

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

Good day everyone. Welcome back to The Journey on podcast. I'm your host, Warwick Schiller. If you're a bit of a regular listener on the podcast, you'd know that I read quite a bit and I'm interested in a lot of different subjects. And I was recently reading a book called Sapiens, a brief history of humankind by a historian named Yuval Noah Harri, and fascinating book. And it really got me thinking about how the way we live these days and the way we evolved to live are two totally different things. And I've recently read a book by gal mate called The Myth of Normal, and it's a lot about how a lot of the mental health issues and stuff we have in society these days, and a big part of that had to do with how we don't live, how we used to live, and how we evolved to live.

([00:01:40](#)):

It really got me thinking about a lot of the things he's talking about in that book were about how Hunter gatherers did things, how we did when we were hunter gatherers. So I wanted to have a bit of a conversation about Hunter-Gatherers society. And so I thought, well, I'll contact my friend Rupert Isaacs. And Rupert has been on the podcast before, and Rupert has spent quite a bit of time with the Koan Bushman of the Kalahari, and who are some of the last remaining hunter gatherer tribes. And so I thought I'd have Rupert on here to have a bit of a discussion about hunter gatherers, how we evolved to live, and what Rupert suggestions Rupert might have as to how we can do things a bit differently to help us get along better in our day-to-day lives. So here is my conversation with the amazing Rupert Isaacson. Rupert Isaacson's in the house.

Rupert Isaacson ([00:02:44](#)):

Hey, hey, hey, how's it going? Very, very, very happy and honored as always. A little bit astonished that you even want to hear from me, but I'll do my best.

Warwick Schiller ([00:02:54](#)):

Well, I've dragged you along here. Thanks for coming along. I've dragged you along here today because in our first conversation several years ago now on the podcast, you talked quite a bit about hunter gatherers and in the past couple of years researching the mental health crisis, my mental health crisis, how the world's going. There seems to be a lot of reference to a lot of the problems we have these days is because we don't live the way we kind of evolve to live, which takes us back to kind of our hunter gatherer route. So I kind of wanted to get you on today and see if we could have a bit about a chat about everything, hunter gatherer, because you've spent quite a bit of time with the Koan Bushman in the Kalahari. And I think that learning more about them and how they lived it might help us learn more about ourselves and how we should live.

Rupert Isaacson ([00:04:06](#)):

Indeed, they are indeed the blueprint for human society. So they're the oldest society on the planet. We'll share D n a going back to them. So yes, you could regard them as the plan for what humans are

supposed to look like, feel like, do, act like, behave, and when you spend time with 'em, that's very enlightening.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:36](#)):

So have you ever read Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari?

Rupert Isaacson ([00:04:41](#)):

I have, yeah. It's a fantastic book.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:44](#)):

I've just been reading it and so I thought I might quickly go over some dates for people because as we go along, I think the timeline will be important to understand. 4.5 billion years ago, the Earth formed 3.8 billion years ago, organisms formed, so the beginning of biology 6 million years ago, 6 million years ago as the last common ancestor of humans and chimps humans. And 2.5 million years ago, humans evolved 400,000 years ago where the Neanderthals began to evolve. And then 300,000 years ago, homo sapiens, so us as we exist today, began to evolve in Africa. So that's 300,000.

Rupert Isaacson ([00:05:43](#)):

I'll add something to that many paleontologists feel that our current sapien sapiens model is plus minus 200,000 years. So there was sapiens and then it seems that who knows, some garlic and some rosemary got added and we got the second sapiens added by somebody or other, and that seems to be about 200,000. But yes, it seems that your timeline is pretty much on,

Warwick Schiller ([00:06:14](#)):

Well, this is no, you've no is Harari's timeline. But what's interesting, I found read in the book was, I mean so much interesting about it, but one of the things I learned in there is you see the diagram of the evolution of humans, and there's this one, and then there's this one, and then there's this one. And what I didn't realize is I always thought it was a progression, but there were four different types of human species that all lived at the same time, and Neanderthals and homo sapiens existed at the same time. It wasn't like we came from Neanderthals.

Rupert Isaacson ([00:06:56](#)):

Sure. And then you also have Flo Homoerectus. There's quite a few humanlike things that were around more or less at the same time, different parts of the world.

Warwick Schiller ([00:07:12](#)):

And then something really interesting, I read in the book that in 2010, scientists mapped D n A from a Neanderthal bone and 2% of the D n A in the modern populations in Europe and Asia have Neanderthal d n A in them. I mean, 2% of it's not, 2% of the people have Neanderthal, d n a 2% of the D n A in all of Europe and Asia is Neanderthal and 6% of the D n A of Melanesians and Australian Aborigines came from a form called Homo Denisova. All this stuff is just, I'm loving this book. If anybody's not ever read Sapiens by U Noah Harari, highly recommended. But anyway, I'm just quoting stuff out of a book here. But I thought it was interesting, especially the part of 12,000 years ago, the agricultural revolution, the domestication of plants and animals, and how much we've changed since then. And that's probably when we veered off from the hunter gatherer path. Is that right?

Rupert Isaacson ([00:08:22](#)):

Well, yes and no. There are still hunter gatherers alive and well on the earth today. So when,

Warwick Schiller ([00:08:31](#)):

Oh no, sorry. I meant we as in us who ended up in this place right now with our microphones and our cars and our houses, and sorry,

Rupert Isaacson ([00:08:42](#)):

What we'd say is agricultural and post agricultural cultures began to veer off. There was an interim thing which was herding. So nomadic herders, and those are also still alive and well on planet earth. Agriculture seems to have come, there seems to have been a bit of a, let's say it's Europe and the Middle East, hunter gatherers, herders, agriculturalists come in and say, actually, we could settle now. We don't need to keep herding. Maybe we'll do this. And they take advantage of a particular set of local climactic phenomena in an Eric or the Fertile Crescent, which is roughly from Syria across in an arc, down through the Tigris Euphrates Valley of Iran, Iraq to the Gulf of Persia. And it's in there that you get all of the first, what we would call civilizations, starting with a place called Gobekli Tepi in Anatolia, what's now Turkey.

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

But it's the bottom bit. It's a bit close to Syria and Arking across, then down through cultures like the Sumerians, the His Heights, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, then the Persians, the Ians. But they're all basically the same people giving themselves different names as different cities rise and different dynasties rise, but it's all that area and more or less the same people. And these are the first civilizations that give us everything. Our mathematical system is based from that. Our legal systems are based from this. Our bureaucratic systems are based from this and our religions and our mythologies too, so that the 12 God pantheons and all of this, it all begins there. And then you get different versions of them coming to Egypt or different versions of them coming to Greece. But it all starts there. And it's interesting because it also starts a little bit at the same time, a little bit later in some other areas of the world.

([00:11:03](#)):

In the Indus Valley for example, we are veering from the hunter gatherer, I think now we're talking about early civilizations, but we'll come back to hunter gatherers, indu Valley where Pakistan and India today meet bits of China and bits of South America where you get similar types of climactic and geographic phenomena coming together. And this was a sort of warm, wet period after the younger dry ice, after the melting of the last ice age, when things got colder and drier again, a bit later, a lot of these civilizations fell, but then they came up again, and these civilizations were pre-meal. Originally they were neolithic, so they were stone age, but using stone in a really, really evolved technical sort of a way. And then very quickly after that came the Copper Age, the Bronze Age, and later the Iron Age, which some people argue we've only just left the I N H, but at the same time that all this was going on, hunter gatherers were alive and well watching from the hills going, I dunno what these guys are up to, but it's nuts.

([00:12:21](#)):

And the reason they would say this is because from a hunter gatherer point of view, the quality of life in those areas where civilization happens goes down massively. So the hunter gatherers sitting up in the hills watching this are going, man, these guys, they're not living very long. They're all getting these diseases, they're fighting wars, they're killing each other, they're enslaving each other. They're gathering together in these hovels and villages and cities with rats infested, and they're all getting bubonic plague.

We are up here and they're overpopulating, so they can't even feed each other. What's up with these people? So the original quality of life for humans in the hunter gatherer and to some degree in the herding cultures is very, very high. People live a long time. They have a lot of time for leisure. They don't have aristocracy, they don't have chiefs. They certainly do not have war or slaves.

[\(00:13:24\)](#):

Women are in control of their uterus because it doesn't pay to overpopulate at all. So contraception is alive and well, when you know it's going to be a drought year or something like this, you certainly don't reproduce nor do the wild animals. And then suddenly you get these quote civilizations where unless you are the elite right at the top of the tier, the quality of life is just awful. And human unhappiness really sort of begins with this. And then they have to create all kinds of mythologies and religions to say, well, don't worry. It doesn't matter that you're a slave, you'll get your reward in the next life and dah, dah, dah. Just keep working. Just keep going behind that mule. Oh, and by the way, if you don't do that, we'll whip you to death and kill your family. So there's an incentive for you to keep going.

[\(00:14:20\)](#):

The people that are up in the hills still, the hunter guys are going to say, Jesus Christ. Well pre Jesus, why are people agreeing to this? Why would anyone allow this to happen to themselves? In fact, there have been movements all the way through history of people coming to this realization and sort of pinching themselves and going, what are we doing? And that's runaway slaves in the Caribbean or America's up to the mountains and forming their own communities. That's where you get rastafarianism or this has happened through the Roman Empire, through the Greek Empire, people opting out. You could argue that the hippie movement in the counterculture, these were all attempts really to get back to a set of ethics that we never lost about equality and quality of life and joy as humans, which is absolutely in the hunter gatherer model. And so when you go to places where the hunter gatherers are still alive and well in the areas of the world where it still exists, what you notice immediately is an enormous happiness quotient, which we in our cultures have lost depression and that sort of thing, not there we have it.

[\(00:15:44\)](#):

So the question is why did we give it up?

[\(00:15:51\)](#):

And having given it up now in our soon to be post agricultural society, we could make grow our food in urban vertical farms now and that sort, it's all quite recent. And since Covid, it's gone, whoosh, green energy and all of this post technological society about to come in, are we actually now going to go back to our hunter gatherer roots ethically, which also includes the conservation of the planet for climate, but rewilding a lot of it, but retaining, if you like, the goodies of our technological successes. And I would put money on the answer to that being, yes. I think that's where our society's going.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:16:44\)](#):

What I want to talk about is what were they doing that we are not, that's one of the things we want to get to, but before,

Rupert Isaacson [\(00:16:53\)](#):

Well, what are they still doing that we are not? I think let's just keep, got to keep reminding that this is not consigned to history. These people are still

Warwick Schiller [\(00:17:01\)](#):

Around. Right, okay. Yeah. Okay. It used to be more widespread though. Indeed. But before we do that, let's give listeners a bit of a rundown on the hunter gatherers that you've spent time with, how you got to spend time with them. And we'll go from there.

Rupert Isaacson ([00:17:24](#)):

Okay. Okay. You want to ax me or do you want me to kick off?

Warwick Schiller ([00:17:30](#)):

Well, as far as I know you've spent a lot of time with the COIs and Bushman of the Kalahari. Tell us how you got involved with being drawn to them and then I want to get into how they actually, what the social structure was like, things they did that we don't do, things they do, sorry, that we don't do. Family structures, political structures, all that sort of thing.

Rupert Isaacson ([00:18:00](#)):

Okay. Alright. So some readers may know that I wrote three books, the Healing Land, the Horse Boy, and The Long Ride Home. And in each of these we look at Hunter gatherer and other cultures, but it is all personal. First it was personal to me and my family in Africa, then personal to me and my son with autism, and it's all about healing and shamanic healing, which is at the root of these cultures. And we'll go into why that is in a minute. But yes, it meant that I was exposed to a lot of what I would say, mentorship, really life mentorship from these people. So the reason why I got in the first place, and this is told in the Healing Land, is family.

Warwick Schiller ([00:19:01](#)):

Great book by the way. Great book.

Rupert Isaacson ([00:19:03](#)):

Okay, well that's very kind. My family is African and my mother is South African and my father is Zimbabwean. I was born in London, but the family connection to Africa remained very strong as soon as I was old enough after the childhood trips to Africa, I was out there sticking my thumb out and just traveling around. And it was fairly natural for me because of my reams of cousins out there and my upbringing being exposed to all this to be attracted to the source, the human source, if you like, of the place, which is the son Bushman of the Kalahari. Partly because a lot of my family is not white. There's a big chunk of my family that is not white. So I have on my mother's side a Africana, just the Dutch settlers, English settlers, Scottish settlers who then are married into or otherwise mated with local koi and sun populations in the 18th and 19th centuries.

([00:20:18](#)):

And those people are still to this day in South Africa designated by a very archaic and outdated term called colored. I have a lot of colored family on my father's side. We are Jews from Russia, Lithuania actually who went out there a bit later on at the end of the 19th century for other reasons. And then those two families came together. So my non-white family, I knew them, knew them well. They're up in an area called the Northern Cape, which is where the Kalahari comes down into the rest of South Africa, the Kalahari region. It's a big region, goes across about five countries and it's about a third of South Africa, half of Namibia, chunk of Zimbabwe, chunk of Zambia, chunk of Angola and all of Botswana. And so this bit that's in South Africa is where my cousins still are. I got wind of a story. I became a journalist

in the early nineties for the British press, and I got wind of a story of a group of what they would call themselves bushmen.

[\(00:21:37\)](#):

They don't really use the word sun. The sun is actually, they would say another racist term from black Bondi people towards them. So they always say, I just call us Bushman, we call it ourselves Bushman or call us by our clan. And in this case, they were kani. They're kani, they have these cliques in the language. So the Kani, Bushman or son were not supposed to exist. And that's why I thought the story was surprising. The myth was when I was growing up, it was an apartheid myth really, that there were no bushmen, no sun left in South Africa. They'd all been killed a hundred years ago. And the only place you could find anyone like that was way up in the deep Kalahari, perhaps in Namibia or in Botswana, but certainly not in South Africa. Well, it turned out not to be true, there were a few small populations still dotted about mostly displaced, disenfranchised.

[\(00:22:29\)](#):

And indeed one of them after Mandela came to power, popped up in an area of the Northern cape where my colored family is from. And they said, we're still here. We got kicked out of what is now the second biggest national park in South Africa in the seventies, and we've been living by the side of the road ever since. And we were like, our land back please. And they found themselves a lawyer. And I got wind of this story. I thought, oh, I need to follow this story. And then I started seeing who was opposing them. There was another non-white group that was opposing them because they said we should have this land and we have ancestral claim to this land as well. I rose, oh my gosh, those are my cousins. Then I looked a little deeper and I realized that among the bushmen there were people who'd married into that family of my cousins and that I was related to this group of son Bushman by marriage.

[\(00:23:27\)](#):

So I thought, alright, I better go follow this. So I go up there and I find where they're living by the side of the road and I basically introduce myself and they say, oh, well how do you know about us because you grew up in London? I said, well, my mother told me stories and I've been coming out here since I was a boy and blah, blah, blah, blah. And my colored family come to London to get educated under apartheid. They couldn't do it in South Africa. So they said, oh, okay, so your mother kept us alive while you in your heart while we were dying here and now you show up as a journalist, you're going to help us. Oh, and by the way, you've got to bring your mother. So I'm like, alright. And I said, what do you want me to do? They said, we want you to get us to the west because we don't think we're going to win this land claim unless it could get international attention.

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

You've got to remember, these people are truly living by the side of the road, truly living by the side of the road, which means every bad thing you can think of is happening to them. Their kids are getting raped and molested. They're having to sell themselves to prostitutes, to the truckers going by. They are having to poach illegally on land. They're getting day jobs here and there as laborers, but they're surviving. And although they are riven with alcoholism and violence because they're coming through all this ancestral trauma, they're not violent like I'm used to other people being violent in South Africa. My own white family is plenty violent. My colored family is very violent. I'm used to violence and I've been exposed to quite a lot of violence down there, black to white, white to black, black to black warrior cultures bugging each other up. The violence among these guys, these were the first bushmen I've met.

[\(00:25:27\)](#):

And remember, they're not living really as hunter gatherers anymore. They're just getting by basically homeless people doing a bit of hunting and gathering and that never really left. Their violence is only directed internally. And I noticed this immediately as a sort of expression of grief really. And they still have this Jo iv, which is unusual down there, and I noticed this immediately. It's like there is this lightness of heart and even when they do bad things to each other, they forgive each other really fast, they don't feud. And when other people come in from the outside and do bad things to them, this is as I'm hanging out with 'em over month, they forgive. They forgive. It's like all about forgiveness. And they say, Rupert, we're not really even real bushmen anymore. We've lost. They say the hunting and the gathering is the least of it.

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

They say What we've lost is our healers. We've lost our shamans, but we know that up there in Botswana, there are really good ones still, but we have no means to get up to them and we want you to help us get there. We want you to get us to the west for some attention. I want you to get us up into Botswana so that we can meet the shamans of our people and if we put those two things together, we feel we will get our land back. And you've got to bring your mother and we've got to do ceremonies with her because she kept you alive in her heart and we need to involve her in these ceremonies if we can get up north into the deeper Kalahari. And I by this time was also traveling up into the deeper Kalahari and I met some shamans there.

[\(00:27:12\)](#):

And as I also met groups of people who were living more the real hunter-gatherer life and there wasn't violence and there wasn't this internalized grief and there was a life where that Jo Aviv, that lightness of heart that I was talking about was very much the prevalent life, even though they also were being gradually stripped of their land and other people were coming in and doing bad things, but it had not advanced as far. And while I was up there, I met a healer called Besa, and Besa was very, very well known through the Kalahari in Botswana. He was famous, but he was almost impossible to find. But you heard his name a lot. He basically lived under a tree in Western Botswana. And I have had this feeling about him, it just came up. The name came. And I finally tracked him down after about a year and a half and I met him under a tree in a town called Near S and Western Botswana.

[\(00:28:25\)](#):

And when I walked out of the bush to him, he looked at me and said, you little Bea, I'm old bea, old Bea, you little Bea waiting for you for a while. And it wasn't even quite like that. He was singing this two besos, there are two besos and you are a little Bea. And I'm like, well, I'm just looking over my shoulder. Are you talking about me? Yes, I'm talking about you. And I experienced some things with this man that defied belief, which we can talk about in a moment if you want to shape shifting and all this stuff that people talk about that you actually see happen if you spend time with these people defies your belief system, laws of physics. But I'm not the only person that has these stories. You talk to anyone who's gone into these areas for any length of time that everyone's got their fund of, can't quite believe my eyes stories. Okay, I go back down to the Bushman in Africa. Can we pause? Can we pause for a second? Yeah.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:29:39\)](#):

Those moments when you see something that alters your perception of reality as

Rupert Isaacson [\(00:29:55\)](#):

Challenges have completely



Warwick Schiller ([00:29:57](#)):

Has been conditioned into you. I think those moments, it doesn't matter what it is, it doesn't matter what it is, it's when you have that moment that you become aware of the fact that everything that you thought you knew is wrong

Rupert Isaacson ([00:30:18](#)):

Or at least incomplete. Yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([00:30:20](#)):

Incomplete or it's It's not exactly true. It's not exactly right. Don't you think those moments are those watershed moments, they're the moments that help you start to view things differently?

Rupert Isaacson ([00:30:39](#)):

Oh yeah, sure. I mean you can't deny your experience. You can question it. You can say, am I insane? And remember, there's no psychotropics in the Kalahari, so no drugs are being taken, no plants are being involved. It's just not in that area. It's just not part of the culture. Yes. But I would also say that by the time anybody shows you anything like this there, they've sort of prepared you a bit. It doesn't happen cold. They're careful what they show. So there were all sorts of little progressions which I could get into. They're all in the book in the healing land where I realized in hindsight, they had been showing me and showing me and showing it and to gauging my reactions and then passing me onto the next one and seeing if I rejected it or was freaked out or came at it from some weird religious perspective. They used to all that stuff. And I think as I sort of responded with, whoa, fascinating. Whoa, tell me about that more than this is freaking me out. I'm not comfortable or whatever. Then they show you gradually more and more and more. And what they're doing is they're harnessing you. They're showing you for a reason, they're going to put you to work, which indeed they did with me, but they're quite upfront about it. They say, look, we need help.

([00:32:10](#)):

So you might as well see what's at stake. You might as well see why we are worth helping. So anyway, I go back down to South Africa after spending some time with Bessa and I report to the Bushman down there that I've met this guy and they say, this is the man that we've been looking for for a long time. We know all about Bessa. There's a sort of Kalahari telegraph, but we had no idea how to get to him. Okay, bring your mother, we're going to go up. You must organize this Rupert, and then after that you must get us to the United Nations. And I'm just this dude, I mean say I'm a journalist of the British press, this doesn't mean I can pull those sorts of strings like the UN and so on. But I had realized by this point that these people have access to the divine and if they say it's going to happen, it's probably going to happen. And it did indeed all pan out. So I brought my mum who was a sport about the whole thing. They stripped her naked on the sand dunes, covered her in a sacred plant, pollen wept on her.

([00:33:21](#)):

And then we went to find Bess and we found him and we did a series of rituals, tra rituals, which actually were very unclimactic, almost underwhelming after some of the other stuff I'd seen. And this is also very much sort of the trickster energy of hunter gatherers to test your faith. And I thought, is this really anything? But I can tell you that when we came out of those ceremonies, da Kra, who was the spokesperson of the Ani South African bush, and my cousins if you like, said to me, yes, Rupert, in a year from now we are going to sit down with President Turbo and Becky of South Africa and we're going to sign the land claim. And I thought, well, okay, that sounds good. I dunno. I dunno what to think. Well a



year and a day, a year and one day after we came away from Besa, they did indeed sit down with Taiwan, Becky and sign the largest land claim at that time in African history for indigenous peoples into being.

[\(00:34:35\)](#):

And they got half the national park back. And although it didn't immediately cure all their ills and ails because they've been dispossessed for so long, that land is now theirs. And little by little they are creeping back into a form of existence that is closer to where they came from. And you could argue justice has been served. I then did indeed get 'em to the UN because the groups of bushmen up in Botswana got wind of what we were doing, who were facing massive, massive displacement by diamond companies and the Botswana government acting on behalf of the diamond companies and the institutionalized racism within Botswana. Black Botswanan do not regard Bushman Sam people as quite human and they've used them as slaves for years. Racism is not just a white black thing, it's endemic through all human farming, non-farming cultures. Back to where we started with this, farming cultures do not tolerate hunting and gathering cultures, whether it's ranches in Brazil committing genocides and cutting down forests or whether it's black boni killing pygmies or coan or whether it's whites doing the same thing.

[\(00:35:57\)](#):

It is all the same process. And it's agricul hunter gatherers, it's Cain versus Abel basically. So anyway, bottom line, lemme just finish the story. I managed to get the South African and the Botswana Bushman to the UN and to Hollywood. We kind of did the whole thing and then finally to the State Department and I couldn't quite believe what had happened, but there was a shamanic process going on the entire time. And other healers like him were trance dancing, going into the spirit world, coming out with series of instructions and telling us what to do and including instruction of lawyers. And the entire thing you could argue was being conducted from the spirit world. We just couldn't disclose that to the lawyers and the journalists and other people have just said we were nuts. But that's basically what was going on. These guys were conducting their trance ceremonies, going to an auto consciousness, getting a series of instructions coming back with that series of instructions instructing us, and then we would instruct the others.

[\(00:37:06\)](#):

And we won in 2006, once again, the largest land claim to date in African history in the Central Kalahari game reserve. So what I got to understand was that this power of joy and conflict resolution and really at the root of hunting and gathering culture is conflict resolution can get harnessed even to the point of international geopolitics. And when I realized this, when you see for example, what's going on now in Brazil, for example, Bolsonaro was in there and he did another great big assault on the rainforest and now suddenly he's gone and there's a new guy in there who's now gone back to protecting them and blah blah and blah, blah. You can be sure that at the back of that somewhere there's a shamanic process going on and that these people allow themselves, they're comfortable with going to the brink of extinction. And you realize that they do this about every generation and they are so incredibly resilient that and their worldview is so broad that they can sort of handle it.

[\(00:38:36\)](#):

And this gives us a clue, I think, to how resilient we are even today in our post agriculturalist society that we can have things like World War II happen or whatever and sort of bounce back. Ukraine will bounce back with what's going on right now because there's this quality in the source of what is human. And you see this really, really at work with people like this who are constantly on the brink. Every generation is like their bugger. They're just going to disappear and they don't. And it seems that what they do is

after the assault of the last 20,000 years of 12,000 years of some people say, it goes back further assaults on these people, which we'd say in the last 500 years since the discovery of the new world and massive colonialization has accelerated and ramped up in a way that there shouldn't be any of them left at all. There really shouldn't when you really look at what's been thrown at them. But yet there they are and there they are affecting us and we seem to be heading back that way because it's a better way to be. Anyway, you had some questions. There's something you wanted to say. I think

Warwick Schiller ([00:40:01](#)):

I did have lots of questions. One of them was, you mentioned Pygmies, the B Bushman quite, they're quite small, aren't they?

Rupert Isaacson ([00:40:13](#)):

Yeah, but they're not, yes some, but not in quite the same way that the pygmies are. So if you like Sun Bushman who haven't had much genetic interference from bond to black Africans or whites tend to be relatively small men, perhaps five, two to five, four women, perhaps four eight to five foot. But proportionally looking very much just like smaller versions of taller people. And then as soon as taller people start bunking them with sadly voluntary or otherwise, you start to get very big one. So I know Bushman who are six foot four, but I also know ones who are much more the original sort of model. But the Bata, the Pygmies, the Bacca, there's many clans of them. They proportionally are slightly different. They really don't get above the, it's very, very rough and get above five foot much more so in the three six to four six.

([00:41:36](#)):

And the reason seems to be because they're deep forest people and all the deep forest mammals, human or otherwise are smaller. Forest elephants are much smaller, forest hippo are much smaller, forest giraffes are much smaller. That's what we call the ocar forest leopard are much smaller, et cetera, et cetera. And that seems to be a feature of that particular close rainforest environment. I dunno why that is, but it just seems to be a feature. But so the pygmies, the Bacca, the batis are very much their own thing, but because they're hunters and gatherers, there's many crossovers with the sand bushman. And then there's a really interesting group in East Africa too called the Zabi who are in Tanzania and are effectively the koi sun of East Africa and they also live a very similar sort of life.

Warwick Schiller ([00:42:37](#)):

So tell me, what is the social structure of say, a hunter gatherer tribe?

Rupert Isaacson ([00:42:47](#)):

Well, the fact is it's not a tribe. So when we say tribe, we tend to think of a hierarchy. Tribe usually denotes chief, usually not always a patriarch can be a matriarch. And under that, a sort of chain of command, almost like a military regimen going down. And that is certainly true in tribes of herders and agriculturalists. This you see when you go into hunters and gatherers, you don't really see tribes, you see clans, you see extended family networks. And there generally isn't actually a chief or achieved Ines. There can appear to be because there might be somebody who has good public speaking skills or speaks English or Afrikaans or French or whatever the language of the colonialists is, tu Botswana, whoever the people that they've got to deal with. And so that person tends to be thrust forward as the spokesperson. They're not the chief.

([00:43:53](#)):

And then so often you'll see that colonial powers will say, oh, we went and spoke to the chief of this group of pygmies or the chief of this group of sun bushmen. But they actually weren't speaking to a chief. That was just their interpretation. What they were speaking to was the person within that group who was perceived to have the expertise in that particular field, but they're not making decisions for everybody. And this becomes very confusing for authorities when they're trying to grab the land or whatever, say, well, we spoke to your chief and I said, well no, the person you spoke to just happened to be the person that speaks your language. So generally what you have, the structure that you have is you have a counselor, a sort of group of elders who are both male and female who have a variety of expertise in various fields.

[\(00:44:45\)](#):

And those people are deferred to somewhat individually depending on what is the thing that's in front of us right now. But they're a collective group. And then under them would be if you like a group of the adults who are engaged in the main economic activities, hunting and gathering. But they would definitely defer to those elders because those elders have the experience and then under them is the sort of young folk coming up, but it's not under in the sort of, I'm going to order you around kind of a way. It's much more rational than that. It's just like, well, you've got the experience. I do not. So it just makes a lot of sense for me to follow your recommendations. They're not so much orders as recommendations. And then at the center, that's the sort of economic structure. And generally males for the most part hunt and generally women for the most part gather, but there's an awful lot of crossover.

[\(00:45:44\)](#):

There's a ton of crossover. So let's say if you're hunting big game fast with spears and bows and arrows, it's going to be primarily a male preserve because you can't really do that with a baby at your hip. And there's some danger involved in that of particular kinds and so on. And if you're going out to gather large amounts of wild foods, it's often a female led thing because that's something you can absolutely do with young children. And it's actually very important to do with young children. You want them to know deeply what's edible and what's not and where to find it. But women absolutely do hunt and trap and men absolutely do gather. So it's not entirely male female, but it's let's just say generally. Okay. And then at the center of that's just economics, at the center of life is the healer or the healers and seems that among hunter gatherer groups, there is a knowledge, an acceptance that the human species is funky and that we are a bit like the chimps and the bonobos we're like 50%, one 50%.

[\(00:47:01\)](#):

The other chimps, they sometimes are nice to each other, but they will rip each other to pieces and fight little local wars and commit atrocities on each other and behave like that. The bonobos are peace, love, sex, conflict resolution, hippies. They're very, very similar though. And it seems like we're schizophrenic. Our species we're like 50%, one 50% the other. It's very hard for us to resolve that internal conflict. So you have shamans who are trained if you like to wash the psychic dirty laundry of the group about every 10 days. And there's a consideration among to cool everybody out. You can also do individual healings if you, for example, had some dilemma or some sickness or something, yeah, they would absolutely call a trance for you. When a trance is called it's collective. So even if they do it for your bad leg or whatever, or because you are arguing with your wife and that's beginning to disrupt the piece in the community, everybody will participate in that dance.

[\(00:48:17\)](#):

There is a sense that any dilemma is a collective responsibility and that everybody must participate in the healing of it. And everybody bears a certain, not blame, but certainly responsibility in the fact that

it's happening at all. It doesn't rest with individuals. And this is at the core of the culture, it's everyone kind of has everyone else's back, even if they fall down on it sometimes, because in hunting and gathering life, there's a lot of things out there that want to eat you. You're only mid-level predators. If you don't have each other's back, you are absolutely going to get eaten by lions for sure. So the only way we thrive as these mid-level weak predators without four legs, without hair and armored skin, without big teeth, without big claws, without the massive physical strength that the other great apes have, which we do not have, is through our collective strategic abilities.

[\(00:49:21\)](#):

If we lose that, we die. And the group fragments. And if the group fragments into individuals, they do not survive. They just don't. So at the core of Hunter gathers is we must stick together. We must not overpopulate because that doesn't pay as a hunter gatherer and there's no need to because we're not putting a crop in the soil and putting the crop out. That takes a lot of manpower. We don't overpopulate. We can serve the livestock, we can serve, we practice conservation, we practice ecology because that's good economic sense and we look after each other whether it's psychically, emotionally or physically and conflict resolution because we are constantly creating conflicts because we're half chimpanzee needs to be addressed all the time. And it is. And the healers go through this very lengthy, decades long training. They don't really hit their stride until they're in their sixties usually, and they're very good at it and they know how to enter altered states of consciousness and make contact with ancestors, spirits and other forces of the divine and in certain areas using plants and animals as well.

[\(00:50:35\)](#):

And they've evolved a culture, a technology really of doing this, which is incredibly effective. People can dismiss it, but the people who dismiss it have never been there. So they're dismissing what they do not know. And that's very human to dismiss what you do not know. And I don't blame people for doing that. But the fact is, if it was all bullshit, all these people would be dead because they get sick like anyone else, and they get better this way. And if they were all just deluding themselves, they'd all be dead in one generation, but they get sick and they get better using this. So that's really the core of the culture and what that allows for because they're so efficient at the food gathering, they know their environments very well. They're very effective hunters, they're very effective gatherers, and they are constantly addressing their funkiness.

[\(00:51:34\)](#):

Well, they're pretty happy. So there's also a lot of time, there's leisure, there's more leisure in a hunter gatherer society than there is in an agricultural society for sure. You're not hunting all the time, you're very good at doing it. So there's a lot of downtime, time for storytelling, culture, art, fun, play, human relationships, philosophy, this sort of thing, and spiritual practice. So the quality of life is incredibly high. And they're affluent. They're all like billionaires because it's like you're never going to run out of money because you could just go feed yourself. The environment is rich, you've got enough, it's like you're just constantly drawing money out of your bank account. It's never going to fail. You are good and there's a shaman taking care of you to make sure that you don't turn into some crazy egomaniac. So actually life is good and that's the original human blueprint if it's allowed to be, it's good to

Warwick Schiller [\(00:52:42\)](#):

Spend time with these in Sapiens. There was a quote from maybe a famous anthropologist or something, but he said, hunter gatherers, the original affluent society,

Rupert Isaacson [\(00:52:59\)](#):

They are the original affluent society and they're why we strive for affluence because the only difference really is that in our society, affluence historically has been reserved for the few, for an elite. Now that is changing. For the first time in human history, more and more and more people are becoming affluent. And the idea of scarcity is people are beginning to realize within industrial and agricultural societies that actually is complete bollocks. There is no scarcity. But if you create a perception of scarcity and a reality of scarcity, where an elite keeps hold of the resources and denies those resources to other people, that's an artificially created scarcity. But for the people that are being denied it, it's real enough.

[\(00:53:57\)](#):

Well, that's a very good way to control populations, but it's not actually how the planet runs. There's plenty of food out there. There's no shortage of money out there, there's no shortage of anything out there unless somebody withholds it. And within hunter gatherer culture, there's no reason to withhold it. And within the culture that we're evolving to, particularly in the West, there's less and less reason to withhold it. More and more and more people are becoming affluent. And becoming affluent doesn't mean you have to become a multi-billionaire, but it means you need to have something a little more than enough. And it's very clear that with Covid, there was a bit of a bursting of the bubble of the perceptions of what work weeks need to look like or whether governments can survive if they give subsidized incomes to people. And we've always known this really because banks always get bailed out and that you don't actually need to harness people to an industrial machine to make an affluent society.

[\(00:55:14\)](#):

You just need to harness your technology in the right way and have a bit of a philanthropic outlook going on in your government. Well, that is the original human government, the hunter-gatherers who are the blueprint, the model for us are very philanthropic. Why wouldn't they be? Because they're looking out for each other. And we're groping our way back to this. And it is interesting, you talk to people this way and they're like, oh my God, are you some kind of communist? And you say, how can you be a good capitalist? Well, I'm actually quite a good capitalist.

[\(00:55:53\)](#):

I've got some socialistic leanings. I'm certainly not a communist in the political sense. I'm actually quite a good capitalist. But there's nothing separating capitalism from the common good unless you want it to, unless you just want to be an asshole. But if you make money and generate money and then put money back in the economy and keep it all churning and give your money large chunks of it to philanthropic things, you do just fine. But you don't have to be greedy. That's a bit different. Doesn't mean I'm also, by the way, all for people making billions. I'm very happy for people to, because if someone makes a billion, they're not taking any money out of my pocket. If anything, they're just generating more money around. They're not taking any money away from anybody. That's all perception. But if they somehow that person got hold of a whole bunch of food in an area where people didn't have a lot of food for whatever reason and then withheld it, well, then yes, they'd be weaponizing their wealth. And that, of course has been a feature of agricultural and post agricultural societies because warfare, slavery, all those things came with agriculture. But we're getting beyond that now. So yeah, you can be a good capitalist and have hunter-gatherer ethics and you just want to share what you've got.

Warwick Schiller [\(00:57:31\)](#):

So it sounds like rural, not rule one, but sounds like step one in hunter-gatherer culture is we're all part of the collective versus individuals, which is indeed a bit of a different outlook than we have.

Rupert Isaacson [\(00:57:48\)](#):

However, what's the paradox of that statement is that in a society where the respect for the whole is so great, what it means is the respect for individual rights is really, really strong. So although people have a very strong sense of collective responsibility, individual rights are really respected, the one does not preclude the other. In fact, they're respected more than they would be in a tribalistic agricultural society where to have your rights really respected, you have to be part of an elite. If you're not part of that elite, no, you're not. Your rights are not really respected at all. Quite the opposite.

Warwick Schiller ([00:58:38](#)):

What's really interesting is I had a lady on the podcast a couple of weeks ago from Sweden named Emily Kata, and she is a, it's hard to say what Emily is, but she's one of the things, she's is an animal communicator, but she's not an animal communicator. Like you call her on the phone and she talks to your cat and says, the cat's got a sore foot or whatever. How she gets this communication is she experiences the animal from their perspective. She feels what they're feeling, she sees what they're seeing. And one of the, so I had her on the podcast and the journey on podcast is mostly about people's journeys. And she's got a fascinating journey. But I heard her on another podcast, there's a podcast called Buddha at the Gas Pump, and it says, conversations with spiritually awakening people. And she was on that, and they get into some deep shit on there, and she was talking about how horse herds, herds of horses, they delegate the task to the one most suited for that task. But there is no hierarchical structure. We think about, oh yes, there's a lead mare in all that shit. And this comes from her experiencing this directly through the horses. And it sounds like that social structure is the hunter gatherer social structure.

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

Yeah, I think that's probably true. I mean, I think you observe this even in prides of lion and wolf packs and so on, the perception of bosses and underbosses and so on is as much a construct as it is a reality in that it's based in a certain observation of reality. Certainly you observe certain individuals taking on greater responsible roles and others taking on less to the outside eye or having most of the reproductive activity or seeming to delegate hunting role or that sort of thing. And you can't deny that that's true. Or a mayor who appears to lead horses to water or resolve disputes if necessary or something like that, whether or not that's the full picture.

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

I agree if we look to our own mammalian structure and see that it could appear to the outside that that's going on. But it also is if that's what you're looking for. So if you are an agriculturalist observing the natural world and you're coming now from 25, 30, a hundred, 400 generations of agriculturalist authoritarian culture, you are going to look for that in everything you see. But I don't hear it's true. I don't hear, for example, son Bushman talking about lead lions in prides or boss mares in zebra herds. It can appear that there's very strong, powerful matriarchs in elephant herds, for example. But again, when you look at them in more detail, it often appears to actually be a bit more of a collective council of elders.

([01:02:33](#)):

But the elephant that's most dealing with the humans might be the same elephant because they're delegated that role. Is it likely that intelligent animals resemble our original wild human structure and our original wild human structure resembles theirs? Well, that would seem likely because we share the same environment and we share the same resources and we share the same basic sort of economic activities. So why wouldn't we? And we inherit generation to generation the same hunting territories,



just like Lion Pride does or gathering territories just like an elephant herd does. And they're passed on and they do expand and contract, but they retain a sort of stability. They're actually much more conservative in the real world, what sense of the word than farmers are who constantly exhaust the land and have to go out, and then they exhaust that bit of land and they have to go out. You don't have to do that if you're a hunter gatherer. So yeah, we seem to resemble animal structures at our core much more, so why wouldn't they resemble us? Yeah, absolutely.

Warwick Schiller ([01:03:51](#)):

And you talked about how there's no, not really a hierarchical structure. Everybody's part of the collective, and whoever the best person for the job is the person who does the job or the best person for that decision. The person with the most information on that is the one who makes the decision. And that basically is at the adult stage. But what I want to talk about now is the things that allow that mindset at that adult stage. And so I'm listening to a book right now called it's, it's about trauma and shame. It's a lot about shame. And it's called, I'm sorry, I'm looking up on my phone right now. It is called Healing the Shame That binds you by a guy named John Bradshaw. And it's a very, very good book. It's probably the one book I've ever read where it's just like, oh, this guy is explaining exactly where all my shit came from, all my exact shit. It's like he knows who I am because you listen to a book. Yeah, that's a bit of me. Yeah, that's a bit of me. But this guy's like, it's like he's been inside my head and he knows where all my stuff comes from. But one of the things they were saying in this book was they were doing some sort of, I don't even research, I guess, of children in Uganda and these children were, I dunno what parameters they had, but these children were the healthiest children that'd ever encountered.

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

And healthy might be mental health, I'm not sure. But something they said was these children when their infants are rarely put down, meaning there's always someone holding them to their body. And there was some parameter that measures the, I can't remember what it was, I'm sorry, but it had something to do with. But anyway, they said these kids in Uganda with the healthiest children in this aspect, whatever this aspect is, because they were almost never put down at that formative age. They were up against a body, whether it was the mother or the grandmother or someone else in the thing. And so can you talk a bit about things hunter gatherers do with their children that we don't?

Rupert Isaacson ([01:06:38](#)):

Cause

Warwick Schiller ([01:06:38](#)):

I think that's the start of all our

Rupert Isaacson ([01:06:41](#)):

Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. We can simplify it. So when I was spending a lot of time with these people, I was in areas where large predators were routinely coming in amongst the huts where people lived. Because even if you're living by the side of the road, yeah, there's lions coming through and hyenas and other things that will eat your kid. So you do not, when you sleep, put your child on the other side of the Hutt because a hyena will absolutely come in there and without any sound, take that kid. So there's no way you wouldn't have that child up against your body while you sleep between two adults or in a puppy pile of siblings with safety and numbers or something like that as they get a bit older.



[\(01:07:38\)](#):

And then of course, yeah, when they're little, little, the only time they're not put down or the only time they're put down, sorry, and not carried around on slings is when you've got an area of brushed earth where everyone is sitting around, it's cleared of scorpions, it's cleared of snakes, it's clean. Certainly no predator's going to come there because there's a fire and everyone's around. No predator's going to come when everyone's alert and around, and that's when the kids are going to be playing in the dirt. But the moment you get up and move, you're putting that kid on your body. You're also going through long grass. You're going through grass that's a meter and a half eye or whatever, and it's just not practical to do anything else. And this child is just constantly rocking on your body, body heat, picking up the electromagnetic field of your heart. The rocking, of course is oxytocin, which is the happiness hormone and the communication hormone.

[\(01:08:45\)](#):

And these kids are just sort of given unconditional love and support all the time. And I noticed this, what I had then also noticed was that at around age 16, these same kids could take a spear, go into the bush by themselves and come back out with game alive and not get eaten. They'd picked up so much bushcraft and they were so secure in themselves. And then at 18, they might go down, leave the wild, go get a job in the local town, or even go down to Johannesburg and get a job in the mines, not even speaking any of their languages down there. Learn the languages, boom, boom, boom, learn how to be a mechanic, boom, boom, boom, learn how to operate machinery, boom, boom, boom. That it wasn't just an emotional security, but it was a cognitive advance that there seemed to be an ability to pick up skills and roll with adaptation, have this kind of resilience, which I didn't observe in the same kids and adolescents from my own culture. And all of the myths about toughening up, which you went through and I went through as boys, just turned us into insecure people and who then had to go and find a way to try to fill those holes in security through various types of dysfunctional behavior.

[\(01:10:26\)](#):

And then it's not just that, but also straight up anxiety. If you take an infant human who is pre-programmed to be born into the wild, the moment you leave them alone, guess what they're going to do? They're going to cry and they're going to cry to say, oh, alone out here with the hyenas guys, oi hyenas, come on, reproduction of the species. It's not a good idea. I'm going to cry till you come and put me on my body. And if you let a baby cry it out, what happens is a certain despair where the baby kind of goes, oh, at a D n A level, I guess I'm going to be eaten by the hyenas. And even if I wake up and find that that miraculous hasn't happened and I'm relieved they're going to do it to me again the next night, and my genetics, my biogenetics has no choice but to have this reaction, well, if that happens to me through my entire infancy, it's going to generate a complete lack of trust in my species, in the world, in everything.

[\(01:11:50\)](#):

And it will make me very easy to manipulate and control because anybody who comes along and seems to show me just a little bit, just a little bit of love, I'm going to eat from their hand like a puppy, or I'm going to bite the hand off. And so I'll either become storm trooper material psychotic berserker material, which is very good, certain kind of canon fodder. And also then military commander sort of person perhaps ending up as governor of a city maybe. Or I'm a good slave, I'm a good surf, I'm coward, but either way, I'm malleable. I can be manipulated. One of the complaints you often heard from farmers in bushman areas is, oh, they got no work ethic, man. You just can't get them to work. They'll show up and they'll work for a bit and then they'll just disappear into the bush. Absolutely, because you can't control 'em and because they're happy and secure in themselves, they're not going to look to you

for validation. They might come and fancy earning a few bob for a while, and they might fancy living on your compound for a while, and when they don't, they'll leave.

[\(01:13:16\)](#):

They're not going to fight your wars for you. They're probably not going to pay taxes for you. And this means they can't be tolerated and they must be suppressed and they must be killed, and they must be violated and they must be dehumanized and they must be brought into line and they're livestock. Their wild stock of food must be destroyed and all of this, and then we can bring 'em into line. And if we can't do that, we'll just wipe 'em out. And that sort of happened in Europe quite early neolithic times. So for us in the West, we feel that the hunter gatherer thing is a genetic memory, but of course in other parts of the world, it's alive and well, and these people are still out there to mentor us. And that for me, that book, the Healing Land that I wrote, I realized very strongly when I got involved in the human rights advocacy for these people, that the reason why this has to happen, every generation that new human rights activists have to come along and advocate for them is that you don't want to lose your grandfather.

[\(01:14:37\)](#):

You don't want to lose contact with the source of who we are. And every generation, it's threatened. Every generation, they're at the brink and they come back and every generation, so now there's other people out there doing the same work I was doing. And it must happen every generation. And that's if you like the younger sons taking care of the grandparents, we don't want to lose contact with that because they're actually a pretty good advertisement for humanity. Just when you are losing your faith in humanity, you go and spend a bit of time with them. Now, it doesn't mean they're saints, they're naughty and they do all sorts of silly shit to each other, but because it's a society of conflict resolution, there's no feud. Things are resolved and there's an expectation that things will be resolved and that none of it matters that much.

[\(01:15:45\)](#):

They don't take themselves that seriously, not like we do. I mean God, do we take ourselves seriously? It's boring how seriously we take ourselves and that we're told we must. And hero myths, Cullen John Wayne, find a hero, Gilgamesh, and I'll find you a crashing bore. Oh my God, Achilles. Oh, I'm just going to go and Hercules. I'm going to constantly go around waving my cock around trying to conquer everything until it destroys me. And that's exactly what happens to every single hero in every single myth. And we're told to aspire to that. I mean, what a yawn that's certain, none of the most they can expect is that ze might make a star constellation out of them or something like that. Well, great, but the quality of life up to that point is rather stressful.

[\(01:16:48\)](#):

But no, we must be the hound of Ulster or whatever. And it's all bullshit. It's just manipulation of elites and then creating myths where young boys and girls will aspire to this sort of thing. But it's all relatively recent construct of the last 10, 12,000 years in these areas of the world, which have now taken over most of the planet of agricultural warring tribes. But it's really an adolescent sort of humanity. And luckily we seem to be, I'm cautiously optimistic, we seem to be coming out of it even what's going on in Ukraine right now, there's no way it can sustain.

[\(01:17:42\)](#):

It's a last dance really of that old way of thinking. And where we go from here is backward, I think, not forward, but backward in the right way with our technologists to this system of ethics that never left us. That's why we bother with the judicial system. That's why we bother with the idea of justice or

otherwise, if it is really truly dog eat dog, we'd really behave very differently. If it's not, we have a very strong moral code really, which goes back to this, and at the center of that moral code is the golden rule, right? Do unto others as you would have done unto you. That is the hunter gatherer ethic. Really.

Warwick Schiller ([01:18:29](#)):

Something I was reading recently was talking about how Darwin was misrepresented, and he wasn't actually saying that it was the survival of the fittest. The survival of the fittest means it makes it sound like it's the survival of the biggest and the toughest and the strongest, but what it actually meant was survival of the ones who could

Rupert Isaacson ([01:19:00](#)):

Best adapt. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:02](#)):

Well, it wasn't about the survival of the fittest as in kill everybody. It was more about the ones who could collaborate with all the other species.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:19:14](#)):

Absolutely.

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:16](#)):

It's like the story about when they reintroduced the wolf back and the Yellowstone, it changed the course of a river, that sort of thing where everything is part of, like you said, with the hunter gatherers, we're all part of a collective. We're not all individuals and whatever it was I read recently, I was talking about Darwin's survival of the fittest was not about the fittest. It was about survival of the ones who could collaborate with their environment the best, which didn't necessarily mean dominating. It meant blending in with.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:19:57](#)):

Yeah, that might very well be true. I mean, I wasn't around, obviously I didn't personally know Darwin, so how would I know? But what certainly seems quite possible is that Darwin himself was not really, from what I can see, a believer in imperialism particularly. And although he used the mechanisms of it to go around and collect species because he's just a product of his time. But he was also a very deeply committed Christian in that mystic Christian way that some of the Victorians were, which wasn't the British Empire type of Victorian Christianity of the three c's, commerce, Christianity and civilization at the point of a gun that wasn't his shtick. So I could totally see how him saying this could have been then commandeered by people who wanted to bring that agenda to science because it was convenient, a convenient way of saying, well, it legitimizes us going off and behaving like the Roman Empire. Whether that was his actual message is for sure open to interpretation, and he as a scientist probably would've been open to revision of his own findings through his entire life. But we also know that viewpoints and science and discovery and all this gets politicized very fast by people who would like to create a mythology out of it that serves their agenda. And it's always been that way in our history.

Warwick Schiller ([01:21:53](#)):

They want to be able to control the narrative.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:21:55](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 1 ([01:21:57](#)):

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

I want to go back to the kids. This whole conversation today I wanted to have with you was about hunter gatherers and how did we evolve to be and why are we so messed up? And it seems like if you wanted to make a change, a big change in the world, one place you could start is educating people on how children are supposed to be.

([01:23:14](#)):

You know what I mean? Where all the shit comes from. We haven't really probably evolved that much different from for the last 12,000 years, but we are living completely differently because we're not living like this organism is supposed to live. And so absolutely, if we could start having this organism thinking about the nervous system where you just talked about the nervous system of a child, basically the nervous system. A child's supposed to work a certain way, and if I go over here and I'm crying, I'm supposed to get rescued or the hyena eats me, but what I'm not supposed to do is cry. If I cry, no one comes, I get eaten. Okay, but before

Rupert Isaacson ([01:23:56](#)):

That comes

Warwick Schiller ([01:23:57](#)):

A moment cry and someone comes, yeah, yes, there's the moment of despair, but if no one comes, I'm dead.

([01:24:06](#)):

But if someone comes, oh, it's all good. So we actually don't have the ability to have a coping mechanism to cope with that being left to cry it out. I mean, this is just a simple thing that who's done with you done me, what we do. It's called alcohol. You know what I mean? Yeah. But you know what I mean? We're supposed to have one or two options as an infant, we cry. We either get rescued or we're dead. We don't get left to cry, and then the next night get left to cry, and the next night I get left to cry and see what you're saying. I'm starting to believe that we are all screwed up because we really don't have the, we've left to cry.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:24:57](#)):

Yeah, we didn't get carried our mums and we got left. Cry out. I think it's pretty simple. I think it does come down to that kind of thing. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:05](#)):

Yeah. It's not just the crying thing, but the whole thing. Like they said, these kids from Uganda were the healthiest in however way they measure this because they're always getting carried next to a body. That's how they're supposed to be. That's how they're

Rupert Isaacson ([01:25:19](#)):

Supposed to be. Also, remember what these kids are observing. So they're observing conflict resolution constantly. They're not observing Blood Feed. My own son, Rowan, those other books I wrote, the Horse Boy and the Long Ride Home describe a series of journeys because of his autism, his severe autism, where we ended up going from shaman to shaman because of the previous experiences I'd had conducting ceremonies where we were by no means trying to cure autism, but we were just trying to look for solutions for some of the sufferings that he was having neurologically, which indeed did happen.

[\(01:26:11\)](#):

And we made a film about it too, so you can sort of see it happening. That's the horse boy documentary. And what he saw, he's now 21, and he talks about it quite eloquently, was processes of healing at the root of the culture in which the children are deeply involved in a central sort of a role. When you go to a healing ceremony in the Kalahari, everybody is there, including the kids, and the kids are participating in the ritual clapping and singing and creating the polyphonic chant and the rhythms and all of that. They're also getting healing. It's not just for the adults. The healer comes around and puts his hands, her hands on the children as well.

[\(01:27:15\)](#):

And then the children take that conflict resolution into their games. So although they tease each other mercilessly and take the piss out of each other and rib each other is on and play games that are on the face of it look quite competitive, they'll race each other, they'll throw spears, and obviously some people get them farther than others, but they don't award trophies. And then there's these other mechanisms where if, for example, you are a very good hunter, so now you might be a young man or a mature man and you can get quite a lot of meat. You don't own that meat. Who owns the meat? The children. That meat has to be brought to the different households and divided up and given to the children and the women, and they then decide if there's redistribution. So you as a quote unquote alpha male, do not control the resources that you get hold of.

[\(01:28:39\)](#):

You are working for the people who own that, who are the younger generation, and this is at the core certainly of traditional koan bushman society, but you definitely do see this in other parts of the world too. I observed it when I was spending a much shorter amount of time with the Cree in northern Quebec, for example, who are still living very much a hunter-gatherer lifestyle mixed with modern stuff as are the bushmen now and so on. And this idea that children have authority, even if it's partly helped along with the support of the adults and that they also have a voice and that they're needed. They're needed as part of the resources they're needed at the healing rituals because they're the next generation, they're going to take this whole thing on. Of course they're needed. So isn't this idea that you're just a kid, what do you know? And somehow then you reach 18 or 21 and now suddenly you have to have all these skills and responsibilities that you haven't been prepared for. That's our culture.

[\(01:29:59\)](#):

And then everyone's lost there. No, no, no. You've been imbibing all of this and you've been involved in gathering expeditions every day and you've been taken out tracking every day, and you've been hunting

small birds and trapping things and reptiles. And then as you get a bit older and can walk faster, so you're out with the men and you're out with the women walking longer distances on the hunts and gathers. It's just, you're included, you're included, you're included, you're included. And people ask you, well, what do you think what that is? Is that kudu? Is that mbo? Is he going that way or is he going west? How old is the track? Is it four hours old? Is it five hours old? Oh, yeah. Look, you can see that a beetle went across it. Well, beetles come out at this time of day in the morning, then they hold up in the middle of the day when it's hot.

[\(01:30:48\)](#):

So therefore this kudu must have gone somewhere around dawn. Whereas that one there that doesn't have the beetle track across it, and it's a bit deeper maybe is a little bit more recent. Let's go for that one. And you, the eight year old are now beginning to discern this sort of thing, and they'll ask you, what do you think? What do you think? And then at the healing ceremonies, the presence of the children is absolutely vital. Without them, it sort of doesn't work because you need the entirety of the energies there of the community. So you are not just being honored and filled with unconditional love so that you grew up as a secure psychologically or emotionally secure individual. You're also part of the, you're being deferred to and asked your opinion quite early, and you're part of the controlling of the resources of the food. So you are imbibing, you're learning the process of government really, and self-government from birth infancy. That is not true in our society. Children are regarded as irrelevant. We're optimistic about them. Well, we hope that they'll grow up to lead the society, but we sort of dismiss them until suddenly we rely upon them when they reach adulthood. And then we're surprised that they don't behave in a mature fashion because they've had no training for it.

[\(01:32:27\)](#):

But yeah, the kids are at the center of things,

Warwick Schiller [\(01:32:33\)](#):

Right?

Rupert Isaacson [\(01:32:34\)](#):

Not on the,

Warwick Schiller [\(01:32:35\)](#):

Yeah. So it sounds like, right,

Rupert Isaacson [\(01:32:37\)](#):

You don't send 'em off to boarding school, basically. No.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:32:40\)](#):

Right. Yeah. It sounds like they're starting out with a nervous system that works like it was supposed to work. Indeed. It's almost like the rest of us guys, we spend all our life with this nervous system that was jacked up from the beginning. And half the problems we have comes from having a nervous system that is not working the way it evolved to work for the last.

Rupert Isaacson [\(01:33:09\)](#):

Indeed. Indeed. And we're mystified by it because we're coming out of generations of this, so we don't have much to compare it to. Interestingly, I just came back from a week of working with Jane Pike, who I'm sure you'll be talking to her as well. And where she's fascinating is she understands the nervous system very, very well. Now, I understand the nervous system from an autism point of view quite well, and I understand a lot of brain stuff had to through the work we do with movement method and horse by method, those people who know the therapeutic side of what we do. However, she knows a lot more about the nervous system than I did. And in the course of me picking her brain as we're driving around between these various clinics we were doing, she was explaining to me how the human brain basically regenerates itself once every nine months or so.

[\(01:34:08\)](#):

If it gets the right input and the right input is novel movement. Novel movement is not doing the same stuff all the time and getting into certain ruts, whether they're in workouts. So you think you're being very healthy, but you're doing the same thing over and over again, and then your brain starts to regard that as just not something that takes much energy or your body regards that something doesn't take much energy, blah, blah, blah, blah. So you don't really evolve, so you don't keep regenerating your neurons in quite the same way izing. Oh, right. This is the same thing that within neuropsych we call B D N F brain derived neurotrophic factor, which is the brain producing more of its own brain cells when you move and problem solve, what is moving and problem solving, if not novel movement, what is novel movement if not hunting and gathering and play?

[\(01:35:04\)](#):

The B D N F brain derived neurotrophic factor is actually only one of five neurotrophins that cause regeneration of cells within the nervous system, gut, brain, heart, and brain. The other four are all taken up only within the nervous system within the body, not within the brain. It's only that last one, B D N F that then goes into your brain neurons, that this is all predicated on hunting and gathering. And we knew with the work we were doing that the more you simulated sort of hunting and gathering exercises and movements with children, the more, and actually adults too. So with dementia and all of this, the more bd n F, the more cognition, the more optimal brain function you got. What I didn't quite realize was that until talking with Jane was that it's so predicated on doing unexpected movements with your body a lot.

[\(01:36:03\)](#):

And if you think about hunting, this is happening all the time because you might have a set route that you like to go, but then it doesn't rain that year, and now things change. And instead of hunting fallow deer, you're hunting road deer, and you are very, very good with your bow and arrow for fallow deer, but the road deer behaved very differently and they've got to relearn your shtick, and now you've got to actually crawl through the bushes because they're much more alert than the fallow deer who are a bit easier to creep up on. And then the next year it changes again. And now you're hunting red deer and you've got to constantly, constantly change and adapt, constantly change and adapt and the actual behaviors and the way your body comes into contact with the earth. It might be more your shoulders, it might be more your stomach, it might be more the soles of your feet.

[\(01:36:55\)](#):

It might be this wants it more. And obviously the same with gathering wild foods. The penny sort of dropped with me and I was like, all right, so if you don't engage in that sort of thing pretty much daily, pretty much through your whole life, there's no way that your brain and your nervous system is going to function in the way that breeds what we would call quality of life or thriving. So let's say for example, you are living an agricultural life and you are doing the same farm chores day in, day out with some



seasonal variation, well then that's not going to work so well. Even though you're getting a lot of exercise or you're doing the same yoga patterns or the same workout patterns, it's not going to work so well even though you're getting a lot of exercise and that's going to have an effect on your psyche, that's going to have effect on your, and also you don't have the shamans around to help with this.

[\(01:37:52\)](#):

So you're taking all of these mechanisms out that are what we thrive in. You're not in nature. If you're not in nature, well then you can't have much novel movement because let's say for example, you go walking, okay, I go walking, this is good for my health, but I'm always walking on these nice tracks. I don't deviate. I don't go off road through the woods and now have to cope with the difficult rough ground and pulling myself up through the trees and crouching low under this and stepping around that. And oh my gosh, I'm cording the thorns and now I've got to unpick myself from the thorns and dah, dah, dah. No, I'm just walking along this track. Well, it's not going to have the same effect. So this seems to affect our happiness, depression. I think that people that say work with horses like you or like me, we have a bit of an advantage because a lot of unforeseen stuff comes to us all the time.

[\(01:38:51\)](#):

And then let's say, okay, you're a dressage rider. You're reining rider, you're riding these patterns all the time, but you're still going to go trail ride. And when you go trail ride, it will be different. The horse will move differently. And then let's say you go cross country riding. Well now you're going at speed across country. Your horse is going to slip, your is going to trip. There's going to be other kinds of movement that will surprise you, and the horse will impact your body here and there. It'll bump you, it'll tread on you, it'll hit you with its nose, you'll hug it. So you're getting a little bit back closer to this type of novel movement, if you like, that affects all these things. But it's still not the full Monty, but it's a lot better than happens for a lot of people. So then you realize, oh my gosh, this could be really simple.

[\(01:39:40\)](#):

Could this be as simple as taking a monthly camping trip and sleeping on the ground and rolling around and off-roading on foot and that sort of thing, and playing games out in those situations, let alone trying to identify bird species and plant species. And what if I were to do that a little bit every day? And then you observe children and how they roll around and constantly get all this different input on different parts of their bodies that they're beginning to form, but they very quickly get that squashed out of them. No, sit at a desk, learn how to sit at a desk. Well, no wonder we're all messed up. So the nervous system is obviously how we're relating to the environment. And the environment is the environment that we're supposed to interact with. And we are this organism. So you take the environment away, you put the organism in a cage, and what do you get? You get a zoo animal that paces, and that's sort of us really. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller [\(01:40:54\)](#):

While you were talking there, yeah, while you were talking there, I was thinking about you driving around with Jane and Jane telling you this stuff because from the traffic, anybody that has not, yes. Anybody who has not experienced being in the same room as Jane Pike is missing out on life because she has this vibrancy about her that's just, it's hypnotic. But you guys did some things together. One of the things you did was a course called Longing and Belonging, and another one was called about vitality. Can you tell us a little bit about those? Because I imagine there's quite a bit of getting back through a hunter gatherer roots in the longing and belonging part and in the vitality part too.

Rupert Isaacson [\(01:41:45\)](#):

Yeah, sure. So yeah, we did this longing and belonging retreat really for about 10 people in the Welsh borders last week in a landscape that I know very well. I partly grew up there. And this particular area that we were in, I know it, it's a friend's farm, so I know it very well. And we wanted to look at this thing of why do so many of us feel a great longing to belong? And what exactly are we longing for? And you had 10 people coming in with 10 very different stories, including a young woman of only in her thirties who had just come back from about five or six years of cattle mustering helicopter pilot work in the northern territories of Australia, even though she's British. And you Warwick would know very well that that is effectively being a stunt helicopter pilot. And then on the day, the risks, they take bananas.

[\(01:42:55\)](#):

And then to do that at that young age as a woman, young woman in that very much a certain kind of man's world up there. And then in between she was hunting and gathering saltwater crocodiles, and a couple of her friends got taken, and indeed her mentor pilot who sort of helped her with that was then killed in a crash last year. And she ended up feeling very lost and coming back to the UK and said, well, where is home? Where do I belong? And then a lot of other stories coming in. Then we were basically gathering round of fire every day and swapping stories and then going out into the nature to explore and look for wild plants and look at the stories and myths of the land and ask, okay, this is an area where the Welsh fought the English all the time.

[\(01:43:56\)](#):

It's the Welsh borders you can see offers dike, which is the 10th century earthwork that was erected by the king of Meia, the Saxon English king to keep the Welsh out, but also there's all the cattle tracks going there towards London where all the cattle from the wel hills were always driven in to be sold down there. And what stories were they telling about each other and to each other and still to this day and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, and King Arthur and those legends, and how do they serve us? Do they not serve us? And how we living and reliving our own legends? And we were looking at this while we were interacting with nature and then coming to gather round fires and cook together. And what it really came down to was that longing and belonging is in the human heart and that what we belong to belong to is ourselves.

[\(01:44:49\)](#):

And if we can't belong to ourselves, we haven't really got much chance of belonging to anything anywhere else, but we can only belong to ourselves of course, if we're in a community that supports that. And how do you find these communities? And I talked about, well, I'm doing this stuff with Jane Park, why am I doing this stuff with Jane Park? Well, because met you Warwick and you're a friend of Jane, Jane Parks and you introduced us and then you put together this podcast where you attract in a lot of people who are thinking about this sort of stuff. And then you ran the summit last year where a lot of us came together and exchange notes and decided, oh, why don't we collaborate because this is the first time we will be working a little bit as lone wolves. And now, oh my gosh. So what's happened is you could argue that you Warwick have sort of created a latter day hunter gatherer ethic culture out of what you thought was a horse training thing.

[\(01:45:44\)](#):

You ended up gathering in a group of personalities who like yourself were involved in that, but had been thinking about these various things and now it's sort of going into the more general human experience. So we did this and we realized we're going to do, and people were asking questions, well, why do I feel the grass is always greener? And we were exactly. Because the grass is always greener because humans are supposed to be seasonal nomads. We are not supposed to stay in one place all year. We're supposed to move camps. We're supposed to have about three to four seasonal camps a year that we go with with

our families. We're indeed, the grass is greener in that season. And that's why we go and we go and hunt over there, we go gather over there, we drive our flocks over there, and then when it stops raining there or the Mong go nuts come up over there.

[\(01:46:35\)](#):

We indeed decamp and we move over there. And this is actually a very useful human thing. It's not something that we have to conquer and get beyond. It's actually something we have to delve into. So are we making regular pilgrimages to local sacred sites? Are we finding whatever are seasonal nomadic camps in the course of our year? That's why we love to travel, why we like to revisit places that are meaningful for us and so on. And why aren't we doing this in community? Well, because we were told that that's all sort of hippie bullshit. But now when we realize that no, it's not hippie bullshit. In fact, that's why the hippies were sort of right. That's why the counterculture became to some degree, the mainstream, which it is today, is because, well, this just goes back to the roots of what it is to be a human being and have quality of life.

[\(01:47:30\)](#):

And so we were exploring all of this through these really interesting conversations and hunter gatherer like activities that we were doing in the Welsh borders. And then we did an online retreat following that into vitality. What does vitality mean? Vitalis is life, but life is really animus. It's movement. Something doesn't move. It's dead basically. Because even when you sleep, you move. And however, there are again seasons to this. Obviously we sleep and burnout what people regard human life as a sort of static thing. We should be in happiness or we should be always, we should be like a Coca-Cola advert, always these bright young things dancing around on the beach, caffeinated up to the eyeballs. And that's right. Of course, when you're dancing around on the beach, caffeinated up to the eyeballs 20 minutes later is when you have your crash. They just don't show you that in the advert.

[\(01:48:38\)](#):

And when you are at your most vital, that's when you're using up all of that energy and you are going to have a crash. So the idea of planning for the crash, the winter sleep, the hibernation, the dark of the night before the dawn, the germination of the seed in the soil, the journey through the underworld, all these things permeating our mythologies are there to help us. Actually vitality is the loss of vitality and the refining of vitality. And that constant dance between the two is the human condition. And so we were exploring that in the online one. Again, fascinating group of people bringing their experiences to that. And then we went to Ireland, did a straight up horse clinic training. But what was really great with that was those who know the horse side of what I do know that we train horses in collection.

[\(01:49:39\)](#):

It started with so that they could create oxytocin in young autistic riders. And oxytocin is the hormone of communication. So the more collective the horse, if he's relaxed, the more your hips rock, the more oxytocin, happiness hormone, but also communication hormone you got. But it meant that we ended up becoming dressage people with a lot of in-hand work. So I was doing that side of thing with people. And then Jane was taking them off and working on their nervous systems with the idea of the various types of novel movement to bring their body into a more harmonious alignment with the horse moving with them. But really we were kind of looking at the same thing, which is a gene environment interaction between the human species and the environment, whether a horse is involved or not, or whether we're doing it around a campfire in the Welsh borders or whether we're doing it online, talking to each other.

[\(01:50:34\)](#):

And I do have to say, Warwick, we wouldn't be doing it without you because yeah, I've written these books and I've done this work and so on and so on, and everyone you bring on these conversations has done really interesting stuff, but you are collating it and bringing it together in a really interesting way where these conversations in this work seeps out into the mainstream through social media, how ironic that social media could bring us back to a more hunter, gatherer based outlook on life, which inevitably is going to bring us back into further contact with nature. And you only have to hear a conversation like this and say, oh, so if I actually would like to sit on the ground then and get this input to my nervous system and perhaps take my shoes off sometimes when I walk and perhaps go off road and walk through the woods, so perhaps get together with groups of friends around a campfire, I might feel better because my nervous system's actually designed for that. Oh, well, that sort of makes sense. Maybe I'll give it a go. Just promoting that kind of conversation. Warwick, you're doing people a great favor.

Warwick Schiller ([01:51:52](#)):

It's not all that altruistic, it's all self-serving. These conversations are the ones that interest me, the ones that I want to hear about.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:52:01](#)):

But that's of course how any good economics works. You do it because it is called symbiosis, isn't it? That's nature at its best when something serves one and the other. Well,

Warwick Schiller ([01:52:16](#)):

That sounds like the whole ethos of the hunter gatherer, doesn't it?

Rupert Isaacson ([01:52:20](#)):

It does.

Warwick Schiller ([01:52:22](#)):

Serving altogether.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:52:24](#)):

Well, we're symbiotic species just like any other. The mushroom mycelium serves the tree, the tree serves the mycelium, everyone. Everyone does better. The human serves the antelope. The antelope serves the human shock.

Warwick Schiller ([01:52:44](#)):

What we breathe, the trees breathe in, and what the trees breathe out, we breathe in.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:52:49](#)):

Indeed, indeed, indeed.

Warwick Schiller ([01:52:51](#)):

It's all connected.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:52:52](#)):

Easy to forget when we're sitting looking at each other down a computer. But what is the internet about that? And that is such an interesting thing, the whole thing of the wood wide web of the mycelium connecting the trees and the trees using the mycelium to pass messages to each other and even nutrients to each other. But the mycelium rather like bankers taking a little commission along the way. Our economic system really just mirrors all this. And what else could it mirror? Because what else is there to mirror other than what the universe provides? And it seems that everything works in this way. So the internet through which we are talking currently is really just a sort of expression of that

Warwick Schiller ([01:53:42](#)):

The hunter gatherer internet. Okay,

Rupert Isaacson ([01:53:46](#)):

An extension of the hunter gatherer mind. I would say yes, because it's all about exchange. And even when it goes wrong, even when you've got the haters and the trolls and all of that, then okay, well, it'd be handy to have a shaman, I suppose, an internet chairman to come in and help make everybody feel better.

Warwick Schiller ([01:54:07](#)):

But it also, okay. And where did the Trump come from?

Rupert Isaacson ([01:54:11](#)):

That's a good question. Well, again, that's our funky chimpanzee side, isn't it? That's our demonic side that we have. Do you

Warwick Schiller ([01:54:20](#)):

Think so? Or do you think possibly? Do you think possibly those internet trolls didn't have enough connection as a child?

Rupert Isaacson ([01:54:30](#)):

Well, it's a bit of both, isn't it? But let's say that there was always that tendency for conflict within the human, but in the right environment, which includes the right spiritual environment, it's mitigated. It doesn't ever get beyond a certain level, but it's there. And then you take those supports away, well then it can go nuts, but ultimately it just destroys itself. That's a limit to what it can actually do. That anything that's going to be productive is always going to come from a position of love. And love always ultimately wins because love is productive. Anything else is ultimately destructive. Anything that's destructive becomes self-destructive.

Warwick Schiller ([01:55:19](#)):

I think after two hours of talking to you on the first podcast, that all came down to love and it looks like it's coming down to the same place here. What

Rupert Isaacson ([01:55:27](#)):

Else can it possibly come down to?

Warwick Schiller ([01:55:30](#)):

Exactly you guys home, if you haven't read Sapiens and you're interested in this stuff. I think like anybody who joins a lot of dots, say Malcolm Gladwell or say Steven Bodansky in the nature of horses or Yuval Noah Hari joining the dots about the birth of humankind in this book, there's always going to be people that say, oh, they got it wrong and it's not exactly right or whatever. But I think for a very interesting version of the history of mankind, I think this book is quite a good book to read.

Rupert Isaacson ([01:56:13](#)):

Indeed. I would agree. And I'd say in defense of those authors, I don't think any of them are offering what they're saying is gospel. I think that what they're doing is saying it could be like this, and this is a worthwhile conversation. At the end of the day, I think there's a certain humility to what they're saying.

Warwick Schiller ([01:56:36](#)):

And the other thing, I was reading this Sapiens book the other night and I'm like, I wonder what the scientists think of this. So of course I look up on the internet and look up how it was received in a scientific community, and there's a number of scientists that say it's incorrect and this and that and something else. But those scientists, when they put stuff out, they put stuff out that the average person can't understand anyway. So someone's got to get this stuff out to where it just makes a modicum of sense and make it interesting enough for people to look into it. So I think it's a great book. I'm loving it. Yeah,

Rupert Isaacson ([01:57:21](#)):

It's certainly going to get you thinking and that's always a good thing,

Warwick Schiller ([01:57:28](#)):

Always a good thing. I think we should finish up here soon. You got any parting words or advice about hunter gatherers that might help people in their day-to-day life?

Rupert Isaacson ([01:57:41](#)):

Yeah, notice and participate in nature wherever you can. And remember that nature is in your neighborhood. It's on your street. So for example, if you begin to notice what birds are on your street, when you walk down it, when you drive down it and you begin to keep a little log of them and you start looking at what are the plants? What are the plants growing out of the cracks in the pavement, what are the plants growing out of the cracks in the wall, let alone plants in people's gardens? And what's so great now is you've got these apps, these little hunter gatherer apps. You can just take a picture of the plant, oh, there it is. Oh, but then look it up. What are the medicinal qualities of that plant? What are the nutritional qualities of that plant? Is it a native plant? Is it an introduced plant? If it's an introduced plant, who introduced it and why?

([01:58:52](#)):

What was it used for back in its home country, if it's a native plant, what was it used for? Say you're in America. Is that a Native American medicinal plant? Quite likely actually begin to take notice and interest in your environment. Stop and look, stop and smell the flowers, basically. Then go to your park or your backyard as often as you can, which means more than once a week, take off your shoes and walk on the earth and feel what it feels like to get that input into your nervous system, even when it's cold and wet, because you're not going to die. You're going to put your shoes back on, take a towel, dry

your muddy feet off, but experience some stuff, some sensation naturally that you wouldn't normally feel. Go and hug a tree, a big one. Does hugging a big one feel different to hugging a little one? Yeah, it does. Why? Because there's electromagnetic fields that come out of them. The bigger it is, the bigger the electromagnetic field lie on the ground. If it's wet, put down like a ground sheet like you were going for a picnic. If it's dry, we don't have to bother with that. If it's Texas in the summertime, watch out for fire ends. Do it on a rock instead and start working around your environment this way. What are the trees in my hood again? Are they medicinal? Are they native? Are they nutritional?

[\(02:00:41\)](#):

Go walking off road. Take a little bit of woods in your subdivision and walk through them through the brambles and the briars and try and get yourself 50 yards through. What will happen if you do this sort of thing on a regular basis is your brain will begin to produce this protein called B D N F, brain derived neurotrophic factor. And when you move and problem solve, and it will improve your cognition and your happiness, also ask yourself, where is my clan? Where is my tribe? Where is my hunter gatherer group of 12 to 24 people? You may not have it, it doesn't matter if you don't have it, but if you pose the question, people begin to coalesce around you. The reason we like to barbecue and stuff is what is that? But gathering round a fire, grilling meat that we've hunted goes to the core of being a human. Do it barbecue in your backyard, invite some friends, but this time don't sit on big plastic chairs. Sit on the ground. And maybe instead of firing up a big state-of-the-art, gas, barbecue or something, try grilling it on open coals.

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

Because the way you'll interact with the wood as you pick it up or the hot coals is you try to maneuver them or get the coals down to that right heat, turning the meat without burning yourself. All of this brings you back to core of human experience. And then when you are sitting around that Barbie doing that, swap stories about life, about myth, about what you saw, what birds, simple stuff, where do those conversations lead? These, what's ironically seem like really radical departures from a lot of our normal life, but really those are normal life. And the more of these things that you do, little things like this, the greater at one's quality of life is, and the less sedentary one is because one inevitably gets out, moves more in nature, but to move in nature in community basically, which is what I'm talking about, noticing and interacting with the nature as a hunter or a gatherer might, can I eat that? Can I hunt that? What is that bird? What is that track? What is that poo? What animal made that poh? You get lots of little laps for that. You get really into it, give it a go. Do what happens, and then let us know.

Warwick Schiller [\(02:03:56\)](#):

I'm surprised it took you two hours to say the word poo, because usually with Rupert, there's poo in the conversation somewhere.

Rupert Isaacson [\(02:04:03\)](#):

It's so true. It's so true. You've raised the tone so much, Warwick that I haven't said shit yet. Shit, I didn't say shit, so now I've got to make up for it.

Warwick Schiller [\(02:04:15\)](#):

I think you did say shit, but you weren't referring to feces. You were just saying shit at that time when you said, well,

Rupert Isaacson [\(02:04:20\)](#):



For example, I just arrived back on a plane, I'm sitting in Germany and I just arrived back on a plane and first thing my wife says to me is, we've got some very interesting poo in the garden. What do you think it is? And she's gone. She's taken a picture of it in a piece of sand that we put out for bees to dig their holes in the ground, wild bees. And it's part of a little local project we're doing just in a small backyard here. And we created a little Shelton. We've got a little wildlife camera, but it didn't catch whatever was going in there to poo. So I've got a little bet on with my neighbor. He thinks it's a hedgehog. I think it's a Martin. The reason I think it's a martin is because I don't quite see how a hedgehog will get up into this area, but it might.

[\(02:05:10\)](#):

And I've seen a Martin caught my wildlife camera before, and it looks a bit like predator P, but then again, a hedgehog is an insect of war. So maybe we'll find out. But the process of finding out will be fun. Fun and joy are at the core of the human hunter-gatherer way of life, which means that the core of human life and without them, well, we feel like we feel without fun and joy. So by engaging in some of these activities that I'm talking about, oh, the other one is dance, by the way. Dance. Got to dance because hunter gatherers dance. How are we going to dance? Dance around the kitchen too? Funky, funky here, give me some air. Get stupid in your kitchen as often as you can, and add that to the little and do it with your kids. And do it with your friends. See what happens.

Warwick Schiller [\(02:06:12\)](#):

Wise words. Thank you so much, Rupert, that was awesome. We probably should pull it up there. Thank you so much for joining me in talking about this. The subject fascinates me, and you're the one person I know that has a great deal of experience with these people, so I appreciate you coming on here.

Rupert Isaacson [\(02:06:32\)](#):

I appreciate you inviting me. Where we left it, where we began. Remember I talked about the lightness of heart. They don't take themselves that seriously. We take ourselves quite seriously and it doesn't make us happy. So the more light-hearted activity, we a banter, funny memes, exchange them, laughter, do it. It's a laugh. Do something just because it's a laugh with your shoes off in nature if possible. You're returning to the hunting. And also that the seeking out of ideas, the seeking out of knowledge that is also hunting and gathering as by the way, the seeking out money. But the quest for ideas, the quest for knowledge. This is all part of it. Curiosity.

Warwick Schiller [\(02:07:29\)](#):

Curiosity. That's the word that was coming to my mind. It's all about being curious.

Rupert Isaacson [\(02:07:38\)](#):

And if children are at the core of life in these communities, don't forget you are in a child and you tend to lose your curiosity when you lose that childlike side of yourself. And that breeds an awful lot of depression.

[\(02:07:58\)](#):

The more childlike we are, generally the happier we are, the more curious we are. Allow yourself to be curious about stuff. Don't let your prejudices about this or that, or your beliefs about this or that. Stop you from going and finding out anyway. And don't be attached to being right or wrong or someone else being right or wrong. Because if you are a hunter gatherer, what matters is can you eat it? Is it there? Is

it there to eat? It doesn't matter. It's more practical than that. It's not about belief systems. It's about what works.

Warwick Schiller ([02:08:39](#)):

Perfect. Well thank you. Thank you. You guys at home, thank you so much for joining us. And the next time we have Rupert back on, we'll find out the mystery of whether it was a hedgehog or a Martins.

Rupert Isaacson ([02:08:52](#)):

Oh, there is a website I'd like to send people to. Oh yeah, please do. So we have a new website called long ride home.com. Some people might know our other website, which is ntlis.co, which is our autism and brain work. But long ride home.com has a program on it called Little Besa, which goes into the sort of shamanic side of things a lot and something else called Face Your Bull, which is about how you use the brain science based in this sort of thing to help face challenges in life. And a lot of what we've been talking about here is sort of on that stuff. So have a look at it and let us know what you think. Long ride home.com, little besa and face your bull

Warwick Schiller ([02:09:33](#)):

Program. Perfect. Yes, everybody take a look at that. And I know you talked about it to me before and I haven't actually gone there and have a look, but now it just reminded me that I need to do that. So once again, thank you so much. Appreciate everything you're doing in life.

Rupert Isaacson ([02:09:49](#)):

Pleasure. Likewise. Alright, see you.

Warwick Schiller ([02:09:54](#)):

Bye.

Rupert Isaacson ([02:09:54](#)):

Cheers, bye.

Speaker 1 ([02:09:57](#)):

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