

Speaker 1 ([00:00:12](#)):

You are listening to The Journey on podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick is a horseman trainer, international clinician and author who helps empower horse people from all over the world with the skills, knowledge, and mindsets needed to create trusting partnerships with their horses. Warwick offers a free seven day trial to his comprehensive online video library that includes hundreds of full length training videos and several home study courses@videos.warwickschiller.com.

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

Good day everyone. Welcome back to The Journey on podcast. I'm your host, Warwick Schiller, and this week on the podcast I have a special guest, Dr. Jennifer Zelig, and I'm going to read you her bio because there's quite a bit to it, much more than I can remember. It says, with a wealth of experience in many species, both domestic and exotic. Jennifer Zelig's PhD is a world-renowned behavioral biologist with over 40 years of experience award-winning presentations on animal behavior modification, numerous publications. To her credit, in 2014, she published what has been called the New Industry Bible Animal Training 1 0 1, the Complete and Practical Guide to the Art and Science of Behavior Modification. Dr. Zelig founded Animal Training and Research International, which maintained for 25 years in animal care facility affiliated with the California State University system where she teaches. Dr. Zelig has been teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in animal training and behavior for over 20 years.

([00:01:45](#)):

Jennifer's also a practicing Buddhist with decades of meditation experience. Her second book, mindful Partners, the Zen Art and Science of Working With Animals was published in 2022. And this part's not in her bio, but that's highly recommended. I think anybody that has an animal, but especially horses should read that book. Amazing book help you with, we talk a lot on the podcast about how to be with animals, not the doing, but the how to be with it. And that book, the Zen Art and Science of Working With Animals is it points out all the parts on How to be. Yeah, great book. So I'll get back to her bio here, where the wealth of experience in many species, both domestic and exotic, and especially with horses, Jennifer's current passion is to help encourage students to greatest successes by helping them to develop better relationships with horses.

([00:02:36](#)):

Through mindful training, Jennifer combines breakthroughs in behavioral science with centuries of contemplative wisdom, guiding people to see behavior as it is fundamentally exists and how actions and reactions are born, practiced, and altered. Her journey into the world of animal training began in grade school when she started learning to ride horses and worked for seven years at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, dc. Since that time, she's worked with dozens of species, both terrestrial and aquatic. She's continued to love horses and works to bring insightful, uplifting methods mixed with science to the broad horse community. Dr. Zelig's has vast experience in the animal care industry, including collaborating with and consulting for countless private and public facilities and organizations, as well as training animals for companionship, liberty work, veterinary procedures, research feature films and documentaries, detection and public display. Dr. Zelig's has been featured in numerous documentaries and television shows including National Geographic Explorer, the Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Dateline N B C.

([00:03:38](#)):

Jennifer's particularly known for her groundbreaking work training Sea Lion to wear video cameras to study and film wild whales. The center of her work is to foster the most compassionate care of animal suited to the needs of the individual trainer, animal, and training objective. Dr. Zelig teaches a nuanced

understanding of behavior modification through a pros and cons model to promote common ground and conversation between trainers of all backgrounds without engaging in shaming or judging different approaches. Harshly. Dr. Zelig hopes to engage students so that together we can inquire and develop the art and science of behavior. Further, her students now work with a manage a wide variety of animal programs throughout the world. That's quite the bio and that doesn't even start to tap into the amazingness. That is Dr. Jennifer Zelig. So I hope you guys enjoy this conversation with her as much as I did. Jennifer Zelig, welcome to the Journey on podcast.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:04:41](#)):

I can say very clearly, I'm very happy to be here. It's really exciting.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:45](#)):

I'm so happy you are here for a number of reasons, but we'll get to the most exciting one for me later. So you are, let me read you a little short bio here. You are an internationally acclaimed author. You're a behavioral consultant and the founder of Animal Training and Research International. You have taught advanced care and training of both pets and exotic animals at California State University, Monterey Bay for more than 20 years. You're also a Buddhist with decades of meditation experience and currently in training for Buddhist ordination into the, you'll have to pronounce that word,

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:05:19](#)):

Ana.

Warwick Schiller ([00:05:20](#)):

Ana, okay. It's pronounced phonetically Ana Buddhist community. Tell me all about how you got to this point. What's your story? Where did all this? Well, let's start out with the animals. Where did your love for animals first start?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:05:38](#)):

It feels like I was almost born with it. You know what I mean? I just lit up when I was a kid. I was one of those kids that I didn't like dolls. Girls are allegedly supposed to dolls, but I didn't like dolls. I was a stuffed animal kind of a girl, a stuffy girl, and my parents always took me out into national parks all over the United States because my father liked hiking and actually he collected butterflies. So we were in the wild a lot when I was a kid and animals and all sorts of things like spiders and just everything delighted me slugs, I can remember. And at a certain point when I was like eight or nine, I can remember getting a list of endangered species from a National Geographic magazine or something like that, and I memorized this list of animals that were endangered and I can still remember copying it over.

([00:06:44](#)):

This is before there were computers and stuff, and I was copying it over by hand and trying to memorize this list. They were probably just the North American ones, but anyways, and crying, just feeling so moved by the plight of these animals. So it just felt like something that was always there. And then what do you do if you're a young person and especially a young girl I think, but if you're a young person, you want to connect to animals, you naturally start riding horses. I think that's 90% of what people do. So that's what I did. My mom took me to a woman who would be a horse spec riding instructor. She put me on the back of the horse and I did, I don't know, you'll have to tell me, but I did what I would call around

the world kind of stuff where you orient forward facing on the horse, and then you go into a side saddle position, then you go backwards and you go to the other side.

[\(00:07:44\)](#):

And so I was doing all that and I was going to be the next Annie Oakley. I was just so jazzed by it and I loved it. And the woman, of course, she told me how great I was, what you tell a little kid, I'm sure, but I was convinced this was it. This what I was going to do. So that was age eight or nine. And then what happened was I developed an allergy, just a little one sort of a snuffle to the horse dander or something. And my mom was an immunologist, and so this wasn't okay to her. She was really worried. An immunologist, if you don't know, is someone who studies the immune system and she made vaccines, but then she also was worried about the development of autoimmune disorders, the immune system doing the wrong thing like allergies and stuff like that. So she was really nervous that this hyperreactivity in my immune system could be disadvantageous to me. And so she told me I couldn't ride horses anymore.

[\(00:09:08\)](#):

So this was, even as I think about it now, I can feel my heart just kind of sink because at age eight or nine and thinking I'd found my calling to not be able to do it. Oh, I can feel it. I can feel this tenderness around it. But it turned out it was like one of the best things that ever happened to me because, not because I don't want to ride horses, but because I must've been pretty unpleasant about the whole thing with her. And so downcast that she searched my beautiful, wonderful mother. She searched so hard to find me a substitute animal activity. And we were part of, I know I'm been talking for a while, sorry about that, but I'm almost there. Keep going. Okay, keep going.

[\(00:09:59\)](#):

We were part of this, I lived in just outside of Washington DC and we were part of what was called the Friends of the National Zoo. It was a community program related to the Smithsonian Institute, the National Zoo, and they had a whole set of classes that people could take that involved animals or kind of that sort of thing. Of course, it was a zoo and one of them was animal training. So this would've been in 1970, late seventies, she said, without putting too finer points on it, it was pretty new to bring training into a zoo. In fact, the National Zoo in Washington was one of 10 zoos in the whole country. I don't know the big picture of the world, but the US was very advanced in this. So it was a real new thing to be looking to bring the positive aspects of meaningful, thoughtful, wholesome interaction with people and communication to animals of all species.

[\(00:11:27\)](#):

Typically, there had always been a certain amount of training in elephants. You'd find that. But the other species were handled but not trained, although from my perspective, as I will tell you, they were all being trained, but they were not being trained with a great deal of thoughtfulness and respect. So she was bringing that in and she had a class that was for age like 14 to 20 year olds or something like that. It was way older than me, but it was on the principles that she was using to condition these animals. And my mom called her up and basically petitioned her to allow me to get into this class. And she was really kind. This woman was called Casey Ver. She was really kind. She was very good with kids. And she said, okay, sure. I can't remember if she met me or something.

[\(00:12:31\)](#):

First, I was way younger than everybody else in the class, but I got in there and ate it up. It was just very intuitive to me, very intuitive what she was saying. And afterwards, I couldn't let it go. I wanted to volunteer. I wanted to stay around the animals. I wanted to keep going. This was it. But they didn't have

a program for young kids like me. So what they did was she didn't want to discourage me. She really cared to encourage. I was very, you can tell I'm a very enthusiastic person. I got all this kind of energy and she didn't want to discourage me, but she couldn't totally let me volunteer. So what she told me to do was, okay, you can come and you can be my research assistant. You can tell me what's going on with these different populations of animals. And I had to take two buses and a subway to get in on the weekends to the zoo from where I lived, which was a lot at age, whatever, nine. And I did that, and I get there, and then she just put me down in front of a group of animals. So today it's elephants, and tomorrow it's wolves, and then the next time it's turkeys. Well, the turkeys for some reason live with a deer, which was weird. But anyway, she just sit me down in front of these animal groups and she said, okay, take notes on what they're doing and report back later on when I'm 25 or something. I found these notes. They were on these long pieces of paper and

[\(00:14:22\)](#):

They were just gibberish. They were not, Obviously I wasn't ready to be of any use from a

[\(00:14:30\)](#):

Science standpoint, but what it did was it meant I was really dedicated to this and it meant that what I did was I just went and listened to animals day after day after day, and I crossed between species. And so I was really, and at that age, you're better at learning language when you're younger. Language modalities come in much more naturally. I think I ended up being able to hear a lot better the language of animals, which is all these really subtle body cues. That's how they speak, and the tension and the breathing and the orientation of their various senses. And that connected me to animals in an even and deeper way. And then I progressed forward and the story goes that I eventually got to volunteer there and I got my vet tech license. And then I went to university and I started running an animal care lab eventually on my own at a different university and got back to horse training. And it turns out a small antihistamine, and I'm just fine on the back of horse. In the end, horses came back around and look where I am now. And I eventually wrote some books about all of it.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:16:02\)](#):

Don't you think that, I mean, I help people with their horses, and a lot of times the problem is not with the horse. The problem is with the lens with which the human views the behavior of the horse. And so then they correspond. They respond to that behavior through the lens with which they view it. And what I was getting at here is I think you were lucky that at that age you got to be around observe animals for a long period of time without trying to condition them to be any different. But just observe them at an age before you have any real preconceived notions about what they should and shouldn't do and what's right and what's wrong and all that judgmental stuff. And you got to just have that experience of being able to observe them without projecting stuff onto them as one of your earliest interactions with any animals.

[\(00:17:09\)](#):

You know what I mean? I think people have such a difficult time looking at any animal doing anything without having a projection of, without injecting that with some of their preconceived notions. And if you want to go back further than that, being in the woods with the butterflies and looking at plants and small things up close and having that focused being in that zone and all this, what I eventually want to get to is the Buddhist part of it, because that fascinates me too. But I'm guessing that all this stuff led up to, you were a Buddhist before you were a Buddhist or all this stuff was teaching you all that sort of stuff before you actually got involved in the Buddhism. So tell me, that was the Smithsonian Institute's National Zoo, isn't it?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:18:11](#)):

Yes, that's right.

Warwick Schiller ([00:18:13](#)):

And so then you said you went to college, you got a degree, what did you get your degree in?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:18:19](#)):

Psychobiology,

([00:18:22](#)):

Which is a nice cross-disciplinary. Yeah, it's sort of a grab bag of applied psychology, biology. You can use it in a wide range of areas. I was very interested in interdisciplinary work. I have always been, I'm not a party to a particular theory. So this was really an integration of what, let's say the ethological side, the evolutionary side. So there's a lot of neuroscience in it, but then marriage with the psychological side, the cognitive side, the behavioral side. So it was a good mix for me as a starting block. But I ended up, how I get to Buddhism is that I had a real interest in Eastern philosophy like Taoism in particular, and I start meditating, and I don't know how much you know about mindfulness in terms of what its effect has been on the psychological disciplines, but mindfulness is just this incredible resource for health and wellbeing medically, psychologically.

([00:19:48](#)):

And so reading and studying about that, actually mostly on my own, not as a formal education, just lit me up in terms of, well, it's resonant effect on what it did for my mind state and where I could also see the parallel in what I already understood, what I deeply understood about working with animals became clarified for me in a way through this wisdom traditions of thousands of years, what people have known for thousands of years, and that I could really see the benefit to myself, and I could see how understanding this more deeply would just potentially lift my game to a point where I could be that much more helpful to others. One anyways,

Warwick Schiller ([00:20:48](#)):

Yes, I've found that, well, I believe if you work with animals a lot, and you can get along with animals because you can work with animals a lot without getting along with animals, but if you do, the animals almost teach you wisdom that if you look at it, you said you had an interest in Eastern philosophy, but it's almost like, oh yeah, the eastern philosophy really matches up with things. The animals, whatever animals you're working with teaches us. You know what I mean? It's almost like earth wisdom sort of stuff, you know what I mean?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:21:32](#)):

Yeah, well, I mean from a Buddhist point of view, we would say it's the truth. So the dharma is the truth, and there's a lot of different things that point to it. Reality points to itself. All you have to be is listening, which is why a lot of the different traditions, they resonate with us or we find the same truths out there. It's like that old adage of the, which is by the way, a Buddhist adage of the blind men and the elephant where they've each got a piece of the elephant, they're touching the elephant, and one of 'em is on the trunk and he's like, oh, it's kind of mobile and long and heavy, and somebody else is on the side and he's like, oh no, it's like a building and it's solid and each part of the elephant is different. The guy at the ear and the guy at the tail, and they're each telling a truth of this elephant.

[\(00:22:40\)](#):

So anyways, I think that's what a lot of these kinds of different approaches, the reason the synthesis approach and this kind of conversation is very exciting to me is other people that are interested in this and get off on this, is that reality speaks of itself and there is a truth in a lot of different points of view. What our job is really to listen to that truth. So that's what we're saying about listening to animals is that they're pointing to a truth and a truth of beings, the suchness of beings. It's quite profound and beautiful and just opens up a million possibilities.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:23:26\)](#):

But it all starts with that listening thing. That's tough for some of us.

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(00:23:33\)](#):

I don't think it's that tough for you, mark.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:23:35\)](#):

Well,

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(00:23:36\)](#):

I think you got it.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:23:37\)](#):

I'm getting there. You were saying everything kind of points to the truth, and it really, whatever you get involved in, if you get involved in it to a deep enough extent, it starts to reveal truth. Whether you probably know who Mark Rasht is, you know who Mark Rasht is? No, no. Anyway, Mark's a horseman, but he also a practices Aikido. He's really into the Aikido and he kind of blends them both together. But when he was on the podcast, he was talking about him and Jim Masterson had made a documentary film called A Mind like Stillwater, and he was saying, I said, can you explain what a mind like Stillwater means? And he said, well, if you go out in the morning, there's a pond before there's a breeze. You look at this pond, when you look at it, you get a direct reflection of exactly what is on the other side of that pond. But if you throw a pebble in the pond and make some ripples, you have now distorted the reflection of what's on the other side of it. And if you wait in there, you really distort what's on the other side of it.

[\(00:24:52\)](#):

Learning to listen without adding any noise to things. Like I said, you were young enough to be able to observe animals without having a lens with which you viewed these animals. You were seeing what you were seeing versus your projection, what you're seeing. You had a mind like Stillwater, you weren't clouding the water with because it's so interesting. People ask about a behavior of their horse and it's so interesting, their interpretation of the behavior, my horse is doing this. It's like, what exactly physically is he doing? Because what you're telling me he's doing is, you know what I mean?

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(00:25:34\)](#):

Yeah. They put a lot of labels. Well, we're all subject to this, a whole bunch of causes and conditions that came before that inform our perspective. Some of it's biological, some of it's psychological, and then a lot of it is learned. And our mind is designed to set up these so-called schemas where we place kind of

rules associated with things. So you and I were saying before we were on camera that something about labels, which I think this part of the discussion is leading towards. There's a benefit to labeling or conceptualizing something in that it helps you to explain it and to communicate. So language is wonderful in that sense, but we have to understand that language is incredibly approximate or effectively it is never absolutely true. The only thing that is absolutely true is direct experience. And it kind of to a certain extent, defies when you start pinning it down, literalism, it's like you squish it. And there's always going to be a perspective where there's a little bit of falseness to that. So the schemas can be really useful, but they can also really limit us whether we apply them to someone else or whether we apply them to ourselves. So unlabel me kind of viewpoint that you and I are talking about is a really important one to being a good listener. Yeah, it was the greatest good fortune I ever had was that small allergy to horses. I was looking forward to bringing that up since you're a horse guy. I was thinking I could be cheeky with that.

Warwick Schiller ([00:27:29](#)):

Well, from the regular podcast listeners will know that I send out 20 questions to people and have them choose some questions for me to bring up. And one of the ones, you didn't choose this one, but one of the ones is something like, what was your biggest failure and how has it helped you? Or something like that. But this is not a failure, but slight autoimmune thing that took you away from the horses and it got you to the zoo, and then you eventually came back to horses and all the other animals too. But what's interesting, you said your mom was a immunologist and you're talking about autoimmune things, and I'm fascinated by a lot of things these days. And one of them is trauma, and it's amazing. A lot of the research points that quite a number of autoimmune diseases are actually related to trauma.

([00:28:33](#)):

They're not what they appear to be. Basically fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia is one of them. Yeah, it's so interesting. Just learning. I dunno, I think I don't have a degree in anything, but if I went back to school now, I, I'd study anthropology or something like that. I mean, how things got to the way they are really, really fascinates me. I'm currently reading, have you ever read Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari? I think his name is. No, it's, it's about the history of mankind. It's kind of the history of mankind, how we ended up sort of thing. And yeah, that stuff just fascinates me. Absolutely fascinates me.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:29:26](#)):

There's a good one that you might like called getting into the gap or the Gap, it might be. And it is about the neuroscience behind the differences between humans and animals. What is that? To what extent is there a gap between humans and animals and what are the evolutionary implications of it? And it's really interesting to categorize the kind of different sorts of thinkings that we understand, but I think a lot of people subconsciously diminish animals to a certain extent in terms of what their mental, their capabilities are because they're nonverbal and they're othered in that way. And so for a long time, for example, we didn't understand which sure you now, but that animals have emotions. That one was one of those fallacies that was out there. Another one is that animals don't have theory of mind. They can't see the difference between what's in their mind and what's in your mind. And while it's clear that they may have, and it'll depend on individual and species, but things are much closer than we like to think as human beings. There's a lot more that unites us in the animal kingdom than that divides us. And I think that actually might be a helpful set of glasses for people to put on as they go to approach their horse to find what unites us.

Warwick Schiller ([00:31:25](#)):

Yeah. You said people tend to, I forget what you said, but you said people tend to look at animals this way, but I think that's a lot of our conditioning that we were told to look at animals that way. I've just read a really good book called Beyond Words by a fellow named Carl Fin. Have you read that? It's about the emotion. No,

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:31:48](#)):

I haven't, but I know of it. It's about

Warwick Schiller ([00:31:49](#)):

The emotions of animals. And there's a really good line in there where, because he talks in there about how in the scientific community, anthropomorphizing was a great way to get laughed at by your peers sort of thing, even to this very day, I think. And he was saying that he was talking about, so the books divided into three things, elephants, whales, and wolves. But the first parts an elephants. And he was talking to someone about elephants and someone said to him, but you have to remember, they're not humans. They're animals, they're not humans. And he said, yes, but you have to remember that humans are actually animals. We are not separate from, you know what I mean? We too. We too are animals. What's really interesting in the book, sapiens is about how up until a certain point we evolved, humans evolved both. We only changed as fast as we could evolve.

([00:32:45](#)):

And then when we started to be able to have complex language and tell other people things, and apparently Neanderthals didn't have that complex language, and so they couldn't say, Hey, over the hill there, there's a herd of buffalo. Now if we all get together, we could go and surround them. It was just like, you basically could just do what you could do sort of thing. And he said it was from that point that we started to be able to do things that we actually hadn't evolved to be able to do the invention of fire. Suddenly we could cook our meat. We didn't have to chew it as much. And it's just fascinating his explanation at least, because unlike most scientists who publish stuff like that, there's a lot of scrutiny to them. And the truly scientific types say they're getting it wrong. But have you ever read any Malcolm Gladwell's books?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:33:47](#)):

No. You've read a lot,

Warwick Schiller ([00:33:50](#)):

Haven't you? I do read. So Malcolm glad Malcolm Gladwell is a guy. Well, okay, here we go. How about a horse book? How about the Nature of Horses by Steven Bodansky? Have you ever read that?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:34:02](#)):

Is this meant to be a list of

Warwick Schiller ([00:34:04](#)):

Books that I

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:34:06](#)):

No, I'm sorry.

Warwick Schiller ([00:34:07](#)):

What I'm getting at,

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:34:08](#)):

I think I'm nowhere near as well read

Warwick Schiller ([00:34:10](#)):

As You Sure you are. Steven Baranski's book. He didn't do the research. He just brings all this research together and discusses it in a conversational way that the average person can get it. If someone sends me an article and it starts out with abstract at the top of it, I'm lost. You know what I mean? This real deep scientific articles, I can't read those, but the people like say Steven Baranski's book, the Nature of Horses, he takes all this research and puts in a conversational form. Gladwell Malcolm Gladwell is a dot joiner. He joins the dots of things in society, and he also, from the people who are like an inch wide and a mile deep into a subject, say, oh, he's getting it wrong. And I have read, since I started reading the Sapiens book, I kind of read a bit about how it was accepted in the scientific community and stuff. And they say, well, he hasn't got it. All right. That I think in order to bring, in order to bring a subject, a very heady scientific subject to a broader group of people, it can't be, I dunno if it can't be scientifically correct, but you've got to be able to convey it in a way that's understandable. Which brings me to your books. I haven't read your first one, but I've got mindful partners here, the Zen Art and Science of Working With Animals, which you sent me. Thank you very much.

([00:35:37](#)):

It is an amazing book because you have the scientific background, but it's quite the conversational book, and I think everybody should read this book after the Bread Mine. You know what I was going to talk to you about? We'll get to your books here in a second. Very good to hear. I've just put out a book and I called it the Principles of Training, and each chapter is a principle, and the first chapter is called Work with the Horse You have Today,

([00:36:13](#)):

Which is all about not having the expectation that they're going to do what they did yesterday or not bringing your lens to the thing. You've got to be able to look at that horse in front of you, but is, I think it's a Buddhist story, and I actually, I think it was in Eckhart Toll's, the power of, now I might've said it in that, but he's talking about these two monks who are walking down a road one day they're going somewhere and there's a girl trying to cross this road, but the road's muddy and she's got her dress and she doesn't want to get it dirty. And so one of the monks picks her up, carries her across the road, sits her down. It must've been a crossroads, like the section of roads or so sits her down. And I guess they're not supposed to do that, I dunno. But anyway, in the story, these two monks continue walking and they're still walking about five hours later. And the monk who didn't pick the girl up turns to the other monk and he said, you know what? You weren't supposed to do that back there. And the monk who put the girl across the road, he turned to the other guy and he said, I put her down five hours ago.

([00:37:23](#)):

You know what I mean? And that's like that chapter, that's a beautiful story. Work with the horse you have today, put it down, whatever happened, put it down. And so it was so cool. Be in the moment. This one monk is telling the other monk that he did it wrong, but the other monk said, I did it wrong for a split second. You've been doing it wrong for five hours. You're supposed to let that shit go.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:37:47](#)):

Yeah. The Buddha said something like, there's a famous story where he's interacting with actually a mass murderer. He was famous for being fearless the Buddha. And he comes upon a road where it's known that there's this guy who's sort of marauding around and is very fearsome, and apparently he even has the guy's name is, and he's even got a necklace made of fingers from people, this really despicable character. And people warned the Buddha don't go that way. And for whatever reason, he felt, nah, this is the way I am going to go, go, and is there, and he goad the Buddha, and the Buddha can't be moved off of his sense of equanimity and somehow the experience for, and I think you have to consider this a little bit mythic or metaphorical, but anyways, the Buddha is moving so fast that Anguli Mala, who feels like he's chasing him, can't catch him. So even though he's this ferocious guy and he's going to be able to do whatever he wants, he can't seem to catch the Buddha. And finally he says, why won't you stop? And the Buddha says, I have stopped. When will you stop? And the meaning of this is that it's the grasping of and all the unhelpful feelings that is making him not be able to get what he wanted, which in this case was unhealthy anyways, but the Buddha has stopped. He had put everything down. He was living just very purely in the moment.

Warwick Schiller ([00:39:50](#)):

That's very cool. Can we talk about your books for a minute? The first one that you put out was called, what was it called?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:40:01](#)):

Animal Training 1 0 1, animal

Warwick Schiller ([00:40:03](#)):

Training 1 0 1.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:40:06](#)):

What

Warwick Schiller ([00:40:06](#)):

Was the lead up to writing the book? I'm sure everybody's got their book writing story like, Hey, why do I want to write a book? How did all that come down?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:40:17](#)):

Yeah. So in the later part of my personal story, I go to university at the University of California at Santa Cruz and

Warwick Schiller ([00:40:35](#)):

Ghost

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:40:35](#)):

Slugs. I went there for Well Done You? Yeah, the Banana Slugs. That was our mascot.

Warwick Schiller ([00:40:44](#)):

Hilarious. You guys at home Hippy mascot, you guys at home listening? So I live 30 miles from Santa Cruz, so I should know that their mascot is the banana slug. But if you're at home thinking a banana slug's a mascot, if you've ever watched the movie Pulp Fiction at one point in time, I think John Travolta loses his clothes or something, and he steals some clothes from a backyard and he puts on a t-shirt, and the T-shirt has got a uc, Santa Cruz banana slug logo on that thing. So if you've got a sharp eye, the next time you're watching, you're rewatching pulp fiction. Keep an eye out for the banana slug on the T-shirt.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:41:25](#)):

Wow. Gosh, you're a remarkable wealth of knowledge, my friend. Really? That's Wow. Okay, so I'm going to put to the side for a second that you're only a few minutes away from Santa Cruz, because that means you and I are not that far apart. I'm in Salinas.

Warwick Schiller ([00:41:45](#)):

Literally, we could've have done this together in the same room, literally and metaphorically.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:41:52](#)):

Yeah. Wow. Okay, so where was I? So I went to uc, Santa Cruz, where there were these incredible giant yellow slugs, though that is not the center of the story. I went there because, well, I went there for a huge number of reasons, but I had been presenting, I was a very precocial child. I'd gone to the zoo, I worked at the zoo for seven years with all kinds of animals, lions and tigers of Bezo Mayan. In the course of doing that, I had started going to international animal training conferences, and I even presented at one of them.

([00:42:33](#)):

In one of those conferences, I met a woman who suggested to me, because when I told her I was going to go to university at University of California Santa Cruz, she told me about this fellow called Ken Norris, who was actually the founder of the American Satan Society. He's the guy who discovered Dolphin Sonar. He was just an amazing, incredible scientist and wonderful human being, and he was at the end of his career, but he in some ways founded the Marine Institute at uc, Santa Cruz. So they had this marine laboratory at uc, Santa Cruz, which was kind of just beginning to expand into a great center. And they had a number of animals in this facility that were engaged in different research projects. And she had said, why don't you go talk to Ken because you've got a lot of experience. I had been working with seals and sea lions and polar bears and all sorts of animals at the zoo, and why don't you go talk to Ken because he's got this large lab and maybe there'll be a position for you there.

([00:43:52](#)):

So I went and talked to him and he was close to retirement, and so he passed me on to one of his graduate students who was sort of taking over, and the guy's name was Dan Costa, and he became my thesis advisor in the later part of the story. Anyways, Dan, somehow, and this is how weird connections can work, Dan was in, when he got his PhD, he was at Scripps Institute of Oceanography in San Diego, and the guy as his mentor, it was called Jerry Coman, had originally employed, the woman who taught me Casey, that I had mentioned from before, she was training animals for him in certain experimental settings where the animals were supposed to swim this long for this fast for period of time or whatever. And Jerry Coman looked at her as kind of a guru because it was amazing what she could get these animals to do, and that she had then gone from San Diego to Mystic and then to the zoo where I met her.

([00:45:11](#)):

But anyways, because of that, bizarrely in all, I mean, that's a very obscure connection, but Dan knew Casey, and so he was like, oh my God, you worked for Casey. She's the goddess of animal training. You got to come and work for me. And so just like that, just those connections and all because of analogy, all of a sudden I was, yeah, I mean, just so random in a really weird way. I mean, there's very few people that work in these marine research laboratories anyways, and so it was just a great good fortune of the universe. But so he said, Hey, listen, I've got all these animals, all I've got is graduate students and they're taking care of or whatever, but you probably know more. Why don't you go in there and start taking care of all this stuff? So I was like, okay. And I'm 17, but I have been doing it for a while.

[\(00:46:20\)](#):

By this time, I mean at least 10 years. So no, not 10 years, nine years or whatever. But anyways, I did know a few things. And so I got in there and there was probably a collection of, I dunno, a dozen different animals of different species and a bunch of graduate students who knew really not enough to be properly caring for the animals. And what I had been taught from the beginning was a real sense of absolute deep concern of the animal's welfare as the first and foremost principle of whatever we were to do. And that was an incredibly important gift and a guiding light for me, but I'll get to the book in a second. I know this is a little circuitous, but more or less I started to go about this task of trying to get enough support for these animals so that they could be cared for in a way that was respectful and appropriate to their needs, which meant their physical needs.

[\(00:47:27\)](#):

But to me, very importantly, their psychological needs, their health and wellbeing, their happiness, what their true needs were. In order to do that, you have to be able to meet them, you have to understand them, you have to be curious about them, you have to respect 'em, and that requires a certain amount of learning. I mean, it's not natural to everyone. And the thing of the graduate students was a lot, like many people we meet in the horse community, they had an agenda. They had, I want them to do this, and they're not doing that, and this needs to be fixed. So they've got a whole agenda of what this other being is supposed to be doing for them, which fair enough. But as I guess we both know, you really have to start for what's in it for them. Their needs have to be met first before we can start adding our whole agenda on top of them. So as I started to kind of catalog everything, first of all, way too many animals and very, very complex animals that require a lot of care, I realized there's no way I could do this by myself. I needed a bunch of other people who were going to be an army to support the quality of care that was going to be necessary. Oops, there we go.

[\(00:48:45\)](#):

And so I started soliciting volunteers from the undergraduate students and graduate students around, and then I realized I have to teach them some things I had been taught. I was very fortunate that I have been taught by a very smart and caring woman. And then I had learned a lot from this deep listening lens that you and I were both talking about that what the Buddhist call beginner's mind, the beginner's mind, teaching the beginner's mind is a very difficult thing, learning to listen. I'll give you the quote since I've dropped that in and then I'll go back to the story. This zen master called Suzuki Roshi said, in the beginner's mind, the possibilities are endless. In the expert's mind, they are few.

[\(00:49:50\)](#):

And so one of the principles needs to be, which would you prefer? Endless possibility are few possibility. Obviously the endless possibility is the better one. So learning to look without that, too much of that schema and bias in there, or at least knowing where your biases are, so you could step around them, jump over top of 'em. And a lot of that had to do with creating a framework of a perspective that would help people in a practical way. Because I can just say that quote to you and we can agree about it, but as

Karen might put it like, where's the action item here? Can I what? My first book, basically, I tried to create a framework that put together this cognitive perspective and maybe this deep wisdom perspective, the ethical perspective with the practical specific techniques that were out there as far as I was aware of them in the world of behavior modification. That's animal training. And over time, so I started teaching courses to these students. I organized the material in a way that tried to help them understand how to listen and have a conversation with the animals. And 20 years go by, and I've attended hundreds of conferences and been invited to go and watch and see trainers of all different kinds. One of the horse trainers that came into my orbit really early on was David Litchman. I think he's a mutual friend who I adore

Warwick Schiller ([00:51:39](#)):

That guy's a wizard and

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:51:39](#)):

Deeply suggested to bring around he

Warwick Schiller ([00:51:42](#)):

Should be a character in Lord of the Rings or something or other. The guy's a wizard

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:51:49](#)):

And such a good human being. So I mean very, you very interested in absorbing and interdisciplinary perspective to expand the art and science of behavior modification. So that was where I was always at. I basically took from a lot of different people, and I used the scientific framework to create the language that I used and the background from neuroscience and cognitive science and ethological science. But I put it into an action item kind of way of looking at it where the techniques were placed according to where they would be most useful. And in order to respect the complexity of individuals, which it has to be maintained at the forefront of your mind, I presented everything in a pros and cons approach so that there wasn't a dictate, I don't have a system. What I did was try to describe as best I could see it and understand it, and it's a constantly changing needle, but describe the entire arena of all animal training techniques and discuss where the pitfalls and the benefits are so that a person could skillfully and flexibly approach the situation according to the needs of themselves, their interests, their tendencies, and very importantly, according to what the animal's needs were.

([00:53:40](#)):

And meeting those two perspectives. Can I, so that they had really, can I

Warwick Schiller ([00:53:44](#)):

Just interrupt you for a second? I was watching a thing on child raising parenting the other day, and it's very much like what you're talking about there. It was saying, don't ever tell your child that they shouldn't do something. Say to them, what do you think is going to happen if, and it's not a threat, it's a curious question. So if you do that, what do you think is going to happen if you do that? Let them kind of think about the outcomes. And like I said, it's not a threat. It's not like, I'm going to do this to you if you do that. It's like, if you do this, what do you think is going to happen? And they were talking about how it's really empowering, and that's what you are talking about here is empowering people to, you're not telling 'em what to do. You're giving them choices, which I think is a huge part of really good animal training is there's no you can or you can't. It's there's a part of it. There's choices. Sorry to interrupt. I

was just thinking about that. No, I think that's completely right to children. But yeah, I love the fact that you, it's not right or it's wrong. Your options, and here's the outcomes of those options and which one do you want to choose.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:55:09](#)):

Yeah. And I have to admit that I've had to use most of the different techniques. I mean, there is a time and a place, I come from a community that is hugely oriented towards so-called positive reinforcement. I say so-called because I don't want that term to be too limiting, but one of the important things about positive reinforcement is it doesn't work without negative punishment. This is something that's kind of like the scientists understand this, but the community often doesn't discuss it very well. So yeah, I think you can get into dogmatism literalism where that's a pitfall. It's what a Buddhist would call a near enemy, pick any technique and it's going to have some downsides. And what's important is to kind of judiciously recognize that and then know what the counterbalancing faculties are. Or in meditation, there's this idea of the tension on a string. How do you play an instrument with a good note? It needs to be neither too tense nor too loose, right? It's got to be. So that's what you're jockeying with that all the time.

Warwick Schiller ([00:56:34](#)):

You know what, you said something a minute ago, it made me think, do you realize you would know this in nature, every poisonous plant grows the antidote to that plant.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:56:46](#)):

Wow. No, I didn't know. It isn't that fascinating.

Warwick Schiller ([00:56:51](#)):

And so it's the duality of it. It's the yin and the yang. It's kind of what you were saying about it's not right or it's wrong, how to choose. There's a negative to everything. And you have to be able to also have to have the answer to the anular. You have to have the thing that's going to soothe over the part of it that's slightly negative, if that makes sense, or the potential, the potential of it. But you have to understand all that.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([00:57:28](#)):

Yeah, the potential of it. Yeah. Yeah. I think, and some of it is keeping your mind towards what is uplifting and really digging towards the thing that inspires you, the thing that inspires you, and keeping your mind on that. I talk a lot in my second book about remembering what your intention is and grounding your perspective as you're approaching the animal in your intention setting, because that will help guide your decisions. When you get a little wobbly or you get, we all get fixed on this, I want this to happen idea. And if you remember that your reason for doing this, I mean, probably if you're riding a horse, it's that you want connection. You didn't choose a bicycle. You didn't choose a motorcycle, right? You chose an animal. So remembering to stay grounded in that good intention at least helps me to let go.

([00:58:32](#)):

Anyhow, that was the approach I chose to take because the experience that I have is that behavior is the study of one. We are all exquisitely unique individuals, true for us, true for the horses, true for all sentient beings. And there's a lot of complex reasons why that's the case. And so a formulaic approach

can work to a percentage, but the real experts like yourself. When I watch somebody who's a real expert, what I see is a flexibility of mindset to work with the energy of the animal, work with their own energy, work with the situation as it is today, right at that moment. In order to do that, you have to have a wide range of tools, and you can't be grasping one tool over another with mindless adherence. You have to be able to see more deeply.

Speaker 1 ([00:59:37](#)):

Warwick is happy to announce his first book, the Principles of Training, understanding the Relationship between You and Your Horse, and Why Effective Training Works is now available after a lifetime of working with horses. Warwick has categorized every horse training method into 12 foundational principles. Understanding the intricacies of these principles will allow you to make the most educated horse training decisions on your horsemanship journey and is a must read for any horse owner. Get your copy today on Amazon or get a personalized copy signed by Warwick on his website, warwick-schiller.com.

Warwick Schiller ([01:00:13](#)):

Are you familiar with the, it's a Japanese martial arts term called Sharri. It's three parts and ri, and it's basically, I think Sir Richard Branson puts it best. First, you have to learn the rules before you can break the rules, or in order to break the rules, first you have to learn the rules, and Ssha is basically about that. First, you have to do it the way they said to do it and perfect it. Do it over and over and over until you do that. And then you start to understand it deeper. Then you can start to bend the rules a little bit. And then in the end, the last part, the re part is you just make shit up on your own. And that's what you're talking about here is because I think people learning to do, my experience is mostly with horses.

([01:01:08](#)):

They want to do it the right way the first time, and they want to get all woo and mystical and whatever. And because really big into relationship first with horses, and I've found that the training so much easier if you get the relationship right. There's so much training you don't have to do, but you still also have to be able to understand how to train a horse to do things. And if you're not an expert on that part, it's almost like you've, I'm not saying you've got to learn how to train them poorly, but you've almost got to learn how to follow a process. And it's just about the training sort of thing. Hope I'm getting this right, putting this across right before you can really get into the mystical, you've got to serve your apprenticeship sort of thing. And you can't just get it all totally woo right off the bat, I don't think, because it's, it's breaking all the rules.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:02:10](#)):

Maybe you're right to a certain extent. I think we would teach somebody physical skills, timing, and there were exercises that would help because you have to get control over your own body, and there's a lot of skills that your own body has to learn, even if your mind can conceptualize what you should be doing. It's like dancing or anything. You have to practice. You have to practice. I do think it's possible to give someone a broad enough perspective that they can start to catch themselves a little bit. They get a sense, oh, I think I did that wrong. And one of the things I always say about trainers that I've worked with anyways is what I notice is advanced trainers. It's not that they're doing everything perfectly for one thing. I don't even think that such thing exists, but they're not doing everything perfectly, or at least I'm not doing everything perfectly.

([01:03:16](#)):

I can tell you, I make mistakes almost in every training session I am, because it's happening in real time. I can look back and go, oh, I should have done that, or I shouldn't have done that, or I wonder if this would've been better. But what experienced people, what experienced trainers are doing that I notice is that they can see in real time that, ooh, that's starting to go a little sideways. And they start counterbalancing it, and their body is in accord with their body is collected to use a horse term almost. They're collected in their purpose. And so as soon as it starts to feel like it's going one way, they can naturally sort of readjust the energy.

[\(01:04:07\)](#):

So I think you can give people a broad enough perspective that they can start doing that sooner rather than later for themselves. But I agree, one should not put up. I think it harms people more than helps 'em to expect to be expert and certainly expecting to be perfect. Making perfect the enemy of the good is just one of the sad things that people do to harm themselves. I think it's not useful. So I like to describe, I make lots of mistakes, and I've been doing it a long time. So if you're like me, let's get together and have a drink.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:04:44\)](#):

The thing about that is you are aware, you're making the mistake. You are aware when you've crossed the line and you're heading off in the wrong direction, and you can self-correct and come back. But the other thing is, this is the mental side of it is you don't beat yourself up for it. You know what I mean?

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:05:06\)](#):

Yeah. And that's why I'm being so forward about saying I make mistakes because by any definition, I've trained a lot of species of animals. So you could say in some sense that I'm a bit of an expert to the extent that that's such a thing is possible, which frankly it isn't. But anyways, and I make mistakes all the time. So if there's anyone listening to me that is hard on themselves, me, I just want to offer that because you don't deserve it. You don't deserve to be hard on yourself in that way, and it's okay. That's part of how you learn. And I think as long as you maintain your sense of curiosity and interest, the way that we, I don't know about you, but the way that I know that I'm going off the rails is I'm listening to the horse and he says, I can feel some tension or something has come up, or the environment has changed. And I hear that and I go, oh, now we got to attend to that. That's what we've got to attend to. Now

Warwick Schiller [\(01:06:14\)](#):

I call that milk and eggs. I'll say to people, do you ever go to the grocery store? And they go, yeah. And I go, okay, so you ever write a shopping list? And they go, yeah. And so with you, I'm going to say, so do you buy milk and eggs? No, you're a Buddhist, but okay, that's okay. I'm going to go. Let's say,

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:06:41\)](#):

I can imagine buying milk

Warwick Schiller [\(01:06:42\)](#):

And eggs. Let's pretend you're not a Buddhist and you are going to the store for milk and eggs. What grocery store do you go to? Trades. Okay, so do you ever write a shopping list? Please say Yes.

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:06:55\)](#):

Okay.

Warwick Schiller ([01:06:55](#)):

Yes. Okay, so you have a shopping list, and at the top it says, trader Joe's, underline, underline, and then the next thing down it says milk. And the next thing down it says eggs. And that's what you're going to do right now. And you walk outside and you go to get in your car, and you notice that your driver's side front tire is flat. Do you then consult your list and go, trader Joe's milk and eggs? Nope. There's, there's no tire pumping on my list for today. I'm going to Trader Joe's to get milk and eggs. You wouldn't just jump in your car and drive off. You would go, oh, this needs to be attended to right now. And the thing I do, I wouldn't say I'm a great trainer at all. Okay? But the thing that I tend to think the maybe draws people to me is I'm good at explaining things they already understand in relation to the thing they're trying to do.

([01:07:49](#)):

Now, as in that analogy, I use analogies all the time, but that's what you's very, very true. That's what you're getting at there is you wouldn't do this with your car. Okay? If you had an agenda trader Joe's milk, eggs, and you notice the front tower is flat, you wouldn't ignore that one right now. You would go, okay, I can still do that after I attend to this. And it's just about being mindful, being in the moment with what's going on, and people do it in other parts of their life, but for some reason, when they're around their horses, animals, whatever they tend to, that agenda is just the thing. You know what I mean? Which brings me to your second. You

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:08:31](#)):

Really are good at that too, by the way. I mean, I can tell it already just in the course of this conversation, what a wonderful analogy that is and how quickly you summarized an important concept in a way that anybody can understand. It's a beautiful talent. That's beautiful.

Warwick Schiller ([01:08:53](#)):

Well, thank you. Like I said, I don't think training, mostly for me it's with horses, but I don't think training horses, people think it's hard and it's confusing, but the same rules apply as the rules you already know in other parts of your life. You know what I mean? I'll ask people, can you bake a cake? And they will say, yes. And I'll say, how long does it take to bake a cake? And they go, oh, 30 minutes. And I go, okay, so let's talk through baking a cake. So what's the first ingredient you need? And they go, well, they need two cups of flour. And I say, well, how far is the grocery store from your house? And they go, 20 minutes. And I go, okay, we're going to drive 20 minutes to the grocery store. We're going to spend 10 minutes in there and we're going to drive 20 minutes home.

([01:09:43](#)):

So 50 minutes in, we have two cups of flour. Okay, now what's the next ingredient? Whatcha going to put the flour in? And they go a bowl. And I'm going to go, okay, well now we need to drive back to the store and get a bowl. So now we're a hundred minutes in. We've got two cups of flour in a bowl. What's next? We need two eggs. Okay, how far to the store? And I get to every time they want to add a different ingredient, it's another 50 minutes. And then when they finally all get it in and whatcha you going to pour it in now a pan? Well, let's go and get the pan. So we finally get it in the pan, everything's all mixed up. And they go, whatcha going to do it now? And I'm go, they say, I'm going to put it in the oven.

([01:10:19](#)):

And I go, does your grocery store sell ovens? And they go, no. And I go, okay, where's the nearest store that sells ovens? And then we go buy the oven. And then are they going to deliver it today or are they

going to deliver it tomorrow? Let's say they deliver it today. Okay, so now we're 600 minutes into making this cake. And then they go, okay, so the oven's arrived. What are you going to put it in? They go, what do you mean? They go, you need a house to put the oven in. How long does it take to build a house? And so the point I'm trying to make is being able to make a cake in 30 minutes takes about three years of preparation. You've got to have a house that has electricity, electricity bills paid. You've got to have all the ingredients.

[\(01:11:02\)](#):

If you can have your ingredients, you can make, and you have all your basic ingredient, you can make a cake or you can make pancakes, or you can make a roux or you can make biscuits, or you can make scones, or you can make whatever you want. If you have all the ingredients, you wouldn't try to make a cake without the ingredients. But I'll tell you what, a lot of people try to get their horse to do something that he doesn't know half of or a third of. Or the horse has got to be able to do 10 things at once at the same time. Exactly. And they dunno how to do any of those 10 things separately. You wouldn't do it with a cake. You know what I mean? So I tend to help people with, it's always helpful for me helping people if I know what they do for a living, because a lot of times I can relate it back to them.

[\(01:11:47\)](#):

And for the most part, with horses, usually dealing with women. And so I always can relate things to dating as well. I'll say, you ever been back when you were single? You ever been on a date with someone? And the whole date, you get this sense, no one says anything, but you get this sense that he expects to be paid back in some way for taking you to dinner in a movie. It's palpable. And they go, yes, I felt that. I go, well, your expectations with your horse is the same energy. You mightn't be outright saying it, but they can sense that there is this underlying expectation that's not being in the moment. You know what I mean? That's not being right there and responding with them how you need to be able to respond with them. And which brings me to your second book, mindful Partners, the Zen Art and Science of Working with Animals. And this is a great, this the one chapter of my book, the Work with the Horse You have today. It's a whole book of that chapter. Everybody should get this book. It's an amazing book. But yeah, I think that is the unseen part of training in my case, horses. But it's the internal energy. It's your perceptions, it's your thoughts. It's the energetic side of it that I think is the most important part.

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:13:19\)](#):

Wow, there was a lot in there.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:13:21\)](#):

Sorry,

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:13:21\)](#):

I'm still on the baking, the baking analogy, and it reminds me of Carl Sagan. I think I have this in my book, this quote, if you want to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe. That's Carl Sagan's. I

Warwick Schiller [\(01:13:39\)](#):

Read that last night. It must've been in your book. I just read that quote that was in the book. Yes.

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:13:46\)](#):

Yep. That's pointing to the fact that everything depends. Everything leans and everything is constituent of other things. And it's back to that idea of not fixing things too hard. That's come up again and again in our conversation about the importance of the fluidity of experience and of acknowledging that fluidity in yourself and in others. It's called interdependence or codependent arising in a Buddhist view. And embracing that side of things, reminding yourself to stay in that side of things is just a really important and beautiful aspect of being at peace with yourself and being at peace with others. Somewhere along the line, I was explaining, I was writing this book, animal Training 1 0 1, which was all these basic principles, which I did out of a desire to try to help explain the kind of lists of things. The Buddha was very interested in lists. He tried to give people all sorts of lists so that they could remember principles better. And that was maybe more of the wisdom side of things where here's some knowledge and here's some ideas and here's some practical things. That was my first book. And the second book was more about the heart. It's more about the compassion side and the side that connects.

[\(01:15:28\)](#):

I don't see these as truly separate. I think they are two wings of the dove. You need both of them to fly. But it is true that I think people might need some actionable items to go with while they're still working on the digestion of the deeper connection. The second book had a lot for both the human and the animal. They're quite simple principles. It's not as an advanced information in the second book, but it was my digestion of my own developmental path through meditation, through Buddhism, through my understanding of the psychology associated with mindfulness and how it applied to the human animal interface as I was seeing it with people working with animals or as I was seeing it in my own part of working with animals. So one of the simple examples of those kinds of things is like you're saying, the horse you have today dump everything before you go into the corral, before you go to where you're going to interact with the animal, you have to put down your agenda and go in with curiosity, with wonder, even. And a simple way to do that is to do a little bit of meditation before you go in with the animal, or even just to ponder the word wonder. It could be as simple as that. Go in with a few keywords that really light you up like contentment. That's another one. Wonder, savoring, appreciation, respect. Put one of those words in your mind. Oh, there you go.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:17:32\)](#):

Yeah. Just flipping through the table of contents in your book here, chapter one's an overview. It says the two wings of the dove. You just talked about that. Chapter two, set your intention. Chapter three, compassionate Striving, chapter four, interdependence you just talked about. Then chapter five, causes and conditions. But chapter six, giving freely. So I think we chatted about her before we came on here, but I had a lady on the podcast a couple of weeks ago named Emily Katter from Sweden, and she's an animal communicator and is an advocate for empathetic communication with horses and not with other species actually, and non-hierarchical riding of handling of horses. But we were talking about expectations, and I was telling her that I'd just that day received a message on Facebook or something from a lady, and she said, you know how you suggest as a starting point just go out in the pasture with no expectation and just sit there. And I did that and he came up a couple of times, but after he comes up, he bolts off, how do I solve that problem? And I was telling Emily on the podcast that I told this lady, you're telling me that you went in there with no expectations and now you are complaining that you're, how do I fix the expectations? There's a problem.

[\(01:18:57\)](#):

My expectations that I didn't have weren't met. And Emily said, I have some notes here from Emily, but she said, ah, yes, trading versus giving and giving would be giving would be, I'm going to go in and give you my time and my presence, and I don't care what happens. I'm just going to give that to you. Versus

trading. She was going to go and trade her time and her presence with an expectation of getting something back from it. And it's a slight distinction, but there's a world, I think there's a world of difference between giving and trading and the trouble, the hard thing is giving. If you do that particular exercise and you can do it often enough, your horse will come and hang out with you. So the knowledge of that gets in the way of it actually being giving. Because if I just said, all I want you to do is go and sit in your pasture, go out, sit in the pasture with your horse for 30 days, after about 15 days, you'll probably go, Hey, he comes up and he hangs with me and he puts his nose on my shoulder and goes to sleep.

[\(01:20:06\)](#):

But if I told you that's what's going to happen if you do that the whole time you're sitting there, it's like, is it now? Is it now? Is it now? Is it now? Rather than I'm just here. And I think it's really hard. I love, I love Emily's term trading versus giving. I think almost all the interactions I'm having with horses is giving, even though it is trading, because I know I'm going to get something out of it, but I don't have a timeline on it, and I don't care how long it takes and I don't have any expectation of it happening, even though I know it will. But I don't go in there with that expectation. And I just think that is the subtle energy difference of sometimes it working and not working.

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:21:00\)](#):

Yeah, it's a tough one, isn't it? Because we all have our needs and they pop up and they can get in our way. I mean, maybe for me, I would say, if I'm being honest, I get into the urge to trade. I get trapped with that. But I try to come back to the intention setting that I have, which is just to be of service. So I try to start with the idea that I want this to be of value to that other, and I'm doing my best. I don't always give gifts that someone else wants. Like I spammed you with a whole bunch of material. And maybe that's not what turns you on. Just my love language is giving. And so giving is sharing as much of yourself as you can, and that's not what everyone wants. I think it's really important to realize that each different creature, each different being, they want something according to their own causes and conditions according to who they are.

[\(01:22:07\)](#):

And until you get to interact with them, you can't really tell. So you're just doing the best you can. And of course you want something back. We all have our fears. We all have our insecurities. There's four basic fears, fear of death, fear of meaninglessness, fear of identity, losing your identity. What's the other one? Abandonment. So those, that's that's a psychological principle. The Buddhists have a different take on it. I can't wait to talk to you about fear because fear is one of my most interesting. I'm really interested in fear. But anyhow, I notice when I, there's a trading thing, there's something, what it is inside me is something like, I feel like I have a need that's not going to get met. And I'm afraid of that. I'm afraid to just be in the groundlessness. And when I connect back to my intention, which is much more wholesome, which is much more about the welfare of others, I can tell you I deeply, deeply care about your welfare. I deeply care about the welfare of those that I interact with, but I can run into these problems. So I am saying this out of just vulnerability or nakedness so that your listeners, if they get into this just as a way of forgiving themselves, there's a kind of self holding that you can do or that I can do anyways that I've learned that is trying to honor where that energy is coming from. And that energy is coming from maybe a sense of lack or a sense of fear. And that leads to grasping.

[\(01:24:07\)](#):

And so as soon as I can identify it, then I can sit with it and I invite that grasping thing to just cuddle up. And I imagine it as a little gremlin and it's sort of snotty and it's got all kinds of crazy, like a porcupine that explodes and all sorts of silly foibles. I've got used to my own demons that way. So I've gotten off

this topic, but I think we all get into that. We all have needs, and it is okay to have needs. And the important thing seems to be mostly to identify it. When you get into that and you can kind of hold yourself with it and say, yeah, of course you want your horse to love you. Of course you want your horse to want to engage with you, and that's a natural thing to want. And at the same time, you are also giving generously.

[\(01:25:07\)](#):

You're giving yourself, this is what you want. You want that connection. And sometimes you do it well, and sometimes you don't. Sometimes you don't get stuck in your agenda and you can get unstuck again, though. That's what I would say. I think we all, I don't know, maybe you don't. Maybe you're just the most open-handed giver that's out there, but myself, I try to give in a non-contingent way, that's the psychological term for this, giving freely, non-contingent reinforcement. I try to do it. Do I sometimes give with the hope that somebody else is going to give back? I do. I do. And I try to forgive myself about it because mostly I know I'm grounded in this intention that is about the welfare of others.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:25:52\)](#):

I just wanted to clarify when I was talking about the lady that said, I went and sat there and then he came up and he left again. I'm not making fun of her in any way. It is normal. It happens to everybody. I wanted to clarify that bit. But the other bit I wanted to clarify was the giving bit is, for me, it's more about the relationship part, the training part. There's always a trading, there's always, I'm trying to shape behavior. There is a trade. I'm not saying, oh, I just go out there and I just give to my horse, and all of a sudden he's doing flying lead changes or whatever. It's not that. It's for the relationship part. And I think the hard part is, and you alluded to this early, early on when we were chatting, is being able to go from, okay, I've got to stop training and I've got to go back to relationship right now because I've gone over a threshold or I've got to go back.

[\(01:26:51\)](#):

I've gone a bit too far. I've got to go back. And in this very moment, I just have to be back to relationship. The giving part, I'm big into polyvagal theory if you're into that sort of thing, that being seen, being heard, feeling, felt getting, letting them know that, yes, I understand how you're feeling about what we're doing right now and go back and repair that. So wasn't sorry if anybody thought I was trying to say, oh, I'm only ever giving stuff, but there's certain things for me that I'm going to be doing that I'm only doing them because the horse needs them, not because I'm going to get anything out of it. But in true giving, of course, when you do it that way, of course you get things out of it, things do come back to you.

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:27:37\)](#):

One part of the conversation that keeps interesting me about some of the things I've heard you say is I think I understand kind of put the relationship and the training as if there are two separate things, or at least just in what you had just said to me, give up. You stop on the training for some period of time and work just on the relationship. And I think I understand what you're saying. I mean, I very much understand what you're saying, I believe. But I have a slight shift in perspective on that, which is that I see training as all the interactions between the person and the animal. They are, the animal training, the way I define it is behavior change brought about by interaction with human beings.

[\(01:28:45\)](#):

Learning is just behavior change. So that's what the animal would do naturally as they change behavior as you go about life. You too, me too. All of us learning changing behavior through our experience

training is animals changing their behavior through their experience with people inherently. So the value of putting that broader umbrella, this is what I see as the value of putting the broader umbrella around it, is it reminds people that all of their interactions with the animal matter and contribute to the animal's perception of them, the animal's comfort with them. And it means that in a way, well, they're building up their relationship bank account, which is a motivational resource between them and their animal that they can draw off of in terms of trust and in terms of desire and effort that is as big, deep, well of magical energy that is more useful as a training tool than anything else you can have. In my opinion. I've always put motivation and relationship at the center, and it also holds you to your own intentions. It holds you to your best self. So this itself is training, developing a relationship with the animal from a science standpoint. So I can talk about it from a science standpoint, or I can talk about it from a woo woo philosophical standpoint, but it turns out it's the same.

[\(01:30:40\)](#):

I used to describe this, this came from Socrates. I used to describe animal training as there was two basic problems you had. One was communication. You needed to explain to the animal what you wanted them to do. So you have to have a picture in your mind of what it is you want the animal to do and be able to somehow communicate that to them so that they can reproduce that action. The second part is convincing them to care or to give a darn that they going to want to do that, right? And as an animal trainer, we know there are a bunch, there's a million different ways of describing the picture of the behavior. And a lot of those work, I mean, they work, there's just many, many different techniques. And there's, as it turns out, there's seven basic strategies of teaching someone to do something.

[\(01:31:33\)](#):

The six basic operant techniques plus language. This is all in the first book. And the thing is, you mix and match 'em. You mix and match 'em, and they all have pros and cons. The communication side is fun and artistic, but you can be great at explaining something, but if someone doesn't give a, you've lost it, right? It doesn't make any difference. And on the other side of it, if someone really is excited and caress and wants to listen and is keen to figure you out, you've got the clever Hans horse that is going to read between the lines and get what. And even if you suck, and even if you don't know what you're trying to get them to do, they will figure it out for you because they care. So that's the motivational side. And those two things have to work together. And the relationship, what I call the relationship bank account, which is the sum total of the animal's perception of you, all of the deposits and withdraws that you make in that account is a huge element of the resource of the motivation of the animal.

[\(01:32:54\)](#):

And if you've got a big account, you can make big withdrawals and you can make big, beautiful, incredible dynamic danced behaviors between the two of you because the animal is going to show up and be delighted to find out what you want to do. So to me, the relationship side is well placed in that. I mean, I understand what you mean that you've got to just, there's that side that is just the caring and just the interest, but it is part of the training in the sense that it's that deep well of motivational resource. Don't you agree?

Warwick Schiller [\(01:33:37\)](#):

Yeah, most certainly when I was referring to relationship versus training is a lot of horses that I help people with, they, they're not ready to learn things because they've got preconceived ideas about humans. And so a lot of times there's not a lot of, you can't ask them to do anything yet. And so a lot of times it's relationship first. But yeah, I totally get what you're talking about. It's probably just for the setup, the way most of the people I have to deal with, most of the horses I have to deal with, it's

probably, I'm putting it that way, but I don't think they're really set. But probably the way I would describe it is one is giving and one is trading the relationship part. When I'm working in the relationship part, it's just giving. I'm not trying to shape a behavior. A lot of it's I just want to change the way the horse feels about the human. There's no right or wrong. It doesn't matter what you do. I'm just trying to, for the most part, for me, I'd say I'm trying to communicate my awareness of their awareness. Sometimes it comes down to communicating my awareness of their awareness, of my awareness, of their awareness.

[\(01:35:06\)](#):

Whoa. But hey, you mentioned before, you mentioned it's a

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:35:09\)](#):

House of mirrors there.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:35:11\)](#):

You mentioned before something about talking about fear. And I know we're going to get to that because one of the questions you chose, so we possibly should get to your questions that you chose because these are going to be fascinating and we'll leave the fee one for last and all the best podcast guests choose that question.

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:35:29\)](#):

Oh, well, I'm happy to be in that category.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:35:31\)](#):

Well, aren't no bad podcast guests. I think everybody has chosen that question or the people that,

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:35:40\)](#):

Wow, everyone's interested in fear.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:35:45\)](#):

There's only been a couple of people who haven't chosen it, but they've talked about fear separately from that. Anyway, so I think all the really cool people are vulnerable enough to talk about that, whereas for the most part, a lot of people don't want to talk about their fears. Okay, first question. What's the most worthwhile thing you've put your time into something that has changed the course of your life?

Dr. Jennifer Z [\(01:36:07\)](#):

It was definitely developing this animal care center and realizing how many skills I had to bring to the table. What happened as I was starting to teach people to train animals was that I realized that there was a lot of things that went into helping people be their best selves so that they could show up and so that they could do some of this stuff like you're describing, where they could train the horse that was in front of them, train the seal or sea lion or dolphin or whale or whatever it was that was in front of them. And so one of my students, eventually it ended up being something like a spiritual community, a community of people that they always discuss. These were their deepest relationships in their whole life

30 years later. And one of the students said as she was leaving, she was going on to her illustrious career.

[\(01:37:21\)](#):

She's the assistant director of Noah or something like that. Now she said, she gave us this poster and it said everything I needed to know about life, I learned at the lab. And she had this list of all these kind of principled things about life in general, about not just about animal behavior, but just about how to show up and be confident and love and be vulnerable and take criticism and collaborate and all the things that were necessary to make this work. So in the course of this undertaking, which for me very much started out kind of laser focused at trying to care for these animals, I will say that it was very much about caring for the animals. But in that period of striving for that, for a long time, I did not meet the needs of the people. And so when it wasn't working, it was because I was being very forceful about we needed to do this and the animals need this. And I tightened up around what was otherwise quite a compassionate and holistic. It's interesting that you can hold even a great thing incorrectly. That's a near enemy. You get into this righteousness thing because I really wanted to do this.

[\(01:38:58\)](#):

So the students started teaching me how to be a better person, really. And I realized everyone, we all need to learn all these lessons together. And that shift also came along with this meditation and this kind of self development side. And I realized I needed to be there. And it was just as important to be there for all the beings that everyone's needs needed to be met in the situation. And all of their uniquenesses needed to somehow get incorporated. So they had different talents, and some of them were artists, and they applied that talent, and some of them were performers, and they wrote scripts, and they applied that talent and there were construction workers, and they applied that talent. And it was just a magic mix of us all trying to do something for each other with the animals at the center. And it changed my life. Yeah, it changed my life. It was wonderful. And do you still operate that?

[\(01:40:15\)](#):

Interestingly, Warrick? I am going through a big transition personally right now because I just closed it. Covid was very difficult for us. Were not, I've never been good at self-promotion or marketing or honestly, me and my wonderful business partner, Stephanie Croon, she started out as a student for 10 years, and then she and I kind of went into business together and we ran this lab that we built. I built four labs in the course of the time for facilities better and better each time. I mean, construction worker, I don't mean I paid someone, I mean, you built it, built 'em ourselves. And the last one we had for about 20 years. But it was very challenging to financially run when you own animals, 365 and marine mammals in particular, to get their environment correctly was as a complex and very difficult thing to maintain. And during Covid, the university shut off all. First of all, they tried to shut off all the people coming to care for the animals, which didn't fly, of course, but they shut off all the income. So for three years, they wouldn't allow us to do anything to generate money. Not classes, not workshops, not research. And it just kind of starved us off. So we have spent the last several years, my partner and I, finding homes for the animals, which is really heartbreaking.

[\(01:42:02\)](#):

And then closing it down. So that's just happened, the final stages of that just in the last couple of months. So I am on a journey of change at the moment, really.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:42:20\)](#):

So what is next for you?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:42:21](#)):

Going to move to Europe, and hopefully I'll get ordained as a Buddhist eventually. And I want to have more conversations like this where we're talking about what really matters at the center, what's good and what really matters for people and animals. Probably just a quieter life with a lot of meditation and retreats and more spaciousness because it is very tiring. Running a big organization, 30 plus beings, I felt a lot of pressure of that all the time. So I'm hoping to slow down, I think.

Warwick Schiller ([01:43:05](#)):

When are you moving to Europe?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:43:09](#)):

I think it'll be this summer. Wow. It's a real complex process. I think you moved from Australia, so maybe you can give me some hints, but it's very complicated, changing your whole life of moving to a totally different country.

Warwick Schiller ([01:43:22](#)):

Which country are you going to? The uk. The uk, okay. I'll get through our next question then. Oh, no, I do have a question because there's a term that you've said a couple of times and I, I remember reading about this term recently and I have an idea of what I think it means. But Near Enemy, can you talk about Near Enemy?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:43:48](#)):

Yeah, yeah. It's a cool concept. So this is a Buddhist reference. The classic way that they talk about this is, well, the best example is in love. Okay, love as a healthy emotion, love and kindness. Meta, the far enemy is hatred. That's pretty straightforward. The opposite of love. The near enemy is trickier because it can look like love, but it isn't. So it would be taking the good elements of love, but overdoing it in a way that ruins it, spoils it. The near enemies are the ones that we fall into all the time. A near enemy might be grasping, sticky love, possessive love, jealous love. It's got at its heart, kind of something good, but then it's spoiled it by falling off the side of the road, or righteousness is another one. So having a principled view, but then holding onto it so tightly that you start judging others when they're not doing it right. This happens so much in the positive reinforcement community. It's ridiculous.

Warwick Schiller ([01:45:13](#)):

There's a saying that I read, and it was actually a dog training book. It might've been Karen Pry Don't Shoot the Dog, or a book called The Other End of the Leash. I can't remember. But it said, our vices are an excess of our virtues.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:45:29](#)):

Our vices are an excess. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's a resonant view. Another one of these things where everything is pointing to reality. You can get the same basic truth from a lot of different sources and with a lot of different poetic references, I think. So, yeah, I think that's another one I used to use was your greatest strength and your greatest weakness are linked. There's no way to have one without the other. So I'll give you a personal example. I am a professor and I had to run a whole facility. I had to be there for everyone I needed to know, and I needed to be really strong and have a lot of energy. But there's a lot of downsides to those qualities. Strength can intimidate others. It can be too strong. It can

be too pushy. Having a lot of boundless energy is good, but it's not good when it runs over top of someone else. It's not good when it's time to be quiet. So I have to be aware of. Well, and another one, I'm a professor, arrogance. Oh my God, pride. These are really, really important. Your enemies, I have to keep in mind all the time just to try to work with my strengths and minimize my downsides.

Warwick Schiller ([01:47:21](#)):

Thank you. You seem like you're quite an energetic type person. Did you find it exceptionally difficult to steal your mind when you first started meditating?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:47:38](#)):

I did. Yeah, I did. Did. So when you're first starting to meditate, do you meditate, mark, you meditate? Yeah. Okay. When you're first starting to meditate, one of the common, there's a lot of different meditation techniques. I want to put that out there. But presumably we're talking about sort of basic breathing meditation, mindfulness of breath, or some kind of open monitoring. And so the instruction is something like, for those of you out there who are listening and may or may not do this, the instruction is something like put your mind on the breath and follow the breath and experience the breath and just watch yourself breathe. And if you try to do that, you breathe in, you breathe out, and very quickly you'll find your mind. If your mind is like me, your mind is trying to find something else to do because it's productive, and that's what your mind is meant to do. Thoughts are your friends. It's not that that's a problem, but it is not your agenda at the moment, and that can start to feel really uncomfortable. And if you fight that discomfort, it gets worse.

([01:49:05](#)):

So some of the techniques for this single pointedness for learning to concentrate yourself that they give you are like counting helps counting how many, counting up to 10 and then back from 10 to nine or different focal areas. But I think one of the more important parts of it is not to struggle with yourself, to have that sense of friendliness, to be the loving witness. So you've heard me say sort of things, dealing with my own vulnerabilities in the course of this conversation and trying to help other people deal with theirs through my own as much as possible, revealing of those things. And I think when I get into the sense where my mind is wild, you have to sometimes be with a wild mind. It's not that it's wrong, that your mind is wild, your mind is your friend. You don't have to listen to it all though. You don't have to be a believer in it. You can see it and you can kind of smile. And mentally, what I do is I pat myself, I pat that wild mind on the head, and I invite it to kind of come sit down on my lap and just try to be together.

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:26](#)):

Have you ever heard of a book called Mind Hacking by Sir John Hargraves?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:50:31](#)):

Hey, here's one I have heard of. Yep.

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:34](#)):

I love the Technique.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:50:36](#)):

This has been a list of books I haven't read so far in this podcast.

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:41](#)):

There's a great technique he talks about in there that I share a lot to do with judgment. And it's where he says, when you notice that your mind has wandered, give yourself a point.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:50:55](#)):

Yeah, that's right. Now you're mindful

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:57](#)):

Again, like when I'm presenting, say at a horse expo or do it at clinic sometimes too. I tell people, I'm a big fan of the Wayne Dyer quote. When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change, and I start out, usually I introduce 'em and I say, is anybody here meditate? A few people put their hand up and I say, has anybody here tried to meditate? But you suck. And everybody puts their hand up and I say, why do you suck? And I go around and ask everybody, why do you suck? And they're like, oh, because my mind wanders and I can't keep my mind still, and I've got a busy mind and all those things. And I go, so has your attempt at meditating? Sounded something like this. Okay, so let's say you're going to sit down. You're going to focus on your breathing.

([01:51:44](#)):

Okay, so I can feel the breath coming in my nostrils. My belly's rising. I feel the air going out, my nostrils, the air comes in my nostrils. My belly's rising. Ooh, my belly, I'm hungry. I wonder what's for dinner? I wonder if it's chicken. I think we're having chicken for dinner. I like chicken. I wonder when that chicken was alive. Was it a boy chicken or a girl chicken? I wonder. I don't know if it was a boy chicken or a girl chicken, but when they're little, they're little yellow ones. I mean, you can't tell then. But by the time they killed it, it probably, you could tell it was a boy chicken or a girl chicken, but not when they're little and yellow. The ones you get at Easter time, like the little peeps like Easter. I love Easter. I get to eat chocolate and I love chocolate.

([01:52:27](#)):

Oh, hang on. I'm supposed to be focusing on my breathing. I said, has anybody had a meditation practice? Sounds like that. And they go, yes. And I go, that's why you suck. And I go, yes, that's why I suck. And I go, do you realize that the moment you started telling yourself that you suck, you were actually present, you had become aware that you were not focusing on your breathing. And I said, that's where you've got to give yourself a pat on the back. Give yourself a point right there. And I say, the only reason you think it sucked is because how you view what happened. What happened was actually you became aware of what your thoughts were, that because you have the impression that meditation means sitting here and your mind's totally blank. And if my mind wanders I'm wrong, then you've judged it poorly. Does that make sense? I said, it's

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:53:21](#)):

Being harsh on yourself,

Warwick Schiller ([01:53:23](#)):

But they're not being harsh on themselves because they're being harsh on themselves. They're being harsh on themselves because they have the wrong expectation of what's going to happen. The mind is going to wander and you are going to not notice that it's wandering, and then you're going to notice it's wandering and you're going to bring it back again. That's part of the process. And the reason I tell 'em that is working with your horse, it's never going to go right all the time. A lot of times it's going to go

wrong. You're going to get off track. That's right. You're just going to bring it back to where it's supposed to be. Not that I'm an expert on meditation at all, but that's something that happens all the time that people think it shouldn't happen, and they go, no, I can't do this because I'm getting it wrong. Whereas getting it wrong is part of the thing. You know what I mean? Okay. We're getting off track. Let's get to your next question here. This might be along the lines of what we're just talking about. Where do you go or what do you do to relieve stress or recharge your batteries, or where do you find motivation and inspiration for what you do?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:54:36](#)):

You were very clever to recognize that possibly my answer was going to be meditation oriented. I was guessing that it's true. Yeah, you guessed correctly. Although

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:54:49](#)):

I think I could answer a lot of things, being alone actually helps to recharge for me because, well, I think I have a pretty strong empathetic resonance, so when I'm around others, I feel a real urge to connect. I love connecting, and that's got a lot of dynamic energy to it, but you can get into those kind of vulnerability hangovers or something where there's a lot of information coming in and going. And I think recharging by being in a more simplistic state, something like, yes. Yeah, especially the kindness, the me type. Do you ever do any loving kindness meditations, the giving and taking of loving and kindness to yourself and to others?

Warwick Schiller ([01:55:58](#)):

I've done it a little bit, very little, but I'm aware of the whole process that you start out, you give loving and kindness to someone who you love, and then it's someone quite well, and then it's someone you don't know, and then it's someone you hate their fricking guts. I think that's the gist of the whole thing, isn't it? Yeah.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:56:21](#)):

Yeah. That's part of it. Yeah. You skipped yourself in the process myself. So the self is the place where you start. Yeah, and for me, it's been really a very important part of the process of self-healing, dealing with judgments in a more lighthearted way so I can still see and strive for improvement, but not feel harsh on myself when things haven't. So that description of what we were just saying about the mind, part of the friendly attitude to self helps also in a friendly attitude towards others. It helps be forgiving towards others and accommodating and interested. And so those kinds of quiet states, and getting away from other living beings, honestly, so that I can just self-regulate and hear what my own nervous system is telling me so that I can stay. You can have those things going on that you just don't even have time to process if you don't get along.

Warwick Schiller ([01:57:42](#)):

Okay. Next question for you. I love what this one's going to sound like. What's the most common myth about your professional or field that you wish to debunk? And first you have to say what professional field you're actually referring to.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:57:55](#)):

Oh, golly. Yeah. As a person who's worn a lot of hats, I can think of a lot of answers to this, but I mean, most probably what I do is teach people how to connect with animals. So I guess I'll look at that as my profession.

Warwick Schiller ([01:58:23](#)):

You look like you're really deep in thought right now, and you have to remember you chose this question, so it's not like I'm putting you on the spot or something. I

Dr. Jennifer Z ([01:58:30](#)):

Know, I know. You mean I should have had a, well, part of it was, as you were saying it, I was thinking, well, in a way we've already covered it. And I was trying to think of something more new to say about it, but the beginning of the answer is that people are usually focused on the problem when there's going to be some magic set of, could you tell me how to fix this, that, or the other? And they've got a list of what's wrong. So they're focused on what's wrong and that I've got some magic tool that's going to fix that for them. But the magic tool, as you and I have, if there is such a thing, is awareness, compassion and acceptance.

([01:59:30](#)):

It, you use the reins in this way or you apply the leg in this way. It's not that there is noticing where the horse is at or whatever animal is at, and meeting them there. There's this old proverb that if you want to guide someone out of wherever they are, so you're on one mountain peak and they're on another, and you don't yell across to their mountain peak directions, what you do is you go over and join them on their mountain peak and guide them from there. So it has to start out by kind of being with where they are, not by a list of you're in the wrong place.

Warwick Schiller ([02:00:23](#)):

It's almost like sympathy versus empathy sort of thing. Sympathy. Sympathy is like, well, the way Brene Brown describes it, sympathy is, I feel sorry for you. And

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:00:33](#)):

Yeah, othering, othering

Warwick Schiller ([02:00:35](#)):

Empathy is, I feel what you're feeling

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:00:41](#)):

To feel the other feelings without losing the sense of the other. You can get lost, you can get into an empathetic coma or whatever. But yeah, I agree with you. Sympathy is very, or pity in particular, it's very othering. It's separating instead of joining. So in Buddhism, we have this idea that not to grasp, not to hold onto, and people misunderstand that as detachment. Detachment is different than non-attachment. Those aren't the same. Non-attachment is not needing to have it be a certain way, have that still that open-minded, spacious feeling. Whereas detachment is othering. It's like separating from the cosmic truth of the interconnection of everyone, and that is not going to get you where you want to go. So turning in with kindness,

Warwick Schiller ([02:01:43](#)):

I think detachment and dissociation of

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:01:48](#)):

Brother and yeah, very similar. Yeah, you're right, they are psychologically,

Warwick Schiller ([02:01:51](#)):

There're brother, sister asked me how, I know you were talking, you said something right then that, do you know I'm very familiar with the concept of dissociation. You said something very early on and then you said something then that made me think of, so the first guest I had on the podcast two and a half years ago was a friend of mine from New Zealand, Jane Pike. And Jane is just, she's amazing. But in one of our conversations, so Jane spent quite a bit of time in India in Ashrams when she was younger and things like that. And she has an amazing outlook on life as well as a body of knowledge about things. But she was here visiting us one time, and we were talking, she was talking about how in our society, one of the reasons we are removed from animals like this, us and them, has to do with our fear of death in our society, Western culture near impossible to see a dead person. You know what I mean?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:03:07](#)):

Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([02:03:08](#)):

We don't talk about death. We don't view death. And Jane said she thinks, I don't know if she said she thinks or she's heard this before, but one of the reasons we other animals is so when you're driving down the road and you see dead dog or whatever, it doesn't affect you viscerally. If you drove down the road and saw a dead person is, oh, it's just one of them. It's not, I dunno how you'd feel about driving the road seeing a dead dog, but it would shatter me, but you know what I mean, but a dead bird or whatever. And she said, one of the reasons we disconnect from those is because then we can stay disconnected from their death. You would love Jane. Everybody loves Jane. But yeah, you and Jane would get along great, possibly and possibly something that Jane will come up in the next question. What quality do you admire in a person

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:04:02](#)):

Way to go, by the way, for keeping us on track, demonstration of mindfulness and prowess.

Warwick Schiller ([02:04:07](#)):

I've got a clock right here in front of me ticking away.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:04:11](#)):

Is that right? Okay. Oh gosh. I'm glad. I can't see that. I think, well, kindness is probably the center for me would be my highest aspiration. And it is something that makes me feel most at ease. But I also want to vulnerability because I'm realizing how much strength I get from other people when they're able to own their own. I really want to give this to people. So I try to talk about my failings as much as I talk about my prowess. And I think vulnerability has this thing of, I mean, it's courageous and it's inherently kind because it's like it takes a veil down and it allows you to get in there. And we all have these tremendous descriptions of ourselves or egos or whatever you want to, personalities that they're so strong. And we try to present a certain kind of way in order for us to move through the world and keep

safe and get what we need and everything. And so when someone is vulnerable, there's something of courageous sharing. I think that is inherently, yeah, it's another one of these things that points to the truth as a theme pointing to the truth in reality, it's owning who they are.

Warwick Schiller ([02:06:03](#)):

Yeah. I think it's also a gift to the other person too, because the thing is, when you first start being vulnerable, you think, I couldn't possibly tell anybody this because they'd laugh at me. And when you actually do share those things, people don't laugh at you. They say, me too,

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:06:20](#)):

Me too

Warwick Schiller ([02:06:22](#)):

Jigs. And that helps you. But it also helps them because then they're like, I have kept that thought in my head for 35 years, and I've always judged myself poorly because of it. And this person over here who I think is rocking it in life has the same thing. So I think it's actually a gift to the other person as long as it's done in the right way at the right time. You've got to be careful what you say to who. But if you have the right person at the right time and you're vulnerable, it's a gift. I think it's a gift to both of you. It's an unleashing of a burden off of you. And then you get the gift back of them validating you rather than judging you. But they also get the gift of, oh, the thing that I was afraid to tell somebody, this person just told me. And I think then it's a, do you remember that movie Kevin Spacey was in, I think it was called Pay it Forward? Yes. So then they're almost, they're going to pay it forward because then they're going to be vulnerable to someone else about the same thing. And I think there's a huge knock on effect from being vulnerable with the right person at the right time.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:07:41](#)):

Dalai, the Dalai Lama says, if you want to be happy, be compassionate. If you want others to be happy, be compassionate. And vulnerability is that, that's what you're saying, it's inherently kind to others by showing this thing that will help them feel more confident in themselves. It's that again, it's that deep seeded truth that we all know we're all looking for, which is going to bring us to the fear question. It is fear Next. Is

Warwick Schiller ([02:08:16](#)):

That our question? Next question is fear. What is your relation, oh, you know what, sorry, before we go there, I was going to add something else that Jane was talking about at the same time, which you talked about the separation from animals thing, and it was about Buddhists, and she was telling me that one of the countries she was in, where they have, what do they call it, the Chanel house or something where they chop up the bodies and put them out for the birds to, so it goes back into that circle of energy, that circle of life quicker. She said they have the novice monks meditate there, and so that you, I dunno what country it was in, but so you're sitting around with a bunch of dismembered body parts, human body parts, and you've got to meditate. And it was shocking when she told me that.

([02:09:13](#)):

Not shocking, as in I'm judging them as bad people. Shocking as in, oh God, that would be very, very confronting. And to do that because it makes you think about the fleetingness of this life, and you've got to face, we're all going to die. And I think you talked about dissociating before. I think it's very easy to go

through life blocking that out, too scary that then you get to the existential question, are you really living if you are doing that? So yeah, I just wonder. That was along the lines of what Jane was talking about. Oh

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:09:58](#)):

Boy,

Warwick Schiller ([02:09:59](#)):

That's another whole podcast itself.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:10:00](#)):

That is so, yeah, well, death meditation is a big one. So I've spent a lot of time with death meditation. I've had near-death experience and those experiences informed my entire life. So at some point we can, well, maybe it'll come up in the fear

Warwick Schiller ([02:10:18](#)):

Discussion. Well, no, it's going to come up right now. I never let a podcast guest get away with just saying, yeah, I've had some near death experiences and not telling you about them because I find the subject. Are

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:10:28](#)):

You

Warwick Schiller ([02:10:28](#)):

Fascinating?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:10:32](#)):

Yeah. Well, death is an important part, I should say. As a background, death is an important part of Buddhist practice. A mindfulness of death is, like you just said, charnel ground meditation or envisioning the body, and it's all deteriorating phases is one of the basic practices. There is another way of looking at it, which is the five reminders, which is the preciousness of this life. And we're all going to get sick, we're all going to die, we're all going to grow old if we're lucky, we're all going to be separated from everyone we love, and we're all the heir to our actions. So for a long time, I spent every day starting with that. Nowadays I start with a prayer. Today I'm fortunate to be alive. I have a precious human life, and I'm not going to waste it. I wake up every morning. That's what I start with.

([02:11:34](#)):

So anyways, I have spent, this is a backstory. I am going to talk about the near death experience, but I've spent a lot of time with death meditation. And I want to just say that that I think prepared me in a way for the couple of experiences that I had. The first one was a very fleeting one that, I won't go into a lot of details, but I jumped into a pool. I was doing a performance with some sea lions, and there was a point in the performance where I had to jump into the pool with the animal, and it was set up. It wasn't at our home, it was at a traveling facility that we had. And so it was only four feet deep. And they have all these signs around that say, don't jump into the pool. You're not supposed to dive. But I'm a professional, right?

[\(02:12:19\)](#):

Warrick. So of course, oh, I got this, I am so I'll let you know. No problem. I've done it a thousand times, which is like the time when it's most dangerous. The last time I did it, I had jumped in and I was wearing a pouch of fish around my body, and I had forgotten to close it up when I jumped in, which is really bad form. And so as soon as I jumped in, I became a cornucopia of fish all around me. And so of course, the sea lion is like, well, there's a lot of good stuff in this pool. We better grab that up. So I had learned from the previous time not to do that. And as I was starting to jump in, I realized, oh dear, I forgot, or maybe I forgot to do up my pouch. So my hands, instead of being above my head and protecting myself, they went down to my pouch. And before I even knew it, I dunno if you can see, but see this scar right there, I hit the cement floor. And when I hit it with my face, and thank goodness, I hit it an angle, I broke my nose, my shoulder, when I hit it, I went, oh, this is it. I'm dying.

[\(02:13:42\)](#):

And then the sea lion was with me, and she, and I don't know if she helped me up to the surface, but anyways, she joined me at the surface and she just kept going with what was needing to me. She's a big life ring. She just kept going. And I just kept going. And there's blood going down my face, and I'm going, wow, am I dead? And the people on the deck we're going, oh my gosh, what's going on? And I realized, no, I'm not dead. And so that was a very brief experience of death that realized for me how close death could be. But it wasn't that informative. Now, jumped to the second experience, which was the one that was really pivotal. And now I've done a lot of death meditation. And it turns out what I had was night terrors. I'm just going to preview, but I was actually teaching a workshop in Sweden, and I was staying in a little room, and I woke up and I couldn't breathe and I couldn't move.

[\(02:14:57\)](#):

And I was absolutely terrified. I was just suffocating and dying right there. And the initial reaction was fight. The fight or flight response comes in. And I was just trying to survive and I was trying to survive. And it was, I couldn't do anything. I couldn't move. And so I knew, wait a minute, you're dying and you better get it together right now because fighting is not the way that you want to go down. You know what to do. And immediately all of the practice came up and I went, oh, I'm fighting. But that's not the mind state I want to be in the mind state I want to be in is connected. I'm curious about this experience. And so instead, I focused on the breath for a few moments. I put a tremendous sense of loving energy around myself who was afraid and who was having to walk forward.

[\(02:16:12\)](#):

And then what happened was a flash of my whole life. Somehow I could remember all the events of my life in that one moment. Like they say that, and I dunno how to describe how that's true, but yeah, the whole string of my life. And I just felt this tremendous sense of good fortune and the beauty of it all. And there was a man I was traveling with who was a student of mine, who was helping me in the next room. And I had this thought, the next thought was, oh no, just this sense of sadness for him that he was going to have to come onto my body and find me dead. And so I spent some time just wishing him well and wishing well for everyone who I was going to have the myths that I was going to kind of leave with others. And then I felt just this sense of buoying up and everything was quite okay. It was all okay in a way that I can't describe to you like time dissolved and things were fine and the love was going to carry me forward. I had this sense of real love and compassion, and then I realized I'm not dead, I haven't died, what's going on?

[\(02:17:58\)](#):

And all of a sudden I could breathe. And I woke up and I realized it was a night terror. This is a particular thing that you can get in your sleep where you get paralyzed anyhow. So it wasn't a true near death

experience, but the thing of it was, was having had this experience and having, I guess, faced it with certain amount of courage and having done that, I think I feel more, less afraid, more prepared, like it's going to be okay for myself and for other people. So it informs how I approach things.

Warwick Schiller ([02:18:53](#)):

Yeah. Everybody I've spoken to that's had one of those has said the same thing, that it changes how you approach things. So now we've got to get to what is your relationship like with fear?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:19:12](#)):

Yeah, I'm too long-winded. Very patient with me, your friend. My friend.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:19:17](#)):

Let's see. I'm very interested in fear. Fear is from a Buddhist perspective, it might be the root cliché, the deepest defilement that we, or misperception that we have to let go of. So I talked to you about the four fears before, but there is this sense of real need for intimacy with those fears or a sense of real need for friendliness. So I try as much as I can to get to know what those fears are telling me. Or a phrase would be, oh look, it's my old friend fear. Which isn't to say that it's not unpleasant. I mean it is unpleasant. But each of them, each time I experience fear, and right now I'm experiencing a lot of fears with the big change that I'm going through, the change of where I'm going to live and everything. Yeah. I experienced fear coming onto this podcast because you and I don't know each other very well, and I wasn't sure how many books you were going to ask me that I didn't know that I hadn't read,

([02:20:46](#)):

But I think an attitude of friendliness. The Buddha suggested that what you do is when you experience fear, you just stay with it until you get to know its energy. There's nothing wrong with the basic energy. It's the misperception that is the problem. And part of it is the perception of separateness. So the root of the fear of death is something about you're not going to be okay. And actually, if I look, I've heard that voice a lot in my life. I'm not, okay, there's something not enough about me. I've heard that voice talking loudly plenty of times, and she's trying to help me. That's one thing to say is that all of our fears are about something that is well-intended. It's something trying to protect us. It's something that does have it. It's center, a good energy. You just have to dig in to see what it is. And that vulnerability that we were talking about is part of that is to the extent that you can meld with that energy and whatever that deep fear is trying to tell you and accept it, you can transcend it, you can integrate it. And so I don't know. I guess I want to have a welcoming attitude to turn into that fear, and I want to encourage other people. The only thing to fear is fear itself.

([02:22:23](#)):

Just keep going forward.

Warwick Schiller ([02:22:28](#)):

Yeah. It is so simple, but it's not, well, it's simple, but it's not easy. That's simple, but it's not easy. That's humor and

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:22:40](#)):

Friendliness. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([02:22:42](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:22:43](#)):

Good humor and friendliness. It goes a long way. Yeah, just having that kindness to maybe you should try the self-compassion exercise as they've really worked very well for me in this regard that it kind of loosens me up around these fears.

Warwick Schiller ([02:23:03](#)):

Yes. The self. Yeah. I think everybody could use more. Okay. One last question. What is the luckiest thing that ever happened to you?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:23:12](#)):

Well, this is my cheeky answer, is being allergic to horses. We kind of brought that in before, but I thought since you were a horse guy that you'd get a good kick out of it. But really my whole life pinged on that allergic reaction that caused this whole crazy chain of events that turned out to be full circle. Now, I spend a lot of time in the horse community thanks to my friend Dave Litchman, who I very much recommend you have on your podcast. I've

Warwick Schiller ([02:23:43](#)):

Got to get him on

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:23:43](#)):

Here. Yeah, he's fantastic. And of all the people who have incorporated my vision of things, he's the one who's probably doing it the most for the horse world. So yeah. So there's this full circle ness. The very fact that I'm sitting here with a world famous horse trainer after having this devastating early life event of failing to be able to become a horse person. It just goes to show, sometimes you have to suspend, you don't actually know that something is bad. You've got a label on it that it's a misfortune or it's unfortunate, but actually you don't know. It might be the greatest thing that ever happened. I'm trying to hold onto that right now because transitioning, and I'm hoping that having to close my facility is just going to open up new potential.

Warwick Schiller ([02:24:46](#)):

I think if you go with that intention, things will open up. You know what? I messed up the punchline. That was going to be the punchline to the whole thing. What's the luckiest thing that ever happened to you? Oh, I had an allergy to horses, and I messed that up in the first hour. That was my bad. Sorry. I didn't know that was going to be the No, you did not. I didn't know that was going to be the punchline.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:25:10](#)):

No, no, it's fine.

Warwick Schiller ([02:25:12](#)):

I

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:25:12](#)):

Mean, lots of things like that. I mean, I could say being born was the greatest thing that ever happened.

Warwick Schiller ([02:25:21](#)):

That's

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:25:21](#)):

A true answer.

Warwick Schiller ([02:25:23](#)):

So how do people find, well, your books, how can people buy your books?

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:25:32](#)):

Well, both my books are online at Amazon or Barnes and Noble or wherever you buy your books, so that's straightforward. But I do have a website where there are some courses around those book topics available, which is animal training us. So just as simple as that animal training us, and you can see if there's any coursework of interest and if there is anyone out there in the world who wants to collaborate around these issues like you are. Thank you so much for the opportunity, and I hope to hear from you.

Warwick Schiller ([02:26:11](#)):

Oh, thank you. It's been an absolute pleasure and an honor having you on here. What else was I going to say? Oh, yeah. The only bad thing is I've just figured out that you're very close to us and you are moving to Europe, so I'll have to catch up with you before you go.

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:26:28](#)):

Oh, I'd love that. Yeah, and I'm sad that you didn't get to come to the facility and meet the animals. I think you would've just delighted in it, but you never know why these things happen. So who knows what there is in our future, but keep going on your journey. It's very inspirational. I got to listen to a few of your podcasts, and I just think you have so much that you're offering people, and it's of such beautiful value to the world. I'm glad that our orbits intersected and that I could have the chance to come on and have a chat

Warwick Schiller ([02:27:02](#)):

With. It was so much fun having you on here. Good luck in your future endeavors. Good luck in your move to Europe and your quest to be an ordained Tibetan, I'm sorry, Tibetan Buddhist. What are you going to be a Buddhist nun, I guess are,

Dr. Jennifer Z ([02:27:21](#)):

Well, our ordination is neither nun nor lay, so it's somewhere in between. It's a Western Buddhist order. So it is, it's a community of people who want to sort of aspire to these higher ethical principles, learn and train in meditation, but not necessarily follow the lifestyle of a monk or none. So it's going to be more suited to me. Yeah.

This transcript was exported on Oct 03, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

Warwick Schiller ([02:27:51](#)):

Awesome. Well, good luck with that. And once again, thank you so much for coming on the podcast. You guys at home. Thanks again for joining us and we'll catch you on the next episode of The Journey on podcast.

Speaker 1 ([02:28:03](#)):

Thanks for being a part of the journey on podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick has over 850 full length training videos on his online video library@videos.warwickschiller.com. Be sure to follow Warwick on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram to see his latest training advice and insights.