

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. My guest this week is Heather Lucas. Heather originally Hales from the uk but now lives in Australia where she runs an equine assisted psychotherapy center. Heather contacted me a while ago and told me her story, and I just thought a lot of the ways she looks at the world are fascinating, including something that we'll get into later that she calls rewilding, which really, really interests me. We had a great conversation and I hope you enjoy this one as much as I do. Heather Lucas, welcome to the Journey on podcast.

Heather Lucass ([00:01:25](#)):

Hi Warwick. Thanks so much for having me. It's a real honor to be here. Oh,

Warwick Schiller ([00:01:31](#)):

I'm excited to have you here. You might be one of the first people I've had on the podcast who emailed me and said, I think I'd be a good guest for your podcast. And we chatted a little bit before you came on here and you said, oh, I'm not really like that. And it was a bit brash of me or whatever, and I would be the same way in the same situation. So it sounds to me like you stepped outside your comfort zone doing that and it worked. So yeah, you

Heather Lucass ([00:01:59](#)):

Thank you. Yeah, it feels pretty brash and pretty against what I'm usually like, but here we are, so I'm really glad I did.

Warwick Schiller ([00:02:08](#)):

Yeah, no, because there's a lot of things that you have knowledge about that I want to talk about. So the thing that you've been doing mostly for I guess a number of years now is equine assisted therapy. So you run the Brisbane Equine Assisted Therapy Center, is that what it's called?

Heather Lucass ([00:02:24](#)):

Yeah, that's right. So we run it here sort of 15 minutes north of Brisbane City. I'm really blessed to have a team of six therapists that work with me in my practice and we've got five horses in our herd that will work alongside us. And yeah, really we work with individuals and groups. We work from sort of ages four the way up to adult herd, and we work with schools groups, we run little retreats and things, and that's my day-to-day work really. I've been in this practice for four years now.

Warwick Schiller ([00:03:01](#)):

And tell me, I don't know much about how equine assisted therapy works. I've been to therapists, but how does the equine assisted therapy work? Lemme ask you this, do you work with clients away from the horses and then go in with the horses or is it all with the horses? How's that work?

Heather Lucass ([00:03:21](#)):

Yeah, that's a good question. So it depends is the short answer. So some clients really come to us because they've been to 10 therapists in room based therapy before and they want something different. So we don't go near the clinic rooms and we're out sitting under trees on beanbags from the get-go with the horses around. And for some clients we sort of dip in and out of the clinic room if that helps meet their needs as well. So the model that I'm trained in is through the Eckline Psychotherapy Institute and I'm one of the trainers as well. So that's the other part of what I do, and it's a really specific way of bringing the horses into therapy. It's not just a bolt-on of you go out and you do your C B T in the presence of horses and you sort of use horses as a tool in the same way you might use a worksheet or something else. In this model, the horses are really integrated in quite specific ways that honor them as sentient beings with their own Yes and no. It's all consent based work and it really, I guess at the core of it brings in the horse's feedback, the horse's unique response to the client presenting as they are. And that becomes often the material. We're sort of trusting the horses to show up as they do and see what unfolds from that. That's a very sort of simplified way describing some of what we do.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:51](#)):

You have five horses?

Heather Lucass ([00:04:53](#)):

I do, yes. Yeah, we've got

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:56](#)):

Three. Okay. So I imagine they all have different personalities. Do you have different horses for different people? When you start working with a client you think, oh, we need to go and see. He will get to the bottom of you. Is it like that?

Heather Lucass ([00:05:12](#)):

That's good to know. So there's an element of that where I start to see parallels in some of my horse's stories and then some of my client's stories. And that can really support self-compassion because it's often very easy to be compassionate towards an animal. So for example, I have a mom called Tara. She's wonderful. She went through sort of showing background, but then she got chased when she was young and has some scars from running through a fence. So she was no good in showing. She went to dressage, but the scars left her with a funny gait. So she was no good in dressage. And then she went to be a brood ma, but she wasn't keeping falls, so she was no good there either. Then she went to pony club and so on, and she's quite a sensitive mess. So there's lots of examples of her not fitting in and not being useful in lots of ways, and when sometimes there are parallels between that and clients who have conditions where they feel that they're now a burden or they're no longer useful to society and we think, well, what would it be like to say that to Tara and, oh goodness, no.

([00:06:22](#)):

Well, she's just beautiful as she is. We are like, oh, okay.

([00:06:28](#)):

So there's elements like that. And we do have a range of really different personalities in the herd, which is cool. Most of them have quite a big story behind them in terms of rescue or so on. I try not to stay attached to that narrative. I think the horses are so ready to let go of it, but it's nice to know the story, but when you say, do I lead clients towards horses? It's funny, and it might sound cliché, but it's not like the horses show up. So sometimes I'll think, okay, Dakota's the guy here. I'm just have that thought, and he's in the round yard waiting as we're about to walk down there, or he's wandering up the hill. And sometimes I'll think, okay, it's got to be juy for this one. I'm starting to formulate what's interesting and the client's level of safety and someone else will show up and I'll trust that process and Oh, okay. That's why. So I mean really the core of what we do is trusting the horses to show up as they need to. There's no performing, they're not therapy horses, they're not trained in specific ways. They're safe enough to be around humans, and that's sort of all I ask of them. So I've always said, I don't want therapy animals. I want animals with me in therapy. And that's sort of the approach, I guess.

Warwick Schiller ([00:07:56](#)):

Wow, I love that. It was interesting reading. You sent me a bit of a CV telling me your story before the podcast, and in there you had said that you were first interested in zoology and then you were interested in vet school and then you were interested in something or other else and psychology. And you said something along the lines of, but no one wants a therapist with no life experiences, and you just said that all these horses, a lot of them have baggage, they're rescues, you know what I mean? So it sounds like all the horses you have have a lot of life experience. Horse doesn't end up in a rescue situation without going through some things, whether it's abandonment or bad treatment that causes them to have behavioral supposed behavioral issues or whatever. But it's just interesting while you were saying that, I was thinking, yeah, you said that you didn't want to be a psychiatrist. No one wants a therapist with no life experiences, and then you're telling me that all these horses that you have, they all have a great deal of life experience. I thought that was pretty cool.

Heather Lucass ([00:09:12](#)):

Yeah, I've never really thought of it that way, but it is really true. And I think the horses, that balance of the story being true, but also the willingness to let go of that and once their needs are met, it doesn't really matter. Yeah, there might be some trauma memories and things that crop up and it can inform, okay, we're behaving this way maybe because of that, but that doesn't define them anymore. And when I first got Dakota and then I found your work for probably two years, Warwick, I was dancing around him like, oh, he had such a tricky life. No, I can't ask anything of him. He'll probably never want to be ridden again. And I was really sort of pandering around him and he's stunning there, I'm ready, I'm here. My needs are met now. Let's see where we go. And the journey with him has been pretty, lots of learnings in that. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:10:07](#)):

Is he the horse that was a former rodeo? Bronc?

Heather Lucass ([00:10:10](#)):

He was, yeah. Not a very successful one and nothing against the rodeo bronching scene, but he was born out on a station and his destiny was to be a bronc horse. And I have the video of him first coming out of the shoot and I don't know, maybe he had booked before, but when he went to the rodeo, he just comes out and he walks and the cowboy's sort of sparing him and then he trots and then he falls back to a walk and he stands there. I'm like, okay. And then he went through, believe it was laley sail a couple of

times and ended up in what they call the Dogger pens here, which is sort of not a great fate, but thankfully for him, he's a very pretty palomino. He's a bit of a barbie pony. So someone saved him. They maybe didn't quite have the means to look after him. So he is quite malnourished. And then our paths cross when I'm sort of a couple of years into living over here and start looking for my first horse. And I've been out of horses for sort of 10 years at this point. So I'm like, what? I don't know Australia, where do I find a horses? So I went on Gumtree, maybe not the wisest way to start looking, and I found him and the rest sort of

Warwick Schiller ([00:11:24](#)):

History, Gumtree, few Americans, Gumtree is Craigslist in America. I'm not sure what in other countries it is, but it's where you just post your things you want to sell. It's like a garage sale online. So there's a painting of a Palomino horse behind you. Is that him? That

Heather Lucass ([00:11:41](#)):

Is him, yeah. It sort of doubles up as my art studio. And my idea is when I'm teaching my students online, they can see the progress, but he's been sitting there half finished for about the last two years.

Warwick Schiller ([00:11:55](#)):

Well, let's talk about that. So at some point in time you said you had half of a fine arts degree. Tell me about that.

Heather Lucass ([00:12:01](#)):

Yeah, so I really struggled to know what I wanted to do when I grew up. So like I said to you in my email, I started off with, well, I applied to do physiotherapy and then thought it's got to be something closer with the intention to moving into animal physio. And I thought now I want to be closer to animals off the bat. So went into zoology and quickly learned wasn't quite what I was hoping for. So then I moved to do psychology and law, so that's my undergrad that I actually finished. And then after that, like I said, realized I definitely didn't want to be a lawyer. And the story I told myself was, who wants to see a 21 year old psychologist with no life experience? So I sort of potted around for a couple of years, run a dog training school, worked at my old high school, and then I always had a passion for art.

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

My granddad was an incredible artist and I used to sit on his lap and watch him paint and I went and sort of funded myself through half a fine art degree. But what's funny, mark, the reason I didn't continue is I think I was so entrenched in academia and I could see my ego coming through in the art class and I wasn't ready to be there. So I'd be painting something and I'd be going to my tutor, how is it? How am I doing? And he's like, it is what it is. What are you feeling about? I'm like, no, but give me a great sort of thing. I really wanted that. So I just wasn't in the space to sort of blend art and study. So I separated the two and now it's just purely for fun. And then I went into teaching. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:13:54](#)):

How long have you been in Australia?

Heather Lucass ([00:13:58](#)):

Six years now. When I didn't continue on through art school, I had studied all sciences at a level at college. So I went back to uni to study as a high school chemistry teacher, and I taught in the UK for four

years before getting a little bit just made with that. And then I moved to Thailand for two years and taught that. And then I came over on a summer holiday with the intention of seeing what I thought of Australia. And then I met a boy and the rest history

Warwick Schiller ([00:14:36](#)):

And the rest is history. Six years. Tell me about two years in Thailand. How was that?

Heather Lucass ([00:14:41](#)):

Yeah, it was pretty great. As I said, I was teaching in the UK and I was teaching at some pretty tricky schools and found it quite sort of draining after a few years. So I thought, I'm passionate about teaching, I'm passionate about helping kids. Maybe a change of scene is what needs to happen. And to be honest, I think I'd watched the film, eat, pray, love, and then I got onto a job search website and thought I want a bit of that. I off I went. So I was head of a sixth form college over there, so it was a UK formulated school in terms of the curriculum. And I was teaching chemistry and a bit of psychology over there and it was great. It was really different. It was such an experience and a awesome base to travel on and see a lot more of the world. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:15:31](#)):

So did you have some eat, pray love experiences?

Heather Lucass ([00:15:33](#)):

I think so. Quite a lot of me in a backpack and just booking flights, hopping from one place to another and experiencing different cultures. And I used to have, I'm a bit of a Pinterest board person. I used to have a lot of different things going on of designing my dream home and all of this when I was younger. And every time I'd see something like the big limestone pillars in Thailand or one of the boats I'd like, oh, I'd scroll past it quickly because it bothered me. It was something I knew I needed to do, but I never felt quite ready for. It was a bit daunting. I traveled well and I lived in America for a few months and I've traveled Europe a lot, but going a bit further and on my own was a bit of a challenge and eventually I just couldn't ignore that niggle anymore. So yeah, lots of cool learnings over there for sure.

Warwick Schiller ([00:16:32](#)):

I bet. And you briefly mentioned that in England you were teaching at a tricky school. What exactly is a tricky school?

Heather Lucass ([00:16:42](#)):

I think at the time there were lots of changes in management and lots of behavior problems as we'd call them across the school in terms of engagement, students wanting to learn and students getting in trouble outside of school too. So the sort of undercurrent was quite poor behavior and sort of lack of the word respect in the sense that it's a demand of we should be respected. But there was really a lack of trust I think in the school from the student's point of view in leadership. But I mean, we had a wonderful headmaster who came in as they started and it got better, it really did, but quite low socioeconomic area, quite challenging behavior and students that just didn't really want to learn a lot of them, A lot of the battle wasn't the ability or anything like that. They hadn't had experiences of wanting to be curious and learning for the sake of wanting to learn. I think that was probably the biggest challenge. And I've got, there's lots of reasons why schools are the way they are, but I think for me, as

someone quite sensitive and has a tendency to look at the whole person and the story, I found it quite challenging some of the ways we needed to manage behavior in schools.

Warwick Schiller ([00:18:26](#)):

In the last, quite a few years now, I've been really taking a bit of a deep dive into all things related to trauma. And you think with a low socioeconomic area like that, lot of, do you think there's a lot of trauma looking back at that stuff? Do you think there's a lot of trauma that really gets in the way of those kids succeeding at school?

Heather Lucass ([00:18:51](#)):

Oh, absolutely. I think our definitions of trauma are really broadening and we can include what's often referred to as the big T traumas or the single incidents or the big or prolonged experiences. But for me, a lot of those students certainly had experiences of developmental trauma or interpersonal trauma or just their needs not being met. It's very easy for even well-meaning parents to not meet our needs growing up. Absolutely. So yeah, that was definitely very present.

Warwick Schiller ([00:19:37](#)):

It's interesting you brought that up because you mentioned big T traumas, big T traumas, obvious abuse, blatant abuse, that sort of thing. But the little t traumas like that, just the needs not being met thing. And that's not a reflection on anybody's parents. I think they all are doing the best that they can in information they have, but I think there's kind of like an epidemic of that type of trauma that really affects so many people, the people that think that I had a perfect childhood, but I think I'm all screwed up as anybody else, which I fall under that category right there. And it's interesting when you start to understand what meeting a child's needs actually means. And for me, that work is really understanding that stuff has really influenced my work with the horses too, because it's your presence, it's, there's not a lot to it, but there's a lot to it. Yeah,

Heather Lucass ([00:20:52](#)):

Certainly. I heard Gabriel say recently, if you don't have a parent who can hold you, you'll create a mind that can hold itself and not hold you as in obviously physically hold you, but as in be present for your emotions as they are. And I think that's where a lot of my work with authenticity coming in now, because I think authenticity and connections seem like two needs of ours that would go hand in hand in the sense that we need to be able to be authentic, to truly connect. And I think that that is the case. But as babies, we are, I believe, born into the world as authentic beings, and then we go through this process of learning.

([00:21:41](#)):

If I start being angry or throwing a tantrum, I might get put out in timeout. So what the message is there, okay, when I'm angry, I'm rejected and I need to come back to normal or baseline to be accepted back into the herd, so to speak. And quite quickly we learn to shut down parts of ourselves and to disconnect, maybe we'll have experiences where some feelings are welcome in the home anger's maybe. Okay, but sadness or fear is weak. So we replace that with anger. And I know you'll know a lot about this already, but yeah, certainly we start to move on this path of I guess moving away from our authentic selves. And it's so well celebrated too. Oh, you're such a good kid. Or, and maybe we start to overcompensate those parts of ourselves that are celebrated in our therapeutic model. We talk about self compensation and

self negation, and the self compensation is, okay, I'll come home from school and with a grade A, I get lots of praise and attention.

(00:22:54):

I'll compare that to the time where I cried and I got told I'm too emotional and I fear rejection. I'm going to focus a lot more on this good stuff that gets me connecting and less so on this and losing parts of ourselves in order to stay connected. Because when you're a child, developmentally it is life or death. If we are relying on our adults or caregivers to keep us alive and safe, then of course I'm going to turn towards myself and blame myself for being too much or too this or too that, rather than them as being faulty because that's far too scary for a child to comprehend that parents are limited. And as you said, no blame in that everyone's doing the best they can with what they've got, but it's the reality. And I think Jimmy Card, the comedian, he said, don't ask comedian if they're depressed because a bit of a sort of common sort of thought that a lot of comedians are depressed. He said, ask them who in their family they needed to cheer up. And Robin Williams said the same thing. It's funny, isn't it weird that I made my mom laugh? I had to make my mom laugh. Like, no, actually it's really intelligent and a really smart thing for you to do as a kid to stay connected. But now as the society, we're celebrating what is in fact a coping mechanism really in parts of it, absolutely. It's celebrating, it's healthy, but looking at what's lying under that. Anyway, I'm digressing, but

Warwick Schiller (00:24:37):

No, that's not digressing at all. That's the big thing about these days is understanding that stuff, understanding that you lost parts of yourself in order to please people. I've got some pretty good people pleasing tendencies. It's funny you mentioned gal Mat a minute ago, and I forget what we were, my wife and I were talking about here probably a month or so ago, but she was, so my wife, her dad, her family moved from the area we live in now down south of here to probably four or five hours south of here to a place near Vandenberg Air Force Base. So my wife's father worked in the aerospace industry and he worked for a company that made the rockets that steer the space shuttle, and he worked in the part of that that made the propellant, that powered the rockets to steer the space shuttle.

(00:25:39):

So he got a job down there with, I think it was with Boeing, and they moved down there for a few years, but then they were going to move back up here to a different job as my wife has started high school. So she was what they call a freshman in high school, took me about 15 years to figure out what that word meant because they don't say, I'm in the eighth grade or the ninth grade, or they say they're a freshman or a sophomore. Still have to think about it. And she was telling me recently that this was probably a month ago that when they moved, she had the choice when she moved back to, backed up to this area that her parents said she could go to the high school of the town, the next town over because that's where all her friends from little school were, or she could go to school in this town we live in now and kind of start afresh.

(00:26:33):

And Robin said to me, she said, oh, so I went to one of my teachers and asked him what he thought of the whole thing, and she said that to me and it just kind of, I'm like, I can't imagine doing that the way I grew up. I couldn't imagine doing that. And then I'm listening, not very long after I'm listening to Gabbo mate's book, the Myth of Normal, and he said he was talking to someone about trauma, and this guy said, I didn't have any trauma at all. And Gabor said to him, when you were a child was, they're an adult figure you could go to when you had a problem and be completely honest with them, wow,

Heather Lucass ([00:27:39](#)):

I'm getting feelings.

Warwick Schiller ([00:27:40](#)):

And the guy said, no. And when I heard that, I'm like, wow. It was right after my wife said, yeah, I went to this teacher that I could talk to about things. You know what I mean?

Heather Lucass ([00:28:00](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:28:05](#)):

So there was like when you said gal Matee and you said about the being held thing, and I thought, yeah, well there's another gal Matee story I've got here too.

Heather Lucass ([00:28:15](#)):

That's a really good one. I think there's lots of reasons why we can't do that. And I think one of the first things that I'm keen to do with people is to normalize a lot of that it's an intelligent, it's healthy, it's meeting your needs in the best way you can to withhold at times because your intuition's teaching you to do that and trusting that process. Maybe if you share an emotion or a feeling or that your truth with an adult in your life, you've learned over time that you then end up managing their emotional response to your emotions and it becomes not what it was anymore or it's not safe to. And I think when we can start from a place of understanding, then that's a good baseline from which to launch into learning how that impacts us. Now,

Warwick Schiller ([00:29:18](#)):

If anybody has not read that book, the Myth of Normal by, I would listen to it while I was jogging and I'd be running down the street and my head would be nodding like this. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. It's kind of like a lot of it I'd heard before in the last four or five years, but it was almost like all condensed into one thing. Yes, yes. Then there was things like that bit when you were a child. Did you ever have an adult when you had a problem you could go to and be completely honest with them? And if you didn't, there's a trauma right there. You know what I mean? So anyway. Yeah. So when you said then this all came from the tricky school comment, you were kind of just going to skip over that, and I thought, no, that's where the meat is right there.

([00:30:12](#)):

Why was the school tricky and yeah, interesting stuff. So you're now doing the equine assisted therapy, but you are starting into something. You started up something that I'm pretty interested in and you call it rewilding. Can you tell us about Rewilding? Well, actually, well, you want me to read, you want me to read the short version out that you gave me? And then we can talk about that if you like. Sure. It says, put simply Rewilding is the concept of letting nature take care of itself. It's a belief that you are nature and you have the ability to heal yourself. It's a belief that you have within you the ability to flourish and step into your true potential and uncover your true nature. Passionate about the power of reconnecting with nature, and integrating a whole person approach to healing and personal growth. Heather developed rewilding blending modern psychotherapy theory with the ancient wisdom of the horse Heather demystifies.

[\(00:31:07\)](#):

What it means to rediscover re is in parentheses, discover your true self with horses as teachers and guides dive into key principles that equip you with the knowledge, skills and confidence to step into your true potential rewilding through the wisdom of horses, we often hear the adage, horses are our best teachers. However, the plethora of information and feedback they can offer can be distorted through our lenses, beliefs about ourselves and the world, all limited by our current understanding. Horses are masters of living authentically. Heather supports you to find the safety and freedom to dismantle beliefs she once held as truths, and to utilize the wisdom of horses to support you to deepen your awareness, excuse me, in connection with yourself. Just reiling approach, sorry. Just as an environmental rewilding approach, doesn't look at just one species, but rather the whole ecosystem. Rewilding here looks at all the layers systems and the ways that we respond to our environment that can lead to a movement away from our true self.

[\(00:32:07\)](#):

One of the key principles is the notion that we are born into the world as our authentic selves, as we develop, it's inevitable that to stay connected to others, and we just talked about this, we disconnected from parts of ourselves that are rejected and we overcompensate other parts of which we are celebrated. We can lose connection with ourselves in this process. Rewilding is not a finding of self, but a return to self, a return to your true nature, a return to where your true nature can take care of itself, that is awesome. And what's what I've discovered in the last four or five or six years or however long it's been, is the whole idea of who I thought I was is not who I had been conditioned to be or the way I'd been conditioned to think and look at things is not really the way that true authentic self that I was born with. So yeah, tell us all about this stuff that fascinates me.

Heather Lucass [\(00:33:08\)](#):

Oh, thanks work and thanks for sharing that. It's funny when you said that about I'm not who I thought I was, that quote came to mind. You're not who you think you are and you're not who others think you are. You are who you think others think you are. And I'm butchering it. Yeah,

Warwick Schiller [\(00:33:25\)](#):

I read that in,

Heather Lucass [\(00:33:27\)](#):

I think it's in Jay,

Warwick Schiller [\(00:33:28\)](#):

It was in, I read in Jay, she's think like a monk. Yeah. You are not who you think you are. You are not who I think you are. You are who you think I think you are. Yeah.

Heather Lucass [\(00:33:39\)](#):

That's the one. That's the one. Yeah. I mean, I think the core of it or the why is giving people the knowledge that I wish I had sooner that I've learned through my own personal journey of healing, a continued journey of course, and my journey with my own horses and their healing and my work as a therapist and teacher. So it's just bringing all of those elements together under something that feels like a fitting banner. The Brisbane equine assisted therapy work is very much does what it says on the tint, and it really reaches the needs of our area. And for people that are on the fence about this relatively

new modality, it's not sort of too far into the woo, but rewilding is my space to sort of unleash all of those parts of what I do that can't be explained or they're limited by our current vocabulary.

[\(00:34:47\)](#):

So that's the core of it, is supporting people to have a bit of a blueprint to support them to return to authenticity. And I know that word authenticity sort of banded around, and I was thinking true self authenticity, but really for me, the truth of authenticity is being connected to our body and our emotions and allowing them to inform us that's what it is. It's not this sort of hype, personal development, toxic positivity sort of stuff. That's it. It's core. And I think horses can really teach us a lot about being authentic when the needs are met. They show up in the world authentically, I don't think, and second guess and move into people pleasing.

[\(00:35:45\)](#):

They know how to get their needs met. And there's that diversity there within my head at least. And I see all their personalities shine. And I think how sad it would be if they all tried to be dislike one another. And it's sort of the part of the concept of rewilding. There's lots of reasons for that name, the whole letting nature return to itself and that sense of we do have the ability to heal ourselves with the right conditions, but also that sense of we need diversity in an ecosystem. And that's what being authentic is all about. It's not about pretending to be more like someone else or getting rid of those parts or overcompensating those other parts. So I guess that's it. At its core, I wanted to take my work online in a sense and make it accessible more so than my, I do do work over Zoom and I do a lot of supervision and work with some clients in therapy over Zoom too, but I wanted to try and bring as much of the aliveness of nature online and accessible as they can as well. So that's a big part of it.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:37:05\)](#):

I think I've talked about it before in the podcast, and I've talked about it at clinics and things, but I think one of the cool things about horses is they are nature and they are subject to the rules of nature, which you can't mess with. And it's a little bit like my son's into surfing. The ocean is nature. You can't change it. You have to learn how to read it and go along with it. And the same thing with horses. I just think, I love the term rewilding because working with horses is one way we can get back in touch with nature. You probably know that my wife and I have been doing ice baths for quite a while now, and I've heard the term rewilding in relation to ice baths because our bodies are supposed to be able to withstand this broad range of temperatures. It's made to do that. We evolved that way and then in the last few hundred years, we haven't been too hot and we haven't been too cold for the most part. And you lose a part of how you were supposed to be. Have you ever read a book called Ishmael? I

Heather Lucass [\(00:38:35\)](#):

Have not. No. No. I'm aware of it, but

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

It's an amazing book. But it talks about that about how about 10,000 years ago when we started to grow more food than we can eat at the start of agriculture, how we started living differently than we evolved. And we've been going kind of downhill since then as far as getting away from our true nature. And I think in a small way, anything you can do with nature, but being with horses and interacting with horses is a way to start to get back towards that.

Heather Lucass [\(00:39:14\)](#):

Yeah, certainly. And I think that alludes to some of the latter of what you're saying to some of the things I found difficult at school. We teach kids to sit still and not fidgeted, and can you wait to go to the bathroom and finish your plate? Or this is when you need to eat. And really normal things required of a big environment where we're managing lots of little people, but it's just that moving away from a subtle, moving away from listening to your body, which I think accumulates over time just when you said that about the not being too hot or too cold. But yeah, in relation to being around horses, there's two things I thought of as you were speaking. The first was a lot of what I do where I start in therapy when I'm working with people who do have maybe quite a complex or difficult history of trauma is maybe reframing some of the current ways of coping.

[\(00:40:19\)](#):

So say maybe dissociating is something that they're experiencing, which to me sounds like a very clinical term that says there's something wrong with you. But when we look at, and I know you've talked to this before on the podcast, that that's for a horse shutting down or dissociating or a wild animal that's part of the repertoire of healthy go-to behaviors they have. And maybe that's a really intelligent way of coping, and that's part of the things you had available to you at the time. So again, the lens of looking at that through horses can be quite disarming for people and quite important. And then maybe I'll share a little of some of the horses' stories, their healing, and that can support some hope too. But that's a good place to start. And the second is I've just started looking into Dasher Keltner's work from the Greater Good Science Center.

[\(00:41:19\)](#):

I think he's a professor there and he's researching into awe, and I'm just fascinated in how horses can, well, I think horses can induce a state of awe in humans, especially a herd of galloping horses or when a horse comes and walks up to you at liberty and chooses to be. To me, I think I experience a then and I think that's what a lot of my clients do, and the research around awe and vagal tone and personality traits that show up more or less when we're in the presence of something that induces or is so cool. So it doesn't have to be horses, it's nature as well, like trees, anything that sort of, what's the definition of, or something that transcends your current understanding of the world, something like that. But I think it's sort of where I'm going at the moment in some of my reading

Warwick Schiller [\(00:42:17\)](#):

And the dude's name's. What dasher, something Dasher,

Heather Lucass [\(00:42:20\)](#):

I believe I know that he's a professor at, is it uc, Berkeley. And he runs or is a part dasher,

Warwick Schiller [\(00:42:31\)](#):

Like on Dasher, on pr, on

Heather Lucass [\(00:42:34\)](#):

D A C H E R, I think. Yeah. Oh,

Warwick Schiller [\(00:42:39\)](#):

Okay. I was thinking with an S and I was thinking, wow, must have thought he was going to be faster something rather name him Dasher.

Heather Lucass ([00:42:47](#)):

Yeah, yeah. Greater Good Science Center. I think you can look it up, but there's quite a lot of research on awe and its impacts on people and creating this sense of connectedness or collective effervescence is one of the terms that I loved where it's like when people are joining together with the same sort of intention that the energy that happens, but they found when they exposed, again, I'm probably butchering the researchers, so forgive me, but the core of the story is when they expose people to trees for a period of time and being amongst trees in nature there, and then, I don't know how they measured this, but they found that their tendencies to be narcissistic were reduced significantly. And I think it's like Ralph Walder, Emerson talks about transcendence that happens when we're in front of the ocean and that sort of the removal from the egocentric self to the sort of collective self. And I think maybe that's a part of what shows up for people with horses. I mean, I certainly think that's the case.

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

Yeah, there's something about those things that make you feel small.

Heather Lucass ([00:44:04](#)):

Yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([00:44:05](#)):

There was a really good show on Netflix a few years ago now, and it was called One Strange Rock, I think, and compared by Will Smith I think. But he talked to astronauts who've been off the planet and they all said, once you get off the planet and you look back through the window at this blue thing floating in space, you are not the same ever again.

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

It just gives you a complete perspective, perspective change. And it's something I was going to bring up. You mentioned that before you said that equine assisted therapy in Australia is like for some people don't think that's kind of strange, but there was some news recently out of Australia that the therapy community there is probably is probably further ahead than anywhere in the world where they have just approved psilocybin and M D M A for psychedelic assisted therapy, and I think they actually could be leading the world in that. I messaged, have you heard the podcast with Dr. Wils? You? Yeah. Yeah. So I messaged Will and I'd send him the thing and he's like, that's awesome. He said, Australia's just gone to the front of the pile as far as Sue will had just been in Iceland and had a meeting with, well, him and Gab mate went to Iceland and maybe Rick Doblin did too. And they had a meeting with the head of a major government department that has to do with regulation of things. I think the minister or whoever they were meeting with the guy's wife had recently had a underground M D M A therapy session and thought this was just an amazing tool to help people. But they are very, very interested in that. But yeah, I just wanted to bring that up that if you think equine assisted therapy is people in Australia think that's weird. Australia just went to the top of the pile as far as the psychedelic assisted therapy. And from my underground experience, it is

Heather Lucass ([00:46:41](#)):

So cool. Yeah, I think when I say it, it's pretty out there. I think the important thing to note over here is it's quite unregulated. So I am really fortunate that I'm part of the E P I and I train for them, and we're doing a lot of work to really tidy up the industry, but the word psychologist is very closely regulated, so you can't call yourself a psychologist unless you are one. But the word therapy and the term equine

therapy, you can have a paddock and a pony and it's pat pony.com and you call yourself an equine therapist. So I think that's why there's some skepticism around it. It's getting, there's a lot of, yeah, so there's a lot of organizations doing a lot of good stuff, but in terms of finding funding for it, it can be challenging. But we're really blessed that everyone that works for me and comes through the training, they're all mental health or allied health specialists already. And then they do the training to integrate the horses and they are therapists, but that's not always the case. And although people may have good intentions when it comes to offering the term therapy and holding space for people maybe that do have trauma, I think there's a lot of risk there of what they may be unintentionally doing.

Warwick Schiller ([00:48:03](#)):

Yeah, I didn't realize I was unregulated there. As far as I know here in America, you have to have a psychiatrist, a psychologist in order to call it equine assisted therapy. And Australia's a bit of a nanny state. I didn't think they'd let that one. It is. I didn't think they'd let that one. They've got a rule for everything there.

Heather Lucass ([00:48:29](#)):

Oh yeah, absolutely. But I think it is becoming more a lot cleaner, and I think there's a lot of people doing really good work in the industry of clarifying the terms, but it's just some of those, because some of the phrases aren't regulated and there's no sort of body to enforce that. I think that's where some of the gray areas come in. But yeah, it's growing, so I think that will change.

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

That's cool. So let's get back to you Rewilding. I'm really excited about this whole rewilding thing. What was the catalyst for you to go, I need to do, there's more to this. What was the catalyst for that?

Heather Lucass ([00:49:20](#)):

The reality is it goes right back to my own lived experience of both having horses from quite a young age. I was quite blessed and their ability to show up as in how and when they needed them the most. And I've got quite a history of quite significant trauma, myself and my horses really were my safe space. And so that's the undercurrent that sort of followed me through my journey. And when I was teaching, I was always moving back into counseling roles and moving back to horses. Although I might've tried to move away, they always came back. So there was that intrinsic sort of knowing that the horses brought to light in my own journey, that's been quite a fuel for probably me going into this work and then seeing their own transformations through almost applying very similar work that I do when I'm working with clients who have trauma to horses.

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

And it's a lot of what you do, and that's how I found your work and seeing the outcomes of that and realizing when I start talking about this stuff and using drops of my own story, not the details of it, but therapeutically saying, when I first tried to do a body scan, I was like, well, feel your legs. I was like, okay, sure. It was one of my supervisors has a lovely way of saying it. It's like handing you a blank piece of paper and saying, Hey, can you just read what's on that and no, and there's nothing there. No, just read it. If you could just read that, that'd be great. And that was sort of my experience. And when I shared little drops of that or the fact that it took me 10 sessions with the psychologist of sharing my story from birth to now, how else could you possibly help or understand me until you've heard everything before, I'd let them maybe even do some somatic work.

[\(00:51:38\)](#):

And even then it was like, okay, this is a waste of time. I lived in my head. So that was my space. So all this body stuff, and when I can share drops of that, of my experience and how that has changed now and it's changing, I can share that. Then that's when people look you in the eye for the first time. And that's when people sit up and go, oh, okay, you're not just talking to me from behind a textbook or behind your degrees or whatever it might be. There's some shared understanding there. And Peter Levine says, living with trauma is, what did he call it? Like a living death or hell on earth, but resolved trauma is a gift from the gods. And I think the experiences I've had have helped me to be who I am and to have the gifts or the insight or the ability to attune to clients and to, I hope present this stuff in a way that's relatable through story and through the story of horses too. And I get curious sometimes whether there's parallels in that with my own story and Dakotas and whether when you sort of move through the work you did with Sherlock, your understanding of, as you've talked about, what it's like to be shut down, really it gives that lived experience, it gives that different level of understanding. You can step into that. And that's what I try to do in this work. I dunno if that answers the question, but that's the start of it anyway.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:53:19\)](#):

No, that's good. Yeah, it was interesting you said when they say, what do your legs feel like? I don't know. When I first started going to a therapist, they say, and how does it make you feel? I'm like, I can tell you how it makes me think. I can tell you what I think of it, but I can't actually feel anything of it. It's, it's a rewilding, isn't it? Because when, who we used to be, we were in our bodies. We didn't have all that. We weren't not listening to our bodies. There was a book I was reading here recently, I can't remember which one it was, but it was about being your body. But they were talking about, they were talking about Wall Street brokers, brokers, stockbrokers on Wall Street and the ones that made the most money, and they asked them questions. And it turned out the one question they asked them all was, can you feel your own heartbeat in your body?

[\(00:54:26\)](#):

The ones that the most money could all feel their own heartbeat in their body. And the ones that couldn't feel their heartbeat made a lot less money, made a lot less good decisions. So it was more about intuition, like decisions that they look at a screen and they go, boom, I'm going to do buy that. And there's no time to stop research, calculate, whatever. But the people that can make more of those good decisions could feel their heartbeat. And the ones that couldn't feel their heartbeat made a lot less of those. I'm like, whoa. Was a cool little experiment. Yeah. But yeah, it's interesting that you brought that up that you couldn't feel your legs. I talked before about the ice baths, and I used to hate being cold, and I still, it's not like I enjoy being cold and people go, oh, I couldn't do an ice bath.

[\(00:55:23\)](#):

I hate being cold. I'm like, Hey, I hate being cold. I used to hate being cold too. But I think the thing about being cold is you feel your body. You can feel your body when you're in an ice bath, you're in an ice bath and you can feel it. You have to feel it. You can't not feel it. And I think that's why I used to not being cold because it made me be in my body and have sensations. And it's funny, you get with the ice baths, you get to where you're aware that there is a major sensation in your body, but you no longer judge it. You don't judge it as cold. It's just I'm feeling a very strong sensation, but you don't buy into the fact that it's cold, which means I should shiver and it should be bad and I shouldn't like it. It's just like I'm experiencing a very strong sensation right now. That's so cool. And

Heather Lucass ([00:56:23](#)):

I think that's one of the core pieces of horse wisdom that I love teaching so much is horses use their feelings as information about how they're responding to the current environment. They don't judge it. A horse doesn't feel the feeling of fear and then think, oh crap, it's probably just a plastic bag. I don't want to embarrass myself. I should probably just hold this in. They look up, they orient to it, they move as they need to. They do what they need to do. They metabolize their energy, listened to the need, and they go back to grazing. But as humans, we hold and we hold and we smile and nod, and we do a lot of those things through necessity and intelligence. But we end up, I think, suppressing a lot through that. And I think it's Gabbo, again, big fan of his that talks about suppressing Angus, trying to hold a beach ball underwater. Have you had him talk to that? And the energy, and also I think about the metaphor of it just popping up unexpectedly. And that's often what happens when we're suppressing emotions. We just go through the day, holding it, holding it, holding it in. We get home and there's dishes in the sink and boom, there's a safe space and a safe person to unleash all of that we've been holding. And it's not about the dishes in the sink, it's about that almost sort of trigger stacking, but with feelings.

Warwick Schiller ([00:57:49](#)):

Yes, trigger stacking with feelings. Hey, how about we get to some of the questions that you chose because I think your answers to a lot of times with people, by the time I get to the questions, I've almost answered them all, but I don't think you have. So let's get into them. So your first one you chose was what was your biggest failure and how has it helped you?

Heather Lucass ([00:58:13](#)):

I think it has to be not being able to toughen up. That has to be probably it. I am quite a sensitive person, and I used to see that as a burden. I used to get those messages or You're too emotional, you're too this. Take everything to heart and so on. And I feel like I've been able to turn that burden into a gift and use the skills of that. And I tried. I really tried to push a lot of it down and toughen up and grow a thicker skin and all of those things. And what it did, as Brene Brown says, it numbed out everything the good as well as the tough thing. So life lost a lot of its vivid colors when I started doing that. And I think a big catalyst of mean horses have played a huge role in my life from when I was young up until now, of course.

([00:59:20](#)):

But I think there was a lot of my early years of training and being with my horses. It was a very traditional riding school and livery yard, and there were lots, I've done a lot of work on forgiveness of how I didn't stand up for my horses at the time, but when it was just, when was just me and her, Molly, my first pony, that's where the sort of magic happened. But it was when other people came in and we train a lot of horses through fear, I think is what's really happening for a lot of people. And when I could strip away that and just be with her, then I could see the gifts of being sensitive. And I think I want to make mention that I'm really trying not to get emotional now, but I'm really grateful for your journey and your openness and sharing that.

([01:00:17](#)):

Because when I bought Dakota, I'd had a 10 year break from horses, which is another story in itself. But I bought him over here and I moved to a adjustment and there were lots of very traditional people around there. And I would get the message of, you are letting this horse walk all over you. This, you need wet saddle blankets. You need to tell 'em who's boss. And I just knew that something wasn't right. I'd done a lot of work personally during that time, but then I hadn't translated it to horses. I'd been away

from horses, and then I returned to horse and I thought, I can't do the things that I used to see happening. I can't, there must be a different way. And then I found your work. And it really is a space where people can see someone else doing it, someone who's in the spotlight doing it and has a lot of knowledge and skills. And it gave me the permission to be kinder to myself and kinder to my horses. So I'm grateful for that. But yeah, my long circling back to the answer, I think really I don't want that success without the failure because I've felt what it's like to try and toughen up and I wouldn't want that anymore. So I embrace it and I enjoy the gifts of being sensitive.

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

Very cool. What do you do, or where do you go to relieve stress or recharge your batteries? Or what do you do to find motivation?

Heather Lucass ([01:01:49](#)):

So it's funny, when I was returning into this field and then bringing horses in, they're very much my hobby as well as my job. And I work and live on site, and I work with the horses that I ride and train personally in therapy. And there's like two conflicting sayings like, don't make your hobby your job, but then do a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life. And I was sort of sitting between the two, and the two are very different. But really recharging for me looks like being in nature and being with the horses. I do a lot of meditating when I'm out with the horses and just hanging out with them, just being with them. And I feel like after a while, nature starts to move differently around me when I'm in that space. And that's where I'm sort of plugged in and recharging really. So a lot to thank the horses for and sitting under a tree as well. All that awe stuff I guess I talked about before, I think.

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

Yes, very much. Okay, next question is, what's one common myth about your profession or field that you want to debunk? And I always love when people choose this question because it's great to get that feedback from people such as yourself in a field that can give us that. Because sometimes I'm even surprised at the answer like, oh, I thought that was true, or I thought that was like that.

Heather Lucass ([01:03:20](#)):

Yeah. Well, it's funny, I had an answer and then I listened to, is it Linda Kahan? I hope I'm pronouncing her surname right. And her answer to this was, don't leave your emotions at the gate. I was like, damnit, that was going to be mine. So I had to think of something different. But that's a key message of being able to show up authentically. But in this work specifically, the more and more I do, and especially in the rewilding space, I think the myth that healing and personal growth or healing and personal development are two separate things. I actually think they're one of the same. And depending on where you are in your healing journey and the upbringing you've had and your belief systems about those words, the world and so on, that may or may not resonate with you. And I'll add the caveat that yes, I'm a qualified therapist so I can dance the line between the two.

([01:04:20](#)):

Because if we're working on here and now stuff going forward and more of a coaching space and more about personal growth, if things as they often do are uncovered from trauma or from childhood experiences, I can go there with the client and that's okay. I'm fortunate in having that ability to sort of dance both paths. But I think healing really is finding the safety to be able to step back into authenticity. That's what I think healing is in a very short way, and I think personal growth and development is the

same. It's not. We talk about in our model the movement away from the ideal self model and that sort of splitting off of parts of ourselves and one of Meg's key theories underpinning what we do is the paradoxical theory of change and the tenant being, the more we try to change, the more we stay the same.

[\(01:05:23\)](#):

Because really if I'm thinking, okay, I just need to get rid of this part of me say that's sensitive or this whatever it may be, I'm continuing and perpetuating that splitting off from parts of myself. I'm not integrating the whole, so to me, it's all one and the same. And healing isn't sitting and wallowing in your story if you haven't had someone hear your story and it feels safe and you are able, and it's important for you to do that. Absolutely. There's space for that in a way that's titrated from a regulated place where you're feeling safe, but we can also start from where you are and trust that what needs to will unfold. And I'll offer clients both ways of working. Like I said earlier, I spent 10 sessions with my psychologist going, I was born here and dah, dah, dah, dah. And the way we went before I felt like she had any enough understanding to be able to support me.

[\(01:06:21\)](#):

Whereas some people, I'm the 10th therapist they've seen, and I don't want to retell my story. I want to start from here and from where I am now, and that's when I really trust that what needs to unfold will, and I wonder if it's probably a lot of the same with you and the horses. Once people feel that they can step into a safe relationship and they are heard and where they're accepted for who they are, a lot of the other stuff falls away. They may come with problems that are day-to-day or practical or repeating patterns in relationships. And once we actually get to that space of feeling safe, connected, and really seen, then a lot of that other stuff kind of falls away. And that's been my experience of working with the horses and the way that you work with horses or as close as I can get to that.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:07:17\)](#):

Yeah, it's funny in the last few years with say with our younger horses like Ruperts now too and doesn't know anything because I haven't really done much training with them and I haven't done a lot of connection stuff. It's not like I go and spend hours and hours with 'em every day. But we just moved, so we've bought a new place that we're going to be moving into hopefully by April. It's a 42 acre place about two hours south of here, and we want to start having, a lot of times at clinics, people have a transformational experience with their horse just trying to me help 'em with their horse, but they didn't sign up for a transformational experience. And what we want to do is have people be aware they're going to have a bit of a transformational experience. And so we want to combine the horses with that.

[\(01:08:17\)](#):

Not equine-assisted therapy, but we want, Robin's probably going to lead people through Icebar and we're probably have a yoga instructor come in and help us out and I'm going to help with horses, things like that. Where was it going with this? Oh yeah. So we went to move those young horses down there, here recently. And I had Rupert when he was younger, I'd loaded him once in a trailer and how I worked on that was I parked the trailer where there was some grass and I just would lead him up to it and sit on the back of it. It doesn't have a ramp, it's just got a step and I'd just sit on the step and let him eat the grass for 20 minutes and I'd put him away. I did that for four or five times in a row and then one day I walked up there and then instead of sitting down, I just stepped in and moved into the trailer a little bit and he just looked at me and just hopped in.

[\(01:09:05\)](#):

I didn't teach him to get in the trailer, but he'd been in there, I think he'd only been in there once. And then I decided he was living in a pasture with our young horse, Bodhi and the mother and another horse Pete. But anyway, I thought I better start working on loading these horses to move them down to the other place. And so I put the four of those in the round pen. I backed the trailer up to the round pen and open the gate and I just threw some hay in the trailer. And so Rupert, he jumped in there to eat the hay and bodie's like, well, what are you doing? So he jumped in there with Rupert and Boddie was very suspicious f to start with, so they got in there so easily I thought, okay, well I don't really need to work on that too much.

[\(01:09:48\)](#):

So the day we went to actually go to load them, we have the horses in the round pen and Robin is backing the trailer up. So I've got to swing the door of the round pen open as the gate of the round pen open as she backs up. Okay. So I can't just back up and then open. And so I've got Rupert and Bodhi, so the two year old and the Ling with a hol and lead rope on 'em, so they don't run out the gate when I open it and the back of the trailer is open. And as Robin's backing up, I opened the gate, those two clowns jumped in the trailer while it was backing up, it was piled in. I'm like, oh, it's going to video this guys. But anyway, so I had people say, Hey, my horse, I get in the trailer, how do I get 'em in the trailer?

[\(01:10:36\)](#):

And I was like, or picking up feet. They're like, I get that a lot. How do you have a video on picking up a horse's feet who haven't had their feet picked up before? And so I've got 'em with probably four or five folds like the videos of doing that. And I said, well, I could direct you to the video, but it probably won't work because you haven't done all the stuff with the horse before I got to that time. It's not like I did a lot of work with them, but I tell people that in order for a horse to stand on three legs, they have to feel safe because they're giving up one of their survival mechanisms. And I think a lot of people have trouble with their horse's feet because the horse doesn't feel safe and then doesn't feel safe around them.

[\(01:11:29\)](#):

And then the person, they don't feel safe around. They want to try to pick one of the feet up off the ground. And you could say it's a foot picking up problem, but it's not a foot picking up problem. It's like you were talking about what led me down this whole convoluted conversation here that what you said is it's not about, once you get that attunement and that connection, you don't need a lot of techniques. And I'm not saying you should only commune with nature with your horses, but when it does come to the training part, it makes these days, the training is a whole lot easier because you're not dealing with a horse that doesn't want to be near you. You're not dealing with a horse that doesn't want to be around you. You're not dealing with a horse that's worried about anything you do, and so you don't have to really desensitize 'em to things like I have and a lot of people have in the past. Sorry, that was a big old, long winded.

Heather Lucass [\(01:12:25\)](#):

Not at all. It reminds me of that sense of something I bang on about in our practices. It's a bottom up approach to change. We can't think ourselves into safety cognitively. It's got to come from information coming in to our body. It is not a conscious process. So same with clients, as with when I'm working with my horses, if they don't feel safe and by safe, it's often connected and accepted as we are. Then anything I'm saying isn't really, it's sort of a patch effect. It's not really going to work until we've got that sense of being seen and being connected to. And from that place we can create safety in the body. We can do a lot exercises that we do and but there's also trust in that too. And that's sort of the fuel that

sits under, I guess. And as you said, a lot of the other, it's not about the other stuff. It's melts away often.

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:29](#)):

Yeah. It's just amazing how much you don't have to do with the other stuff when you start out with that connection trust. I mean, you still have to train 'em to do things. If someone says, oh, I only connect with my horses, so how's your left to flying lead change, there are things that you have to teach a horse to do and there are technical things, you know what I mean? But I don't think one or the other's the holy grail.

Heather Lucass ([01:13:58](#)):

No. It's like you've got to leave a bit of space for the magic as well, I think. I dunno if that makes sense, but Oh yeah, yeah. The two combined.

Warwick Schiller ([01:14:12](#)):

Yeah, the two coupon. Okay. Next question. What quality do you admire in a person?

Heather Lucass ([01:14:18](#)):

So I think it has to be the willingness, openness, and bravery to show up as they really are. The ability to show the world some of who you really are. And to be brave enough to do that. I think that requires doing the work to be able to get out of your own way, to really understand the belief systems, patterns, ways of seeing the world that might be, I think as I've talked on before, helping you to sort of deviate away from your true selves, but those masks that we were of overcompensating and promoting the parts of ourselves that are celebrated and those parts of ourselves that we hide away because they've been shamed historically or whatever the stories are that we've been told and we've integrated now as beliefs when we can start to strip those away. And I see people who are really the true selves.

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

That's something I admire. And I think you can feel it in a person too, someone who's really comfortable in their own skin and has a sense of who they are. But I think with that, it has to go hand in hand with compassion for people who can't do that. And certainly as you spoke to earlier, people pleasing, made up a large part of my personality for a while. I was quite a chameleon depending on who I was around because I didn't want to rock the boat. And that took a lot of work. So I have compassion and there's no judgment for being there, but it's something else when you're around someone who can show the true selves, I think.

Warwick Schiller ([01:16:13](#)):

Yeah. During that you mentioned, you said someone who can show the true selves, and then you said someone who's done the work and it's almost a chicken and an egg thing, isn't it? Like usually someone who has that, what they call the Jonathan Field vibe about 'em, that real open sort of vibe. There's no shields up there. They've done the work. You know what I mean? I dunno if you've listened to the podcast with Jonathan, but I'd been around him a bit and knew that this was a special human being and we'd chatted about different things, but it's not till I had him on the podcast and he talked about, I knew, I knew he had an accent where he lost his hand and it was hanging by a thread and they put the thing back on. But what I didn't realize was all the therapy he had, he told me about a lot of therapy, but I thought he meant physical therapy after that. It took a year to get his hand to work or something rather. But the actual therapy working through, I imagine his life kind of flashed before his eyes. He

almost, they said if he was another two miles from hospital, he would've bled out. He said the blood was just slosh around the floor of the truck taking him to the hospital. But after he told me all that in the podcast, I'm like, oh, that's why. He's like, he's, he's done the work. He's been to the dark places.

Heather Lucass ([01:17:42](#)):

Yeah, certainly I read something recently that talks about how mediocre situations or not so bad situations can be worse than those really dark moments or those sort of transformational moments because we can sit in those not so bad spaces and we can pretend that everything's okay. But I think a lot of transformation does come out of those moments where we maybe you do hit rock bottom or we can't cope, or there's something that's life changing that requires us to show up in a different way. But yeah, I did listen to that podcast and he's a pretty cool guy. Pretty cool story.

Warwick Schiller ([01:18:30](#)):

Yeah. I mean, he's got this in person, he's got this vibe. I

([01:18:34](#)):

Got a very cool vibe. And it's funny, when I did the podcast a couple of years ago where I answered all the questions, my answer to that question was the same as yours. Oh, really? What quality? My in person was someone who's, and I think I talked about Jonathan Phil, I said, someone who's just open when you talk to 'em, they're just like, they're right there. And you can tell that, oh, there's no shit there. They've worked through all this stuff. And then like you said, no judgment on people who haven't. But that's the funny thing about learning about all this stuff in the last number of years is now when I'm talking to somebody or somebody does something or whatever, I can be less triggered by it and go, oh yeah, I see what, I dunno exactly what it was that happened to you, but there's some things that happened to you that made you respond to that thing in that way. And you almost, it gives you a lot of compassion for people. Instead of being pissed off about things that people do or judgmental or whatever, you can kind of understand how they might be the way it's like we've been talking about gal mate, have you ever read his book in the Realm of Hungry Ghost? Yes.

Heather Lucass ([01:19:55](#)):

Yeah, long time ago. But

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:56](#)):

Yes. So he was a doctor in part of Vancouver that's got a lot of drug addicted people, and he talks about that if there's addiction, there's trauma and it's all rooted in trauma. And I grew up, my parents, like people that take drugs are druggie. They're just bad people. And so you have this impression of someone's an addict of some sort. That's a judgment. That's a judgment of 'em instead of, now if I hear someone's an addict or whatever, you think, oh my goodness, I wonder what terrible things happen to you to make you end up that way. And I think as Russell Brand says, we are all on the addiction scale somewhere.

Heather Lucass ([01:20:51](#)):

Indeed, and you probably had a lot of coping privilege and that sort of concept too around addictions and how we cope. But I very much should have formulated it through an attachment model and a way of getting our needs met in the best way that we can with the tools or resources we've got available. And I was actually talking to a guy I work with training my horses. He's pretty cool. He's one of those,

you talk about those horse trainers that are out there that no one knows about and they're really cool. I went to one of his clinics just by chance, and we got there and he's like, right, well, we're going to start off with a pineal gland meditation. And I'm like, okay.

Warwick Schiller ([01:21:35](#)):

I

Heather Lucass ([01:21:36](#)):

Had such a cool experience there, but he was talking about he Who is that? That's Kim Daly. He is a wonderful

Warwick Schiller ([01:21:43](#)):

Guy. Oh, okay. I was thinking it was going to be him. Oh, really? When you said you're going to start out with a pine or gland meditation, like I bet it's Kim Daley.

Heather Lucass ([01:21:49](#)):

Yeah, he's a cool book. So he's helping me restart Dakota, the Bronch course. Now we're having some really cool things going on with him and thinking about things and then them happening and all of that sort of stuff, but I won't digress too much. But yeah, he sort of talked quite openly about his own story and being thankful for those things because what would be the, if we didn't have that, if the addiction or the something else or the coping mechanism wasn't there, then what else? So going back full circle to what I said about dissociation and shutting down and comparing Dakota's story, that's one of those necessary and intelligent ways in which we respond to try and meet our needs the best.

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:36](#)):

Okay. I got one more question for you, and I love it when people choose this question, what is your relationship like with fear?

Heather Lucass ([01:22:42](#)):

For a long time, I used to do everything within my power to avoid feeling afraid. I had quite a serious accent on a horse because I wasn't listening to her and I was letting my ego run the show when I was about 18, 20 and trying to retrain the next resource, and I was just sort of trying to toughen up. So that's where that sort of story sits. And then I moved away from horses completely because I said I was too busy. What you need to do, I've got teaching to do. And really it was about avoiding fear. So I've got quite a history of trying to avoid feeling afraid, but now I'm thankful for it. I recognize that my brain is preoccupied with keeping me alive, and that's a good thing, but it also can lead me to recognize things that I might be organizing the field in a way that supports me to feel more fearful than I am.

([01:23:44](#)):

So what I've learned to do over time is really hold onto that fact of knowing that my mind's job is to keep me alive and that wonderful reticular activating systems, doing a good job of letting in what I focus on and noticing all of those bits and pieces. And really, I think it's the most disarming thing is approaching fear or any sort of feeling really with a sense of open curiosity. It's quite disarming, is this based on the here and now? And if so, what do I need to do to mobilize to keep myself safe? What's the important information? Or is there a chance that this is based on the there and then, and that something's being activated or triggered and really I am safe? And if that arrives, then I'll sit with it. I'll

welcome whatever, wherever it comes in my body, I'll be with it, breathe into it, give it some space and see what happens next. So I think it's been a journey to learn, to welcome fear, to build the safety, I think to be with it and to sit with it and to hold it and to be able to sort of question it and get curious. But that's sort of how I approach fear now.

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:10](#)):

Yeah, it's interesting you're talking about that. My wife has always suffered from anxiety, and for the longest time she did a lot of work on techniques to stop her from being anxious. But then the next level above that was sitting with when it comes, sitting with the feeling instead of making the feeling go away, not rejecting the feeling, but sitting with and feeling, what am I feeling right now in my body? Yeah, I think that's kind a paradigm shift when you get there. Have you ever read a book by one of your countrymen named Aunt Middleton?

Heather Lucass ([01:25:49](#)):

I don't think so, no. Have you

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:50](#)):

Heard of Aunt Middleton? No. Actually he was in the s a s.

Heather Lucass ([01:25:54](#)):

Okay.

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:56](#)):

He's a British guy who was in the s a s and did all sorts of missions in Afghanistan and stuff. So then he's, because he had a reality TV show where he'd take people through that sort of training. But anyway, he's written several books and one of 'em is called The Fear Bubble, and he talks about when he'd be back from Afghanistan at home in London or wherever he lived with his wife and son, and he'd have dreaded about going back again. And then when he was on the transport plane flying back there, he'd have dread about what was going to happen when he got there. And then when he got to the base, which he says is one of the safest places in the world for a human being to be, it's the most heavily armed. And you'd have this fear and dread and then they were flying and the helicopter to the mission, you'd have this fear and dread, and then they'd be marching to the place and you'd have fear and dread, and then you'd finally get to the place.

([01:26:44](#)):

And basically what he was saying was, the only time I really need to be afraid is when I'm going to kick that door in. And there's an armed guy with an AK 47 on the other side of it that before that I'm not in danger. There is, there's no reason to be worried about then because not in the here and now you're in the future. And he said he'd spend all his time worried about what's going to happen when he kicks the door open, even when he's six months away from kicking the door open and half a world away from kicking the door open. So to thing, it was a fascinating sort of book. We've covered a number of different subjects here today, but there's something I wanted to bring up that is at the bottom of your emails. So we've been emailing back and forth trying to organize the time to do this, and at the bottom of when you send an email at the bottom of your email that says, Brisbane Equine Assisted Therapy would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first people and

traditional custodians of the land in which we meet and work, we value their cultures identities and continuing connection to country waters kin and community.

[\(01:27:56\)](#):

We pay our respects to elders past, present, and emerging are committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of Australian Torres Strait Islanders Young people by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive. And we talked a little bit about this before we came on the podcast, but it's acknowledging, basically acknowledging colonialization and what was taken from. And it's not just there everywhere, but it's really acknowledging colonialization. And the reason I wanted to bring it up, because I think a lot of horse training in the past has been a bit like colonialization. Some of it's like slavery. Some of it's like slavery, but then you get to the better horse training. It's still a bit like criminalization, where as Leslie Desmond said on the podcast, if no is not an option, yes, has no value. And once you really start to, I think first heal your own stuff because then your perspective changes.

[\(01:29:24\)](#):

That thing in the bottom of your email, probably 10 years ago would've read that, and I'm like, what a crock of shit. You know what I mean? So your perspective changes over time, but I think once you start to work through your stuff and have a different perspective, at least for me, it gives you a perspective, quite a different perspective on the horses. And I actually shared a thing on Facebook the other day, probably, let's see if I can bring it up here. It was a meme that I saw that I said was very applicable to horses too. The meme said, as you heal, your attractions change too. Toxicity stops looking like excitement and peace stops looking like boredom.

Heather Lucass [\(01:30:09\)](#):

Absolutely. And

Warwick Schiller [\(01:30:10\)](#):

It's just unknown. The post that I said was, this is the same with our horses. As we heal, our interactions with their horses become different, our expectations of the become different and our interpretations of their behaviors become different. A lot of times the activities we choose to do with our horses is related to trauma. And as we heal our traumas, the activities we choose become different.

Heather Lucass [\(01:30:34\)](#):

Yeah, I think one of the most important things that I teach is what feels familiar, feels safe. So if some sort of chaos, some sort of fear, some sort of unknown uncertainty, lack of safety feels familiar to you, then it's going to feel safe, even if it isn't. So when you talked about as we start to heal, that does strip away and that no longer is something we're seeking or needing to be able to keep the status quo and it feels really, really safe. I recall a psychologist I worked with asked me to do a sharp inhale and hold it and really hold that sort of tension in my tummy. And then she asked me to sort of fully exhale and to let myself go really sort of Boppy. And she said, which one feels most familiar? And I was like, it's the former. And we really got into it, and I did quite a lot of sematic work with her, and it took time for me to stop feeling sick when I was letting my body relax.

[\(01:31:42\)](#):

It really did. So what's not familiar feels unsafe, even if actually it's an unhealthy or an outdated sort of pattern. But yeah, going back to that message, I'm on quite a journey of educating myself to be sort of, I guess working in the way I can with the land and community here that really honors the roots and

knowing that a lot of what we're sort of circling back to, and even my Rewilding stuff really sort of touches on it. And I'm not from Australia originally. I'm from the uk, and there's a lot of learning for me in that. And putting that on the bottom of my email, I even sort went through a process of thinking am I don't want to just sort of tick a box of putting a little statement at the bottom of my email, and that's where it starts and ends, and I'm doing my, what do

Warwick Schiller ([01:32:43](#)):

They call that?

Heather Lucass ([01:32:46](#)):

The signature or the acknowledgement of

Warwick Schiller ([01:32:50](#)):

No, no, no. Doing it.

Heather Lucass ([01:32:52](#)):

Oh,

Warwick Schiller ([01:32:53](#)):

What is it called? There is, it's a two banger word. It's like toxic positivity, but it's not. It is. No, it's escaping me too. Messing up the podcast. I can't think of this thing. It is. I can't think of it. You guys at home will probably know what I'm talking about. It's like going through the motions of that, but you're not really doing anything about it.

Heather Lucass ([01:33:23](#)):

So I'm mindful of that not being where that work starts and ends to me, and really honoring the roots of a lot of the things that I'm starting to journey back to now are really things that have been out there for a long time that I'm just starting to put my own words to. So there's not,

Warwick Schiller ([01:33:47](#)):

Yeah, I've got a number of books that people have sent me or I bought on Aboriginal wisdom and just indigenous practices, and it's like these people lived for the longest time in cohabitation with nature. They got along with nature. Yeah. There's just so much we've got to learn about that sort of

Heather Lucass ([01:34:11](#)):

Stuff. Certainly.

Warwick Schiller ([01:34:16](#)):

So tell me, you told me before that you and Kathy Price are up to something pretty cool pretty soon. What are you guys up to?

Heather Lucass ([01:34:22](#)):

Yeah, I'm pretty excited about this. So I've worked with Kathy sort of personally and with my horses quite a bit. And I think maybe me coming from that science background too, and being a bit sort of slow

to dip a toe into all things woo or different, they sort of really resonated with Kathy's story. So she's done some wonderful work for me personally. I'm with my horses and I knew she was coming over here and I wondered if we could sort of catch up in some way. And then I thought, why don't we host something? I feel like when my work at its best, it's not really me that's doing it. It comes through me. It just happens and it's not, and I wondered what it would be like for me to combine some of the knowledge, the teachings practices, the somatic stuff from the Rewilding program that I've developed and Kathy's work, and we're calling it a Return to Self, and it's going to be two days at my facility here. So sort of, yeah, 40 minutes north, 50 minutes north of Brisbane City, I think first weekend in September. It's just going to be a small group of people, rewilding and returning to self, and they get to meet Kathy over here, which I'm so excited about because I'm a bit of a fan of, oh, so

Warwick Schiller ([01:35:48](#)):

That's the weekend before our podcast summit in Melbourne? Yes,

Heather Lucass ([01:35:51](#)):

That's correct. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:35:53](#)):

Yeah, because why Kathy's coming over here. Yeah. Perfect. That'll be fun. So how people find more out, Heather Lucas and what you are doing?

Heather Lucass ([01:36:04](#)):

Yeah, well, thanks. Well, I've got my Brisbane equine assisted therapy work sits under Brisbane equine assisted therapy.net.au, and we are also on Facebook and Instagram there. That's the practice that's been running for the longest time. So there's a lot of stuff and ways to contact me, work with me there. We have the half day retreats, and they're also quite selfishly run this little club called The Connection Collective, where groups of like-minded horse people can come together and sit and talk all things polyvagal theory and horses or whatever it might be. But really probably most of the work we've talked to here, we'll sit under the Rewilding, so it's just rewilding.au. So no other bits. And I've got a little Instagram for that and a bit of a Facebook page, but really that's just being born at the moment, so it's growing. I've got a pilot group for the online course that's full, but my hope is to run a live version of the course and then a sort of self-study version. And there's some other opportunities like coaching and other bits and pieces too, but probably the Rewilding stuff is what I would imagine where I'll imagine you'll follow, your listeners might want to go to, if they're interested in connecting. They're super welcome. I love hearing people's stories and journeys and connecting, so that's super welcome.

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:35](#)):

That's awesome stuff. Well, I think you're doing amazing stuff out there in the world. Keep on doing it, and thank you so much for joining me on the Journey on Podcast.

Heather Lucass ([01:37:44](#)):

Thanks so much, Warrick. It's been a pleasure.

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:45](#)):

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You guys at home. Oh, you're welcome. You guys at home. Thanks so much for listening. We'll catch you on the next episode.

Speaker 1 ([01:37:54](#)):

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.