisle looking for some pellets from my pellet gun. Like all 14 year old kid should be doing or 16 year old kid should be doing and he came up to me, like, Hey, son, how old are you? And I was like, I was like, I'm 16 just about to turn 70. And he said, he said, Really, and we started chatting, and he started telling me about his Golden Gloves boxing days and, and he's like, once you come by the armory ON After School next week, and we'll box a little bit and so I did. And then we started boxing every week. And at the stroke of 17. He says, Hey, have you ever thought about going in the military and I now know I was being handled I. But that being said, he I asked my mom, she said, No, I asked her again every day until she said, Yes. And so I went into the Army as a split up. So I went to basic training, the summer of my junior year, came back from my senior year, broke my neck wrestling and snap my arm riding bulls. And so when basic training time came around, or when a it time came around, to go to the My individual training, and then you know, go off to my, my service station, I, I was injured. And I thought, I don't know if I'm gonna go and I called the recruiter and he's like, no, no, you signed the contract you're going. And so I was like, alright, screw it. I really liked basic training. I was the honor graduate my class at 17. I thrived in it. But I just, you know, I'd hit 18 years old and started to like, you know, other girls around and there was, there was more bulls arrived, and I was just sort of like, but I went, it was the best thing that ever did. It

changed my life in so many ways. I didn't have a dad in quotes growing up because I was with my mom and I'd see my dad, you know, one week a year or something. And I really didn't want him in my life. Because my mom was everything to me and I was taking care of her and I guess he was the enemy a little bit. Looking back on it now he was he was just trying to be a good dad but so I I went off to basic training and then about, I would say are off day it I'm sorry, I would say about two weeks after it ended on leave. My mom gets in a horrific car accident, and she's going 80 miles around the miles an hour around the corner with gravel on it. On the highway. They done construction. It was during the Sturgis car rally or bike rally and there was a bunch of bikers camping on the side of the of the road. And her car which was called an eagle Talon was doing like somersaults through their campground. No it no bikers got hurt, but she was she was wearing a seatbelt seatbelt actually ripped and she was ejected. I think I got a call like two o'clock in the morning. And they had told me that she was being sorry. She was being airlifted to a hospital. And so I got in my car and drove about 120 miles an hour for about eight hours and got there and, and anyway, she, she, she made it through surgery. But she was a quadriplegic. And you know, it just she spent probably, I would say, five years trying to survive but eventually died. I talked about that all the time. I don't know why it's so emotional this time. But it's yeah, she you know, you're when you're when a parent dies, you know, the the weight there, I can only explain it relative, you know, relative to either, you know, somebody dying in combat, or a pet dying or something, the weight of each of those are different. When when your parent dies, especially someone that you've taken over the care of and tried to save, you know, it's a it's a deeper, longer injury. It just is very different. And so I went through all of what we talked about, you know, the stages of her death and grief plus, all of what I realized happened to me as a child and then linking those two things together. A lot of the things that happened to me happened to me because of her you know, just inviting dangerous people into our home as when I was an 810 year old kid you know every kind of abuse imaginable and so, you know, the the reconciliation of grieving someone at the same time that you're angry at them at the same time that you're processing all these things that happened to you it was it was a lot. But I firmly believe that the things that that were chosen, were chosen, you know, servant leaders are chosen and it's a gift in some ways to be given that kind of trauma because it allows perspective and the ability to leverage the empathy that you feel for others into helping people. And I guess, you know, the the gift for me, once I got through it was, I went from hating myself to loving myself, which was a pretty long journey. And then from loving myself to using the understanding that I had, from what it felt like to hate myself, and all the ways that I helped myself get to self love. And then I wrote a book about all that, and put that book, and I've not published it yet, for those, you're gonna ask for it. But I took that book and turned it into curriculum. I hired PhDs and, and master's degree coaches from across the physical, intellectual, emotional, and, and spiritual values, modalities. And we worked for a year and a half, and built a curriculum to help people on that same journey. accelerate through the journey. Into the journey, I would say, actually, and then, like you do about 500 acres in in, in the Ozark Mountains on a beautiful river and built an amazing retreat for service members to come in and learn about themselves and grow and become coaches so that they can leverage that power of empathy to serve in an in a uniform. I jumped over a lot of stuff there, you're gonna make me go back. I

J

James Geering 31:36

know I am. I am a first. In that, again, the fact that you had that emotional responses is what's needed. Because I've sat through a lot of kind of talks and mental health presentation, and the PowerPoints and the statistics, you know, they do not resonate. But when you have someone will hear about the amazing university they've created. But now, people understand the origin



story of that the origin story of save a warrior, the origin story of so many people that have come on here. Once you have found your path, and once that trauma has true months, you'd be that trauma has truly been a process that becomes a superpower, then, because you can look someone in the eye and say, I know what you're going through not the same thing. There we go. It says leverage your superpower to serve others in the background. It wasn't even reading that. So but this is just it is that now you have the buyer. And as you and I know, if someone walks in in spandex and talks to a soldier or a firefighter, hey, we're gonna do aerobics gonna prepare you for the battleground or the fire ground, you're gonna be like, get the fuck out my face. But if someone walks in, and they happen to be British shs, and they tell a firefighter, hey, we're gonna do a workout, you're gonna be alright, where do we begin? Because there's that buy in. And I feel that it's the same with a mental health, it doesn't mean that you have to have been crushed by trauma. Maybe you've been fortunate enough to have the tools were earlier on, you're able to process it. But if you haven't been honest and vulnerable about your own path, you're never going to create connect with the people that need your help.



33:08

1,000%. Right. That's a really good point. I hadn't thought about that way. I totally agree with you.



James Geering 33:14

Well, so with going back, as I said, we would just for that time, your army time is interesting, because it was four years just before 911. So talk to me about your personal military experience.



33:27

Yeah, I had a phenomenal experience. For the most part, great leaders, I learned I learned how to be a leader in the military. I'd say I learned I learned the concepts of it. I didn't I didn't get to become a leader in the military because I got out. And I know the war was coming, I would definitely would have got gotten out. At that time, I was full of rage and ready to serve. But, you know, the kind of my, my contract, I think I think I did another two extra years in the reserves. So I had a total of six years I believe. But the, the, you know, the path out for me was while the diamond service was was good from a learning to beat the fundamentals of leadership, getting to watch good leaders. I enlisted in in the as a 13 Bravo and then Reagan classes at 11 Bravo. Partially because I had a really bad leader and got just wanted to try something different. And I absolutely love the transition from that. But I I, I felt like I needed to go to college and you know, I think back then especially the whole like brusher of you need to go to school, you need to go to college, and I had the GI Bill and I was like No, I'll go to college. So I went to college, I went back to Nebraska, patch things up with my dad and understood a lot more about why what happened to me happened I wish he had nothing to do with but you know, understood more about my mom and and their relationship and now I have a very nice relationship with my dad. But what school like any kid who's you know, 22 or whatever I was going to college and and still was full of rage and and on the inside and peace on the outside. So you can imagine what I did to girls, I was I was very sweet until I got to the point of like, you

know, sabotage because you don't want people to see that. And eventually, if you get that intimate with somebody, they're going to see every bit of who you are. And so I take it all the way to the point of of falling in love or, or whatever that was for a 27 year old kid, and then I'd nuke I'd nuke the situation and go to the next one. And, you know, I didn't realize back then how bad that was, you know, I was hurting people or I probably wouldn't have done that. Again, I think just lack of consciousness and understanding. And I've now got a three year old daughter who's absolutely, like been sent to the earth to pay me back for all those things. She's she's got to be a handful and her mom is beautiful. And so I'm destined for a bad situation of that. But yeah, I just didn't understand it back then. And so I went to school. What sent me on the path of my career was I had that neck injury from wrestling and I wanted to collegiately wrestle. And so I was I was training and and never really got to the place where I could, but I was taking every supplement under the planet to try to get there. And I went to a GNC nutrition store. And there was a young guy in there at about 26 and he had a he had I'll never forget this guy. He had a Corvette outside that said, Mr. G, and C and the license plate and that back then I was like, that's cool. And now I'm like, That's douchey

J

James Geering 36:58

that was the 80s and 90s for you though.

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37:02

But anyway, Mr. GNC gave me a job. He's like, he's like, Hey, man, you want a job. I was, you know, I was in good, really good shape from having been the military and and having been training to wrestle and I'm like, my neck injury was still bad enough that I couldn't. I couldn't do anything else really, like couldn't play sports in college. So I was like, Yeah, sure. So I started working at this guy's store and through the process again, get myself in a position to serve. I had everything from from 18 year old kids come in saying, I want to get jack so I can get chicks to old ladies who are going through menopause crying in my store. And I'm 22 years old, like hugging old ladies who are bawling their eyes out because their emotions are so jacked up. And I became like, like, it was like my utopia. I'd get out of school and I run to GNC and I go to work and they come in and I'd write diets I'd research I was talking to doctors all over the country like this person has this this person has this What can I do and and so I fell in love with helping people through nutrition. I was writing all the diet programs and nutrition programs for the athletes at the University of Nebraska and go Cornhuskers by the way and I was delivering their supplements and inadvertently became so successful at at a at running GNC stores because I because I was delivering supplements outside of the stores GNC stores app, see an average of 30 to 45 customers a day. Maybe you sell them, you know, back then \$30 worth of stuff. So maybe \$1,200 a day, I was delivering like \$1,000 a day extra of supplements to kids around school. And so this guy is like, Dude, you're killing it. You just doubled my store sales. You want to like drop out of school and work me full time and I was like, Nah, I'm gonna get on a finished school and and, but what I was what I did do was start watching him and learning how he was running that store. And then I started asking questions about how he got into that store. And then pretty soon I was like, I'm gonna open my own store. And so I worked weekends, building houses, nights at GNC saved up 40 grand, use my federal benefits to get alone and opened my own GNC store near a college campus hired all the athletes at the school to work there and did the exact same thing and I replicated that model over and over for about six years and had about I don't know 2020 Or so GNC stores and along the way learned a ton of lessons. I'll tell

you a quick one. I was running my GNC store my third GNC store I bought three within like 14 months. And I had so much cash I'm like this is amazing. This is like the easiest thing ever and and you know I didn't really have any business background at all other than like being I'd say creative and having like, you know, pay are out in lawn mowing jobs and shit like that. But I saw I wasn't paying attention to the details. I'd say in one day, this guy, that clipboard walks into my store and he's like, are you mad? And I said I am. And he said, he said, You're not paying your taxes. And I said, I pay my income tax every single year is actually my returns. And he's like, no, no, you're not paying your sales tax. And I said, What's that? What do you mean sales tax? And he's like, give me your Give me your registered tape. He pulls the tape other thing he said, you see that number? On the bottom? It says, 6.7% That's not your money. That's my money. And I was like, ah, and he's like, you'll you'll need some money. I said, I get my check, but I guess how much how much is it? And he said, \$330,000 And I said, because I was like, you know, doubling down open and stores by the wakeboard boat and my version of the Mr. GNC douchey. Corvette was a Hummer is a Mr. GMC on it. But I had a Hummer, which is totally douchey

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James Geering 41:02

Mr. Hummer doesn't have quite the same concept, especially if you drive in the wrong part of town.

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41:09

Yeah, that might have put me in a different different area of town. But anyway, so anyway, wakeboard boat when Omer went that Matt paid his sales tax, and I learned a valuable lesson about paying attention to details and business. So anyway, fast forward a bit. I moved to Vegas, I go to Vail skiing with a buddy and I had been moving around Kansas and Oklahoma and Colorado, opening GNC stores for like, five or six years and just burning heart. And we went skiing and and it was just like a picture, perfect ski day. And there was it was spring break, there was girls everywhere. And he's like, Dude, you want to move here? And I was like, Yeah, I do. And so I we skied down the hill literally ski down the hill walked into the first real estate offices we could find when looking at houses bought a house the next day, closed on it in 30 days, and we were living in Vail and I stayed up there for five years skiing just him and I scan and you know, doing what guys do and ski towns and and that that romance came to an end and 22,009 10 I guess not romance the dude romance with ski town. Oh, so yeah, I got the itch to start, like doing something different. I sold all my GNC stores. Partially because I started to develop products. Back remember back to the days when I was at the GNC calling researchers about things ingredients, how to help people. There was a researcher at University of Wisconsin that had found I had found because there was an oncology center next door, and I used to get cancer patients coming into my store all the time, and you want to talk about gut wrenching, trying to help people who have terminal cancer is just many people out there have been touched by cancer, I'm sure you understand what I'm saying. But I'm, I'm now like, how do I help? So I started calling cancer researchers. And there was an ingredient called beta 3d glucan, which is actually a pretty popular ingredient now for immunity through the gut. It's really effective, actually, for the listeners out there who have either autoimmune issues or are going through chemo, beta 3d glucans, a very, very good ingredient for helping to protect the cells and reduce inflammation that's driven from unhealthy guts. And so anyway, that researcher called me and she said, I have a really, really interesting ingredient I want you to

take a look at and she had known I was working on a nutrition store and that I worked across sports, nutrition, diet, and general health. And so she sent me all this literature. I was like, This is insane. And it's this ingredient called CLA, which has been now commercialized across 100 different brands. But I launched the first CLA product in the country at GNC and so I, I had a love of packaging and I built like this, this I was sitting at dinner. And I was looking at this as a sushi place and Voss water was sitting there and I was like, Why isn't anybody made supplements nice looking like they're all in these little shitty brown bottles or plastic and they cost \$50 And I used to hand people on the sales floor at hand people product and then I'd be telling him about it. And they're like, does this and it does this like oh, it's amazing. How much is it? And I'd say you know \$40 And I'd hand it to them and they'd be like, holding they're moving their hand up and down like the weight of the product \$40 And I was like I could see that the discrepancy in their head was it doesn't feel like it's worth \$40 And so when I started making supplements I started doing it in in glass heavy packaging, where you could see the pills inside and they made the pills nicer looking and But anyway, this this lady gives me this literature tons of clinical studies they have been doing on cancer, which is why I knew her from cancer research. But the ingredient was was being studied in as a as a cancer ingredient. But all the cancer patients that were taking it, were losing a ton of fat, specifically around the belly. And I was like, that's crazy because everybody that comes into the store says I want to lose weight, and then they touch their gut. And so I launched a product called AB cuts. And it was a healthy CLA, ala GLA still still for sale at like Walmart and Costco and GNC etc. and it crushed it, it just became like a really, really top selling product very quick. Again, fast success in another business. And and so I built a, a sports, a global sports nutrition and health company, over a period of about six years. Pretty much focusing on technology, I can gradients of technology and packaging. I kind of sold that company in 2017, to a fund in New York, where I was living, actually, and and that's the time I started putting my focus on on the veteran space, and how do we help service members thrive, after service through a variety of things, but largely through health and fitness.

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James Geering 46:23

So I want to get to that transition. But just before we do, Thorne has been one of the sponsors of the show for a while as a company that I've used and you know, you when you learn about the supplement industry, you have the highest level of efficacy and certification and you know, those kinds of things that cleanliness, but then you learn there's a lot of dark sides to a lot of these things that you will find. So you know, you have a unique perspective. Talk to me about the best and the worst through your eyes with this incredible nutrition path you've been on.

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46:54

Oh, well, you nailed that there's, you know, the predominantly the sports nutrition world comes from bodybuilders, you know, former bodybuilders who decide to either start brands or endorse brands. And, you know, let's be clear those guys are largely juicing the shit out of themselves, and they're not natural and supplements are not what are causing them to be what they are. But I don't have any judgment over that. I don't care if people do that kind of thing and want to take steroids taking steroids, but But my point was that what what's driving the category of sports nutrition, largely is former's former bodybuilders who who have a huge audience who they leverage to buy their supplements when they become supplement CEOs. And some of those CEOs have built pretty big companies and a lot of them are built like kind of fringe 2030

\$50 million businesses that are meaningful businesses. And I'm not saying that small businesses, but they're not professionalized. They're not doing clinic, tons of clinical research, they're not. And they're more focused on muscle and muscle performance than they are in like, human performance from a holistic perspective. And so, you know, you mentioned Thorin they're a great company, they do a lot of awesome things. I met the CEO a couple of times when I was in New York and there's just you know, some companies that are doing great some that are doing less well we partner with a bunch of those kinds of companies here because obviously we're building coaches who are gonna go out into the world and and recommend products and so we want we want the right kinds of companies representing themselves to our students. But yeah, there's a there's a big underworld of very shady shit going on in the supplement space for sure.

 James Geering 48:43

Yeah, I think it's important people understand what I try and do with the sponsors that come on here is just simply to say you're gonna spend your 50 100 bucks anyway let's find out you know what's worth your you know your dollar Is it is it effective is it actually given you a nutritionist says on the packet and for a lot of us in uniform are you going to make sure you're not going to piss hot and some drug tests as well because I've heard I think was Jeff Nichols was telling a story how one of the I forget what it was one of the latest and greatest protein powders people were like, oh my god, this is amazing. And they were having these great results. And it turns out they were putting androgens in the protein powder and then when it came time to people say oh, we should probably test those they removed them and everyone's like, What the hell am I gains so you know, when you hear some of that shakiness going on, imagine if that was a profession where they were testing for that thing and now someone in uniform loses their job, you know, unknowingly because of the supplement they were taking so it's a very important topic I think for us in uniform especially.

 49:49

Yeah, Your Honor present right. And it's hard if you don't know the space you're trusting the companies and the people that are selling it you know, GN C's done a good job now of of you know, Maybe not in the past, but now of like, testing everything that comes into their stores. So they don't give a kid or a soldier. But you know, there's there's assholes out there pardon my friends who are who have, you know, there's some guys in jail right now remember Jack 3d, you know, the the brand that was still it's still a brand actually I think now, but the documentation in a court hearing you that the Department of Defense sent them a notice that said your product, two soldiers have died or three soldiers have died from this product, we need you to pull it from the market immediately along with the FDA. And these idiots turned around and sent a company wide email out that said, We've got to get rid of all these products, wholesale them at half price. We need to get rid of them ASAP. So imagine that they go to they go and actually sell more of it more people die. And the FDA investigates. They stayed at a prison for about a year, I think. But the FDA investigates, and then they found that these guys were actually shipping drugs into the country, through containers in China. And they have emails to the Chinese importer saying please change the label from you know, to Daffodil and allergens to vitamin A, or something. And so they were getting into country and putting these drugs into supplements. And everybody's like you said everybody's having these crazy results. And then people start dying. Anyway, the they took all their money, put them in, put them in prison, and

not long enough, but I think I think they've been in prison for maybe they get 10 years or something. But anyway, so that isn't to scare people to not use supplements, because there are some great companies out there. But you know, do your research, do your homework buy from reputable companies that have been around for a long time that have you know, good trusts and seals on their websites and that kind of stuff. I'm not gonna throw any names out there in terms of like the the companies that are doing it, the best companies do it the worst, but I'll just say that there's plenty of companies that are not doing it the way they should be.

 James Geering 52:03

Absolutely. You give me an idea that next time I sell cocaine, I'm gonna put it in a glass jar. So it feels heavy, like Damn. Grand, this feels amazing. Like James. All right, well, then, talk to me about that you've had this amazing success in the supplement world, what makes you kind of decide to kind of like, take a left term and then create fit ops.

 52:26

Yeah, so in 2017, I was, as I said, I sold the company. I was still working at the company. But I'd sold the company to a fund. And I took a couple million bucks and put it into a foundation to do research. I had been hiring vets this whole time that I had GNC stores, and at this company of a couple 100 employees, and I saw the same thing. And I was at that time trying to mentor them and counsel them, but it didn't have the awareness now or the resources now, then to help them the way that I wished I could have. But I saw the same struggle, it had nothing to do with combat trauma, it had nothing to do there's an adjustment period coming back from from combat for sure. That is hard. And you know, that's that's a version of transition, I would say. But, you know, the number of soldiers who are service members who saw the kind of combat that would require, or that would create results of, you know, I believe there's been a couple 100,000 suicides since the global war on terror took off. We have what, seven 1078 or something, combat losses of life in that 20 to 20 year period 7000 in combat 200,000 into suicide. So the numbers don't really add up relative to like, these people are killing themselves because they had such they've seen such bad things in war. And I knew firsthand because a lot of the guys that had working for me were citizen soldiers who hadn't been deployed. And they were having the same challenges that that the the larger population would think that we all have, and so I knew it was something else. I didn't know then that it was lost the purpose. I thought that it was childhood trauma, honestly, because that was my journey. And so that's always where I would start, but I didn't until I tied it all together. It fit ups, which was largely a Research Foundation wasn't successful or as successful as the University have created because it wasn't as holistically built. The book that I wrote, which I started writing right after grabbing the pandemic started and finished in early in mid 20. That title everything together it was all the exit interviews from all the roughly four or 500 students that point who had gone to the program listening to them. But quite honestly James the first time that we held space, which is a event we do here on campus every other night, it truly looks like a cult. We have we've carved a massive crater out of the earth and built seats, built seats into the around it and put this huge fire pit. That's about eight feet by eight feet by eight feet in the middle of it. And then there's torches all around the top. We're out in the middle of the Ozark Mountains in Arkansas. And if you look down from above, you'll see like eight torches and a huge fire in the middle of the bunch of guys all in black. At night, and if from the from the air, you'd be like What the hell is going on down there. If you're on the ground, it's the exact opposite of what you'd think it's,

it's men and women who have served telling their origin stories to the rest of the group. And you know, this kind of stuff goes on across all kinds of the nonprofit space, they bring people away and do retreats and talk about, you know, how you feel. And there's some good work being done. But I think that the work, sadly, well intended, but sadly, doesn't tie the the action steps into like, Okay, now you you've got some of this trauma out, you've talked about it, what are you gonna do now. And so that book was really about writing a strategy to identify who you are, why you want to serve in the first place all of your experiences, before and after your passions, the things you're skilled, that all rolled together into a strategy for your life. And that's called the purpose blueprint. And that's what the book will be titled when I finally publish it. But it's a strategy for people to to get afterlife in a way that is actionable, meaningful, and will lead to incredible purpose. And I think that everybody just generally should be living a life of purpose and meaning, that feels good. I don't think people should go to work and hate what they do. That may seem altruistic to say that that's possible, but I believe that it is. So that that that map that blueprint, that is the curriculum here at the university, is the center of everything that we do. And within it is called Think train, feeling and lead think or your intellectual skills, trainer, your physical skills, feel, or your emotional awarenesses and lead or your value systems. And so you build, you identify all your skills and all those areas. You overlay it with the things you're passionate about, and then you build a career strategy off of it. And then we put it into action when you leave here.

J

James Geering 57:29

Well, I think you're spot on as well with the concept of loss of purpose. And if you've read Sebastian youngers tribe before, but I mean, I think that nails it, you know, hits it on the head, and he's actually coming back on for things a third or fourth time in a couple of weeks. But that is what he found, too. You know, there were people that were in Restrepo, that when they were in combat, were the happiest had been for a long time. And it was when they transitioned out and were basically in D mob in Italy, that they all started falling apart. And so when you have the first responder professionals the same, you know, you're in this tribe, you have this sense of purpose, you know, you're doing good in the world. And then one day, the door closes behind you and your ID doesn't work anymore. And some fortunate people have already created other tribes. And you know, the next step, I think John was actually one of them that he already had things in place when he when he kind of transitioned out. But a lot of people don't, you know, and then you have this distorted perception of your skill set, which especially in the fire service, most firefighters go teach at a fire academy. While you were a problem solver, you were calm under pressure, you work well in the team, you have leadership skills, you have problems, solving skills, you have an amazing skill set. But the problem is you viewed the world through a myopic lens, which is, oh, I can only cut people out of cars and put fires out. No, you can do anything you want. You just have to be able to pull those blinkers off and actually realize that the world is your oyster. And you can serve in 1000 Other ways without wearing a uniform?

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59:01

Yeah. Yep, spot on. 100%. Right. Senator, we get that out to everybody. Everybody who's leaving the military and the fire service and the fire department EMS, we will be better off because those people will struggle less, they'll be more fulfilled. And those are our most talented asset in our population. There's no better part of our population than service based

people. We need more of them. And we need them to be happy and healthy so that they can help serve other people because that's what this world is all about. It's about building relationships and helping each other move forward.

J

James Geering 59:33

So you mentioned about kind of having this shift again during COVID. I actually wrote my book during COVID Two so it was a good time to sit and write. One thing that absolutely mad me about the whole pandemic experience was the only real truth in the middle was that the healthier the human, the more chance there was of a good outcome from this virus. So we took a two year window with a captive audience and could have made such incredible progress in the health of this nation, we could have empowered in local farms to grow clean food and meat, we could have changed the way we feed our children in schools and taking the soda machines out, etc, etc. What absolutely happen fucking nothing when it comes to that whole thing. So that leads me to my next one. That's I mean, let me give you the mic for a sec. What what is your perception you come from the world of fitness. You're a military veteran, and you worked in nutrition for a long time. What was your experience before we get to the university?

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1:00:33

Well, I own some gyms in New York and LA, they were basically brand houses. And it was basically it was the concept was the holistic house with a brand house which had everything you can imagine saunas, IVs, massage therapists, therapists, nutritionists, personal trainers, and it was a member's base gym, where you pay 500 bucks a month, and you have access to all this stuff. And it was crushing it is in middle of New York City. The pandemic shut that down. And I knew almost all of our members there. And it wasn't I wasn't building a gym business, I was building a brand House to talk about, you know, test products in, you know, very actually not that dissimilar to this university in terms of all of its assets and abilities to be able to test products, help companies tell their stories about their products through our population, by supporting students that go through here with scholarships, things like that. And anyway, so pandemic happens, you know, I remember my wife and I had just had our first son. And we were living in New York City, and we had been upstate at our house in Bedford, which is up just north of New York City. And we were, we were like, well, let's just go back out there. Because nobody really knew. And so, you know, my theory is whether you take what you call out Hitler, you call it COVID, you call anything where fear has captivated people, and you use fear to drive it goes back to the same thing we talked about before. Fear is an incredible, powerful tool. It's also a incredibly chaotic and destructive tool if used in the wrong way. If you fear something, you set your intention on that thing. Don't hit the tree, don't hit the tree, don't hit the tree, fuck, how do I hit that tree? It's the only thing out here in 200 miles, because you're focused on not hitting it, you're still focused on it. I think COVID All these assholes on the news got on there and started seeing how dangerous it was before they really knew what it was. And then they were bought into that narrative, either because it was pushed on them to be bought into, or because they believed it themselves. Because it gave him power. I don't know why. But they basically created created mass hip hypnosis, where psychosis, mass psychosis thing it's called, where everybody became so scared. And I'm not saying that COVID wasn't dangerous to a certain part of the population, and that that population needed to be protected. But the reality of how bad they made it seem and the deterioration of mental health and financial health, and a lot of other versions of health was absolutely not worth it. And somebody could look back and



say, well, we didn't know you, we knew probably 25% the way through COVID that it was not what they said it was but they were there their arrogance and be as of I want, I want to be the I like to control I have over these people. I'm just gonna I'm gonna double down now. And then you got guys out there. There are researchers that are well, you know, Joe Rogan has gotten hammered for this. But Joe's right, there's people out there that had validated research that was that said, it's more dangerous to put people at home and not allow them to create community. I lived in California for about a year, six months during this pandemic. And the these idiots had the beaches shut down. Like I just don't understand. And to me, a common sense guy, not. I'm not well educated. But a common sense, I think is something I'm pretty decent that it just felt like it lacked complete common sense. And at the at the cost. The control of people came at the cost of everybody's mental health. And it destroyed people's lives. And I think it was sorry, you just gave me the mic and I took it. I think it was I think people should go to jail for the way that it was handled. A lot of people made a lot of money from it. And I don't know if that was the reason for it. I sure hope not because that's really messed up. But in general, we all went through it together and hard times. There are good things that come from them. And I do think that that it did expose some things that we've gotten better at and helped get people consciousness they didn't have before and health and wellness is now a bigger focus and so maybe the greater good will prevail and that you know, like a lot of things that you go through that are hard. There will be Silver lining that will create incremental growth that couldn't have been created otherwise. But that's my that's my take.

J

James Geering 1:05:09

Well, I think it's important for us to keep talking about not all the time. But as I said, I wouldn't mind so much if after the fact people put their hands up and said, You know what, there were all these lessons, let's take these lessons and let's move forward. But there was literally, I remember, there was a couple of weeks where the people that were the most tyrannical about this, were like, Oh, well, yeah, I guess we were wrong, but we don't want to do and let's just forget about it. Like, whoa, timeout, forget about you shut the whole fucking planet down. And you closed everything that would actually make people healthier. And then you told them to stay at home, watch the tiger King and get fast food and alcohol delivered to their house? No, we're not going to fucking forget that. And I agree with you completely. Because it to me what it did. And let's not forget this span to different two sides of the political aisle. Both of them were in the driving seat this this time. And when we were asked for people to lead and let's be you know, clear leadership is simply bringing people together. Everyone was pigeon holed and divided families and friendships with torn apart because of this, people were hugging with clingfilm on them for fuck sake, it was just insane. So when you talk to the Oh, God, it was I mean, it was just ridiculous. So but when, when you listen to the wellness professionals that I have on here, the nutritionists, the coaches, you know, all these people, the doctors, the psychologists, they all say the same thing. Yes, it was a real disease. But the healthier you are, the more chance you've got to recovering. So two years later, you should have a much healthier population, because you learn the lessons of COVID. What's happened is we've got mentally worse, we've got fatter. And no one talks about this, that last wave of flu that kind of went through was still murdering 10s of 1000s of people, but CNN and Fox are like, oh, yeah, we're on to transgenders on beer now. So fuck it, you know, man, it just drives me crazy. And so this is why we have to have these conversations, because we don't want to forget otherwise. It's like the, you know, the Germans gone? Yeah. And just forget about Hitler, you know, it's just sick. No, that was a huge, let's never let that happen again, and we have to do the same with this.



1:07:20

I'm very surprised that the media, that the the broad range of media still has the kind of influence that they have, I do think it's declining. Thankfully, they're not trustworthy anymore. But they still have an it tells me how unconscious unfortunately, a lot of the population is they just don't, you know, the, the they vote with their emotions related to the economy and the things that they get from politicians versus what's best holistically for their lives, it just tells me that they're making decisions based on on unconscious awareness of unconscious or subconscious awareness levels of of what's really happening. And, you know, I will also say that COVID created such a politically charged environment that we've never recovered from, you know, I'm not going to get into politics, and then we'll go down a rabbit hole. But in Trump's that, a lot of dumb shit his presidency for sure. But one of the things that I remember him saying early in the pandemic, was, we need to allow her to meet immunity to happen so that we can we can get through this and get healthy. And I'm, in the beginning, I wouldn't say that that was right, until we really knew what we were dealing with. Once we knew we were dealing with that kind of 25% all the way through. That's what should happen a lot faster. But again, they doubled down and said, No, everybody's got to stay home, you can't go to the beaches, it's too risky. And then, you know, now, my father was going to be the political polarization that was caused during COVID that really brought politicians into the light and allowed them to have a platform that polarization is still driving. You know, I generally believe that if you look on the horizon, the middle section, or even 60% of the middle section of the horizon, most people generally agree on things like in terms of politics, the idiots out on the right and on the left, who have now learned that you can divide people through fear and push them out. And more closely align them with your, you know, ideals and politics is a better way to make sure you win elections. And, you know, I didn't I actually like Trump's policies. But I think that Trump created the this big separation, he started to create that divide between people. And now this current president is doing it even more, whether it be LGBTQ, or racial issues, or whatever they are, they're all now politically charged. And again, the people in the middle generally agree like I don't want to be gay, I don't care be gay. I do not care. But I also don't want like somebody to force it on me. is as a, you need to be thinking about this, like, the things that matter to my family of my life are built on my on my values and the things that I value. And no one needs to tell me what those are. So, anyway, stop, give me the mic shut me out.



James Geering 1:10:14

No, no, but it's brilliant. And I'll just, I'll just kind of add on to that. Addiction kills gay men and straight women. You know, it kills black, white, purple, obesity is probably killing more black people than anything else. gang violence, and supposedly white cops, you know, all these things? Yeah. Where's it? Where's that conversation? So again, it's, it's complete. Like you said, it's triggering. I don't care if my mermaid is black, or white, or Eastern European or Indian. She's a fictional character. And it doesn't really factor into my day to day thing. The safety of my child, in my schools certainly does. And all you fuckers do is argue about the right to bear arms. And 30 years later, was still having our children executed in schools and having to do code red drills. You and I got to do fire drills, not super scary, the bell goes off, I hated math anyway, I get to get in my class 20 minutes and stand outside. These children have to practice hiding in case one of their classmates walks in with a weapon and periodically executes them in front of them. And that is not a topic that you think is worthy of every single day discussing until we figure this out how this is a multi faceted issue. Guns are a small part of it. I mean, there's small guns are a part of it. Of course, mental health, sleep deprivation, childhood

trauma, sexual abuse, bullying, you. This is the Maelstrom that causes the psychosis in this child, the side effects of psychiatric meds and other thing, video games, you know, movies, social media, yeah, all these things. So if we're not having this holistic conversation, basically you're saying, if it's not about guns, I don't want to hear it. You know? So how many children are we supposed to lose? So this is the problem. And I think the root of the from my James Geering, my perception is this, we keep having the same conversations, because our system is so broken, that every four years, we have to choose from two fucking thirds. And we hear the same thing. I've got to choose from the lesser of two evils. And we never go, Wait a second, our system is broken. I can name 20 people that will be amazing presidential campaigns, but they have ethics and they're not millionaires, so they'll never make it. That's right. There you go.



1:12:31

And it's it's I don't know what the answer is James, that our democracy is one of the greatest, I think in terms of our Constitution in the world. But we've gotten ourselves into a into a mass putting people into office, and we were the ones voting them in I don't I don't understand. I mean, I'm not voting any of these idiots in unfortunately, I have to pick one of the one of the one of the two losers he talked about, but the lesser of the two evils. But why is it that we can't get, you know, servant leaders to have who have you know, why aren't Why are generals who have proven to be amazing leaders serving in these roles? What Why can't we have another Eisenhower or you know, somebody who, who, or even flip it away from the military and take it away from service and go over to people who have built amazing companies with ethics and morals and incredible economies, helped a lot of people helped a lot of their employees, a lot of communities. You know, Doug McMillon, from Walmart, for example, if Doug McMillon from Walmart can't become president, I don't know what in the world this country is going to do and where we're going to go. He's not running for President, by the way he should. But he's not his ethics and morals probably would never allow him to be the kind of politician he needs to be to become president. Because our system is set up in a way that is just but by all measuring standards, he's the kind of guy that should be in that chair. Because he knows how to run a country profitably. He knows how to invest in his people. He knows how to how to lead and make people feel inspired. He knows, you know, anyway, we'll move on.



James Geering 1:14:14

Yeah. But it's an important insight, especially from someone like yourself, who's been in all these roles, and you know, as a successful business person as well. So thank you for that. We're talking about bringing solutions to problems. You COVID happens talk to me about you taking the kind of data and experiences from fit ops, and then what gave you the idea to create the university and then tell us what that involves now.



1:14:39

So I was on the last of I think, post post the sale I was there two years and a month maybe and, you know, going through COVID I was dealing with the guys that own the company, we're running it and again, fear makes people make different decisions. And I think they they, they they earn the right to make the decisions because they bought it and I was still running it. My vision was still, you know, generally over the business, but I started to feel like I was losing

control of my ability to influence where the brand was going and how you're acting based on short term and potentially long term transactional desires versus like, I want to build this big thing that impacted a ton of people's lives. And but my head and heart were were starting to drift over into my work with veterans, largely because a lot of veterans were suffering during that time. And, you know, if you'd asked me five years ago, or even meant probably five years ago, why, why did you want to start this or what perspective gave you to start this, I probably would have answered differently because I hadn't really gone completely through the journey we talked about to get to the other side of, you know, this, this full self love belief that those people who are who have the strongest value in themselves love themselves, can can give to others in a way that's sustainable service members. Anybody who served in any capacity, knows what it feels like to lever the power of that uniform into something good, to help people to make them feel better to make them feel safe. And so, you know, I, I believe that, that the time when I was leaving, leaving that business is going through another transition, I started thinking about, like, what really mattered in my life, while watching all those stories, videos about race from from students, when they leave, they record a story about themselves and what they've learned on their journey here. And, and I just started hearing all these like tidbits. And, and the first night, a lot of the same things we heard in the first night of those that that camp where I got up and told my story to to 35 complete strangers. The very first fit ops research camp was held in Texas and a little boy scout camp with tiny beds, and big people. And they were, they were men and women from for prior service who I had, some of them I met cup, one I'd served with most of them, I had never met him. And we brought them together and like service members do. They they've gelled and bonded quickly, we started to see you know, we're we're attacking it from four domains physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually in values. And they all have common common language and ground in those areas. A lot of those areas physicality, obviously, is the easiest one. But the intrinsic link between mental health, mental and emotional health and physical fitness is undeniable, there's 100 1000s of clinical studies on it. But that same link exists in the acquisition of knowledge to create more consciousness, and the implementation of a value system to keep you on track in the areas that one discovering your values and to keeping you on track living from them. And so I guess the answer your question is, I was starting to fall out of love with with building sports nutrition companies, and starting to fall in love with, with helping people on the same journey I had been through. And so my wife who is Australian, by the way, long live the king. She was not wanting to leave New York City, but New York had changed. And we tried Ia for about six months. And you probably have a lot of La listeners or Cali listeners on here. So I'm not going to not going to dig into why I left that place. But I had some similar challenges with with LA that I started to see in New York and just just wasn't my wasn't was that wasn't our place. But Arkansas seemed really intuitive for a couple that lived in New York City of International dissents. And so I've been coming to Arkansas for probably eight or nine years selling sports nutrition products to them. And I gotten to know a few of the executives here and and really what I saw was at a community of you know centrists, who are capitalists you know, the Walton family are the capitalists they've they've they've built the arguably the largest and most successful business in the world ever. From a consumer products. perspective, for sure. On from a retail perspective, for sure. But the people themselves the fabric of of that family is the American like what we want our people to be. They're great people, they do amazing things for other people. They do it quietly. But they know how to do it and create outcomes at the same time that benefit all parties. I think a lot of problem with service members they they get out and they want to give and give and give and give and they never give back to themselves. I believe that the best ecosystems are ones where you can succeed. And that success allows you to serve others. And then they want to serve others. And there'll be successful and it creates a flywheel of opportunity for everybody. And so to answer your question, literally, that office was a research vehicle. I, I'm a capitalist, I believe in building economies and doing good with the

things that you do, the things that you're given. I'm not an overly religious guy. But I believe in the idea of stewardship and doing well for others when you do good yourself. And there's some luck in that there's some talent, some grittiness, but in general, I think that that we all have a duty to help other people be successful, too. And that's what being servant leader is about. And so I decided to convince, I'm going to try to convince my wife to move to Arkansas with me to open up this school, and also pour a lot of our money into it. Millions and millions of dollars into this. And I started on that task about 18 months before actually succeeded in it. I got told Fuck, no, I got told you're out of your mind. I got told you moved to Arkansas. But I'm not going to Arkansas. Because she just didn't really know what it was. And we predominantly live from the same value system she likes. She's a little bit more extroverted, I'm a little more introverted. I like a small, tight group of good friends around me, not a big group of people I don't trust to know. So we always defer that way. And in Arkansas plays in my favorite that way and plays against you know what she cares about. But we in the end, we got to resolution, which was I'll give it a year. That allowed me to get down here start to get the team bill. We had a big, big daunting construction project, we had to build \$10 million of infrastructure in a year. And I wanted, I wanted the first students to be on the ground Veterans Day of 2021. And so we did it and moved, we moved here. And we opened the doors on Veterans Day. 21 I had John Cena who has donated to my foundation many times and a really, really good guy. He was here and the eagles were flying above us, we have two under bald eagles on our campus. I had a couple of generals, one active duty one retired four star and a couple 100 people from the community and about 50 of our students that were on the ground training and and it was just, yeah, it is a magical day of a lot of really, really hard work. And by a lot of people were where where we got she got to see they got to see the students here training and and since then we've we've I guess that's a year and year and a half ago or so. We've put another 400 through and and we anticipate by 2024 We will be on a run rate of 1000 a month. And so you know seeing 12 to 14,000 veterans a year who who want to become coaches in some capacity. And it doesn't mean it's become a personal trainer or nutritionist it's really about learning to leverage the power of empathy and service that you have in your heart. Where and whatever career you're gonna go into. We teach you how to do that in that career. Specifically though, we teach personal training vocation accredited personal trainers, licensed health coaches, licensed nutritionists and entrepreneurship will launch later this year.

**J** James Geering 1:23:41

Well, firstly, I mean that's it's amazing to hear and reason i as leading up but the COVID thing before and obviously we got sidetracked and some very important conversation but when you talk about supply and demand, we have a huge demand for health we got 70% of the country that is obese or overweight, we have a mental health crisis so proactively it's such an amazing kind of career path for some people because one thing when we talk about transition that I've noticed commonalities is that usually when someone's struggled they found themselves transitioning into for example finance where they're not feeling they're making the well bear I know as a firefighter and paramedic and then as a coach myself when I am on the rescue on the ambulance, you know, pumping on someone's chest a second the tube down their throat that's very reactive. They've called me on their worst day. Now then that that same the next day I go to the gym and I coach a session. I look at it as proactive Okay, hopefully this was so some seasons person will never see my ugly mug as the last thing when I'm, you know, sticking drugs down their veins. So I can see how that is not only a career path, but mentally they feel like they're carrying on the service that they had when they were in uniform. Yep,



1:24:57

yes, fine. I mean, I guess you're asking that Did that thought come into my head? The first one came in what is the what is the career that would make what is a career that would make the most sense for a transitioning service member? When, when getting out of the military, or out of venture, we'll open up fire and EMS and police here as well. But what is the career that allows you to continue to serve that is healthy? that leverages the skills you have in leadership physicality, empathy, rapport building, you know, all those are all those are skills, you learned the military, and it's healthy. And so and the most important part, we haven't talked to anything about this yet. 72% of veterans don't use their GI Bill GI Bill benefits. That's, that is \$120,000 education that you're like, man. Why is that? Because the majority of schools that are available the GI Bill, our four year colleges or even two years called schools, and those schools are not imagine door kick kicking doors in for 15 years and your career your your tip of the spear of Gunslinger and you you're you're gonna go sit in a classroom for four years around 18 year olds, fuck, no. I get it, I get it for somebody, but we're talking about enlisted conventional force military, where do they go? They go back to the hometown they live in, they go work for Uncle Bob, probably on some, like, you know, ship job. And they, they fill the void of lack of ability to serve an impact with drinking with hanging out bad people. We talk about, you know, the background of these kids socio economic disadvantage is a very easy place to recruit military candidates from kids from backgrounds of inner cities, kids from small rural towns where where these kinds of abuses happen. My theory is that a lot of us who were hurt as kids were called to serve because of that trauma. And so what what are they gonna go back to? So I wanted them to, I want them to have an opportunity to be able to thrive through a career, they can they can earn a degree and in less than a month. They leave here skilled as a coach. So when I say Coach, it means anybody in a position to change someone else's life. So how do you connect with other people as a leader, it could be on a trading floor, it could be in an office, it doesn't matter. And then if you want to be in the health and fitness space, you have an accredited personal training degree from us, from the from an accredited body, and you have a practical, you've been here for 23 days, and you've been training every single day, you've been doing role playing, you've been training you've been writing in your blueprint you've been writing in your journal you've been. So there's all these things that allow us to put a productive person who cares about serving others into their community, and serve through holistic health and fitness physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. So anyway, that's why to get to your point or question about did I think of this during COVID COVID just reinforced why it should be done.



James Geering 1:28:24

Okay, for people listening, then they can use the GI bill for your program, they will



1:28:29

be able to in the next six months, if somebody wants to come through here, go to the website and apply a University dash hp.com. And you don't have to pay we have foundations set up around it that will pay the tuition, we will scale the organization through the GI Bill. And then that money. Some of the profits that come from the education here will go to foundations like Team Red, White and Blue that are doing awesome community based stuff. If you had Mike Irwin on by the way,

**J** James Geering 1:28:59

I haven't Yeah, I think we talked about it when we spoke over the phone. So we're still gonna make that connection. Yeah, I'll

 1:29:04

make the connection. Organizations like Team Red, White and Blue. They're creating community events. Our foundation, which will provide entrepreneurship funding. My goal is in the next four years is to get the organization big enough that every person that comes through will be able to put 1000 to \$1,500 into a foundation per person. That foundation will aggregate those dollars and produce you know, call it seven to \$10 million a year in funds, and then launch an entrepreneurship program where someone could come here with a business idea, go through the entrepreneurship program and say, here's my plan. Here's what I want to do. I just need the funding for it. My goal is to get to a place where we can provide the the capex and opex op X for a year capex and total. So let's say you got out of military you want to open a gym. It would probably take you four or five years At least, to maybe longer maybe even couldn't do it, if you had a family to save the money to open your own gym, if we're really going to help service members thrive after service, we need to actually put not give them things, empower them to do what they do and serve and accelerate their careers not to just make it better. But not just to catch up to the people that were appears in high school, but to accelerate past them to get in a position to serve our communities in a healthy way. So my goal is to within four years, you're getting out of the military, you want to be you want to work in the health and fitness space, you come through one month of curriculum here, you become a coach, you go home for four or five months, put it to work, I'm definitely a love the space, I want to own my own business, you come back for entrepreneurship one, which includes p&l balance, sheet, branding, all that kind of stuff, while in that class, which is probably going to be four to six weeks, you build your business plan. And then you present it to a panel a board, and the majority of people that get into that class would likely get funded. And imagine me now let's say I'm getting out the military, I'm gonna become a coach and I would own business in a year, right now people be like, yeah, right, dude, you're never gonna be like you, you're an e6, and you got four kids, and you've been in service 20 years, no way. My goal is to be able to put them in a position to do that with no debt, a mentor. Imagine how much that pressure that would take off of a transitioning service member and their families, to put them in a position to do what they do and serve their communities. That's what I want to do.

**J** James Geering 1:31:34

I love it and the skin of what you're talking about the, you know, the branding, that is the broken veteran with mental health problems. That's, you know, give a man a fish, they don't want donations. And so what I've always talked about when we talk about mental health, it's not a fundraising thing. It's a community thing. It's a connection thing. And of course, there are ways that we can use money for example, what you're talking about to empower someone to have that purpose and then forge your own path, but it's the teacher man the fish that we need to start focusing on.



1:32:03

Yeah, 1,000% all that stuff I just said you could have just said So you mean like, set a given amount of fish? She's manifest. I'm like, there you go.



James Geering 1:32:16

All right. Well, just one other area and I want to get some closing questions, but I had John Cena as stunt double on the show Spencer Spencer Thomas and I have been fortunate enough to have some you know, some bigger celebrities on the show Josh Brolin, who he himself unbeknownst to most people, was spent three seasons volunteering as a wildland firefighter John Travolta's be on the show. And when he did the latter 49, he donated a load of money to the local fire department here. So there are some phenomenal celebrities that not just because they were told to by their publicity manager, but actually from the heart, I truly get people as well, because they just happen to be an actor. And talk to me about John, because that is someone that I would love to get on the show one day, but I see over and over again, just seemingly a good human being that does a huge amount with this platform.



1:33:07

Yeah, he's the best. And yeah, and also doesn't want any credit. And often, I think he's been record is making 600 or 700 wishes or something like to get to kids. The real number is probably more like 2000. But he just doesn't tell anybody. And so, you know, his schedule is insane from shooting movies, but in between when everybody else is relaxing, John's go into hospitals and meet with kids. And so incredible human. I met John in maybe 2015 Through a friend had breakfast with them. And it was being set up as like, hey, this man, he's doing some cool things with with with this business, and maybe you guys could work together. But he's got this really cool idea to do research with health and fitness and veterans and I want you to meet so I sit down at breakfast them in California. And you know, John's really intense dude, like, not when you get him away from everybody else and just, but like when you first meet him, he's very serious, like, get to the fucking point guy. And so we sit down at breakfast and, um, you know, I'm like us and honestly, the cool I don't care about celebrities necessarily at all. I didn't get like starstruck. And he leans across the table and kind of gets right in my face. He's like, What do you need from me? And I was like, whoa. Back up. And, and I, I, I was able to, like, you know, turn the conversation and get you know, and within probably an hour and a half, two hours we're we're laughing and joking and have a good time eating breakfast together and and, and we just struck up a friendship. And when I a year later so when I launched the foundation, he came to New York and spoke to a bunch of ads at my gym. And he's been there ever step of the way, honestly, he's not involved in university. He just wants to be involved in philanthropic things. He's got plenty of things to do in his business that are his focuses. But anytime event needs something John's John's there. He's met a lot of events through us see ventures that's through us. And, and yeah, I mean, he's just his best friend Johnny is our head of our head of like our graduate, support psychologist, type, dude. So he's got a mental health background. And when they leave here, the first week you go through the program is called the foundations of health and performance. And it's all about your life and where you're gonna go in your life. Johnny leads that process for the first week. And then he leaves. And the next two weeks are toggling between physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and then Johnny's at home during that



three week period. And he's on zooms, talking to companies working on getting vets placed support, therapy, masterminds, all that kind of stuff. You should have Johnny on your show, actually, he's that he's an awesome guy.

**J** James Geering 1:36:09

Sounds like it should? Absolutely. All right. Well, we're gonna talk about some of the closing questions before I do the purpose blueprint. When do you think that will be out so people can start looking for it?

 1:36:21

Um, I would expect it to be published in the next eight months, I'd say,

**J** James Geering 1:36:26

okay, brilliant. So we'll keep an eye out for that. Let me know when it comes out. And obviously, I'll share it. And I'll add that to the website when this is done. Thank you. So then first of the closing question, speaking of books, are there any books that you love to recommend it can be related to our discussion today or completely unrelated?

 1:36:46

You know, I'm not a big reader. Everyone always thinks I would be because I'm, I'm, I'm a very practical learner. Of all things I like to consume from people. Like I listen to podcasts, I that kind of stuff. But not even not even a lot of those. I would say foundational books, which are like, How to Win Friends and Influence People would be a book I'd recommend for transitioning servicemembers. Especially because, you know, you get out of the military, you have certain skills and knowledge, you go sit in a company where you have a skill and knowledge maybe a lot of people don't have and you're like, Oh, he's wrong, I'm going to tell you how I'm right. And that that books is a really short good guide to like, how not to stick your foot in it. I like I like that Simon cynics books around, find your why. You know, I find myself rewriting my book all the time, because I'm like, fuck, you already said that book, you already said that. I don't want to steal his shit. But he's, he's got he's got the wife quite figured out. And he's. So I think he's he's done some awesome stuff. Brene Browns work in vulnerability is I'd say, for people who are, who are listening, who think maybe I do have some stuff I haven't dealt with. And for the sake of my family, at least, and hopefully yourself, that you're willing to step into vulnerability. I'll tell you, it's easiest to step into it. Step away from your life and step into it wholly like we do here. If you can go to you know, a place like this, or if you're not interested in health and fitness as a part of that. There's some some good, some good organizations out there that do like Hoffman, immersive kind of self discovery retreats. But I think that I think the population that we work with are one not big readers. For whatever reason, I don't know, maybe it's all the manuals, we had to read with the military. But for some reason, I just, I don't I spend a lot of Oh, I'm sorry, there's another book a guy, I think it's pronounced how to find your purpose. It's a Japanese book, not written in Japanese, but it's written by Japanese philosopher. And it's all about understanding. And there's case studies for them that you live longer if you live your life

purpose, meaning like, you will live longer. And it's it's like, there's been a study done on it. So if a guy find your purpose is an incredible book, that one is probably the one I would recommend if someone's going to take something from recommendation for me. It's probably that one. Yeah, that that's about all I got. I've read four books do

 James Geering 1:39:34

now a good book. So and Simon Simon Sinek is another one I need to try and reach out to again Brene Brown, I've tried a couple of times, but I understand why.

 1:39:40

Mike urban Mike Irwin knows Brene Brown. Oh, okay. brollies done a lot of other

 James Geering 1:39:46

people. So maybe that and then so that kind of leads me to one of my next questions. I'll skip to that. So is there a person or are there people I think we've already touched on a couple that you'd recommend to come on this podcast as a guest to speak to the for First responders, military and associated professionals of the world.

 1:40:04

Can I send you the list versus answer now? Absolutely. Here's

 James Geering 1:40:06

the thing a lot of people know that other people it's usually easier.

 1:40:10

Now want to think about like, I want to be thoughtful about it and not just good people but perfect people for your audience that I'll send you a list.

 James Geering 1:40:17

Beautiful. All right, well then what about films or documentaries, any of those that you love?

 1:40:24

My brain goes 1 million miles an hour every day. Working on this and mentoring vets and honestly, the TDI watch is like, Yellowstone Can I can get hooked on some like aviation

horseshit. I like like mindless TV. Either stuff that makes me feel because I'm kind of a feely guy. Like hero stuff like Yellowstone's got a hero in it. You know, the guy's always trying to like, come to the rescue. Or mindless. Write down shows. I fucking hate him right down housewives. All the housewives all those bitches can fuck off. What else? Yeah, I don't know why women like that shit. My wife walked in the house. My wife's watching and she's like, I love it so much. I'm like, it sounds like a buck and train wreck. You know, it sounds like it sounds like when I come home and you're yelling at me. That's what it sounds like. But I'm sitting here listening to it for like, she's like, No, it's entertaining. And I was like, I think it's entertaining. Because you all see a little bit of that in yourself. And you get to see it. And then you're like, Oh my God. Like that's how that's how us guys feel when you're yelling at us. Just like that. But they're not even yell there's talking to each other. That sounds like yeah, now I don't have any more. I don't have any more.

**J** James Geering 1:41:49

That's the first time I've been told films that I have TV that I hate. And I just finally got my wife. I love her to bits but she watches a lot of toxic shit on Facebook. Like people screaming at each other. And then also these fucking awful like, dramatized like scenes where Oh, that the husband comes in and he's he's rude to his wife or he's racist. But then this happens. And then as a takeaway, like Babe, you don't need to watch a 10 minute video on don't be a dick. That's really badly acted and written but she watches these things. Oh my god. I think Jay Shetty was doing them as well early on in his career, but they are just like, oh, like two seconds. And I'm like, You're watching one of those stupid fucking videos, aren't you? She's like, Yeah, but it's you know, the takeaway is Don't be a bully. I that. Yeah, babe. I know, I know. Anyway, I digress. Alright, well, then the very last question before we make sure people know where to find you in the university. What do you do to decompress?

**i** 1:42:49

Oh, good question. I work out. I work out. You know, on Sunday, March Saturday, Sunday mornings, I have two kids three and five. So, you know, I'm full on with that plus 24/7. We have vets out here on the ground trainings. Fall on with that. You know, we have when you come here, which I hope you do at some point, you'll see we have ice baths and saunas and hyper ice or hyper ice chairs for recovery and compression boots. And yeah, my favorite thing is to go to the gym, get a workout, go sit in the sauna. Get in the ice bath. Have a really good bacon, eggs, potatoes, fruit. Like, I'm simple man. I like I like simple things. I ride bikes a bit. There's a lot of big biking scene here in Bentonville. With a mountain biking capital the world now or capital United States now, in terms of trails, and there's also like gravel riding and road riding. So I do that a bit. I don't like getting in the funny spandex pants, but I do it once in a while. And then traveling, I love to travel with my wife and go to and kids sometimes but kids kids, at least at their age make trap a little crazier. But I'd love to. I'd love to go to Italy and France and have wine and make fun of the French. It's great.

**J** James Geering 1:44:12

Well, one thing I didn't hit on I just like when we're on the decompression topic that I wanted to slide in there before we close up. You have this experience where you're sitting there in tears half listen to a conversation half watching a kind of slideshow of your life. What now have been

than listen to a conversation than watching a kind of slideshow of your life. What now have been some of the tools that have worked for you. I mean, it's such an amazing spectrum, a gamut of things that people are largely unaware of from psychedelics, to EMDR to Canine therapy, etc, etc. What are some of the tools that worked for you to process such a horrific trauma that was buried for so long?

 1:44:45

Yeah, that's a great and it reminds me to ask you I think you said Marcus Capone has been on before

 James Geering 1:44:50

Yes, yes. Yeah. Yeah.

 1:44:54

For those who don't know Marcus Marcus is doing incredible research work within the IV gain space. which helps, I would say you won't understand my journey. It took. It took it happened when I was eight, it took basically 30 A little less than 30 years to come out 25 years once it came out another 10 Full on really intensive years of like, understanding it, I believe had I pursued plant medicine at when I first started trying to get therapy to figure out what was going on before you know I was in therapy trying to figure this out when I was in my 20s but I couldn't figure it out. I didn't like the life I was living I didn't like feeling terror and rage inside and being nice on the outside. That's like a Jekyll and Hyde which is what I think a lot of our vets feel honestly but I was taught therapy only works. It only works if you're if the therapist is intuitive enough to ask the right questions to get your subconscious to let go and bring it into the conscience. And if you have a lot of things that you don't understand talk therapy can take years to get it to the forefront yet your wiring is still sabotaging those and sabotaging that entire time. And so I legitimately believe in like in Marcus this case hadn't Marcus done Ibogaine, and just on therapy, I don't think he'd be alive today. And nor thriving in his marriage. So I think you know, my message for folks out there who are struggling, is consider some plant journey. Start with ketamine maybe start with an Iowa Boska trip a little bit less intense Ibogaine is like if I Alaska is a Mazda Ibogaine is like a Ferrari with like, nitrous and a nuclear weapon in the back, it's like, it's like full, full sand deep into the wormhole, when you come out, like, shifts gonna be different. Ketamine is a little bit, and and MDMA, which are both, by the way, being have been and being researched within the VA, tons of clinical studies have proven that they expand consciousness and allow your ego to let go, so that you can heal. So you can see things that you need to see so you can heal, to land the plane, if I had done one of those Plant, plant medicines, or MDMA guided MDMA earlier on in my life, when I was in my 20s, I'm glad I didn't, because it created the it created all this and we're helping a lot of people here. But if I had, I believe that my life would have been a little bit, a lot bit smoother and, and happy a lot earlier. So I think it's worth exploring, start small, unless you're extreme, like Marcus was, Mark is needed to go do something extreme, or he's gonna die. If you're just unhappy and struggling with your life, and you can't figure out why there's just something that's missing, and you don't know what it is. Look at your purpose and figure out if that's something that you need to spend more time on, like, am I living a life that has meaning, that might just be all that it is that you're not? If it's deeper than that, like, no, it's just something I just don't feel happy, I feel

very, very sad or angry, then maybe go try a ketamine drip with a therapist, to just talk you through some things. And I'll, I'll explain what I think is what happens when you do a journey. The ego is such a powerful part of who we all are, and we all have one and the ego is wants to be protected. If you take a psychedelic, or any kind of plant assisted medicine, it basically allows you to be a passenger through the windows inside of your body. In your cells, the cellular power is so much more than subconscious power, so your power is so much stronger than the conscious power. Conscious is the things you have access to you can see, subconscious is 100,000 times bigger, it has way more things in it, like you just can't see it. And so I always describe it this way. When you're a little kid and you grab, grab a hot pan for the first time. You grab a hot pan, and it burns you and then you're like out and you let go. The next time you touch a hot pan, the cells in your hand. Remember what that hot pan felt like and you don't even burn yourself, you touch it and go like that your reaction is so fast. That's not an intellectual reaction. That's a cellular reaction. The same exact thing happens when you get into a situation at work and somebody's being aggressive towards you. Your reaction is going to be based on your training and your experiences. So if your reaction is that in the instance of grabbing the pan, if your action is to punch somebody, or to defend yourself or to tell your boss to fuck off and destroy your career, then you You're not in control of yourself, you're reacting versus responding. You got to get yourself in a place to be able to respond. And that means rewiring some things inside sometimes because they're, they're protected by the subconscious. So I guess the point is psychedelics and plant assisted medicine can help you get into those into those cells faster, and allow you to see things that you're, you would never be able to see. Hadn't you done the plant journey or the medicine, because your ego would never let you see them. And it'll act, the perspective will allow you to heal. And you'll come out like Marcus. Marcus will tell you. Life's not a bowl of cherries for me all the time. It's a normal life. But I'm not trying to kill myself. I don't feel sad anymore. I love my wife. And I'm thriving, and I'm helping others. And he's found his purpose. And so yeah. down the rabbit hole again.

**J** James Geering 1:50:54

Yeah, well, I mean, if we want to go down the rabbit hole further, we'll get into the whole drug prohibition and why our vets have to go overseas to get a lot of these treatments. But that's another our conversation. So we'll skip that. But part two,

**i** 1:51:05

yeah, James part. Part two is you coming down here and seeing this and doing a podcast from here?

**J** James Geering 1:51:10

You see, I just when we were talking, I've got this vision of I think what I need to do is do a little podcast road trip. And I'll say I'll bring my dog with me. And then I'll just, you know, go from place to place and do part twos with people. Because I keep saying, Yeah, I'll come visit this facility, I'll come visit this gym, whatever. I think that would be a really cool thing to do. You know, so I'll figure out when that will work. And I would love



1:51:33

to see, you know, John Cena will likely be here for Veterans Day. So maybe that's your end for your podcast.



James Geering 1:51:39

There we go. There we go. He's gonna be excited to see the man behind the behind the shield podcast.



1:51:46

You can bring your your What'd he call it? Your stunt double.



James Geering 1:51:54

Yeah, that'd be go Spencer's there. Yeah, he's an amazing guy. Yeah, but I mean, as far as that I had a guy Dr. Ben Sasa, who's a professor in Bristol, near where I grew up in England. And they're doing they're having great success. You know, they do the MDMA led therapy, it's only three sessions. And you're not you don't leave with MDMA, you leave. And then it just keeps working better and better and better. So just to be able to unlock those those dark places. And I had that myself. I was in a house fire when I was four, wrote my book during COVID. And during my COVID experience, I'm like, Oh, shit, I never I totally forgot about that. I almost died when I was four. It had been just locked in there. And I don't think it was, in my case. A negative because I became a firefighter. So it wasn't like, and then it became a firefight. Yeah, exactly. But it was



1:52:41

caused and disparity that you felt it for what you won't remember now might be why you wanted to serve as a firefighter. So other people who felt the disparity you fell in the fire. They don't feel that



James Geering 1:52:52

exactly. I'm almost certain to that, you know, so but even even though it was a positive, it wasn't even a negative. It was still that door was closed. So this is what I think is so powerful. I had Catherine Walker on she's got she was a nurse anesthetist I think I've got that right. And so in the anesthesia world and she realized that ketamine was having such great impact on people with mental health issues that she changed and now she has clinics. So people will look for ke Walker they can find places in the states that you can access very easily.



1:53:26

Eventually that's going to be on this campus I just you know, if we get ketamine is legal in

Arkansas now. I'm close to the governor, and I'm working on a lot of things with her to try to bring we want to make Arkansas the center of gravity for veterans and service members in our country. And that's one of the libraries I'm asking her to, like look at is meet with Marcus and how do we figure out how to make it legal in our state to have these plant treatments done here? So the federal government's got to do something about it as well, but we'll see.

**J** James Geering 1:53:58

Probably yeah, maybe I need to connect you with Katie them because maybe they she can already doing.

**o** 1:54:03

I was gonna say anybody that you think would be like strategic or synergistic, or anybody that you talk to needs, support, help. Start, start connecting, don't even have to ask, just make connections.

**J** James Geering 1:54:14

Beautiful. All right. Well, that posted me perfectly in the last one. So for people listening, just remind us again of the website, and then where are other places that people can find you all the University online?

**o** 1:54:26

Yeah, so the website address is web dot University dash H p.com. If you're a service member or veteran who are interested in coming through the program, either health coaching or personal training, or just getting a better grasp on how to serve through your gifts, hit register, we'll get you into the queue one of our counselors or call you go through a little a little zoom interview and then if you're accepted, we will have a will send you to a foundation to get funded to come everybody who wants to come here will get here meaning like we will find funds for you. And then eventually GI Bill will be in place and we're not to worry about any of that anymore. If you're a company brand interested in like, you know, being a part of what we do, we have an incredible facility here. This facility was built by Beaver fit actually, which is a defense contractor in the health and fitness space. They donated almost this entire facility to our program, which is a 20,000 square foot indoor turf Training Center with you know, hyper ice Recovery Center in its classrooms is incredible. Yes, so we're, there's, there's on the website, there's all kinds of buttons you can push to find us and then we're on social media University underscore HP. I'm, I'm somewhere on there. I don't think mine's Matt underscore hesi HSSE. I'm on LinkedIn. I'm everywhere. I'm digitally. I'm Omni digital.

**J** James Geering 1:55:59

Well, Matt, I just want to say thank you so much. It's been an amazing conversation. Obviously, we kind of hit that childhood trauma area pretty hard. But I mean, that was when the door

open. And I liked that organic conversation that we had. But you know, the you being so vulnerable and courageous with your own story, and then coming from, you know, a business on entrepreneurial space. And then just like John Cena, using that platform and actually doing amazing things with it. It's been an incredible story that we've heard. So I want to thank you so much for being so generous with your time today.



1:56:32

By great pleasure, you're an easy guy to talk to. I appreciate you all the work that you're doing as well.