

Speaker 1 ([00:00:07](#)):

You're listening to the journey on podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick is a horseman trainer, international clinician and author, whose mission is to help people achieve a deeper connection with their horses through his transformational training program. Just be causing that.

Warwick Schiller ([00:00:33](#)):

We'll get to everyone. Welcome back to the journey on podcast. I'm your host, Warwick Schiller. And today I have a special guest on here. So today I have a lady named Sarah Schlotte and she is a trauma therapist from Canada who does, but trauma work with horses and humans. And she has a website called Equusoma. That has a really, really good blog on there. And my first introduction to Sarah was reading one of her blogs one time, and it really, really struck me as, uh, so important to know. And the blog was called one trick pony, a therapist's view on horse training. And she basically talks about why people choose a particular training method, choose one over another. And a lot of it comes back to a life experiences are all the things you've had happened to us, our trauma, all of that sort of stuff I'm going to, before we get her on the lawn, I'm going to read you a pot of that blog because I found this is fascinating.

Warwick Schiller ([00:01:41](#)):

She had just been in this blog. She had just been talking about how, you know, there's different ways of working with, with trauma and stuff like that, you know, human type, uh, trauma recovery, but then she says what's important to note is the following just as a human psychological field, recognizes the limits of a strictly behavioral view and understanding and treating the complexity of trauma. So too, is there increasing need to shift beyond traditional and even behavioral models of horse training to add in modern innovations that are based in psychophysiology polyvagal theory. And you've heard me talk about polyvagal theory, attachment theory, somatics, bodywork, and other concepts. This is not to say that learning theory does not have a place in working with horses. In fact, the opposite is true. A foundation in learning theory is how of how and when to apply positive and negative reinforcement is necessary as is recognizing there's more going on than just classical and operant conditioning.

Warwick Schiller ([00:02:42](#)):

And yet what most commonly happens is that rather than exploring the virtues of integrating multiple approaches to horse training, equine professionals and horse owners, commonly pick one camp and exclude all others, slings and arrows of thrown from old sides, each the wise better ivory towers, political polarization in guru culture abound in reality. Having more than one tool in the toolkit is immensely helpful as is knowing the limits of different methods as well as their strengths. And when to use each one, for instance, positive and negative reinforcement can be done well, or unskillfully positive reinforcement can be used to control, can be used to control and inducing anxiety, agitation, or food-related aggression in response to treat seeking for BA specific behaviors, negative reinforcement, which is pressuring release can be used to control an induced flooding and learned helplessness. The timing of H is important as is recognizing the horse and the humans threshold of tolerance, nervous systems, nervous system state, sorry, and attachment patterns.

Warwick Schiller ([00:03:47](#)):

She goes on to say, what past experiences contribute to black and white thinking about horse training methods? What adversity has shaped people to become polarized as opposed to seeing the shades of gray, say for instance, for those. So look down a negative reinforcement and exclusively rely on positive

reinforcement have past negative experience led to unresolved charge around resaving re around raising your energy and pressure resulting, avoiding anything that could be perceived as negative. Is there a fear of becoming or being perceived as violent or not recognizing the difference between pressure and abuse, not recognizing the difference between assertion and aggression, not recognizing difference between anger and intensity or fear of connecting with the bound activation related to incomplete fight responses were appeasement behaviors such as being nice, the safest option at any time in the past, instead of mobilizing fight or flight energy, which were deemed impossible, unsafe, or were punished, and this is childhood stuff, will you taught that being assertive was bad or even feeling angry was bad.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:49](#)):

So that's for the people who look down on negative reinforcement and rely exclusively on positive reinforcement. There's a possibility that that's in your past now for those who look down on positive reinforcement and rely exclusively on negative reinforcement and positive, positive punishment have past negative experiences led to seeing dominance authority and discipline through force and obedience as the only way to experience respect or has a lack of empathy, appreciation, praise or emotional support from parents or caregivers resulted in a tendency to dismiss the validity of these needs in yourself and others with fighting and freeze responses. So disconnecting from emotions and closeness to safest options in the past where social engagement was deemed unsafe or uncomfortable in any way, does it feel safe, uh, for you to feel heartened and detached as opposed to vulnerable? Do you insert so interpret, softness as weakness? So you kind of get in the idea of the questions this lady asks.

Warwick Schiller ([00:05:50](#)):

I mean, she's pretty darn deep, but when I read that right there, I'm like, yeah, I S I see quite a bit of me in that, you know, I used to rely exclusively on negative reinforcement and it's still, uh, a large part of what I do. But, um, yeah, I can say some pots of, of me in there too. So this, this stuff really makes you take a look at yourself and really decide, Oh, really look at what, you know, look at why you choose to train your horse the way you choose them. Not that anyways, you know, right or wrong. But I think the traumas that we bring to the whole horse human relationship can have a big, a big impact on how you go about stuff. So I'll get Sarah on the line here and we'll unraveled some of this very, very interesting topic.

Warwick Schiller ([00:06:54](#)):

Sarah, welcome to the journey on podcast.

Sarah Schlote ([00:06:55](#)):

Nice to see you again Warwick.

New Speaker ([00:06:58](#)):

Good to see you too. It's been a while.

Sarah Schlote ([00:07:00](#)):

I think it's what was, what last summer? What may lasted this?

Warwick Schiller ([00:07:04](#)):

Yeah, well, I did, I did a, uh, it was, it ended up being on YouTube. Wasn't it? On your YouTube channel. Yeah. So before we get started here, why don't you tell us exactly what you, not, what you are. That's not a good way to put it. What, what your qualifications are? What, what, yeah, let's go with that.

Sarah Schlote ([00:07:24](#)):

Let's start with that. Gosh, well, um, I'm a human first and foremost, and as a human, I find, uh, our relationships with ourselves and with the natural world inherently fascinating. And I have become, uh, quite well-known for being a very science oriented individual, but a lot of people don't know this about me. Um, but I'm actually a pretty spiritual person as well. And, uh, both sides of me are equally alive, even though I've made a name for myself more in the neuroscience world. So my scope of practice is largely as a registered psychotherapist. I work in the area of trauma recovery. Um, and I have been in private practice for about 10 years recently, moved away to start working with an indigenous community, uh, in looking at what healing and wellness programs involving horses and, um, indigenous traditions and returned to the land and a reclaiming of, um, horsemanship in what I'm calling decolonizing horsemanship. And maybe we'll get to that at some point. Um, but people often know me as the trauma informed lady. Uh, and so I've, I've done a lot of teaching and presentations around trauma informed care, both in the human to human sphere, but also in the human to non-human animal sphere as well. Um, and largely with horses though, certainly, um, other animals too.

Warwick Schiller ([00:08:54](#)):

Yeah. That's what was that originally attracted me to what you were doing was I forget what it was. I first read by you, um, on your Equusoma website, but in the intro to this, I talked about the blog you did about that. The tr the, I forget what it's called, and you're like a, a therapist lens on why you train the way you train. And I think that's a conversation that really, really needs to be had in all horse circles. We'll start here on my podcast, but I think that's a conversation that people really need to hear about because, I mean, I, you know, I've been training horses for 30 years and until I read that I didn't actually ever consider the, the deeper, um, not necessarily ramifications, but the, the origin of why you pursue a certain way of dealing with, with, with horses and what attracts you to it, and why, why you might, um, say reject a different way of doing it. Can you talk about that little or a lot

Sarah Schlote ([00:10:08](#)):

Happy to Warwick, Um, so, uh, I think I'll back up and just give a metaphor as a starting place. So I like the metaphor of a bike chain, you know, and we've all got bike chains in many areas of areas of our lives. And sometimes our bike chains, the different links of the bike chain are kind of rusty. Sometimes a link is missing. Sometimes the link is broken and our bike chain doesn't run super smoothly. And part of our work, I think, is to get more familiar with our bike chain, what precedes the link that just happened. Um, and, and can we, can we look at the link before that and the link before that and the link before that, and when I think about your question about horse training, it's like what leads us to pick the horse trading methods that we do? There's a bike chain there.

Sarah Schlote ([00:10:54](#)):

You know, we often think about the end result. I do this. This is the method I choose. This is the method I use, and this is what I ascribed to or aligned with. But the rest of the bike chain, isn't there, like what, what precedes that and proceeds that and precedes that. And if we're not paying attention to all the links in our bike chain, we can have a pretty bumpy ride. And so that blog post in particular speaks a little bit to, you know, what are in what the behaviorist field talks about antecedents, like what is the

thing that precedes the thing, right? And, uh, in somatic experience, and we call that a prodromal or pre prodromal, like in medicine, we'll talk about the prodromal, which is the thing that occurred before the symptom. And so the pre-pro drama is like the symptom, the pre symptom before the symptom.

Sarah Schlote ([00:11:40](#)):

So if we back things up, it's like, okay, well, what led to the selection of that training methodology? What, what shaped you to be that particular way in relationships? Because horse trading, isn't just a set of methods that we use to get the job done. I mean, horse training is inherently about a relationship, ideally, at least I'd like to think so. And in my own mind and look at good horse trainers, good horse behaviorists, good equine behavior consultants, whatever you want to call them, good clicker trainers, whatever your method happens to be. I think a good human who's doing good work in that area is kind of like a good psychotherapist, right? Our job is to go in there and get curious about the bike chain and the links that make up the bike chain and how can we ensure a smoother ride for all involved, you know, and if we're not looking at our role in the utilization of that bike chain, if we're not paying attention to our own bike chain, you know, we can get caught, you know, we can get caught up in what's going on and inadvertently, um, move some things along that maybe are not optimal because they reflect our own upbringing.

Warwick Schiller ([00:12:45](#)):

They reflect our own traumas, our own attachment style and, and so on. And this is sort of what's happening in the work that I'm doing right now in a, in a very specific indigenous community. Uh, and before we continue work, I just wanted to give a bit of a land acknowledgement because I'm not at Liberty to disclose the community that I'm working for right now. I do want to acknowledge that I am on their territory as I sit here and talk with you today. So I just wanted to sort of make that known, even though I can't specifically name the community I'm working for and with. Um, but I do want to acknowledge that I am on their land and I am, uh, I'm here now as a, as a part steward of, of that land. And I recognize that I'm here as a guest.

Warwick Schiller ([00:13:21](#)):

And so I wanted to name that off to start. Um, but this theme of what we carry forward also shows up in what I'm working on. Now, my, this sort of current project of mine, which is about decolonizing horsemanship, you know, what was learned from indigenous communities as a result of having to survive as white settlers came in, what was adopted as horsemanship techniques post-contact, and what has been brought forward that may or may not represent indigenous values, but that were adopted for survival reasons for living in a now white culture. And how can we decolonize that? How can we check out that bike chain and go, okay, does this match what I want moving forward, similar to horsemanship training, does the methods that I have selected, do they reflect what I truly believe and what I want, or are they leftovers from a previous set of experiences or previous time that might actually reflect trauma response more than more than anything else. So, so these, these pieces all sort of come together. So I'm glad you started us off their work. I think that's pretty rich rich topic.

Warwick Schiller ([00:14:26](#)):

Yeah. Maybe if you can go a bit deeper into, so I, I, in the introduction, I, I read the two different, if you are just a negative reinforcement, only negative reinforcement and everything else is bunk, or you are only positive reinforcement and all negative reinforcement is abuse. Can you maybe peel those apart little bit more? Sure.

Sarah Schlote ([00:14:53](#)):

Um, that particular blog post looks at a very particular link in that bike chain sequence as I like to call it. So, so one of the hallmarks of trauma is very, dichotomized thinking very black and white thinking, right? Very polarized thinking can often be a very strong hallmark of trauma. It's like it was either this or that, and never the Twain shall meet. And there is no middle ground, you know, it's, it's, that's just how trauma tends to manifest, especially the earlier our traumatic experiences, because there comes a point in all human development where, um, we tend to fall into black and white thinking and absolutes as part of our brain development. I mean, that's just a known part of, of child development. And so if there's any kind of wounding that occurs at particular phases of our development, that can reflect as we get older, we see this a lot with what's going on in politics these days, you know, and so not wanting to air into that goal category cause that's a whole other topic.

Sarah Schlote ([00:15:45](#)):

But, um, if I think about the polarization between negative and positive reinforcement, you know, it's like we've got the negative reinforcement folks who look at the clicker trainers that you th th the sort of specifically strictly clicker trainer group of people. And, and they might look at that as being mechanical and you're just, you know, bribing or, you know, like what, you know, this is too soft and this is too airy fairy. And this is, you know, that, you know, it just doesn't feel very realistic or it doesn't feel like it captures some of the pieces that do happen in horse herds because horses do use negative reinforcement with each other all the time. Um, and maybe we should define the terms perhaps for our audience before we continue. So negative and positive reinforcement, don't refer to good versus bad or bad versus good. They're not evaluation terms, but negative reinforcement refers to the removal of something that's a versus in order to ensure a behavior continues.

Sarah Schlote ([00:16:40](#)):

Um, and the end positive reinforcement is the adding of something desired as a reward for a behavior that we want to see continue. And so it's about additive versus subtractive, uh, versus good instead of good versus bad. So I just wanted to name that. Um, and then we've got the clicker trainers who are strictly only clicker training or only positive reinforcement, um, who kind of point the finger over at the negative reinforcement folks and go, well, you're all abusive. And you know, this is high stress and horses live in captivity and they already experienced a lot of stress. And so we want to be increasing their stress levels and there are ways to get the job done without having to use a versus, and so why shouldn't we be doing that? Um, and so, and then they might look at negative reinforcement folks and go, well, you know what, what's led you to be so heavy handed for instance, but that sort of thing that assumes that all negative reinforcement is done abusively beyond threshold. And that assumes all clicker training is airy fairy, and isn't recognizing nuances of relationship and it's only mechanistic, right. And so we've got this sort of dichotomizing happening. I think that's what you're referring to work. Did I explain that properly?

Warwick Schiller ([00:17:47](#)):

Um, perfectly well to me. Okay. But yeah, that's the, when I first read that and I kind of alluded to this in the intro that is like, with the, like, with the purely negative reinforcement, that the things that would lead a person to only view things that way I looked at that and went, Hmm. Yeah, I can see, I can see quite a bit of me in my life experience in that. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:18:19](#)):

What were some of the things that you resonated with from that work, from that list of, um, sort of the negative only because, you know, we know that you've been doing a lot of work in terms of your own horsemanship and your methods have changed tremendously as you've done your own sort of personal exploration, you know, hence this podcast series, like what, what did, what, what did you use to align with their, you know, and what's shifted, I guess,

Warwick Schiller ([00:18:45](#)):

Oh, everything shifted, but, um, well, I suppose this is probably gonna lead us into the path of polyvagal theory, you know, just growing up in the, in the, um, you know, the era that I grew up in and everybody else grew up in the same thing. So it's not, you know, that know my parents were wonderful. They were doing what everybody else was doing, but it was that era of, you know, stop crying or I'll give you something to cry about. And, uh, the whole children's would be sheen, sorry, seen and not heard and all that sort of stuff. And it, it, it leads you to, you know, view the world a certain way. And yeah, in that, you know, in that little paragraph that you had, I'm like, Oh yeah, I, I, I see a bit of that. And you've got to do, you know, you got to do it without judgment of what happened.

Warwick Schiller ([00:19:41](#)):

You just recognizing what happened, not labeling it good or bad, but you lay your understanding why you are the way you are without, you know, it's nobody's fault, but it's, it's, you know, I tell, I, I probably haven't ever said this on my podcast. I've I've I revealed a lot of stuff on the podcast, but I'm not sure I've actually got to this one, but, um, I have talked about growing up as a male with a freeze response, you tend to have, you know, uh, like some negative self-talk or some, a lot of negative self-talk about that. You know, you're supposed to be a man you're supposed to be brave. You're supposed to be tough. You smell that sort of stuff. And it was during one of the conversations with you last year that you kind of urged me to look further back in my childhood.

Warwick Schiller ([00:20:44](#)):

Cause as far as I know, I had the perfect childhood, you know, I, you know, mum and dad loved us and they were home every night. There was no argument. There's no drugs, no alcohol. I had a great time. And you were the one that urged me to look further back into stuff. And, and, you know, I had read, I think we'd been talking about Peter Levine's, uh, waking the tiger book. And he was saying, I read in there that early childhood, uh, surgeries are often a, a key to trauma because you get strapped to a gurney and wheeled away from your caregivers, by people wearing masks. And I'm like, nah, well, I had, I've had some surgery, but I don't think it was that young. And then you urged me to look into, and I knew that I'd had, uh, like, you know, airway problems when I was younger. I knew it had bronchitis quite a bit. And I knew I had pneumonia. Sometimes I just didn't know how many times I had pneumonia. And you were the one that urged me to ask a mom when I first had pneumonia. Yeah. And my, and uh, my first hospitalization with pneumonia was when I was three months old. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:22:03](#)):

And the second one, I think it was 11 months old, but I spent a week in hospital each of those two times. And it was the, you know, it was the old Catholic hospital with the very strict nuns and all that sort of stuff. And I'm not sure if it was you or Jane poked, but someone on that, someone I've spoken to said, well, the reason you have a freeze response is because at the time you're in, you know, you feel like you're in danger. You don't, you know, your caregivers aren't there. And at three months old, you don't have access to fight or flight. You just have

Sarah Schlote ([00:22:40](#)):

Shut down, right? You know you'll have an intense amount of activation. And we rely on our caregivers to co-regulate right. We, what goes up in terms of our arousal or activation. So to speak comes down through social engagement, comes down through us, recruiting other nervous systems that have more regulatory capacity to bring that back down into a realm where we feel safe again and little infants that are left alone and left to cry, prolonged, crying it out. I'm not talking about small doses, but we're talking like extreme stress, intense separations, intense periods of crying it out. Um, intense amounts of fear. And it remember what's intense for a little young nervous system is quite different than what's intense for a grownup, right? And so we're thinking about very premature, uh, nervous systems that can be really, really overwhelming. And if you're already separated and isolated in a really, um, sort of austere kind of environment where there isn't a lot of affection and you're isolated, plus they're having difficulty breathing.

Sarah Schlote ([00:23:47](#)):

I mean, lack of oxygen flow LA you know, sends the nervous system. All those are conditions that can send the nervous system into a dorsal vagal response, which is that shutdown response. So it can be early surgeries. We know a lot of men suffer a lot of early relational trauma because of circumcision. And so the earliest surgeries, we start to see a lot of rampant sort of toxic male socialization shut down emotions. It's not just socialization in terms of the nurture portion of how we've raised men in Western society, but also early surgical experiences. But even beyond that, for some men who haven't experienced circumcision as an early state, um, this early experience of difficulty breathing, you know, can create very scary, uh, experiences, which, uh, Dr. Pore, just in Dr. Levine, both call, um, uh, immobility with fear, right, where there's stillness and terror, right?

Sarah Schlote ([00:24:44](#)):

It's like I can't breathe and there's no one here to help me and I have to do this alone. And that's a very overwhelming state for a little nervous system. And, and those early adaptations often involve just shutting down and not feeling it's not always abuse. It's not always outright neglect. You know, people often don't realize that they carry around trauma in their bodies, you know, because like you, right, like you said, well, I had a decent childhood and my parents got along well and, you know, we weren't harmed in those obvious ways. And so sometimes it shows up in these other ways, you know, and that can lead to shut down. And then we start to see, you know, um, management strategies and self-selecting into various careers that are reinforcing for us. So I'll give an example of, um, sort of, I've seen this happen many times in practice.

Sarah Schlote ([00:25:31](#)):

I've known people in my personal life for whom this is true, um, colleagues for whom this is true. So this is just sort of generic information, but you can imagine, um, a young boy who experienced a sexual abuse in his family of origin, either by a parent or a sibling, um, and the confusion around that experience and the sense of helplessness and powerlessness that comes from that. And the only way to combat the powerlessness is to find some way of finding agency. And I've known many men who this isn't true for all men who do this, but, um, for some male identified individuals who have turned to, uh, intense sports or bodybuilding or, uh, you know, ways of making their bodies find, feel strong, or feel strength in order to overcome the early experiences of powerlessness and shutdown and shame, it feels a lot better to feel agency and strength one's musculature than to feel the collapse response of something's happening to me that I am powerless to interrupt.

Sarah Schlote ([00:26:26](#)):

And then we start to see people self-select into careers like extreme bodybuilding or, you know, sports careers, or heck even horse training. You know, I'm not saying this is the only cause, but I'm just sort of drawing out a potential bike chain here, right. Here are some potential links that can line up. And then we start to see people self-select into specific methods, say of horse training or specific careers. Um, uh, Gabor, Matteo talks a lot about medical doctors and what they self-select into, why they self-select into medicine, you know, and, and what's going on for many medical doctors in terms of, you know, um, what drives them psychologically in terms of early experiences, trauma, psychia, and so on, you know, and so we, we have these early States and our personality shapes around these early experiences of threat and unsafety in the world. And then we call that personality and then that sometimes gets reinforced into a profession. And then we get really good at doing that profession. But if we step back and it's like, well, hang on a second. Especially if we're, when we're in that profession, it's so black and white. And so dichotomized, and so polarized. Usually that's the indicator. If we go back in the bike chain, there's something else playing out here.

Sarah Schlote ([00:27:41](#)):

And I heard you, I heard you breathing a lot. We're hearing you say all that. I'm curious about what's happening for you right now?

Warwick Schiller ([00:27:50](#)):

Uh, well, you know, one thing is I've never, okay. So I, for the most of my life, I had no idea that any of this stuff had affected me for the most part. I didn't know that it happened. You know, I knew I had pneumonia when I was a kid. Um, and then it was only talking to you last year that I've gone back and, you know, talked to mom. And she told me when I had pneumonia and they also had it, uh, before it, just before it was five as well. Uh, and so it, it explained to me why I had the shutdown state, but what I hadn't given. And I was thinking it was being away from my caregivers in this hospital with all these nasty old nuns, but I didn't, I hadn't ever given any thought is the breathing, like the almost, you know, the almost suffocating sort of thing at the same time.

Warwick Schiller ([00:28:48](#)):

I'd never thought of that. You know, it's almost like being waterboarded or something or other yeah. Um, yeah, that's got a lot to do with it, but I had a, I had an epiphany here on the podcast. One time I was talking, cause I've always judged my, uh, my shutdown very negatively. Yeah. Like it was, I didn't want it, uh, once I discovered what it was, uh, but talking to my friend, Jane pikers and a questioning mindset coach, and I was, she's really taking a deep dive into old stuff, uh, sematic, uh, you know, she used to be kind of a top-down approach, you know, all thinking about it. Now she's getting really into the bottom up somatic stuff. But she said to me in the podcast, so I had like an epiphany on the podcast. You hear me breathing then to where I went. She,

Warwick Schiller ([00:29:42](#)):

Cause she said to me, she said at the time, your shut down was your best friend. Yeah. And I kind of went I've often since I've known what it was and how it got there. It's always been a negative connotation. Like it, I wish it hadn't happened, yada, yada, yada, but it's, you know, it doesn't matter if it's fight flight or freeze at the time, it's it? Your best friend. And so, yeah, so that, but, but yeah, so Jane got me that epiphany on the podcast, but right then when you were talking about the, the pneumonia part of it, I'd never give any thought to that bit either. So yeah, that makes, that makes a lot of sense.

Sarah Schlote ([00:30:26](#)):

It's it's, you know, there's, there's so many nuances, right? Work. It's like our survival responses are what kept us alive, whether it's fight flight freeze, fold, faint, feign, death, fragment, Fon, fine. Like there's so many F's that we use in English to describe the various trauma responses that we have, you know, survival responses and, and all of those, all of those were necessary under those original conditions, you know, and we're, we don't heal by further shaming and judging ourselves for the very things that kept us going, you know, there, our physiology, our, our relational survival strategies, all of that recruited together and marshaled or fell apart, so to speak, you know, D marshaled in order to keep us going. And, and that's, that's a beautiful thing. You know, it might not serve us as well now, but the S the solution isn't to judge ourselves for it, we only get past it by aligning with it.

Sarah Schlote ([00:31:24](#)):

Some people in the psychotherapy field, we call that rolling with resistance, you know, and a form of rolling with resistance. And I forget the name of the person who coined that term. Um, so apologies to that person, I'm usually really good at citing. And so I will acknowledge that this is not my idea, but certainly that the concept is out there. Um, and rolling with resistance as this idea of not fighting the survival response and meeting it with more fight, but can we soften into that? Can we, can we be gentle with the very thing that's causing challenge? You know, I think about children who were molested or children who had difficulty with, you know, inappropriate sexual advances and they coped by deactivating their, their arousal response. And then they wind up in relationships later in life with a partner, and they're unable to maintain erection or their own table to reach orgasm.

Sarah Schlote ([00:32:12](#)):

And it's like, Oh, I don't understand what this block's all about. I'm gonna go get some biography or whatever. And it's like, well, no, hang on a second here. This might actually be, now, it's not true for everybody. But, you know, in cases where there's a trauma history, deactivating your arousal response and, and finding yourself in your musculature to find strength would have been a really powerful survival mechanism. And, and so too is the, the switching off of, of sexual interest. And it's like, so, so then I think to myself, not only are we talking about a psychophysiological response, but some people in the trauma world we'll talk about parts. We all have, we have parts of ourselves, you know, like inner child and her rebellious teenager, you know, the inner perfectionist, you know, we all got different parts of the inner infant. That's always crying for attachment, you know, there's these bits and pieces of ourselves that show up at different times.

Sarah Schlote ([00:33:01](#)):

And I get really curious again about that bike chain kind of like with horse training. It's like, so before you lost sexual arousal with your partner, can we back that up and go, like, where did you, where did you disconnect? Where, where did you go into your survival response to deactivate survival, to deactivate sexual arousal? And, and what age are you right now? How old are you in this moment? You know, I'm going to guess it's not appropriate for a five year old to be having sex. So of course, you're not going to be able to have sex with your partner if you're connecting with that. Five-year-old right. And so it's like, so of all, this is all bike chain stuff. This is just, let's back it up, back it, up, back it up. And let's be really gentle with the fact that that was needed to survive.

Sarah Schlote ([00:33:43](#)):

It wasn't safe, and it isn't appropriate for little kids to be having sex. So of course that's going to be deactivated. And the cool thing about trauma, which is also the most frustrating thing about trauma is the, is the conditioning around it, right? The slightest smallest thing that reminds us of the earlier thing sets off this unconscious response pattern that happens in the present moment. Even if those original conditions are not happening now. And so the idea is, can we work with the physiology? Can we recognize the trauma response playing out? Can we have compassion for the resistance? Can we recognize that there was a reason why that's there, you know, that response served a function, super served a function. And in your case with the surgery in the hospital, you know, or not the surgery, but the, the, the pneumonia, I mean, this is, gosh, this is, so this is so compelling given COVID, I mean, there's so much suffocation trauma happening right now.

Sarah Schlote ([00:34:35](#)):

And especially intubation trauma as a result of, of the, the ventilation machines, you know, it's terrifying. It is a terrifying experience. And so I have a lot of empathy for a little work and what he would have gone through, you know, with, with these early States, I mean, three age, three months to be having pneumonia in a hospital, separated from caregivers. That's pretty overwhelming. That's a, that's a hard time. And I just, I hear, I keep hearing, as I'm talking work, how you hold, you take these breaths in and you, you kind of hold, I feel almost like I feel my own diaphragm tightening. As I hear you kind of do that and pull in,

Warwick Schiller ([00:35:12](#)):

I knew this is going to happen. You're going to therapist me on me.

Sarah Schlote ([00:35:16](#)):

Not intending to you, did it when I was on your podcast. I should have known that wasn't my intention.

Warwick Schiller ([00:35:25](#)):

Yeah. But you know, it is what it is. You know, I want to go back to when you're talking about, say, uh, like why, why certain people are drawn to be doctors and stuff. Like one of the podcasts I did was a podcast on books that have influenced me. And one of the books was, uh, the masks of masculinity by Lewis Howes. You've mentioned

Sarah Schlote ([00:35:48](#)):

This before. You've told me about it before. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:35:51](#)):

And you know, that book really made me think that all the people that are out there who you think is succeeding or only succeeding because of trauma, you know, CEOs, it doesn't mean, you know, sports people, CEOs, comedians, whatever, it's, it's, they're all, it's all, uh, related to trauma and you might be really successful. But I think if you are successful because of trauma, but don't heal the trauma, it's a pretty empty success. And you, you just don't feel, uh, you know, your life's not really complete. And then you, you, I think you tend to want to get more and more of whatever that is, whether that's, you know, sports success or whatever. And I, and I often think about like the people that I've had on the podcast, quite a few of them in the same,

Warwick Schiller ([00:36:46](#)):

You know, in the same sort of sphere as I am. Okay. Horse people who ended up in the public, I kind of wonder, you know, it's funny I get, you know, like at horse expos or in articles or whatever, then you get this, one of the world's leading horsemen. I'm like, that's. The world's leading the world's best horseman. You didn't even know him there in the middle of Montana on a rent. So, you know what I mean? That's not me. Yeah. Um, uh, but I, I often wonder what is it that led us to want to be, you know, a lot, a lot, a lot of it's about wanting to help people, but there's also gotta be, uh, a part of it. That's the, the, you know, I don't know, I'm not sure. I'm not sure if I've spoken to you since I went, I went to a, a, a three-day men's emotional resilience retreat, uh, last year.

Warwick Schiller ([00:37:39](#)):

And I've talked about it earlier before in the podcast and the book that they were really, but there's a lot of, it was based about, it's a book called a King warrior lover, magician, it's the male archetypes. And it was talking about that each one of them has a, has a shadow side and the King does things for the good of everyone, but that the shadow side of that is the Prince energy that does it for, uh, personal validation. And, and, um, and I kinda, you know, sometimes interviewing guests on here that are in the same sort of fears zone, anything. I wonder why you do this really? Cause I don't even know why I do this. It's in there somewhere, but it's got to be, um, and I actually had a bit of an, not an epiphany, but almost like a young and extrastential crisis at that, at that, uh, men's emotional retreat, resilience retreat. Because when they talked about that, I'm like, Holy cow, why do I do what I do? Do I do it? I think I do it because I'm trying to help people. I think I have that King energy, but what if it's just for the validation and I'm sure there's, there's parts of that, both of those there, but yeah, although that stuff just makes you, it makes you, makes you think.

Sarah Schlote ([00:39:01](#)):

I love that, that chain of that chain of thought work and where that's taking us, it's reminding me of, um, when I did my master's degree many years ago, Dr. Tim black out of the university of Victoria was my thesis supervisor and my grad supervisor as well. And he used to say whatever. Yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([00:39:18](#)):

Victoria, British Columbia, not Victoria, a lot of Australian people here that like, no, Sarah did not go to school in Victoria, Australia,

Sarah Schlote ([00:39:27](#)):

Although that would have been really cool. I probably would have really enjoyed that. Um, yeah, no, that's okay. That's okay. Yeah. Is there a university of Victoria in Australia?

Warwick Schiller ([00:39:38](#)):

There is a state. Yes. And there are universities there, so maybe they're engineering. Hmm.

Sarah Schlote ([00:39:45](#)):

Maybe, but so, and at the university of Victoria in British Columbia, um, my thesis supervisor, Dr. Tim black said, um, the reasons that lead you into becoming a psychotherapist can not be the reasons that keep you a psychotherapist. And I've often thought that that is very potent and true because we often, again, it speaks to the self-selection what led us into the career if it's unresolved trauma, which for a lot

of helper types and not just psychotherapists, but life coaches, wellness practitioners, healers of various types. And so on, we're often known as a wounded, the walking wounded to a certain degree is the wounded healer archetype, so to speak. Right? And so, so there's things that led us into these careers. And if we're not actively working on those things, if we're not actively examining the unconscious motivations that led us to become helpers, healers, whatever, um, that can, that can come and, um, distort the work that we're doing.

Sarah Schlote ([00:40:45](#)):

So in the therapy world, we talk about something called countertransference. So transference is the client's response to the therapist or helper, regardless of scope of practice. Countertransference is the therapist or helpers response to the human. They are helping. And if we're not owning and paying attention to, and working on our own stuff, it can easily bubble to the surface where we lose our objectivity. And we're not actually being helpful where we can actually be harmful. Sometimes it's, it's, it's not on purpose. I've certainly had moments where I was facing intense amounts of compassion, fatigue as a result of experiencing criminal harassment from somebody who was tormenting for me for a number of years. And it really affected my capacity to hold space for some clients that were similar to the person who was harassing me. And I, it was a whole lot harder for me to hold objective space for certain people.

Sarah Schlote ([00:41:37](#)):

And that was, that was really hard. Um, but overall, if I take that sort of extenuating circumstance out of it, you know, what we're intending to do do is we're trying to hold a clean space. And some people don't. I experienced sexual, um, assault from a guru healer type guy many years ago, um, who I turned to during a vulnerable period of my life. And he had some spiritual gifts. I will, I will be honest, but he also had a lot of distortion and he had a lot of, um, toxic, um, behaviors. And he did engage in a lot of power and control and grooming sexual grooming behaviors. And so, because he, and he called that part of the healing, he called getting entangled in that kind of stuff, his particular medicine that he was offering clients, I'm like, Ooh, that's a slippery slope. If you're not holding a clean space, you know, that's, you enacting something onto somebody.

Sarah Schlote ([00:42:35](#)):

I turned to that person for a clean space and I got his projection. Um, and that was, that was not a healthy place to go. And so that particular individual does not appear to have done the work. They need to continue to hold that space. You know, it sounds like that person's trauma is what led them into their profession, but it's not what it's, it's, it's still what's maintaining them there. It isn't, what's keeping it clean. And so if we think about horse training, it's like, well, so what led you to be a horse trainer? You know, what, what early experiences positive or negative strengths-based resilience based and, or trauma based shaped you to be who you are shaped. You select an either fully, you know, [inaudible] perspective in either direction, you know, what, what led you into into there, you know, and it becomes interesting because like, I think of, you know, the, the person who wants to be a healer, the person who, what we might be called, um, we might call unintegrated.

Sarah Schlote ([00:43:34](#)):

So, um, I have a colleague who's a life coach and starting out as a life coach and, and relatively new to life coaching. And, um, you know, um, has a fair amount of empathy skills and, and, and, you know, truly believes they're a healer in their, in their heart of hearts. And, and I can see that that's true, um, and has

a tendency to fix and jump in and take over for clients or customers. And, and, and it doesn't feel like helping, it feels a lot more like, um, imposing something based on their response. So client feels X, Y, and Z, and then they have a reaction to what is happening for the client, which is their countertransference. And then they react out of the countertransference to offer a life coaching solution, which isn't actually helping the client it's it's, it's handholding or T or caretaking or in mashed.

Sarah Schlote ([00:44:29](#)):

And it's like, so if, if we're truly being with, and for our clients, what Dr. Sherry Geller calls therapeutic presence, regardless of your scope of practice, holding therapeutic presence is about holding space with, and for the other person and their process, or in the case of horsemanship therapeutic horsemanship, you know, is, is holding space for that animal and a good horse person, regardless of gender expression, identity, regardless of background, we'll be holding a clean space within for that animal and within for it's humans. And if we're not, our stuff will be coming forward. There was really interesting research that looked at, um, this is all still new ish, but not enough research has been done yet. Although there's some that's happening more and more around, um, looking at people's attachment styles and how that influences, which horse training methods they adopt. And also the perspective they have of the horse and their interpretation of horse behavior, uh, is in part influenced by their attachment style and what influenced our attachment style, but our early histories. Right. And so you can't separate this out. This is the bike chain. Again, all these links are connected, right. So it's just interesting.

Warwick Schiller ([00:45:47](#)):

Yeah. And you can't separate that out, but then when you completely understand that the energy, the intern energy, you bring to any interaction with the horse yeah. Influences the horse. And so then this is where you get to where, um, you know, my, my son, uh, has a degree in business and he handles all the, the marketing and businessy side of what I do, you know, uh, when he first joined us, I, I, I basically, you know, he's going to take over all that stuff. And I said, the only thing you can't do is sell we're here to help people.

Warwick Schiller ([00:46:34](#)):

That's what got us this far. That's the only reason this thing's working. Cause I mean, I'm an, I don't even have a business plan. You know what I mean? I've actually been on a podcast with a guy. He has a podcast called horse business, something or other, and he kept trying to go, okay, what's the secret? What did you play in? Like, I don't have a plan. Just help people. Yeah. And, um, so lately some of the advertising that Todd has been doing his head, this saying that I said a little while ago, it's not a method, it's a mindset. And because the mindset you bring with any interaction with your horse influences the horse. And so if you have, you know, if you bring all this, this stuff inside you, this trauma inside you, and then you project that onto the horse, and then you get reflected back that.

Warwick Schiller ([00:47:22](#)):

And then my horses are bastard. You know what I mean? And it's all mine. I spent 48 years of my life, not having my head wrapped around this. Not that I even had an education in it, but, you know, uh, the, once you, once you see that and experience that you can't, you can't unsee it. And this morning on my Facebook group, it was interesting. I, I had posted a, a YouTube video about energy and intention with horses and a girl replied and said, yeah, I was at a horsemanship clinic a few years ago, and there were in the arena and there some horses outside the arena were getting trotted down a Hill that was a

pavement or something rather, and was making a lot of noise. And my horse read up and the clinician yelled at me stop pulling on him. And she said, I yield back.

Warwick Schiller ([00:48:10](#)):

I'm not the lead grubs completely used loose. And he said something to her, like no, internally, not externally. And she was, he was standing there on his own feet raring up. And she may as well have been pulling on the lead rope. Cause all her internal energy was saying, don't do that stop instead of all that interesting. Yeah. Oh, look at you standing on your hind legs, but you know, EV her whole internal being was screaming don't and like, and, and she said, and as soon as he said that I kind of softened and gave away the judgment of what was happening in a horse just came back down and just stood there. But the whole time that she was rejecting that and having a visceral reaction to it, her horse was, was dancing. That's the hard thing about this stuff is, and that's why I want to talk to you because I want really, really want people to understand that I think everybody has trauma everybody.

Warwick Schiller ([00:49:13](#)):

And if you are, if you around your horse and you haven't started to work on that stuff, there's going to be quite an element that, of that. And it supersedes, or it overrides any physical thing you may do with your body, you know, like any aides or cues or whatever you might give that stuff inside of you has those horses read that way more than the, you know, the left leg, right. Leg left, hand, right hand, whatever it is you're doing. And yeah, it's, it's a deep subject. And I don't mean deep as in profound. It is that too, but it's, uh, it's, you know, there's a lot to it, but it's such a huge part of, of getting along with not just horses with, with any other sentience being as well, but especially trying to get along with your horse, you know? Well,

Sarah Schlote ([00:50:12](#)):

And it's interesting, you know, cause as you were telling me about the story just now I, and she was saying, Oh, the lead rope is loose. Like am not holding it. And he was like, no inside, not outside. I found my chest wall completely contracting. And I felt a whole bunch of tension happening in the upper part of my, my core. And, and I felt that internal tether that you were speaking about and I'm like, exactly, like that's the residents. Like I felt it as you shared the story and I'm like, I can imagine what the horse was picking up on. And I don't even know this person I'm hearing the second hand. And even I had a physiological response, right. So of course the horse is going to have one as well. I'll give an example. So in, uh, January, um, so I, um, I moved to a remote area not too long ago, a few months ago.

Sarah Schlote ([00:51:00](#)):

And I been adjusting ever since to my new surroundings and my new life. And, um, and there was a day in January where we had a very strong cold snap. And, uh, at the exact same time, I had changed bales of hay and had started feeding. Like the bale that I had cracked open was a little bit more coarse and dry and wet. And the cold snap happened, the horses weren't drinking as much water. So I woke up one morning to discover that I thought they had early signs of colic, uh, impaction, colic, because cold weather and all these things. And I immediately rallied and went into overdrive. I'm out here by myself. I'm, you know, miles away from any veterinarian. Like I'm literally in this area, that's kind of, kind of out there. And I, I was trying to figure out, gosh, like, what do I, what do I do?

Sarah Schlote ([00:51:48](#)):

So I had the vet on the phone and I was just praying for no power outage because at the time I didn't have a landline and I, you know, I was really just, um, quite worried and distressed about my horses. So I started getting them on like getting the moving and getting the mashes to get their fluids in their body, to get their bowels working, you know, and I was doing all this stuff and they still weren't drinking water and they didn't drink water for almost two, three days. And I was starting to panic and they were getting through their fluids through the mashes I was making with alfalfa cubes, but they weren't drinking. And I was like, what is going on? Like, come on, you dang horses, like just Drake, you know? And I was like, stop stressing out your mother. And I had a meeting with some colleagues of mine because with Aqua Soma because of my move and, and all the transitions happening in my life these last eight months or so, um, a lot of things have had to go on the back burner until I sort of created more cultivated, more space in my life for this again.

Sarah Schlote ([00:52:40](#)):

And, um, I'm starting the Munis podcast, honestly work. I'm glad we're doing it because this is, um, assigned to me that I'm, there's more space and capacity in me to re-engage with my aspects of my old life again. So it's, it's really nice to be here today on for multiple reasons. You're, you're an enjoyable person to talk to, but also for myself, it marks the beginning of a re-entry back into, um, what I was doing prior to my move. So I had a meeting with a number of my [inaudible], um, uh, faculty and training assistants. And I was having a hard time. I cried. I was like, I'm overwhelmed everybody. Like, I'm having a really hard time with this. Like I moved to this area, my job, I, new job is really rewarding, but really hard. And, you know, and, and there's all stuff. And being out here by myself on this farm, like, it's hard, like I'm doing all these things alone. And, uh, and I said, you know, and my horses won't drink and they're called, they're having impaction call, like, and I'm stressed out. And I said, I don't even want to unpack my boxes because I'm not even committed that I'm going to be staying here. Like I'm so overwhelmed and scared of being here that I'm not even unpacking my own boxes. And they said, did you just hear it?

Sarah Schlote ([00:53:52](#)):

You're, you're not unpacking your boxes. You're impacted too.

Warwick Schiller ([00:53:57](#)):

And, and

Sarah Schlote ([00:53:57](#)):

I felt like something released a little bit and I cried and my guts started to unwind a little bit like the musculature and then the, the fascia and the tissues started to soften a little bit. And I had some tears because as the dictum says, you know, when we feel held, then we can let go. Right. So I felt held by my group, even though it was by zoom, you know, I sort of my body let down into their holding. And then I talked again and I said something else. I said, um, Oh, and I said, I'm so backed up with all this that I have to deal with, you know? And there's all this I'm so backed up with work and Aqua Selma. And my book contract is I'm trying to finish my manuscript for my publisher and you know, and all this stuff. And they're like, you

Warwick Schiller ([00:54:40](#)):

Did it again. You hear

Sarah Schlote ([00:54:42](#)):

How backed up you are. That's what call it kid.

Warwick Schiller ([00:54:44](#)):

Yes. You also said, you sit an own backed up with.

Sarah Schlote ([00:54:49](#)):

Well, cause I was so overwhelmed, right? It's not truly. Like these are all things I love, but like, you know, I'm just, I'm so overwhelmed, but the words came out, I'm backed up with. And I cried again because it was witnessed and held and my body released a little bit more and we finished our meeting and they said, I said, I'll, I'll go outside and see the horses. I'm going to go count poops and see where the water levels are at. And they went out and then

Warwick Schiller ([00:55:12](#)):

He finally drank. And I was like,

Sarah Schlote ([00:55:16](#)):

Cause it wasn't about it. Wasn't just the cold snap. And uh, me opening up a dry chorus, bale hay. It was, they were experiencing my own backed

Warwick Schiller ([00:55:26](#)):

Up ness, you

Sarah Schlote ([00:55:28](#)):

Know, and, and responding and kind, my animals have always done that. My dogs have always done that with me. They've always ended up with the same physical ailments that I've ended up having within a very short period of time. And, and that was one of those examples of that. So that story that you shared about the, you know, the internal state, like how we contract, how we hold, I mean, that's palpable. We, we were teaching Equis Soma once last year in an online format. We had students from around the world and the training. It was really cool. And we were talking about, um, biophysiology and we were talking about how the nervous system moves through survival responses and how animals under optimal conditions work through those responses. They activate, or they marshal a response and then they deactivate and it comes, you know, they kind of come out the other side, their body releases what was built up, you know, and, and then they go back to homeostasis or balance.

Sarah Schlote ([00:56:19](#)):

And everything's great, but that this doesn't happen in captivity for the most part, not the animals in the wild can't experience trauma cause they do. Um, but captivity conditions form a very particular set of circumstances that humans and other animals experience that contribute to trauma responses. Um, because we don't have that ability to reset, to discharge, to let down, let go, we're not held, you know, we don't have the space in which we can de armor ourselves, so to speak. And we're in this training and we were looking at a bunch of photographs and some videos showing Gazelles and Impala and zebra, you know, moving through these trauma responses. And we're just talking a little bit about, um, one of the, I think it was one of the videos showing a leopard chasing, uh, or going after an Impala of some kind. And the, one of the students was in some other country on some other side of the world.

Sarah Schlote ([00:57:14](#)):

Um, and she was like, you know, what's really cool right now we're talking about the Impala being chased by a leopard. Um, and my cat has just started running at top speed around my apartment. And I have not seen this cat be aggressive like ever. And this cat is now engaging in stalking and prowling behaviors while we're in the zoom meeting, talking about predatory behavior in the animal world. And I'm like, you can't make this stuff up. I mean, this is, this is, this is resonance, right? Like when, when you're, when you hear me talk about suffocation, you hold your breath. Right. We don't, we don't have to unpack that, but it's just another version of that. Right? And it's like, Oh, this is why we're mammals. Right. We're meant to have resonance with each other. It's part of our survival, you know, so it's the same with horses.

Sarah Schlote ([00:58:03](#)):

Like, and if we have unresolved stuff within ourselves as horse trainers, because we were say raised with heavy handedness or, you know, you know, I'll give you something to cry about and, you know, or whatever, or we were gas lit like the example that you gave a while ago of the horse reacting to the human trainer's handling. And then the human trainer calls that horse, an or a BA a bastard or whatever. And it's like, Oh, you're being a. You're deliberately doing X, Y, and Z. It's like, well, hang on a second. How much of it? We just gas let the horse into the horse is responding to something about what you're saying or doing or experiencing. And, and you're blaming it for its normal response to the circumstances or to what you're putting out there. That would be a form of gaslighting, you know?

Sarah Schlote ([00:58:47](#)):

And we, we do that. That's, that's a form of trauma response. And if it's there, it's, I'm naming this not to create judgment. And gosh, I'm not a perfect person either. I mean, I'm right up there with all of you all in terms of, you know, working through my stuff. I mean, I'm a human too. Um, but it's more to insight, curiosity. It's like, Oh, if that's playing out, that to me is usually an indication that there's something for us to look at. Like you said, you know, trauma trauma is everywhere. Or as I like to say, traumas are in every room and round pen, you know, and it is, you know, whether the human or the

Warwick Schiller ([00:59:22](#)):

Horse or both, you know, and, and I take a pretty wide definition of what trauma is like, like your example, right. Of early suffocation experiences, coupled with separation, from your attachment figures, that's early developmental trauma, right. People often associate trauma with like, you know, car accidents and rapes and being beaten. And it's like, well, no, it's more than that.

Warwick Schiller ([00:59:42](#)):

Yeah. I, I always had, and, and it wasn't until I read Peter Levine's waking the tiger. And then I think maybe the body keeps the score by Bessel van Nico. Yeah. Which I mentioned both of those books in my book podcast. And I think he was reading those things that made me like, Oh, really? You know, and that, you know, it's here, we are completely down the rabbit hole, but yeah. And this is not, um, not, you know, uh, you know, none of this is to point the finger at anybody. But I think once you like the further, the deeper you try to go with the horses, the more you try to, you know, I've talked about this before in the podcast, but I think the great thing about horses is you get out of them what you're putting into them. And when you get to a point where you're trying to get further with them, you've got to look deeper a lot of times within yourself to get there.

Warwick Schiller ([01:00:44](#)):

And I think that's, you know, they, they just become our discipline and we could be doing martial arts or something. Right. You still have to do the same thing. Totally. Uh, but yeah, it's, uh, it's just, uh, I don't know if the subject fascinates me these days and, uh, I guess because I've got so much out of, you know, taking a bit of a dive into, into my stuff, but it's, it's come out in the, in the, the horse training stuff. You know, I think I was, I forget I was, I was talking to someone recently on the podcast, but I was talking about how these days that not that I'm doing many clinics these days with COVID, but in the last couple of years, you know, at a clinic or a horse expert or whatever, someone's got a horse that's pretty uptight and they'll hand the horse to me and I'm going to take the lead rope and do something to help the horse through the problem. A lot of times they'll hand me the lead rope and the horse is just kind of let down and I have to turn to everybody and say, I didn't do anything right. Then I didn't just project, you know, I didn't. And I tried to tell him that there is not being good with horses, that there is all the stuff I've been working on away from the horses. And it's, it's just made me realize how much getting good with horses is that, that, you know, that, that stuff has an effect on

Warwick Schiller ([01:02:10](#)):

Yeah, well, you know, and that speaks to two things. Um, and one is, and I'll bring them up both here. So that way you can help me come back around if I forget one, cause there's two, I wanted to

Sarah Schlote ([01:02:20](#)):

Name one is about, um, uh, something you had said earlier around, uh, what re what would get reinforced into, you know, and we saw careers that are reinforcing to us. And like you said, the King in the shadow, the shadow Prince, you know, um, there's something, I want him to name about that around coping privilege. And I'll come back to that in just a moment. Um, if I forget anything, please remind me about coping privilege is another term I've coined. Um, and it's not even the right term, but I just don't know how else to call it. Um, and then the other piece is around, um, the positive reinforcement. We've talked a little bit about sort of the negative reinforcement folks and what leads us into say more extreme, sort of only focused on negative reinforcement and not the softer bits and pieces around positive reinforcement. And were you treated a certain way by your parents growing up where you weren't affirmed you, weren't given you weren't shown love or kindness or, you know, affirmation. And therefore you think that that stuff is, you know, who we areAnd very fluffy and therefore it's not valid. And it has to be

Sarah Schlote ([01:03:26](#)):

A particular way. And of course, with negative reinforcement, some of the more extreme versions of that include a lot of misunderstanding of what dominance theory is about. Um, and that that's a whole other topic of conversation. Um, but the, the positive reinforcement people, like you were saying, a lot of this is our internal work. You know, horsemanship is not just, like you said, a set of techniques, it's a mindset. And it's like, well, it's also your state. It's also your healing work. You know, you're only gonna be as far as you've come yourself, right? We say that about therapists all the time, a therapist can only bring their client as far as they've gone themselves. And I think that's true with humans and horses and horsemanship or equine behavior consulting or whatever your horse profession happens to be, you know? And, and so I think of, um, sort of the more positive reinforcement strictly, only folks.

Sarah Schlote ([01:04:13](#)):

And I get curious about, um, if anybody in that camp has experienced, doesn't have the ability to differentiate between intensity and rage, you know, and I think that was in my blog post originally, if we come back around to it, right, is like one of the hallmarks of trauma is a lack of differentiation. Things get over coupled and things start to all look the same. And so we start to lump everything into the same category and we can't recognize difference. And so, so how many folks who have tried to go into learning negative reinforcement, say they started there and work come into contact with a lack of ability to recognize the nuance and the horse, a lack of ability to recognize the thresholds because the natural horsemanship trainer wasn't paying attention to the horses thresholds or their own. And they brought the horse well beyond threshold into flooding.

Sarah Schlote ([01:05:03](#)):

And that can happen inadvertently with negative reinforcement quite easily, if we're not paying attention and negative reinforcement can be done without attention to relationship and connection. And then that can also create a reenactment of trauma response about coercion and shut down as opposed to it being about choice and consent. Um, but also for the person who might've experienced, um, a very enraged parent or parent who was violent, who had anger issues, they might not be able to differentiate between an increase in intensity within safety of relationship while I still feel connected and an increase of rage and intensity that's punitive, and they might not be able to distinguish the two. And so if a person who has that kind of trauma response for whom there's an over coupling as Peter Levine likes to say, you know, as I start to increase my intensity of arousal, I immediately come into contact with incomplete fight, response, energy, or shame around violence, because I have my own unresolved angers that I haven't dealt with because I don't want to be like my great uncle Ted or my grandfather or my grandmother, you know?

Sarah Schlote ([01:06:11](#)):

And so I've learned to shut down my anger response because I don't even want to go there because that's terrifying to come into contact with a little bit of increase of intensity, can open up a complete Pandora's box around all the stuff that's been avoided. And so it's like, well, I'm not even going to go there because that stuff's one big ball of wax and it's all harmful. Therefore I'm going to just be safe and we're going to go all the way over in this opposite direction and avoid that stuff like the plague versus, Hey, let's, let's start to tease apart, differentiate between unresolved, anger and rage and trauma response, fight response stuff. That's locked in the nervous system. That's terrifying that needs to be worked through really carefully and what pure living calls, healthy aggression, and finding assertion within that. And being able to raise intensity without it being an emotional punitive thing.

Sarah Schlote ([01:07:01](#)):

And in having an intensity within the safety of connected relationship is very different because we can increase our intensity within thresholds while respecting thresholds and remaining connected and have that not be about flooding and coercion and shut down. Right? And so there's a lack of differentiation there. And that also speaks to me of possible trauma response. I say possible because I can't diagnose, or I don't want to lump everybody into one category, right? This is, this will fit for some people and not for others. So not trying to create broad sweeping stereotypes or generalizations here, if this fits for somebody, it will fit. And if it doesn't fit, then toss it, of course, as usual. Um, but if I come back around to, uh, coping privilege, so earlier you were talking about people who self-select into their own careers, um, and they, they, they Excel in that career.

Sarah Schlote ([01:07:53](#)):

Um, like you said, CEOs and all sorts of these, these things, um, because of trauma response and it, and yes, you can be a CEO or X, Y, and Zed profession, and have, you know, worked on your trauma and have that, not be the driving factor. Um, but like I said earlier, like Tim black would always tell me it was, you know, the reason what led you into your career can not be the reason that keeps you there, you know, because you'll burn out and that we in somatic experiencing, we call that a management strategy. So, um, and in part, yeah, work theory or shadow work, or, you know, all these kinds of there's different ways to discuss ego state approaches that work with the parts of the self, um, internal family systems therapy. We'll talk a little bit about managers. There's there's categories of parts of self.

Sarah Schlote ([01:08:37](#)):

I lump it down into two to make it really simple. There's the protectors and the protected, right? So we've got these parts of ourselves that are protecting us, and we've got the aspects of ourselves that need protection and we've, you can easily break it down into two. And the protector parts have to sort of functions, uh, depending on where they show up. And so an internal family systems therapy, they talk about, uh, managers and firefighters managers are really proactive parts of ourselves that often get highly reinforced and prized by society, right? Like the perfectionist, right? How many of us have an inner perfectionist? That's often highly prized by schools and educators and employers and so on. And so that can be a trauma response if left unchecked, right. Because it also helped us to survive of, I just am so attention to detail that I crossed all my T's and dot all my I's and I do everything right.

Sarah Schlote ([01:09:29](#)):

Then no one can do judge me and I won't be shamed, or I won't be rejected. Right. And so, so the function of the perfectionism is to protect the part of me that wants to belong. Right. So, and to avoid away the pain of separation or the pain of ridicule. Right. And so, so the part of me that it makes me into a perfectionist is what we would call a manager. It's often, again, a very, yeah, highly proactive, uh, behavior set that we have. Um, firefighters are often less prized by society. They often show up after the manager failed. So, you know, in, in, in spite of my best efforts to prevent harm, something comes to the surface, uh, an emotion comes forward, I'm vulnerable. I do get harmed or there's a risk of harm. And then we're going to pull it all the stops to like, stop that from happening.

Sarah Schlote ([01:10:15](#)):

And so firefighter, parts of ourselves are protectors that come up when we're feeling like, Oh, my best attempts are not working here. And so that's usually the things like addictions and dissociation and self harm and, you know, right. And they're kind of like the more emergency, like they put out fires, right? That's the job of the firefighter. They make a mess, right. It's like, we're just going to get quick and dirty and put this fire out by any means necessary. It's not as right. And so, um, so when I think about coping privilege, you know, I think about the CEO, right? The CEO might have just as much trauma as the person. So who's on unemployment insurance. Who's unable to sustain a job or who's on disability. Right. And unfortunately, because of society and how society falls, if you're, I hate calling it coping privilege, I just don't have a better word for it.

Sarah Schlote ([01:11:04](#)):

But within we talk about privilege and we talk about sort of white privilege, male privilege, socially privileged based on religion, based on language spoken based on, um, based on ethnicity, skin color, like, you know, ableism able-bodied people versus non able-bodied. People didn't privilege, et cetera.

Right? So there's all these privileges, but no one really talks about what I'm calling coping privilege. It's like if your set of circumstances happened to reinforce a manager, part of you into being highly perfectionistic, overworking, overriding, you know, being a workaholic, being the high achiever type, cause I'm one of them. Right. And that was how your trauma manifested as a protective mechanism, that gives you a certain amount of privilege in the world, over the person who, whose management strategies were the firefighters, right. To dissociate, to be disconnected, to shut down, to not be able to function to, you know, to, to go into the addictions and the coping and stuff.

Sarah Schlote ([01:12:02](#)):

I mean, workaholism is its own addiction, right. But it's like, that person has just as much harm I'll. I remember a colleague told me once the story of, uh, a friend they had, and there was like the, the siblings were all super educated. They all had master's degrees in like engineering. And one had a PhD in some sort of like biophysics or something. And then they had one sibling who was on disability and couldn't work. And everybody in the family would point the finger at the one person in the family who was the black sheep, because they were the one who was not coping. And they were the one who was struggling with drugs and various things. Right. And, and I looked at that situation. I'm like, but they're all equally traumatized, potentially right. Cope, coping privilege, just because all y'all were able to go off and become, um, overachievers doesn't mean that you're not struggling.

Sarah Schlote ([01:12:50](#)):

Doesn't mean that you're not coping with addictions, that your relationships are not falling apart, that you have difficulty sustaining attachment. Right. That you're not deep down crippled by self-doubt and shame. Right. It's just, you happen to lock into a form of coping that got really prized by society. Your manager got in charge, your sibling carries the brunt of all the shame and has been surviving by the firefighters. Right. And so does that mean that they're more traumatized or less? No, it's just, it just means, you know, how we got there. We got to, again, go back on the bike chain and look at this really objectively with a lot of compassion. Right. Or no different,

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:31](#)):

That's the thing for me delving into, you know, my stuff and, and things like that. When you, I said before, like everybody's got trauma. And then when you start to realize that the CEO's and the heroin addicts probably have the same problems, they just coming up with different ways. You really, for me personally, it's really made me a lot less judgmental and a lot more compassionate because, well, I think you've got to get rid of the judgment to get to the compassion. But when you understand that it wasn't a choice. Like I've, uh, what book of gobble mottos was it? I think it's in the realm of hungry ghosts. I listened to it. And he talks about, you know, so many, if not all people who are addicted, um, uh, a lot of it comes from lack of attunement and, and that in itself is not like you wouldn't look at that and go, Oh, they're being abused or whatever, but that's a big deal, especially back in like, like the era when I grew up.

Warwick Schiller ([01:14:43](#)):

Yeah. Um, and it's something as simple as that can, can, uh, yeah. Cause you to be some sort of a, an addict. And I, I really am a big fan of Russell brand. I think that guy's amazing, but his book recovery, you know, he says we're all on the addiction scale somewhere. He says, Oh, I was lucky because I was a down and out smack ed. And the good thing about being a smack ed, you ever figured out you got a problem. Will your dad make, you know what I mean? He says, but if you have some of the lower

addictions, like, you know, eating workaholic, porn, whatever, socially accepted addictions, he says, you can spend all your life with this level of unrest that inside you, that's not bad enough to make you fix it, but you just don't feel

Sarah Schlote ([01:15:39](#)):

Right. Yeah. It's, it's, it's, it's humbling. I remember what was the quote Terrence, and that wasn't his original name, but that was the name that was given to him. He was in early, I believe in early slave back around like the start, like back in Roman times. Um, and he had a quote that I really like, and I, I'm not saying his name properly, so apologies, um, to, to him for, um, using his slave name. Um, but he says, uh, nothing that's human is foreign to me. And I, and I love that quote because it implies that again, the CEO who might be on top of the world in terms of wealth and whatever, but is falling apart inside and lacks empathy and is, is, has, you know, is, is, is cheating and has multiple side relationships and has a drug addiction. And you know, his relationships falling apart and is estranged from his children or her children, or what have you, and the person who's on the street, who's, you know, hitting up the next, the next injection, you know, for the next high they're both lacking attunement.

Sarah Schlote ([01:16:47](#)):

They just, they just coped in different ways. They're both seeking something on the outside to give them that hit. Right. And so the overworking, the workaholism provides a similar hit in terms of those responses in the brain, in terms of the neurotrauma, the neuro-transmitters as, as will, you know, uh, an, an intravenous drug and back injection, right? There's going to be some differences of course, but the seeking of something on the outside to replace something that was missing through attunement, that's now a gaping hole on the inside. Those are the same, right? That is what we call an external locus control. That is the same, right? The mechanism that developed as a result of that looks different. But again, if you look at the bike chain and not the specifics of the bicycle, the bike chain is going to have a similar process, you know, and we look at those links in the bike chain again, and it's like, okay, yeah, the bike might be different, but you know, the chain that's driving, the bike is not that different.

Sarah Schlote ([01:17:43](#)):

And what's human. Shouldn't be foreign to any of us. And, and right now there's a meme going around social media. And it's kind of, it's kind of got me curious, because people are talking about, you know, the traditional response, which is, you know, to be judgemental and so on and bloody blah. And then they're talking about the trauma-informed response, which is, Oh, like, let's understand the trauma behind behavior. And, but, and then they said, ah, now we're evolving beyond that. And we're looking at like the compassion response I'm like, but those two are not distinct for me. Like I come to compassion as a result of understanding what caused what's going on. You know, like I, it's the understanding of the trauma that helps me have compassion and vice versa. Having compassion opens me up to understanding the history. And so to me, those are not separate, but there's, it feels like there's this false distinction happening right now where it's like, Oh, well, if you're trauma informed, it means that you just see the trauma in the human I'm like, but that's not true.

Sarah Schlote ([01:18:36](#)):

Maybe that's true for some people, but that that's, that's not true for me. When I teach trauma informed awareness, it is coming from a place of compassion and loving the person or the animal in front of me. It doesn't mean I see them as nothing, but their trauma, a trauma informed response does not limit the being, to being a product of their trauma that would not be consistent with a trauma

informed response. So, so you had said compassion, and I want them to just name that because I've been seeing that floating around the internet lately and I'm like, Oh, but I feel like there's a false distinction happening there. I don't, those to me are not separate.

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:07](#)):

Yeah. They're the same thing. Yeah. You know, I, I said before that, looking into my stuff, and then it kind of gives me a lot more compassion, empathy for others, but it's really made me a difference with the horses. Yeah. To where you understand that any of those behaviors, behaviors that are horses exhibiting, that we would find undesirable instead of wanting to make the behavior go away. I really understand that the behavior serves a function and it's come from an unmet need somewhere. And if you can figure out what the unmet need is, you don't have to train the problem a way. And that, and that, you know, and that's, uh, you know, that may be a quantum leap for some people and no judgment. If they're not that they're not there yet, but it, it, yeah. It just really, you know, I've, I've been kind of lucky or unlucky, but it is what it is spending like 48 years of my life seeing the world one way.

Warwick Schiller ([01:20:19](#)):

And in the last five years, seeing it completely differently. And I think I'm lucky because I still remember when I started the other way, a lot of people, their journey started so much earlier and they've made this gradual morph. They don't, they don't even know that they have done it worse for me, it was pretty steep learning curve. So I can still, I don't forget that bit back there. I remember what it was like back there. So yeah. But it's really understanding a lot of this trauma stuff has really made me, uh, you know, view the horses differently, but really understanding polyvagal theory and it's and stuff. As, as we've talked about before I come, I usually come to the science from the back end. I, I learned it empirically, and then I figured out, Oh, there's a science that backs this up. And for me, probably bagel theory answered it kind of explained why everything I had been doing recently started was working like it was working. It's like, Oh, that makes sense. Yeah. So, yeah, I'm a big fan of that.

Sarah Schlote ([01:21:25](#)):

Here's a question where I'm wanting to be mindful of the time we've been talking for 75 minutes and I feel like there's like, gosh, we could open up polyvagal theory here. And then I, I was feeling really inspired by what you were saying and wanting to bring in like indigenous ways of knowing and decolonizing as white people. Like, how do we recognize how we have influenced, you know, indigenous, um, you know, patterns and how do we sort of help with, you know, being good allies and recognizing, you know, how science has kind of overwritten indigenous ways of knowing and that the spiritual sort of aspect of this and these more bottom up ways of processing that some of it can be explained by science. And some of it is like so much more beyond the kind of like the example I gave you of my horses, you know? And it's like, wow, there was nothing I could do to make them drink until I processed and moved through my own impactions. And then they started drinking water. You know, that that's, that's truly some of this non,

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:21](#)):

Um, like

Sarah Schlote ([01:22:23](#)):

That that's sort of beyond, like, I suppose you could quantify that perhaps, but like, there's this whole other piece where the science and the spiritual meat, and I, I don't know if you want to continue. I know my, my dog is asking to go to the bathroom and I'm kind of like, I'm mindful of his needs as well. And I don't know if we can press pause and continue, or if you want to do a round two. Um, but I realized there's a lot here.

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:47](#)):

Let's press pause and you take the dog potty because I just did a podcast recently with, with Rupert Isaacson who's who is the author of the long road home and the horse boy. And we, we went there and I, to tell you the truth, I am, I'm still processing. It is something happened to me. Listen to that, go on the podcast. And you're probably going to trigger a bit more of it here when you get back from yeah. Let's, let's take a break and let's come back and talk all things weird. Let's go.

Warwick Schiller ([01:23:28](#)):

Sarah, you're back from taking your dog potty, you know, while you were out there in the backyard, I was just thinking a minute ago that, you know, there's quite possibly some people listening to this who, you know, some of the things we've talked about, he might have them thinking about things they may not have thought about before, and they may be sitting with some feelings they're not used to feeling. So, cause I know what that's like when you start down this stuff, um, I thought maybe you might want to walk everybody through that in case that's what's happening before we go any further. Cause I shouldn't want to leave anybody hanging with, with some of those feelings that if they're not sure what to do with them.

Sarah Schlotte ([01:24:11](#)):

Yeah, sure. You know, and this is, what's always so tough. You know, some people call these courageous conversations or brave conversations, you know, and, and, and sometimes they put us up against the edges of our own awareness or they put us up against the edges of our own window of tolerance to use Dan Siegel's language. Um, sometimes they, they connect us with a lot of aha moments. Some of you may be having some really strong moments of insight of going, Oh, that fits or, Oh, that connects for me or, Oh, I have questions now. And you know, I'm, I'm curious about this and I wonder about that. And there's some people you might be feeling really inspired. Some of you might be feeling really uncomfortable. Um, and so I'm imagining that there are a number of different responses taking place today that, um, may reflect just where you're at right now.

Sarah Schlotte ([01:25:00](#)):

Um, and that can be as if it's discomfort, it can be because of, you know, stirrings of unresolved things or unexamined pieces that, you know, haven't come to the surface yet, or that you've been keeping at Bay through your own management sort of strategies, or it could also represent, um, you know, that could represent shame. It could represent something that we call cognitive dissonance. So cognitive dissonance is when you have a particular belief or mindset about yourself, the world, et cetera, and others. And you're presented with information that, um, challenges your belief system or your mindset and, and the discrepancy between the new information and what you currently believe can be really uncomfortable. And some people as a knee jerk reaction to that cognitive dissonance, that dissonance between belief and new information is so, so great. That discomfort is so great that they immediately discredit the new information and double down on their position because it's more comfortable to do so. Um, in somatic experiencing, we call that an expansion contraction pattern. There's an expansion

Warwick Schiller ([01:26:04](#)):

Into new information here, and that can be accompanied by expansion of feelings, expansion in your body expansion. Doesn't always feel comfortable sometimes as we open up into something new, we come into contact with other things that we haven't wanted to look at yet, or didn't even know were there. And then we can have a contraction around the expansion or as a result of the expansion, because it's like, Oh, that's too much. You know, and that's a threshold question. We did this with horses all the time. You know, we ask a horse to do something and we get it to do something bigger than what it's used to and it's beyond its threshold and then it will contract and response. Right? And so we do that too. So if you're noticing some of that happening in this podcast, as you're listening and really any, any podcast or any information that you take in, that's sort of got some edges to it that you're not comfortable with or not familiar with.

Warwick Schiller ([01:26:54](#)):

See if you can sort of find your, find your sit bones, find your, find yourself on whatever surface you're you're on at this time. Or if you're walking, you know, feel your feet on the ground, find the interface and see if you can just settle into that for a little bit and hold some curiosity around what might be coming up for you right now, because we're all people what's human is not foreign to us. What's mammalian to adapt from Terrance in what's. Mammalian is not foreign to us. And, and we've had to shut down some of this stuff to survive. That's valid, you know, so if any part of this podcast has been bringing up things for you that are uncomfortable, just, you know, you might take a break, you might press pause, you might focus on something that's comforting for you. You know, sometimes having a hand on your belly or a head on your chest, just to feel some containment and to feel some warmth can be really helpful and just sort of allowing your attention to go there instead.

Warwick Schiller ([01:27:58](#)):

No, or it might be that you, you bring your attention to something that feels solid right now. No, it's the opposite. Titration is a concept that was derived from the chemistry field. And Dr. Peter Levine talks about titration as this idea of only doing little bits that you can tolerate. So many of us have learned to override and go well beyond our capacity into what two teachers of mine, Kathy Kain, and Steve Terrell call the full window of tolerance, which is where we're overriding outside the window. And we think we're calm. And, you know, we think we're doing well, but in reality, we're just overriding, you know, be in the real window of tolerance can be quite uncomfortable. So it's like, what can support you right now to slow it down, to not have to take this all on at once, just to be with whatever small dose of this information feels tolerable and let the rest go for now, you know, and if you need some support with that, there are certainly people who are trained in this area of work, this sort of bottom up processing, working with what's coming up in the body response.

Warwick Schiller ([01:29:05](#)):

Um, certainly, um, there's the somatic experiencing trauma Institute, feel free to check them out. They've got a directory of, of people who work with this sort of dilemma in our bodies, or we're feeling something uncomfortable that we want to shut down. You know, that expansion contraction kind of thing. If that's part of your bike chain, um, they would be some really good people to look into. Um, there's internal family systems as a different way of working with what might be coming up for you, uh, sensory motorcycle therapy, you know, there's, there's lots of different, lots of different ways, brain spotting, EMDR,

Warwick Schiller ([01:29:40](#)):

Deep brain reorienting. There's a lot, a lot of them. Um, but work, I know that you were talking a little bit about, um, we were starting to talk about indigenous, uh, themes and you were talking about Rupert Isaacson, I believe before we did a brief pause there for a moment. And if I come back around to moving away from Western ways of knowing and Western ways of, of healing and working with trauma, and now some of those Western ways that I've just talked about, interestingly enough, and perhaps not surprisingly have been appropriated from indigenous methods, somatic experiencing derives in part, not just from neuroscience and biophysiology, but also derives from indigenous healing methods that Peter Levine studied with a number of different indigenous cultures around the world. He talks about those and waking the tiger. He talks about them in an unspoken voice is currently writing his autobiography where he's going into greater depth about the different communities has worked with at this, uh, you know, in his history.

Warwick Schiller ([01:30:36](#)):

Um, you know, even internal family systems, which is known as an ego state therapy or an ego state approach, ego state approaches come from shadow work and shadow work original, you know, in terms of white culture, we can think of Carl Young who talked about archetypes and the collective unconscious, and that's largely derived from a lot of indigenous traditions and collectivistic cultures and, and shamanic themes. So I, I want to also be careful of the word shamanism because, um, there's some issues around colonization with even the concept of generic shamanism. Um, you know, white people came along and studied different indigenous cultures and traditions and lump them all together and called it shamanism in reality there's while there's similarities, there's a lot of differences too, and we've kind of whitewashed shamanism into this thing that white people can appropriate. And I think it's really important, you know, people like Rupert Isaacson who have gone and studied with particular communities, you know, and, and name those communities. I think that's a really important piece, you know, if we're going to start talking about some of what's coming up,

Warwick Schiller ([01:31:38](#)):

Folks. Yeah. Talking to Rupert the other day, like I said before we went before your dog went potty right there and it just, yeah. Had something shifted in me and it's still, it's still floating around in there. But yeah, I, I, I really started to think that I have a there's something in me that really attracts me to that stuff really flips my switch, like really interests me. So, um, I'm not exactly sure why, but, uh, yeah, I had, uh, some of the stuff he said, I've listened to his podcast back a number of times, and I aren't the only one I've had a lot of, uh, feedback from people and everybody's just flabbergasted, but, uh, yeah. So have you had much, um, uh, real life experience with say, like indigenous healing or was it more been stuff you studied?

Sarah Schlote ([01:32:38](#)):

So my I'm gonna contextualize my experiences in this area as a white person coming in as an ally who tries to practice anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice. Um, so I'm not indigenous an indigenous person. We have done our genealogy down, both sides of my family all the way back to when we first came to Canada from Europe, um, down my mom's side, there are indigenous women who are in my family tree. Um, it's, uh, documented both in my genealogy and in my DNA, we've done our DNA analysis. So we've got, um, documentation, but I do not claim it indigenous status. So I want to make sure that it's clear that I'm coming in as a white person today and talking about this because

appropriation is really important for me and acknowledging how we as white people have come in and taken culture, culture and tradition from marginalized or indigenous populations.

Sarah Schlote ([01:33:36](#)):

And then, you know, at the same time, I'm engaged in a lot of oppression and genocide and it's, it's, it's, it's something that we want to be really careful about, you know, and I remember I worked with, um, when I did my master's degree, I had a meaty professor, uh, on a faith house who also at the university of Victoria in British Columbia. And he said, you know, there's this real trend around white people being attracted to indigenous traditions. And we want to be really careful about white privilege there around this attraction to indigenous traditions, while at the same time simultaneously engaging in racism, systemic racism against them. You know, it's really, it speaks to our white privilege that we can go in and cherry pick the things from these traditions that we think are really cool or whatever, while at the same time simultaneously oppressing them and, and having these sort of the, the, the intergenerational effects of colonial trauma sort of playing out.

Sarah Schlote ([01:34:29](#)):

And so he said, you know, he said he suspects that, and I'm going to paraphrase Dr. Dr. Kraus here for a moment. But, um, he had talked about, um, that ultimately if we all go far enough back in our own lineages, you know, it's like I said earlier, when Terrence said, you know, nothing, that's human is foreign to me. If we all go far enough back in our lineages, there will be times where we as, uh, our, our ancestors way back had their own traditions and songs, you know, and what were they, you know? And so sometimes I think that the drive and the curiosity around traditional peoples may reflect our own disembodiment from our own cultures and our own traditions. You know, especially if our people came and immigrated from where we originally were from and moved to this new place, and then we appropriated this new place and then we've lost touch with our own cultures and traditions.

Sarah Schlote ([01:35:25](#)):

And then as a way of trying to make up for that, we try to appropriate those of others. And it's like, well, what, we're our own? You know, not that it's not, not that it's wrong to show interest in indigenous community and indigenous culture and tradition. I mean, me, myself, working now in an indigenous community and, um, and taking part or being invited to take part in different traditions and drumming and ceremony and so on. Um, and also working with the community to develop programs and services that are indigenous led, where the curriculum has been indigenized and where I've, where I'm encouraging what I'm calling decolonizing horsemanship, you know, which if you do a Google search, you'll, you'll find that there's absolutely no results for decolonizing horsemanship, for some odd reason. It's not a concept. And, and yet we talk about decolonizing trauma, recovery, you know, and decolonizing, um, you know, um, the history of indigenous peoples who've been colonized for centuries and the trauma that's occurred since contact and how do we, how do we decolonize and support the reclaiming of what was always theirs?

Sarah Schlote ([01:36:32](#)):

You know, and how do we do that with horsemanship? And that's sort of this, this area that I'm wanting to really tread carefully about that I'm really passionate about. So I wanted to just couch our conversation in that lens, because I think it's really easy for us as white people to show a lot of interest and curiosity in what we might call shamonic traditions. I use that word with quotation marks because

I'm not a fan of the term, but I understand what it refers to. Um, but if we, if we, we can have an interest there and we want to be really respectful about

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:00](#)):

Yeah. Uh, for me, the interest in that stuff, I think is because, you know, like when I was, you know, when I was a young train and I was wanting to learn, do the raining stuff, you know, I was doing the running and looking at what the best guys are doing well, I'm starting to really get into this whole connection to nature and to energy in the divine itself. And these guys have been doing it for longer than anybody else and doing it, I think better. So that, I think that that's my interest in it. It's like, it's like going to the original, you know, it's like, they were the ones that did it first, and then everything else has been kind of, you know, a chopped up version of that. But it's almost like going to the truth of the matter is, is yeah. The source really like the, yeah, that's, that's probably what my, probably what my interest in it is because, you know, like doing various

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:56](#)):

Meditation practices and different things like that, there'll be times when I'll be, I don't know. I've, I've, I feel I can, I can, I can feel the universe. Like you can, like every, like you become like an antenna for energy and that's that feeling is just, uh, amazing. You just feel like you're not separate from anything but part of it. And it's just, you know, I get fleeting glimpses of it every once in a while, but, uh, just, you know, anything that can just enhance that. And, and, and I really start to think, you know, when you, that's, when you really tune into say horses too, like, you can start to get that feedback because, you know, as you know, I've always been in my head and you get that semantic thing going to where your body becomes, uh, you know, you, you, you feel things rather than think things, you know, instead of viewing it with your, I've got a, there's a book I've read about shamanism called, um, calling us home probably for that.

Warwick Schiller ([01:39:02](#)):

I'm Chris, uh, Lucero, I think he's name, but he's got the things over is of Nordic descent, but he spent a lot of time in, uh, here in North America. And I think also in Africa, but he basically outlined some practices and, and, you know, one of them is to go out and sit in nature and just observe what you can see. And then another part of the practice is sit in nature and, uh, and just sit there and what can you hear? And then he starts to combine it. You go out there and you sit there and what do you feel like, turn your body into a bit of an antenna. And after a while you go out and you sit there and you, you know, like you use 30% of what's coming into you is what you see in 30% of what's coming in is what you hear. But 40% of what you is coming into you is through the antenna of your, of your body. And yeah, that stuff really interests me.

Sarah Schlote ([01:39:58](#)):

It's cool stuff, because we have like, it's, it's interesting because if we think of Western science traditions, we've got the whole field of eco psychology, right. And this returned to nature. And this return to, um, uh, what is called the biophilia hypothesis, which I think is that E O Wilson. I hope I'm saying that correctly. Um, and then the biophilia hypothesis is this idea that as humans, we are attracted to the natural world because we are part of it. We are inextricably part of it. And part of our trauma response reflects, you know, the, the commodification of the natural world, that the capitalist economics all reflects a disconnection from our, our, our, our connection with the natural world around us, this ability that we can be resonant tuning forks to the natural world. Like you said, when you go to

nature and you can feel the hum of the planet, I mean, you can like, there's something Really powerful and potent about that.

New Speaker ([01:40:57](#)):

And The property that I happen to live on now is a really spiritual place. I mean, I go outside some days and I can feel Like it's, it's, it's almost, it's Much larger than me. And I feel Something very potent, you know, that, That resonates in me in a very special way. Um, and the, the animal life here is, is, is really, It's really powerful, you know, in terms of the wildlife that comes to where I live now. And, and it's, it's, it's Interesting because there's this eco psychology sort Of trend, um, and yeah, And eco healing and eco retreats, and this sort of returned to nature. Um, and, and there's something like I said, what's human is not for me. And to me, what's mammalian is not foreign to me. What's, what's ecological is not foreign to me. And we can look at the disconnection in our relationships with animals, right?

Sarah Schlote ([01:41:46](#)):

Our relationships with each other, our relationship with the planet is no different than connection that we have, that the fact that we have commodified Sources, you know, it just speaks to the, the, the, the broken relationship that we have we've objectified and made it subservient to us as opposed to where's the relationship. Um, you know, it's like, it's, it's, we've moved from, you know, What can I get out of w w how can I be of service? How can I be a steward to, what can I get out of this? You know, and that speaks to a disconnect that speaks to a form of trauma and where I think we're on the same page with this work is I will encourage people to go to the store Where ever possible, you know, if We're going to learn about this stuff, not saying that learning, not learning about it from eco psychology, like, obviously that's a valid field of study in and of itself, but there's something really powerful and potent about going and learning about this from an indigenous Community, you know, and I'm using it

Sarah Schlote ([01:42:48](#)):

Just in the broad sense. This could be African indigenous communities. This can be, you know, first nations or indigenous communities, you know, Nordic, indigenous communities. I think of the Sami people in the North of Finland, for instance, you know, there's, there's all these sort of indigenous communities, the world over in Australia as well, you know? Um, and, and so, uh, South America, the catchword tribes and so on, there's all these different, um, indigenous communities all over. So I'm not trying to single anyone out or to broad stroke. It, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm using shorthand in my language not to be disrespectful, but to recognize that there's a lot, you know, there's many, many voices, many peoples, and how, how can we go and learn From, from the source, you know, as opposed To, you know, yes, let's learn eco psychology, let let's, let's, you know, there's something to be said about sort of the white plastic shamanism. There's something in there that can be taken, but I'm Preference is, is let's not take from white plastic shamanism. Let's, let's go and learn. Let's show her Respect and deference and acknowledgement of where the, where these things come from you and also recognize,

Sarah Schlote ([01:43:52](#)):

You know, it's not, we can't just go in and take either. That's what we've done for centuries is we've gone in and taken. So we want to tread really carefully. It's, it's connecting with our birthright, as mammals, as humans. We all have this in us, I firmly believe. And we want to be careful about the parent, the power dynamics inherent in the learning or in the seeking of the teachings. You know, can we be humble about it?

Warwick Schiller ([01:44:17](#)):

What, uh, what fascinates me better? All that stuff is like talking to Rupert Isaacson the other day, you know, he's been to, uh, you know, into Mongolia to the shamans, went to the Kalahari desert at the, chairman's been to Australia to, uh, in the Daintree rainforest to the aboriginals there, and then to the Navajo in Arizona. And these are thousands of year old traditions, and they had no communication with each other, but they're all very, very similar. So this knowledge is going to be coming from somewhere it's the whole Rupert Sheldrake morphic resonance, I think. And that's, that's really what fascinates me is the whole collective consciousness that that's, that's, that's really what fascinates me these days.

Sarah Schlote ([01:45:04](#)):

Yeah. And, you know, I find, and that stuff, there is some truth to that. Like, you know, Carl Young talked about that, you know, again, you know, white, white male here, a pian Eurocentric kind of perspective on it, but he's, he's, there's some truth to these bits and pieces, you know, there's, there's something about, there's something communal, there's something that we all share. If we go back far enough, you know, there's a reason why these things are showing up all over the place, you know, between cultures that have no, that were, were thought to have had no communication or connection. I mean, who knows. Right. But you know, that we believed had no, you know, connection or communication, and yet, you know, there's something there's something shared there and there's something powerful there,

Warwick Schiller ([01:45:46](#)):

We know what communication and connection they didn't have. They didn't have the U S mail. They didn't have internet, they didn't have cell phones, but they had energy energy. So, yeah. Uh, it's interesting. I, I think you know this, but I went to, uh, Florida couple of years ago and did a three day. I watched a ceremony where the Sherman from South America and the South Americans add up all the millions of plants in the South American jungle. They get two and mix them together. And it makes Iowa scout and the indigenous people down there that if you asked them, how did you figure it out? Which two, to put together out of the millions of combinations, they say the plants told us. Yeah. And that, that there is just something to think about, isn't it?

Sarah Schlote ([01:46:36](#)):

That's it. And that's it, that's the residence, right. This is where it goes beyond what we were talking about earlier with scientism, right? Like these are indigenous ways of knowing this is traditional knowledge holders, right. This, this is

Sarah Schlote ([01:46:50](#)):

Where we're getting into a return to what I suspect. We all had connection to, at some point, you know, down at each of our own lineages, right? Like, like, like Dr. France was saying, you know, he's like if you're of dramatic descent, there is a strong tradition of indigenous peoples way back. If you go back to the original dramatic tribes back in Europe, I mean, they had their own indigenous traditions for that particular tribe or culture of people. Where did that go? You know, there, there was some, there's some really cool stuff there and we've lost it, you know? And, and there's a striving, I think, in each of us for, uh, a reconnection with some of that. And then, you know, we, we, we go to, you know, various places to try to find it and where, um, one of the chapters in my book that I'm working on, I have a whole section on looking at, um, you know, power and control dynamics, you know, and discrimination and privilege and all these kinds of things.

Sarah Schlote ([01:47:44](#)):

And anti-oppressive anti-racist practice. Um, and how, and how has speciesism playing into that? Um, how do we take from other species? Like we take from other people's, you know, we cherry pick and we take what we need, and we do this with horses. And, and there's a piece in that chapter where I say, you know, um, how many of us have gone and gotten like, you know, a deck of shamonic cards or deck of tarot cards, you know, that bring in animals, spiritual meanings, right? Like medicine messages of various animal species, and have drawn those cards to try to get some sort of meaning in our lives. And because we're looking for something powerful, we're looking for something meaningful, but then by the same token, we go outside and we harm the animals that are in our yard, or we harm the nature that's in our front yard.

Sarah Schlote ([01:48:30](#)):

Or we know we, we, we, we buy products from the store that have excessive packaging because we can't be bothered to take the meaning beyond the taro card or the book that we read on shamonic meetings. You know, and, and to me, this is the commodification of it. It's like, okay. Yes, that's all lovely that we have as a drive in us to reconnect with source, with tradition, with indigenous knowledge, however you want to classify indigeneity. But, but then it's like, okay, but are we actually living it? Or is this just this commodification? Right. Like I go and I go to an Iowa ska ceremony, or I read a book on shamonic principles, but then I'm buying products that, you know, involve slave labor with Brown people in some other country, or, you know, I'm, you know, like how, and I'm not trying to put this, this, this on the individual because corporations have a big part to play in this.

Sarah Schlote ([01:49:17](#)):

Obviously corporations go unchecked and, and we see, we see that harm happening, right. Trauma, you know, in CEO's that have learned to rise to the top and, and do so doing they've commodified the natural world in order to get to the top. I mean, how all this is reflective of trauma and disconnect. Right. And it's like, okay. So if we're going to do that, if we're going to go and explore traditional knowledge from whatever people can we can, we, can we do it right? You know, are we, or are we just using the bits and pieces that suit our purposes? And then we go out into the world and we're engaging in harmful behavior. You know,

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:00](#)):

I think, you know, for me, there's got to be a starting point some way, you know, you can't, you can't go, okay, I'm going to sell everything I own. And I'm going to, you know, live under a piece of bark on the side of a Hill. So I, I think, you know, would want to be discouraging people from, from going there. But at some point in time, you, you reach, you may reach that point of, um, Cognitive dissonance. You know, there's a book that I started reading about three years ago, four years ago, maybe kind of at the start of this journey I'm on. And it was called Equis last wonderful book. And I got halfway through that book and I couldn't read it anymore. Yeah. Cause I kind of had this feeling if I've finished this book, I may not ever ride a horse ever again.

Sarah Schlote ([01:50:58](#)):

Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:51:00](#)):

I still have it. Yeah. But you know, it was getting a bit too real for me. I'm like, you know, I don't think, I don't think I even finished this book right now,

Sarah Schlote ([01:51:12](#)):

But you feel, so there is the expansion and the contraction that's right. There's the expansion and the contraction. Right. So even in this conversation, my goal is not to discourage people from going and learning about from traditional knowledge holders. Right. I'm not, not discouraging that I'm saying, can we do it with care? And can we be curious about taking it beyond just this feel good, fuzzy thing that we do, but that doesn't translate into other areas of our lives. If we're truly going to embody this, it's like, where can we find the edges of that expansion? So we're not gonna do it perfectly. I don't do it perfectly. Right. I make choices that are potentially harmful. And some of the things that I buy, I try to be very mindful of those things, but I'm not doing it perfectly, but I think the goal is not to aim for perfection, but can we start to look beyond just the, Oh, I do this here, but the rest of my world is not reflective of the thing that I did over here to feel good.

Sarah Schlote ([01:52:06](#)):

You know, it's like, can we start to integrate it in a broader way? It doesn't mean that we're going to do it perfectly. I think if more of us were doing it imperfectly, we'd see a very different world, you know? So it's not, so that dissonance that's, there is not in, it's like, Oh, there's that? There's that, that, that contraction, right? It's like, Oh yeah, I don't know. It's like, Oh, there's an opening. And we want to be careful. And I think if we're feeling a little bit of contraction around this idea of expanding into indigenous indigenous knowledge, that frankly is probably a good thing. You know, we want to proceed with caution. I'm not saying not to do it. You know, there's, there's a lot of good and recognize that it's couched in layers upon layers of oppression and taking and genocide and, and, and, you know, and it's just, it's, it's messy stuff. And so we want to proceed, um, with a lot of care. Correct. You know, if we're going to go there, it's not that we, not that we can't, but that how are we doing it? Right.

Sarah Schlote ([01:53:07](#)):

Powerful stuff. Like you were saying with, in your conversation with Rupert, there's some really amazing stuff. There. There's some there's stories I can't share. I'm not at Liberty of sharing right now because the community I'm working in, we're not quite ready to do full press releases on the project that we're working on. So we're, we're kind of having to, I've been given permission to talk with you today about sort of these more general topics and the importance of acknowledging like Eurocentrism and colonization and how we have all these dynamics and such. But, um, I can't, I can't fully speak to some of the power of it, but Hopefully, hopefully sometime soon, you know, it's, it's, it's, it's important to take great care as we move forward. So Expansion we'll have a bit of contraction around It and that's okay. You know, it's not saying that

Sarah Schlote ([01:53:50](#)):

The contraction has to be a hundred percent. It's like, Oh God, I'm doing this wrong. I shouldn't do it at all. Well, no, I'm not saying that, you know, that's, that's too polarized. We're back to where we started from, but the polarization is again, right. It's not so black and white, it's not, or no, it's kind of gray. It's like, yes, yes. Show deference, show respect, be curious about your own ancestry. Where were those traditions? Where were those lost along the way? Can you reconnect with those as you're learning about collective unconscious and all these sort of shared communal kinds of ideas, because there is

something there that is shared And communal and humanity base, you know, and can we also be respectful for the privilege, you know, that we have, right. And that's, that's all,

Sarah Schlote ([01:54:33](#)):

All I'm saying. So it's, it's, it's, it's just, for me, it's a, it's a, it's an important topic because if I am going to talk about these things, I want my first sort of public acknowledgement of this to be very careful, um, just because I've seen too much appropriation happening. Um, and there's a lot of appropriation happening by people who think they're doing the right thing and they go forward and, you know, and it's just, it ends up being very harmful inadvertently, but still harmful. And so part of, uh, if we think of the legacy of, of how we've treated indigenous peoples through colonization, it's like, how can we reconcile, not going to reconcile that as we're also having curiosity and passion for The healing methods that they may, they may have, you know, The knowledge that they carry that is, you're not going to find through science. You know, like you said, the plants told me, like, how do you, how do you explain that?

Sarah Schlote ([01:55:30](#)):

And it worked Because that's the wild thing, right? Like this is all stuff that works. And this is why it's so funny for me, because like, things like somatic Experiencing is like a science And an, uh, biomedical as part of Peter Levine's background. And so somatic experiencing comes out of a lot of this neurophysiology, but also based in a lot of these shamonic quote unquote traditions. And it's like, and the two feed each other, and they're not, in some ways they're not that disconnected. They're not that disconnected, you know, it's just different language sometimes for similar ideas. And so it's normal and natural to be drawn to it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:56:13](#)):

Yeah. And I think for me, you know, I probably wasn't drawn to it at all when I had no feelings when I had no cause because th that somatic experience is a big part of that. And if you're in your head, you're not connected to that, you know, you know, you're disconnected. So, yeah. Yeah. Well, we've been babbling on here for quite a while. Um, maybe we should wrap it up maybe before we go, though, Sarah, can you tell everybody how they can find out more about you, the stuff you do, what you yeah. When your book might be out, what your book might be called, things like that.

Sarah Schlote ([01:56:48](#)):

Yeah. So the book title is still a work in progress. The title I want is not the title that the publishers is suggesting. So I don't want to name the title just yet, but it is looking at trauma and horse human relationships, trauma and horses, trauma, and humans. And how do we navigate that space? Um, and it does come from an anti-oppressive anti-racist perspective, anti speciesist perspective. So, uh, all those sort of forms of, and layers of, of social justice awareness, which to me is a cornerstone of trauma informed awareness. So that's, uh, it's coming from that perspective. Um, my deadline was supposed to be September 15th and then I moved and had my big sort of series of quantum leaps that led me to come completely go off the face of the planet for a while. Um, my next deadline is March 31st. We'll see how that goes.

Sarah Schlote ([01:57:36](#)):

It's coming along though. The manuscript is coming along. I'm at about 350 pages at this point. So it's coming. Um, I don't even begin to know don't I have no idea. I'd have to pull up my word document. Um, but it's, it's quite a lot. Um, so it's coming, uh, it is coming. I appreciate people's patience with me

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about that. Um, to keep in touch. Uh, I have my personal website, Sarah [inaudible] at, uh, that's my email address, uh, is there slooty.com. So S a R a H S C H L O T e.com. And then there's Equis soma.com as well, which is where my horse human stuff tends to live. So E Q U U S as in Sam, O M a.com. So Equis and Soma, um, Soma, meaning the body. So, um, yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([01:58:27](#)):

And that equals Soma Aqua summaries where I got the, the two quotes I read in the introduction to this. So if you go in there and go under blog, all the blogs on there are just, uh, I think they amazing That some of the gave me some of the biggest aha moments in all this stuff. So thank you for all that. You're doing the horses and humans.

Sarah Schlote ([01:58:50](#)):

Thank you, Mark. I appreciate your time. And I'm so, uh, encouraged and so excited about what you're doing and what you're putting out there too. Ever since we kind of connected a couple of years ago, this has been a real fun, real fun journey for me. And I appreciate your process and your B you being so open and vulnerable about it. So thank you. That's a gift to me as well, and to horse owners and horses everywhere. Well, thank you for your path and walking in so authentically.

Warwick Schiller ([01:59:17](#)):

Well, thanks for being a part of my journey and kind of being a bit of my coach along the way. Awesome. Will that you guys at home listening, thanks so much for joining us on the journey journey on podcast, and we'll catch you on the next episode.

Speaker 1 ([01:59:32](#)):

Thanks for listening to the journey on podcast with work Schiller Warrick has over 650 full length training videos on his online video library at videos dot [inaudible] dot com. Be sure to follow Warrick on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, to see his latest training advice and insights.