

Episode 153 Mary Wenless

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7s Journey on. 1s Lies

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within the trails we ride.

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You're listening to The Journey On podcast with Warrick Schiller. Warrick is a horseman, trainer,

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international clinician, and author who helps empower horse people from all over the world with the skills, knowledge and mindsets needed

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to create trusting partnerships with their horses. Warwick

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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 and videos. Warwick.

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because you

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see. 1s Get everyone. Welcome back to the John Podcast. I'm your host, Warwick Shila, and my very, very special guest this week on the podcast is Mary Wanless. So Mary is one of the world's most renowned writing instructors. And the thing I love about Mary is her journey reminds me a bit of mine to where she

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has become one of the world's most renowned writing instructors, not just from teaching writing, but. 1s Exploring other avenues to help her teach writing. So Mary has combined her lifetime of equestrian knowledge with the experience gained by studying psychology, biofeedback, neuro linguistic programming, the Alexander and Feldenkrais techniques, tai chi, massage, dance, anatomy, sports psychology, and educational kinesiology, and this has led her to develop an extraordinarily effective method of teaching based on an understanding of the biomechanical demands of writing and the communication styles that people need that make writing skills easy to learn. So I had an amazing conversation with Mary. I hope you guys enjoy this as much as I did recording it. 3s Mary Wanless. Welcome to the Journey On podcast.

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I'm thrilled to be here.

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I'm thrilled that you are here. Thank you so much for joining me. So what do we start out? What did you what I was going to say, what you do. But why don't you. Why don't you tell us exactly what you do in the world these days?

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I coach writing, I'm a writer. I've written a number of books about what I do and made DVDs and now have a website. And really, it's about. Getting riders to. 2s Begin to recreate what it is that talented writers do that they don't know they do. 1s And talent, from my perspective, is a word that means she's really good at it, but we don't know why. And through my own quest as a not very naturally talented writer, I think I have figured out a lot about what talent is and how to recreate that in bite sized chunks for people. In a way that makes it easy for horses to. 1s Come into lovely posture and movement and want to be there and happily do what they do. 2s Yeah, we did. We just. You just hit on a common thread, uh,

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with me too, because. I. 1s Was not a I didn't think I was a talented rider or or trainer of horses or whatever. And I had to, you know, I've got friends of mine who are talented and you ask them, what did you just do? Then they go, I have no idea. They don't know what they do. And. Because I had to learn.

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You know, stuff inside out, back to front, left or right before I could actually do it. That enabled me to be able to teach it because I could quantify it. Absolutely, as opposed to just being naturally good at it. And yes, yes. So let's unravel this story of of how you became you went from a not so good rider to, um, being, I would imagine I could probably grouped you with one of the most prolific, uh.

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Influences of writing, of correct writing in the world today, wouldn't you say?

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Um, yes, I think that would be true. 1s In a way that makes it much more accessible.

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Yeah. It's it's. Yeah. Most certainly. So you did you grow up riding horses?

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No I didn't I grew up in the outskirts of London, actually, not so far from Heathrow Airport. Um, in a non horsey family. I begged for riding lessons from 4 to 14, and eventually I think my parents only gave in because my cousin was having riding lessons and her family clearly had less money than my family, so eventually they gave in. But that was ten years of begging, and I went to a riding school that was further out of London and a fair bit of way, and had a lesson every week and became a helper there and work my way up into being one of the chief helpers. And, um, my experience of riding between then and when I went to university was, you know, weekly lessons and a few riding holidays and ponies in a somewhat muddy field. 2s And when I went to university, we had a riding club and a friend and I took over that riding club in time. We actually for the first two years I was there, had a rider called Chris Bartle in our riding club. You might have heard of him. 1s Um. 1s He did very well in dressage and was 11th in one of the Olympics, I think the LA Olympics, and won badminton and coached the German um Friday event team and now coaches the British team. So we won quite a lot because we had Chris in our team and I had a great time riding at university. And um. 1s We need some adjuncts to the tail, actually, which is, you know, my parents were mortified by me writing, but I was so determined. It just happened. And my mother became really ill when I was 14 and I when I was 16. And then my dad died when I was 18, during my first term at university. 1s And I stayed with my brother during the Christmas fact, just after my dad had died and during the Easter weekend, he was fairly newly married. And after that Easter vacation, it became clear to me that that wasn't something I should do again. So when it came to thinking about the summer vacation, everybody else had homes to go to, and I didn't. And my friend where she and I were running the riding club together, said, well, why don't you go to where I kept my pony and be a working student and see if you could do your assistant instructor's exam? I never would have thought I was good enough to do that. But she came up with that suggestion, and it was the best suggestion I had for where to go and what to do. So I went and did that and, um. 1s In some respects hated being the lowliest person on the totem pole, but learnt lots and by the skin of my teeth passed the exam. So went back to university and was writing a bit and teaching a bit alongside my degree and getting lots of experience, because in the inter university competitions we did showjumping and dressage and you get on a horse you didn't know and you had ten minutes and you had to do a novice dressage test and you got two jumps and then you had to do a show jumping around. So it was actually lots of practice of getting on lots of horses and um. 1s We had a riding school that was much more upmarket than where I'd grown, where we were training. And university writing was a really big element for me in my development. 4s I wanted to back up just a little bit because, you know, I said earlier that, oh, we've kind of kindred spirits in the fact that we didn't feel like we were very good writers, but we had to figure it out left, right, back, front, up and down in order to be able to. And I think that's what enables us to be able to communicate those ideas to somebody else who might not be quote unquote talented. Well, you just said that someone told you that you should do this thing and you thought that you weren't. It never occurred to you that you were good enough to do that, and how I ended up staying in America and training horses. I came to America for a year just to learn how to train some horses so I could train my own at home. And the guy I worked for for a year, as at the day I was leaving, we shook hands on his on his veranda and he said, if you want to come back, I'll give you a job, because you could do this for a living if you wanted to. And that was.

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You know, I never thought. *1s* I was good enough to do that. So yeah, there's we've got two things in common already. This is going to be fun. Yes. So you would you you kind of skipped over the fact that. Well, not the fact, but why you what you were studying in university. Because from what I've read from you, what you were, what you were studying in university and. Maybe some of the lessons you learnt from studying that factor a great deal into part of how your life ended up in the direction it went to. So you were studying physics, is that correct?

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I was studying physics, yes I was. So, um, I got a bit backed into a corner in a way. You know, I'm pretty sure now that I'm dyslexic. I mean, there was no such thing in those days. Um, school was not easy. I ended up in an elite school, which was really unfortunate. I'd have been much better off, I think, in something with more flexibility. Um, so I was terrible at languages. I do well in English some years. But then if the teacher was really fiendish about spelling and everything else, it would be a nightmare. *1s* Um, but I could kind of do maths. I'm not great at adding up and things like that, but somehow calculus and trigonometry in those kind of things worked. And physics work reasonably well. And I quite liked geography. I thought I was going to do geography and then, um, in the UK we have big exams at 16, and you choose just three subjects to go on from 16 to 18. When you do the sort of school leaving type exams and, uh, choosing your college courses. So we specialize much earlier than you folks do in America. *1s* And my really lovely geography teacher

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is Australian, so I'm

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well, that's true, that's true. So I'm not

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I'm not you folks.

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Yes. My apologies. So, um, my lovely geography teacher left, and the new geography teacher wasn't fun at all. And the more advanced geography just was tedious. So I ended up doing physics, pure maths and applied maths. And there's not very, very far you can go from there. So physics. It was, um. *1s* And. *1s* In. In many ways, I was a philosophical physicist and still am. You know, I cut my teeth on the waves and the particles and cosmology and astrophysics and things like that, the expanding universe. And I could kind of do the math. The math isn't that hard. But then you sit down and scratch your head and you go, what does this mess actually mean? And that's where the problem arises. So. *1s* Beating my brain over the problems of physics and trying to understand what the maths meant. And if there had been a joint physics philosophy degree, I might have been tempted to do it, although I'm not sure I could have done enough reading fast enough and really made sense enough of the philosophy. But physics and philosophy really interested me. *1s* And my obsession with the waves and the particles in many ways is still there, still with me. And it has a rather comparative obsession with the mind and the body. *1s* Um, and that in many ways began in my childhood as well. Um. *1s* From a ridiculously young age.

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Can you say more about that?

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Um, that began really with my mom being very religious and. 2s In a rather unusual religion that talked a lot about spirituality and what was really real. Was it the spiritual world that was real, or was it the world of the senses that was real? And, um. 2s So I was debating that from very young. What was that

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particular religion? So

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she was a Christian Scientist. Okay. Um. And I'm very willing to believe that Mary Baker Eddy, who founded Christian Science, did have a miraculous healing and then wrote about it and founded that church. My mother's version of that, I would say, was very punitive. And if you got sick, it was because you hadn't got your thinking straight and things like that, you know? So it all became a rather punitive kind of deal that I'd have flashes of understanding where I really thought I got it. 2s And then times when I didn't think I'd got it. But that was another kind of background growing up. And then of course, my mother got cancer and died of cancer. So that was a double whammy, um, where she wasn't able to heal herself. 1s And that kind of ended up taking me away from the church and away from any organized religion, but still contemplating those kind of things.

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Do you feel it was that contemplation that led you to study physics, or was that? I was trying to figure out when you're talking before was the the physics. You chose that because I seem to be good at it. Or was there an actual interest in there? And did that interest come from this kind of this metaphysical stuff? You know, I think I came from a really good physics teacher. I had really good physics teachers and really good maths teachers. And. I wasn't much good at anything else. 1s Um, so the physics, I would say, came more from school influences than home influences, but I did, I guess I did wanted to do something a bit unusual and different. I had a brother who was an electrical engineer, and I was more attracted to science than arts, and I would say the family were more encouraging of science than art.

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Mhm. But I was also dancing and. 1s Doing things

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like that to hear in a bit. Yeah. Um, looking back, would you do you think that there actually was a part of the of. 2s That understanding spirituality that kind of led you towards physics. 2s Possibly. I think it was more the teacher at school rather than my home background that led me to physics.



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Okay, and you don't really get into the philosophical bit until you get to sort of 16 or so, and by then you've made your choice to do it right.

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Yeah. 1s So you mentioned dance and I think. 1s Dance is going to dance and movement and understanding. It is going to be a huge part of this story of where you know how you ended up doing what you're doing and being good at what you're doing. What sort of when did you start dance and what sort of dance we involved in?

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Oh gosh, I think I started having ballet lessons when I was four. 1s And they went from 4 to 14 and then we moved. Um. 1s And that's finished ballet. Um, I did some non stylized dance at university. Um, I was doing dance and trampolining and possibly ending up where I thought I would carry on and do a postgraduate education course after finishing physics, which in the end I didn't do. Um, with a possible sub um subsidiary in movement gymnastics, trampolining, dance. But really dance more than gymnastics. 1s And I didn't do that in the

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end. So in. 1s It's so interesting. The trampoline. You're talking about the trampoline? Um, so a former podcast guest of mine, Kansas Carradine. So she's the daughter of. I don't know if you ever heard of the famous actor David Carradine. She's his daughter, but she was a trick rider in Cavalier. I don't know if you ever saw Cavalier

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or Cavalier. Yes, yes,

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but her husband was a trampoline. It was like a world champion trampoline or something. Yes. And then he was a street performer in Toronto, Canada. And these guys approached him and said, hey, we're starting this thing up. Would you like to join us? Which ended up being Cirque du Soleil.

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And so he was in on the ground floor of Cirque du Soleil, and then he ended up going to, uh, Cavalier as the artistic director. Fast forward a few years. Cavalier after Covid, Cavalli is no longer. And I had seen this on the podcast. Yeah, I'd had Candace on the podcast, so I got to know a little bit there. And then I'm at a horse expo in Australia and Kansas. Carradine walks up, I'm like, hey, how's it going? And I'm like, what are you doing here? And she goes, well, my husband is working at Fox Studios in Sydney because they're shooting the new planet of the apes movie. And he with his. He did a lot of similar stuff. You did

like the Feldenkrais stuff, all that sort of thing. It's his job to teach the actors to walk like three different types of simians, uh, orangutans, apes and chimps. And that was his. So I'm just joining the dots here. He came from trampoline,

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but ended up being a body movement coach for. So it's just I think it's not long come out. The latest planet of the apes. I know I saw an ad for it the other day. Um, yeah. So he was the coach for that. So, yeah. A lot of similar threads there.

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Yes. And my oldest, dearest friend actually, who I met my first day in Bristol, um, she was doing French and drama and we did a lot of movement stuff together at university. And also when both of us ended up in London. Um, so non stylized movement then became part of what I was doing in theater improvisation and I didn't know at the time that really I was training a lot for being in front of an audience and improvising in a writing arena. Um, but it was great training for that, I think.

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Can you tell me more about non stylized movement? Because I have no idea. Um,

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that would just be kind of. **1s** Using movement to express emotion, to tell a story. To relate in the outdoors to the earth, the rock, the trees. It's not quite dance therapy, but it's sitting on the edges of dance therapy. Really expressive dance. And it's always interesting trying to work with your movement vocabulary. You know, we all have a movement vocabulary and you don't realise how limited your movement vocabulary tends to be. Um. And in dance it can be a very long time.

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I've never heard that term before. Can you tell me more about movement? Vocabulary? Movement, vocabulary? So we all we all have our ways of moving, don't we? And our posture and our breathing and our limitations and maybe how flowing we are or how jerky we are, how stuck to the ground we are, how mobile we are, and. You know, in that in that land, ballet might be considered a disadvantage because that's a style. **1s** And if you can only move with your toes, point is then. **1s** That could be seen as a limitation. You know, you want to be able to move with your toes wherever you want to put them.

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And you could express more things that way than if you can only move with your toes pointed. **3s** So movement. So both she and I are still very good friends, dealing with movement from very different perspectives and bodies, from very different perspectives, but still appreciating how much we have in common.

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And when was it you met her?

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I met her my first day at university.

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Okay. 2s And so when you went to university, you were, you know, studying physics. You are still in your writing on the university writing team and you're still involved in dance. And those

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a little bit runny edges. Yes, yes, a little bit of dance around the edges.

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So when you. So you graduated from university, got your degree? I graduated from university and I took a year out quote to get riding and horses out of my system. End of quote. It didn't work. So I took a year and, um. 1s Ended up being head girl at a big riding center for a while, and then running a small little riding school for a while, and going back to Bristol to do the post-grad teacher training course because I really thought I should, and all my friends parents were telling me I should. Um, they were taking over surrogate parent roles in my life. And, um, so I went back and started that. And halfway through the first term, I think I had the biggest sort of blinding flash of light experience I've had in my whole life when I was walking along the road one day. Um. 1s I've taught a few physics lessons under supervision in a boys school. That was a little cruel, putting me in a boy's school, and I suddenly found myself walking along the road. I'd been getting headaches, I'd been feeling pretty miserable, and I had this blinding flash of light that went, I don't care if kids understand Newton's laws, I really don't care. 1s And at that point in time, I walked into the department and excused myself, and I got a part time job working in youth clubs, um, with kids. And I was also writing and teaching. A friend and I shared a horse. We bought a horse between us. We were attempting to take this black and white cob eventing, which kind of worked.

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And so I was working with young people and teaching and. 1s Pretending I was a student kind of, and being the mainstay of looking after this horse, because it turned out really hard for my friend to do it, given how busy she was teaching and learning how to teach. 2s So that was my next year. And at the end of that year, I sold my share in that horse to my friend and bought another horse and went off to my first, well, not my first proper horsey job, but horsey job, and then worked in horsey jobs for the next. Golly, how long was that? Let me think. 75. Next four years during which I struggled my way through the British Horse Society exams. Spent most of my time thinking, there's something my teachers aren't telling me. There's something they're not telling me. There's something they're not telling me. Damn it. Reading every book I could lay my hands on. Trying to find out what they weren't telling me. Failing explicitly, not understanding at that point that they weren't telling me because they couldn't put their skill into words and they didn't know. 2s And I spent the last couple of years of that time working for a guy, an Israeli guy who had trained a lot in Germany with Egon von Lindau, who was one of the few classical German writers who had survived Hitler's. Eradication of the aristocracy as well as Jewish people and whoever else. Um. 1s And he was one of the very few continental train dressage riders in the UK. At that point, everybody in the UK was eventing and hunting and showjumping, and if you weren't around in circles, you were considered mad. 1s But he was, I think, a really good writer. He died a couple of years

later, so I never got to see him right from my much more evolved, I. That started happening after that, but he really showed me what a skilled rider could do with a horse. And. In a way, gave me a new brick wall to bash my head against. I passed the British Hall Society exams eventually. I was eventing before I met him and I had a wonderful time, a wonderful year eventing several horses. 2s I was terrified before the cross country, but loved it and was so exhilarated at the end. You know, some of the biggest highs of my life, I would say, were when you're alive at the end of a cross-country horse and your course and your horse is really done what you wanted, you know, it's the most fabulous feeling. So. 1s I got to the end of two years with him and I was burnt out, and I wasn't strong and I was not in good shape emotionally. I would say, you know, I can't agree with my mother's death, but I never had a safe place to grieve my father's death. I wasn't very strong emotionally before any of that happened, and my brother and also my best friend who teaches movement, had both gone to London ahead of me and both got involved with psychotherapy, and I needed to do that. So I sold my horse, which broke my heart. I quit my job and I went to live in London 1s and it really felt like the end of my dream. It felt like my teacher was kind of. Saying things to me, and he kept saying them louder, in response to which I did what I thought he meant harder, you know? So he said it louder, I tried harder, we were like ships that pass in the night. I wasn't smart enough to go. If this isn't earning me a good, maybe I should try doing it different. He wasn't smart enough to go. The kid's not getting it. Maybe I should try saying it differently. And to begin with, he put his heart and soul into teaching me. I'm one of the few people who spent hours on a lunch line. Um. Really attempting to learn to sit and attempting to learn how it worked. And yes, I got better. But no, I didn't really work out how to sit. And I didn't understand it, and I didn't feel like I got it. 2s And I would say that was the lowest time of my life. So I actually had my midlife crisis at 26. Um, and in retrospect, there's huge advantages to having it that early. But at the time it was not easy. And, you know, I wouldn't wish my early life on anybody, basically.

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In my notes here. It says in 1979 you decided not to write or teach anymore, and you started selling fire extinguishers.

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Yes I did. Yes, I went to London and I needed something to do. I rented a room in somebody's house, somebody who is still a good friend. And, um. 1s I kind of needed to do something, and I ended up selling fire extinguishers, which meant I was sort of walking the streets of London and going into shops and seeing if they had the fire equipment they needed and if it was being serviced and up to date. And that was kind of keeping me amused to a point. And, um. 1s There were people that my boss used to teach on the fringes of London, and some of them kept saying, come and give me a lesson, come and ride my horse. And I just said, no, I'm not doing that. 1s And meanwhile selling fire extinguishers was getting a little bit tedious and boring and, um. 1s One day I was walking on Hampstead Heath, which is one of the really nice parks in London, which wasn't far from where I lived, and I saw this kid on a pony and I said, oh, where'd you keep your pony? She says, oh, it's not my pony. And I said, oh, so where does he come from? And she said, he comes from Kentish Town City Farm. And we kept talking. And I live pretty close to Kentish Town. And, um, at one point she said to me, here, have you got your assistant instructor's exam? And I said, yes. And we kept talking. She said, here, have you got your intermediate instructors exam? And I said, yes. And we kept talking and she said, hey, have you got your instructors exam? And I said, yes. And she went called, blimey, you should come down to the farm. So I did go down to the farm and they had maybe eight ponies there and two quite good instructors actually, and they were trying to increase their standing with the British Horse Society and spearhead building a riding arena. 1s And I ended up working there part time, and I ended up saying to the people who were asking me if I would teach them, okay, I'll teach you. So I got back into writing and teaching you again about six months later. And everything was different.

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So when you say everything is different. What was different? Were you different was. It's only been six months. Was horse culture different? What? What was different? My attitude was different. I mean, I had hit rock bottom. I had given up. 1s Before I gave up. I desperately wanted to pass those British society exams. I wanted to look good on a horse. I wanted to ride well. I wanted to compete in eventing and do well, and it was almost like I wanted to be there. You know, I wanted to arrive. 1s And after I gave up. It was like the worst had happened. I didn't care any longer, and I just started noticing things in a different way. 1s And part of that was noticing, well, my left seat bones always feels heavier than my right seat bone. And horses tend to be heavier in my right hand, and I have trouble steering right. And I wonder if those are connected. 2s And as a physicist, you know, I had this innate sense that there had to be a science that underlay the art. 2s And. 1s I had this breakthrough. 1s Where I wrote a horse for somebody pretty regularly, and that horse jogged a lot. 2s And every now and again I could just stop that horse jogging and I didn't know what I'd done. 1s And then a lot of the rest of the time I will pull on the reins, it will pull on the reins and it would just keep jogging and then I could stop it. But I didn't know what I'd done. But I knew what I'd done was really important and significant, and it took me a long time to figure out what I'd done.

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And when I figured that out, I started teaching that to other people, and it started working for them, too. And that really was the stage at which my work as it is now, was born.

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And. 2s I felt I discovered something that was a real baseline that nobody had ever said to me. And that made a world of difference. And I kind of made a vow that I was going to. 1s See if I could really work out how writing worked.

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And what it was that these riders that I envied were doing that I wasn't doing. 5s A little while ago, you mentioned your friends were getting to

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psychotherapy. And I want to know what. 1s I've read up on you a bit and I can't. I can't figure out if you had therapy or you you trained in

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psychotherapy. It was both. So I did find myself a therapist and start in on therapy fairly soon after arriving in London. And it was probably about two years later that I started training as a therapist.

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So I'd probably been in therapy for about two years when I started training as a therapist and, you know, therapy in the 1980s as it was by then. Um. 1s Is pretty different to now. The field has moved on immensely in really good ways, and I think a lot of what happened in that early therapy was it just kind of retraumatized me really and truly. 1s Um. 1s I did have some really big insights. I did change a lot. I

did get stronger. Um. 2s It did make a big difference. 1s But it didn't hit the spot in the way that a lot of things that are around nowadays hit the spot much more easily for people. 1s And. 2s The whole experience of training in the therapy was really significant, because I can remember how our teacher would do a little demonstration with somebody. Yeah, maybe a 15, 20 minute demonstration. And say, okay, everybody pair up. 1s Do something like that with each other. 1s And everybody else acted like they knew how to do it, and they could do it. And I was there thinking, I've got deja vu. 1s I've been told to do things before. I've watched magic and been told to go away and do it and failed to do it. And it's happening again. 1s You know, I've watched magic in front of me. I'm told to go away and do it. I'm floundering. I'm not doing it. 1s And.

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At some point during that time, I stepped into an alternative bookshop in London and opened a book that looked interesting. At random, you know, there's a page, and the page said, if you want to learn to do something, go and learn it from somebody who really struggled to learn. Don't learn from somebody who's really good at it. And I went, this book is for me. Yeah. So I bought the book and it was actually frogs into Princes by Richard Bandler and John Grinder. It was one of the beginning books of NLP. That's neuro linguistic programming. Yeah. And that got me really interested in that as a way of finding out about how people get stuck and how people get changed, how people change and how people learn. And I ended up I did go through that whole therapy training and graduate from it and then get involved in the world of NLP.

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And I want to go down that NLP rabbit hole with you. In my notes, it says in 1980 you spent three months at a dance and movement training. And

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I did. Yes. So my good friend,

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the NLP.

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Um, that was before. And yes, it was. Yes. Yeah. Can you tell me a

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little bit about that? Because that's got to be a huge part of where, you know, how you ended up doing what you're doing now. So that was towards it probably happened about a year after I arrived in London. And my very good friend, who's now a movement teacher, she was going to go and she said, do you want to come? And I went, oh, I wonder if I could make that work? And I discovered I could make it work. So I took three months and we both went to train at the San Francisco Dancers Workshop with Anna Halprin and her team of coaches there. 1s That was where I first met the Phelan Christ method. One of the teachers was a Southern Cross teacher. We did that each week. 2s Um, we did all sorts of things.

U1

36:43

It was quite difficult for me. I think I had it would have worked better for me if I'd had been in therapy for longer before I went there. I found it quite difficult in many ways, but it was also formative. Um. 3s
Can

U2

36:59

I ask you a question?

U1

37:01

Yeah.

U2

37:03

You said that it would have been better if you'd have been in therapy for longer.

U1

37:08

Yes.

U2

37:09

Would the therapy have? 3s So the the what I'm trying to think of here is, you know, a lot of times trauma gets stuck in our bodies, uh, as restrictions, limitations and things like that. So before you went there, if if you'd had therapy for longer, would your mindset have been different or would your body have been different?

U1

37:32

Both. Folks. You can't separate them. You know you can't separate them. Um, but where they wanted to come in from a movement perspective. 1s Um. 2s I wasn't quite ready to be able to do that well. 2s It was. It was formative. We did some things that were great. I mean, the group of about 25 of us, and I'm not sure how many times a week it was that we spent, I don't know, maybe it was up to an hour as a group just doing walk, run and freeze. 2s And we became like a flock of birds. You know that if one person took off, everybody would take off and somebody would stop and everybody would stop. It was an amazing attunement exercise between a group of people, and we just did walk around and freeze with no other instructions.

U2

38:22

Okay. Tell me, tell me about walk around and freeze. I've never heard walk around and freeze. And I'm fascinated already by the little bit you said. So we had a big dance studio about 25 people. The

instruction was, you can walk, you can run, you can freeze. You can go anywhere in the space. You can kind of interact, but you're not touching other people. You just walk, run and freeze. So in the way that a flock of birds or a herd of horses, you know, will just go or just turn. We kind of became like that.

U1

38:59

Um.

U2

39:00

Was that part of your instruction,

U1

39:01

like, did to each other? Sorry. Was that part of the instruction like, one of you is going to decide to make a change and everybody else has to follow. Is it? No, no,

U2

39:11

there was no instruction to do that.

U1

39:13

There was no instruction to do that.

U2

39:15

So everybody could do different things.

U1

39:18

Everybody could do whatever they wanted.

U2

39:21

Okay. And. Was that just you guys or if anybody if this exercise is done with a different group of people, does the end result become that flock of birds, school of fish, herd of horses

U1

39:34

thing? I mean that I can't tell you because I've not been involved in that kind of way over that timescale, doing it with a group of people. But I would think the answer would be yes.

U2

39:45

Yeah. And how long did it take before you guys all synchronized?

U1

39:52

You know. I don't know the answer to that. *2s* I was today. It's quite a gradual process. No, no, no, I mean, we did this a couple of times a week for three months, okay. Most of that time. Yeah. So I can't I can't quite tell you when that happened. But it evolved as a, a way of collective being in that group has evolved over that time.

U2

40:15

Mhm. So it becomes and it was great mind. Yeah. I've read a book about it wasn't about Navy Seals, but in this book they were talking about Navy Seals, how they meditate together and they train together and they get to where when they go into like, you know, maybe they're storming a building or something or other

U1

40:34

and, you know, they go in like a zipper. So the first guy looks left, the second guy looks right, the third guy looks left the fourth. And at some point in time, if one of them sees something that catches his eye and he goes off the rest of them just following behind him. But there's nothing said. There's no, hey, come over here. There's no movements. It's just when he decides to make that decision to go there, they've got this hive mind to where they're all feeling of each other, to where they just. And the leadership, the world. The leader changes all the time with no

U2

41:08

yes, no verbal things, nothing physical. It just they feel it. They sense it. Yes, I really get that. I would say we were doing the same kind of thing. And what was really important about that overall. Um, and it was partly Feldenkrais and that kind of exercise and some of the books I read when I was there that I hadn't found in the UK and maybe hadn't make it yet. There was some books on visualization and healing and cancer, which obviously I had an interest in. *1s* And um, Timothy always in a game books the inner game of tennis in a skiing. I found those while I was there. And by the time I came back from the San Francisco Dance Workshop, I was there going, I'm not just an eccentric riding teacher. I really have found out something important. I have a message here and I vowed that I should write a book. And that was Christmas, 1980. *1s* And it took me seven years to write that book and get it published. It was a long, slow seven years. Um, and that was right with

U1

42:15

the dancers. That was right with your mind. The which was published in the US as *The Natural Rider*. So that's. *2s* The San Francisco Dance Workshop made me take myself more seriously. *3s* And it was its biggest value was probably that. It might have taken me quite a bit longer if I'd just been doing my thing quietly in London. *1s* Them being in that milieu.

U2

42:45

Mhm. You've mentioned Feldenkrais several times. Do you want to explain to our listeners, give a like a bit of a broad overview of that. Yes. So the film crisis technique is one of many body work techniques. Um. 2s All of which can be useful. Um, Moshe Feldenkrais 1s is the founder of it. He was around in the same kind of era as, um, Moses Alexander and the Alexander Technique and Ida Rolf, who started Rolfing and. I think they met in London at various times. I'd have loved to have been a fly on the wall on those discussions. The Federal Christ technique can be both done as a group, following instructions, and you might find, um, lessons from across lessons on the internet that you could just lie down on the floor and listen to and do. And you can also be done one on one. Um. 1s With a practitioner doing hands on work on the client. And it involves very small movements, almost like kind of how you might tinker with something to get a screw undone or something that's tied in a knot, you know, just little small movements that tinker with things and that break established patterns. And. 1s You will almost always get up from a Feldenkrais session feeling different, feeling that you walk different. Feeling that you stand different. Feeling that your spine and your pelvis are different. And, um. 1s It was one of the first bodywork. Techniques I ever did. I came home from London and had regular phone and crisis lessons with somebody, and went to classes when I could, and it was a big stage. I love the expression. This is actually from a book on skiing, um, where the writer talks about. 2s I just need to think what is she says. 1s Breaking up clods of habitual movement like a gardener breaks up clods of earth with a hoe. 1s Mhm. Yeah I think that's beautiful. And we all have clods of habitual movement that don't serve us well. And where you can kind of break them up like a gardener breaks up earth with a hoe. You have much more subtlety and many more movement choices. You're developing your body awareness, you're developing your movement skills.

U1

45:19

And it's been a really significant part of my life actually doing Feldenkrais and doing other body work as well.

U2

45:28

Is there, in your experience at least? 2s Because I was saying before, like trauma gets stuck in the body as is limitations and things is there. Do you get emotional? Do you find people get emotional releases doing photographs like it's the. 1s Emotions and the movement restrictions. Are they? Are they connected at all? They can be. Um, I don't know that that happens a lot in in Feldenkrais. I think it probably can happen. Um, I think it can happen in any kind of movement.

U1

46:06

Okay. You know, I can remember being in a massage once and. The person who held my hand and I just burst into tears.

U2

46:14

Yeah. You know, and that was kind of like, how many times have I had my hand held with good intent in my life? Not enough. 3s You know, it's a pretty cold, difficult household I grew up in.

U1

46:30

So that's a very simple example of what can happen.

U2

46:39

So all this, all this stuff happened in San Francisco that you read the you know, you're doing the the dance and movement training. You've, **1s** you know, you've got some different books on. **2s** On different things. So I guess you come back from San Francisco, are you? Are you energized? Do you have your vision of where you're heading to yet?

U1

47:04

Um, well, I know I'm going to be writing and coaching and learning on the job and really trying to figure out what talented writers do that I haven't been doing. And they don't know they do, and they can't tell you they do. And to really treat it all as an experiment. Yeah. So I began almost like setting up an experiment to go, how does this work? **1s** And beginning to write. My first article was called Zen in the Art of riding. First article I had published starting to right get things published where I could. Um, I'm not really a natural writer. That was quite a learning curve. **1s** I had to write an awful lot to get my anger out of my system, because I really felt like I'd been kind of shortchanged and, and and cheated a little bit in the way I've been taught. And I didn't want that to come through in my own writing. **1s** And I kept, you know, in working with people. I kept saying things like, what did I say that helped you the most? How would you explain this to somebody? What was the difference that made the difference? And learning a huge amount from my students. **3s** And collaborating like we were all trying to work this out together. **3s** And

U2

48:27

second ago you said sorry. I want to back up a little bit. I'm sorry I keep interrupting, but you keep. You keep saying things like, oh, this is important to dig into that. When you said you you wrote to get your anger out, did you find that you felt different in the world when you. **2s** Allowed unexpressed anger to come through, whether it was in your writing or however you did that, did you find that you would felt different after that?

U1

48:55

Um, I would say it helped. I would say I felt very different over time, but. That became a watershed in my writing. I don't know that it was a watershed in my life. It was a watershed in my writing. Um, I don't know that it was a watershed in my life in general. **3s** But it enabled me to write in the positive, encouraging way I wanted to write. Whereas I used to read my writing and look back through it, and there was a subplot that went, you rotten lot, you you really shortchanged me here.

U2

49:30

Right. You held some held some resentment in there. So you've I want to make sure we get the timeline right here. So you've decided you're going to write the book. Yes. Took you seven years. These articles you're writing are these the beginnings of. This is after you've decided to write the book. But you're not writing the book yet. Is that where these articles are coming from?

U1

49:49

Yes. So I was just trying to learn to write. Um. **1s** And, you know, I've done science at school. I hadn't done that much English since I was 16 or so. So I was trying to teach myself how to write, work out how the heck you get published, how you put a book together. Um. **1s** And riding horses for people and

teaching around the fringes of London, and just trying to put two and two together and doing all the other stuff that interested me, the therapeutic work and NLP. I also got involved in biofeedback, um, in the very early days of biofeedback, I was very fortunate to be in the right place at the right time with that one. 1s So Tai Chi or anything like that. That was a body mind kind of based skill I was up for, and I was doing the improvisational theater at that time as well. So I was having a good time. Really? 2s Just holding it together financially.

U2

50:54

All right. This is a fascinating story because and I'm. 1s Yeah, I'm loving this because. 1s We're learning all the things that. Make you a good writing instructor and then nothing to do with writing.

U1

51:09

That's right. Yes.

U2

51:11

And it's and it's people like you that look outside the box that are the, you know, the paradigm shift is because I think, you know, maybe up until you everybody was looking at writing, instructing from a writing instructing perspective and not bringing. All these other things. Into it. 1s Yes. So, you know, I was learning about coaching. Learning about communication. Um. 1s Learning about riding, learning about biofeedback all at the same time. And I just did whatever appealed to me next. And and really and truly, I probably had to be in London to avail myself of Feldenkrais and biofeedback and NLP and so on. It was the very early days of NLP in London, taught by, you know, a lot of the really original people. Um. 2s And I had a blast.

U1

52:13

In a way, I think in that time I did adolescence because my adolescence got rather overshadowed by sick parents. So I kind of got more out and about, more social and, um. 1s It's had a foot in the horse world and a foot in the personal development world. And that was where exactly where I wanted to be. 2s Can you tell us a little bit more about NLP? In case some people have no idea what neuro linguistic programming actually is?

U2

52:44

Yes. It came from, um, a guy called Richard Bandler starting to study some very well known therapists and successful therapists of that day, who were considered the gurus of the field and really trying to work out what they did that they didn't know they do or that led to their success. Um, and it was Virginia City and Milton Erickson and various other people. And he kind of came up with a way of looking at communication and ways of figuring out how the brain works and how we process information internally. And. You know, NLP will do a little bit of theory and then have people break up and do exercises with each other. And once I got into that milia, these were exercises that were in the kind of bite sized chunks that we could actually do. You know, it wasn't like the writing things I couldn't do and the therapy training that I couldn't do, um, or kind of vaguely only sort of kinda maybe. And it made sense to more to the scientist in me. 2s And it was fun. And I learned so much, um, about what makes people tick and how we hear information and what we do with it inside our heads, and how. 1s What we think the world is, is based with what we pay attention to, what we see, what we don't see, what we hear, what we don't hear. Whether we're thinking we know what goes on in somebody's head and guessing

when we don't know what goes on in somebody else's head, getting clearer about what goes on in our own heads. 2s I mean, NLP has some sayings. One of the NLP sayings is there's no failure, there's only feedback. 2s And at that point in my life, I find myself saying that to myself. And then I'd wake up and realize that I said to myself, there is no feedback, only failure.

U1

54:49

And I was going. There is no feedback, only failure. There's no feedback, only failure. Wait a minute. That's wrong. There's no failure, only feedback. 1s You know, I felt like I'd failed such a lot in my early life. I'd struggled my way through the educational system, being very average. Um. 6s And it was. It was really. Yeah. It was fabulous. I would recommend anybody. To do an NLP basic NLP training and just get a handle on the way. We use words inside our heads. The pictures we make, the feelings we make. 2s What we do to ourselves in that process that is helpful or not helpful.

U2

55:39

And isn't there a part of that? I think you mentioned it a minute ago. Part of that that breaks things down into bite sized, you know, bite sized pieces as far as trying to teach people things.

U1

55:53

Yes. The theory and the practice are much more linked than the theory and the practice of. Anything I dealt with to that point. 2s You know, as in theory and practice within the psychotherapy training didn't mesh as well as they really needed to. Theory and practice in the horse world didn't really hold up for me terribly well. Um. 2s I still think our conventional, you know, in the world that I grew up in, our conventional theories and ways of talking about riding and horses aren't helpful for most people. They don't help most people get it. 1s Um. 2s So this kind of walked its talk, you know, it walked its talk more convincingly than anything else I'd met. And it took the mystery. Out of things. And, you know, I'm a physicist. You try and take the mystery out of things when you have a physics kind of mindset. Mhm. You know, I recently the reason I was asking about NLP and I recently listened to a podcast with a retired US Army colonel, and I don't normally listen to podcasts, anything to do with anything military because it doesn't that really interests me. But this guy ended up being involved in the thing called, I think he was involved in, in what was called MKUltra, which was the US Army's attempt at trying to work on paranormal things. Um, you know, um. 1s What are they? Remote viewing. So they were trying to get people just during the Cold War, and they're trying to get people to see what's going on inside the the the Kremlin. Remote viewing, telekinesis, the all those sorts of things. But this guy was saying he they really got into NLP and they did this experiment where they got the the Army's, um, pistol coaching.

U2

57:59

Squad or the people that teach Army pistol shooting and these guys. Can teach the, you know, teach people to do it really, really well. And they did. They had a like a three week challenge to where the Army taught it their way. And this guy taught a group of people who didn't shoot pistols using NLP. A lot of NLP stuff. Yes. And the army starts at 25 yards. You start shooting the target at 25 yards. That's where you start. And when you get decent at that, then they start to move it further out. He said we started at point blank range.

U1

58:38

So you

U2

58:38

couldn't miss was right, you couldn't miss, and you went from there. And they could actually teach. They could actually teach people to shoot pistols better than the experts in the army who that's all they do is teach people to shoot pistols. Yeah. It was just breaking it down into to. Yeah, I love it. Have you ever read a book called The Talent Code by Daniel Coyle?

U1

58:59

Absolutely. Yes. I'm very fond of the talent code. I recommend that to people all the time.

U2

59:04

Yeah, I talked about it. I talk about it quite a bit. Helping people. Yeah. Yes.

U1

59:09

And I know that story from the NLP and, um. 1s Yes. And my aim was to try and do the same with riding to. Can I make this a much more learnable skill? 1s Can I make the underlying skills explicit 1s in a way that people can get it and get it in bite sized chunks? And you know, I knew the answer was yes. Um, in the outer layers of the underneath. At least back then. And the answer is a much bigger yes now. 2s 40 plus years later.

U2

59:44

Wow. 1s So in my notes here around or I've got an LP I've written in my notes kinesiology Paul Dennison I don't know why I've written that down there. Can you tell me why I've written that down there? And yes, Denison, educational kinesiology. I did a fair bit of that when I was in London, um, exploring different things that really helped me explain. It really helped explain me to myself. Um. So there's a whole load in that school of thought around the effect of dominant hand, dominant foot, dominant eye, dominant air, dominant brain hemisphere on how you take and how easily you learn or not. 1s Um, and I happen to have a really quite tricky pattern. 1s You're born with these patterns, you know? So I'm left handed, left footed, left eyed, left eared and left brained, which is not good news because under stress you switch off your non-dominant hemisphere, which for me would be the right hemisphere, but all your sensory input is going into your right hemisphere, but your right hemisphere is switched off.

U1

61:00

And that, I think, goes a long way to explaining why I was really slow to read and write. Um. 2s Really struggled within the educational system, 1s but it also explains a lot of what happened since, because I got through that, which a lot of people might not have done. I got through that to the point where I would rarely now switch off my non-dominant hemisphere. But I was stressed enough as a child that I think I lived that way most of the time. 1s And I can remember sitting in. I can remember being in a corner of our dining room rocking, you know, how you might see people sort of in a squat rocking and is a kind of what you might see if somebody's in a mental hospital? I can remember doing that as a child. Um, and I think I was just kind of back up against the wall at that point. But anyway, having got through that, I think it explains a lot of what I've done, because if you can get both brain hemispheres working together,

my right brain has the advantage that all my sensory. 1s Input goes into it. My left brain has the advantage of being the dominant one. And when they actually talk to each other, probably what I've done more than anybody else in the horse world is put words on feelings. 3s Yeah. So my sensory input going into my right brain, which when it switches on and talks to my left brain, I've got the advantage. 1s Of putting together feeling and language in a way that has, I think, not been done before. 2s But it wasn't easy. It was not easy to get to that point.

U2

62:49

So while you were talking about that, you know, left foot, left hand, right brain, dominant, all that sort of thing, I was sitting here thinking about that. And so you said you have an unusual pattern. Is there a usual pattern or everybody's patterns

U1

63:07

of the pattern that does really well in academia and would probably be one of the more common ones? Um, but does really well in school would be to be right hand dominant, right foot dominant, right eye, right ear, and left brain. 2s So that means all your sensory input is going into your dominant left brain from the right side of your body. And really and truly, the educational system is set up for that.

U2

63:41

So that's that. And then, you know, right. Wrong left right. You know, good at numbers.

U1

63:48

Everything. That's right.

U2

63:49

Emotional. It's very. Yeah. Engineering

U1

63:52

takes in information well and probably doesn't think outside the box that well, but can take in information and use it in a left brain, you know, linear logical kind of way. 2s Um, and then, you know, you can have all sorts of I think there are 32 different possibilities of. Which brain, which I, which ear, which hand, which foot. And I think it does have a bearing on personality and learning style. Um, and the research on this was done back in the 90s, and I actually really don't know how much it's been validated since. Personally, for me, it was really helpful.

U2

64:33

And. And this is kinesiology or is it,

U1

64:37

um, separate?

U2

64:38

Exactly. If I was going to look it up, what would I look up?

U1

64:42

Um, I'm not sure how active educational kinesiology is now. Um, there's a book by Carla Hannaford called The Dominance Factor. 2s And that book would. 2s Give you a good idea.

U2

65:02

Okay, so how do you tell which foot you are dominant with? Is it like which to put your undies on or.

U1

65:10

Which one would you kick a football with? 1s Okay.

U2

65:14

Okay. 1s Um. 3s You know, I've always like looking at pictures of me over the years. I'm like every hat I wear for, like, I'm wearing a cap or whatever. It's always crooked on my head. But I got to looking at it. I realized that no it's not. My head is always turned slightly like a not a 45 degree angle. But, you know, I'm left

U1

65:39

to the right.

U2

65:41

Yeah, my head's turned to the right. Now look at things out of my. 1s Lift. I. You know, when I think I'm looking straight ahead, my head's turned to the right.

U1

65:52

Yes. Is there a big difference in the your vision in each eye?

U2

65:57

No, I don't think so.

U1

66:00

Yeah. And the other thing I've wanted to is, you know, they say that people who are beautiful, if you cut their face in half, that it's an exact replica on both sides. I went to a thing one time where they would do that. Like, you put your face up against this machine and it cuts your face in half, and it shows you a duplicate of the left side of your face, and it shows you a duplicate of the right side of your face. The I can't remember which side of my face, but one side of my face. When you duplicate that, I look like the you know, the I look like the buck stud American quarterback, you know, the hero of the movie sort of thing. And if you duplicate the other side, I look like I'm the character in Deliverance playing the banjo.

U2

66:45

All right. You know, I've got two totally different sides in my head, and I'm wondering if I'm wondering if those things are related to, you know. Yes, I would think they probably are. And I think everybody is more or less asymmetrical. And, um, there's a lot of fairly recent work coming out of a group called Z Health in the US. That, um, really works with neurology and figuring out, you know, what's going on with your eyes and ears and getting your brain to work better. And, um, that is absolutely fascinating. And I think it's going to be one of the next big things, actually, to become visible in the horse world and be a factor. Um, and the simplest, strangest exercises can make a difference to how well you function.

U1

67:37

And, you know, your asymmetry as a rider. And we all have asymmetry as a rider. That head going to the right will be a part of it. ^{1s} And your whole body probably rotates to the right. ^{1s} Or at least some parts will rotate to the right. There'll be some balancing rotations to the left, and working with vision can actually be a really quick inroad into helping somebody with their asymmetry. Really. And that for me is pretty new knowledge. Yes. That I have a little bit of skill in and I'm currently doing some training in actually.

U2

68:15

I love that you eat in all these rabbit holes and you're still down a new one. You know, I yeah, I honey, I did a disc with a with a fall off a horse years ago and I went to a the guy was his business was he is a holistic um.

U1

68:31

Bodywork guy, and I just want him to fix my pain in my back, you know? And he stripped me down to my underwear and videoed me walking across his gym, back and forth, left and right towards the camera, put me on a treadmill and videoed me running on the treadmill. Stood me in front of like a grid on a wall, and hung a plumb line down in front of my nose and took pictures of me. And yes,

U2

68:50

put me on two bathroom scales. And you know, I carry £25 more on one foot than the other. But

U1

68:58

he said, that's a big difference. And

U2

69:01

he said, look down at your feet, and they're my feet. They've been attached to my body forever, and I've never really looked at him in this way. He goes, the feet, the toes on your right foot grow straight and the toes on your left foot curve off to the left.

U1

69:15

Ng. And it was really it was just really interesting him showing me how much asymmetry is in my. 1s Is in my body. And it's not just asymmetry down that axis down the middle, because then it's the other way too. If you think about me turning my head all the time. You know. Yeah. It's all.

U2

69:37

Very interesting stuff.

U1

69:38

Yes. We're all. We're all asymmetrical. If you're alive on planet Earth, you're asymmetrical. And, you know, as writers, I think it's something we all get to work with. And there's no such thing as goody sort of that. Now it's all done. I'm all fine. It never goes away. But you learn how to work with it better. 1s And how changing you changes your horse and how your horse is dealing with you being wonky on top, and you're probably part of making him wonky underneath you. 2s All good, clean fun figuring that out. Oh, well.

U2

70:12

Good clean fun. So you took seven years to write this book. It came out in 1987.

U1

70:19

It did?

U2

70:21

How was it received?

U1

70:25

Um. That's a really good question. It's all very well. Um, it did change my life. 1s Um. 2s It was the best I could do at the time. It has a lot of my shock in it of discovering that things. 2s You know, it weren't as simple as they seemed. And I knew the simple words weren't a good rendition of reality. Um, nobody chopped my head off during the process of writing yet. My editor kept saying to me, you keep getting to the point and backing off. You've got to put your head on the block. You've got to really say it. Nobody came and chopped my head off, which I kind of thought was going to happen. 1s Um. And one day the

phone rang and said, hello, I'm from California Dressage Society, we'd like you to come and speak at our annual convention. And that phone call changed my life.

U2

71:25

So it was. It was a great start. 1s And that I went to California and taught a couple of clinics while I was there. Um, met some people who I were. I really piqued their interest. And I've been coming to the US every year since.

U1

71:47

Did that? Did that

U2

71:49

start you, uh, you know, coaching around the world? You mean other players did?

U1

71:55

Yeah. Yes. I actually coached in Australia before the US. Um. And yes, other places too. And I've loved travelling. Travelling is. Yeah. Something I really appreciate that my life has given me the opportunity to travel. And it's an eternal dilemma for me between being home and enjoying my horses and seeing the world. But it's not so hard to leave the UK in winter.

U2

72:23

Yeah, I, I bet I was in the UK in December at a horse expo and it was so cold and I was not disappointed to have to leave there. 2s Um, so tell me before that your book was published under a different name in the US, and I'm curious as to who advised you to do that and why you were advised to do that, and what the cultural difference that caused that change to happen.

U1

72:52

Okay, so I know a number of authors whose book has not been published under the name the author wanted the publisher in in virtually every book contract. I think the publisher gets to be the one that determines the title of the book. 1s And that first book was actually published by Simon and Schuster, and they wanted to call it The Natural Rider, and there was nothing I could do about it other than add a couple of paragraphs saying there isn't much natural about writing. For most people, writing does not come naturally. So the American version of the book has a couple of extra paragraphs somewhere saying that, and. 1s It got published under that name, which I wasn't happy about. But that's just how it is. And I've met several other writers who've had the same experience since then.

U2

73:46

So it was published. It was

U1

73:47

what publishers thought would sell.

U2

73:50

Right. It was published in the UK before Simon Schuster picked it up. Is that correct?

U1

73:55

It was published in the UK um, a bit before in the US, but the American contract came. 1s After the well, I'm not even sure it came after the UK contract. It came fairly early on in the process I think. 2s Or as a whole, drama over contracts. That is another story and may not be a story to go into. Um. 1s I can't quite remember when the American contract became part of it, but it wasn't right at the end.

U2

74:29

It's they were, you know, you know, different movies have a different title. You know, I know some Australian movies have had a different title in America than they were in Australia. And I was just wondering if there was a, you know, if there was a cultural difference. But it seems like it's a, it's a publisher thing.

U1

74:45

It's the publishers. It's what the publisher thinks will sell. I mean, it's, you know, the the authors got their own ideas, but ultimately it's what the publisher thinks will sell. 2s So the book had two different names.

U2

75:02

Having a, you know, an idea of what's in the book. I would. I wouldn't be messing with right. With your mind. 2s So I'm not a book publisher either.

U1

75:15

No, but you know, it is saying your brain is the bottom line. Your mind is the bottom line. Um, muscles are foot soldiers that can only do what they're told to do by the brain. 1s They don't have any independent. 2s Nous of their own. 1s What you're thinking inside your head is a huge part of how things pan out. What you're paying attention to, what you're noticing, what you're not noticing, what kind of things you're saying to yourself inside your head are so vital. 1s In terms of how it pans out.

U2

75:59

Now you've since written. 1s 4 or 5 other books for four other books, have you?

U1

76:05

I have written seven books in total. There are three still in print.

U2

76:12

And the ones that aren't in print. Why are they not in print anymore?

U1

76:17

Um. 1s Because not a lot of books stay in print for 8797 007 1735 years. Some do, but not all do. 1s Um. 2s So. 1s The earliest one that's in print was written in 2001. 1s Then 2008, then 2017. 1s Um. 2s So it's how it goes. You know, you have to kind of admit that's how it goes, especially if you write another book in a way you could be seen as making the previous book obsolete, although that's not really true.

U2

76:59

Did you know? Okay, here's a question for you because I wrote a book and published it, I think it was last year or the year before. 1s Did you? Well, I'll tell you, the struggle I had was I didn't want to finish it because, like. But this is a this is an evolving perspective. Like if I publish it now. Absolutely. A week, a week later, my perspective is going to be slightly different. I'm going to have a I'm going to have a slightly more nuanced understanding of the things I'm saying. Did that kind of did you have that feeling of like holding back, like, I can't finish it because I'm not done yet. 1s Um, yes. And I'm not terribly good at finishing. I mean, I think the last stages of the book are a nightmare. Actually. I hate finishing books. Um, and I guess that's really why there was another book, you know, because I had another perspective and another perspective and another perspective and another perspective and another perspective since the last book was written. And on it will go, um, so a book captures a moment in time and freezes a moment in time. And I just accept that that's how it is. 1s Um. 1s And I think I pretty much got to accept that with the first book as well. 1s Knowing that that's just how it was. And the time between finishing a manuscript and publication was a lot longer than it is now, where things are more digitally done. Um. So even in that time frame, you know, things have evolved to a degree understandings of evolved. So. 1s The the books. If you take the books as a whole, they chart a learning process over 40 years, right? 3s Which is valuable for somebody as a research project at some point, because I have heard people say within sports, you rarely get that perspective of being able to chart. Somebody's learning over a long time. But actually the books do do that. 5s Interesting. So you've. You've got to travel around the world. Um.

U1

79:14

Teaching. Where would you say is the the place you've enjoyed visiting the most? 3s Well, that's hard to say. And you probably know that when you travel around the world coaching, you see a lot of airports and a lot of riding arenas. Yes, yes. Yeah. But

U2

79:35

but I also make time to, to to see some of the country too.

U1

79:39

Yes. And so do I. And I think the place I love the most is New Zealand actually. Um. 1s A lot of places in America I loved. I love going to Australia. I think the place that attracts me the most that I've been in New Zealand.

U2

79:55

If you ask my wife the same question, she'll give you the same answer. 1s As far as as far as a place to go back to time and time again. It's like it is so beautiful. Yeah, I, I don't get sick of New Zealand.

U1

80:11

You know, so it's fabulous. 2s Yeah. And it appeals to a yes. It kind of appeals to my sense of beauty and majesty and. Yeah. And the folks there are lovely. It's it's a great place to go.

U2

80:26

Yeah. It's beautiful. Um, we might get to your questions that you chose.

U1

80:33

And sometimes by the time we get to the questions we've already answered, the questions in the conversation we've had, but we'll see how we go. Um, the first one you chose was.

U2

80:43

What has been your biggest failure and how has it helped you? 2s Well, I think my biggest failure. I felt like an extreme failure when I gave up writing in despair. 2s And it needed me to. Get to the point of not trying to be somewhere else, but just noticing. Where am I now? What's happening now? How do I understand what I'm feeling in my own body and feeling underneath me right now?

U1

81:16

Um. 2s So it changed my mindset from trying to be somewhere else and being results orientated to noticing. 2s And I really. Attempt to teach people to get into what I call noticing mode. 2s And, um. The change in my own life and my writing from doing that has been immense, and I'm glad it happened as early as I did. Much as I wouldn't wish it upon anybody.

U2

81:52

Yeah, but that noticing mood, that's just not related to writing.

U1

81:56

That's. No it is. It's a life kind of stance. Yeah, but it was, it was in writing and within movement and within therapy and that kind of thing. And I NLP noticing people's language and. 1s That noticing became the name of the game.

U2

82:16

ET al. So we have a podcast summit every year to where we have the guests come and present. You know, they do like a Ted talk style talk on stuff. Mhm. And uh, last year one of our presenters. 2s She's a equine assisted therapist, but she said. 2s What would you notice? 1s If all you did was notice. 4s And she was kind of referring to how horses are in the world. Horses notice everything, even though if they even if they look like they're not noticing it, they're still noticing it. You know, no response is a response. Um, but yeah, what would you notice if all you did was notice and it was talking about the same thing about about that sort of thing. Um, okay. Next question. And like I said, you may have already answered this. What's the most worthwhile thing you've put your time into? Something that changed the course of your life.

U1

83:19

Writing. 2s I would say. 1s Um, I mean, obviously that follows on from coaching. 1s Um. And I also think I'm really fortunate in that I've got three flow activities in my life. You know, writing for me as a flow activity, coaching as a flow activity. Writing has been a flow activity. Um, sometimes I can turn doing accounts and things like that into a flow activity. So. 4s What was the question?

U2

83:54

The question was, what's the most worthwhile thing? You've put your time into something to change the course of your life. You said writing.

U1

84:01

Yes. So all of those I mean, writing is predicated on riding and on coaching. Um, but all of those as flow activities. 1s Our big part of my life. And ways I love to spend my time. 3s And I've learnt so much, I think, from those different perspectives. You know what I sense and figure out in my own body feeds what I. 2s Will do with students, perhaps, that I know well who would be more close to my kind of cutting edge and see what works for people and work out ways to say it. And then you sit down and write about it, and then you're doing it from another perspective again. 2s So getting to process the material through all of those modalities, I think is hugely helpful. 3s It's

U2

84:56

interesting you said that coaching. You get into the flow state coaching. And I've found that doing. 1s Uh, doing clinics, you know. I'll be in the arena all day long, and people go. Don't you get tired or don't you get, you know, you must be so good at pushing through, blah, blah, blah, blah. Time stops. I don't know what time of the day is it? I'm not. I'm not cold. I'm, you know, working with a person and a horse to where you're not thinking about what were they going to do next? What do we do? Ten minutes ago, you just in that moment, I find that's one of the places I really get in the flow state.

U1

85:31

Yes. 2s And I think in coaching, it's almost like I think of it a bit like if I can tune myself a bit like tuning a musical instrument. Where I get into flow. 2s To help. To tune the rider. To help to tune the horse. 1s Yeah. That's where it's at. And it's magical. It's magical when you get where you can do that in a pretty ongoing, never totally guaranteed, but close to guaranteed kind of basis. And it certainly beats shouting louder at the natives.

U2

86:08

Yeah. You know, you you are someone who's.

U1

86:13

Perpetually curious. And, you know, like you said, you're still doing some training on something different now. But do you find that while you were teaching in the act of coaching and in the act of explaining something to somebody, so they get it that you will get like deeper insights?

U2

86:35

Into something you already know. Yes. Yeah. Yes. And I mean, I've very deliberately through the years and I still do this. Ask people how would you explain this to somebody. Mhm. What did I say that helped you the most. 2s And then somebody said, maybe comes up with a way of just saying it. And I think, oh, that's great. 2s Or there's the occasion where you've tried explanation A and B and C and D, and none of them have worked in your. They're scratching your head and you come up with something. That's new and that becomes the best way ever to explain something. So the learning on the job, the way of learning on the job, and interacting with people and getting their perceptions is fabulous. I mean, I love it.

U1

87:23

Yeah. And sometimes it's kids, you know, sometimes it's kids that just come up with something out of the blue and you just think, that's brilliant.

U2

87:33

Yeah, well, then mine's a lot less cluttered than ours, and they probably see things a bit. They're still at the seeing clearly stage.

U1

87:41

Blue.

U2

87:45

Very cool. Okay. The next question you chose and I'm always excited about this one. What book? What book do you recommend the most? Not necessarily your favorite book to read, but the one that you tell other people about the most.

U1

87:59

Yeah. So we've already talked about that. That would be Daniel Coyle's *The Talent Code*. Oh, really? I'd love people to read my books, but the talent code is a big one because I rarely meet anybody who knows how to learn. Mhm. I think people learn how to learn in doing the work that we do together. Um, but we don't come out of school or college or wherever knowing how to learn. 2s And there's a huge amount in the talent code about how to learn. Mhm. That is invaluable for people and gives them a perspective that's so helpful.

U2

88:39

I did a podcast episode called *Books That Have Books* that have influenced me, and that was that was one of the ones I talked about. And there.

U1

88:52

Yeah, it's a very helpful book for people. 1s And people think, you know, you only have to do things a couple of times and you should get it. And for really elite performers, that's true. But for the average person, it takes a lot of repetitions to get it. And also the notion of got it lost it got it, lost it, got it, lost it, got it, lost it. Working on the edge of your skill set is very alien to the riding culture. Where I come from, where people want you to get it. Get it now. Get it more. Have it, keep it. Come on, keep it, keep it, keep it, keep it. Where the brain needs the contrast of. Get it, lose it, get it, lose it, get it, lose it. To begin to really get that pattern. 1s Mhm.

U2

89:39

Yeah, I'm glad you mentioned that book. That's awesome. Okay, if you could spread a message across the world and you are spreading messages across the world, don't you worry. But if you could spread a message across the world, one that you think people would listen to, what would that be? Or your favorite quote? Or both. 2s Um, I think my message really is how you sit on your horse matters. You know, if I'm talking to riders, that's my message. And that the scary truth is that your horse knows more about you than you know about yourself. 1s He knows whether your center of gravity is over his, ahead of his, behind his. He knows how wiggly or jiggly you are. He knows how chubby and pushy you are. He knows your asymmetry. He knows your level of. Go for it. 1s He's reading your body and there's no training course required in that for him. He has that skill and for us to lead, to learn to read the horses like the horses just read us. 1s Does need skill, does need learning. And. 1s Is invaluable. The value of it is immense.

U1

90:57

So how you are up there matters. It matters to your horse. It affects who and how he is. 1s And it's really worth working on. 2s This is going to be good. What is an unusual habit that you have? 2s Okay, so this is going to make me sound like a nerd, which I suppose I am. Um, I really like it when I've ridden my horses in the morning. 1s And I've since whatever I've sensed in my right, you know, and there's usually a a building on something that's a kind of little nuance. Or maybe there's a big breakthrough. There's something. And I like it when I come home and. 1s Get a little bit of lunch and sit down and have a cup of coffee and actually start looking things up in books. Start looking things up in anatomy books to go, what should I actually do there? Did I do what I think I did? How does that work? Um, sometimes I look things up in my own book, which kind of cracks me up because I'm not sure that many authors look things up in their own book, but sometimes I do. And when I go, oh yeah, okay, that's what I did. And that's how this influenced that. And that's how my horse got straighter or more this or more that. And I

just like that way of. Putting two and two together and. You know, it's again, it's taking a right brain feeling, as it were, and figuring out how it works and how to put language on it. 5s Very crazy.

U2

92:35

Uh, no, not at all. Excuse me. Okay. The neck gives you a kick. The next question you chose was, what's the worst advice given in your profession? And before you answer this one, you've got to 2s you've got to quantify. 2s What you would you profession you were talking about because you were a writer. You're you know, you were a lot of things. Which part of your professional world would you be

U1

93:01

referring to? When I'm talking about what is said to people in writing arenas.

U2

93:05

Okay, perfect. Let's hear that.

U1

93:07

Yeah. Grow tall. Stretch your legs down and push your heels down. 2s Worst piece of advice ever given to anybody, I reckon. 2s Um, and I see loads of people pulling up their ribs, hollowing their back. They probably been told, grow tall, stick your chest out. There's not a lot of breathing happening at that point. And. 2s Riding with their stirrups as long as they can, so their angles are far too open. Um, pushing down into their feet. As soon as you push down, you create an equal and opposite push up tends to send your seat bone up. Makes you less stable. 3s It's really not helpful. 1s And I would say, you know, somewhere 20 plus years into the process, I started having feelings on a horse where I could say, oh, okay, I could understand. I could call this growing tall. Oh, okay, I could understand. I could call this stretching your leg down. 1s But when the average person hears those words, what they do, what any normal, sensible person would do. Hearing those words is not what those words really mean. 1s And they're not words I would ever say to anybody because I know how they be interpreted. And maybe somebody who's been around in my work for a while and they'll go, well, when I do that, it feels like I'm growing tall and I'll go, well, congratulations. I think you've figured out what that actually really means.

U2

94:40

Yeah, that's that's a really good point, is what is said and how it's interpreted at a lot of times two different things. And.

U1

94:52

You know, like, say, the growing tall thing. You could say that, but how many? One out of a thousand. He's actually going to get the. 2s The right response from that, and the other 999 are going to do something that's.

U2

95:09

Detrimental. So you've, so you've you've really figured out how to. 2s How to phrase. Things in such a way that. The response you're trying to get out of the body is the correct response. 2s Yes, much more so. And. And also what? It took me a very long time to really realize. But actually, I think now is blatantly obvious. Um. 1s Certainly in the dressage culture, you know, you've got these sayings handed down from teacher to student, teacher to student teacher to students through the generations. And those sayings were set by people who were the elite riders of their generation. Revered riders. 4s And they said them to their students and da da da da da. And the generations you go. But if these sayings were made by elite riders, that means that the discoveries of time and talent. 1s And that if you imagine learning to ride as having an alphabet of its ABCs and its deaf through to its XYZ, that means, by definition that those phrases are XYZ. 2s But they're presented to people as if they're ABC's. 3s So in a way, what I've done is what are the real ABCs? 3s And how do we work our way through the alphabet to get towards the pcrs and the UV? 5s That's talent code stuff there.

U1

96:53

Yeah. 2s World class basics. 1s And all skills are built on that. 2s And very few people have them because they're trying to do X's that are being presented as A's, 1s and that can lead you astray. And you can try your heart out like I did in those early days before I gave up. Try your heart out doing the wrong things.

U2

97:23

Yeah, and I think that's true. Yeah. It's not just applicable to writing. It's applicable to. 1s Everything, you know. We had an intern many years ago who was very into dance. She was very into salsa dancing, and she actually went to college in Mexico City so she could immerse yourself in the salsa dancing scene. And she told me a dance saying that says, and you've probably heard this before, but it said beginning. Dancers tend to take intermediate lessons, and intermediate dancers tend to take advanced lessons, but advanced dancers take beginning lessons

U1

97:53

and beginner lessons. Just

U2

97:55

yeah, yeah, like the talent code really helped me with that. But I've seen it so many times. Excuse me. 2s Um, and I love I love meeting somebody from other a different discipline in horses or a totally different sport.

U1

98:11

And who's world class and asked them how to be world class. And they'll always talk about basics. I remember I was in New Zealand at a horse expo, and there's a guy there named Rob. Erin, sir Rob was the Dutch Olympic showjumping coach. I think he's coached three Olympics and he competed at three Olympics, and he does lots of clinics around the world like that's he travels and just does clinics all the time. And I said, do you ever have somebody who comes to the clinic and they can jump three foot, but they're failing at three foot three, he goes, yeah, all the time. And I said, do you ever solve the problem at three foot three? And he goes,

U2

no, we always have to go back to the ground rails. And that was one year at that horse expo, and the next year there was a, uh, Olympic silver medallist from Holland named Albert Vaughn, who was presenting at that horse expo. And I was doing a demo in an arena, and he was on next after me, and his session was on how to jump a meter 50. So if anybody is not a jumper, a meter 50 is a big thing. Like it's basically the lesson is how to do the hard thing. Yeah, it's how to do the hard stuff. And I and a 45 minutes after my demo, I had to go and do a demo somewhere else. So I had 45 minutes to watch an Olympic silver medalist talk about a world class. Somebody talk about how to do the hard stuff. ^{1s} He had two riders there. In the 35 minutes that I watched, they didn't even go over a ground rail. And I love to tell that story because it's about, you know, he. Yeah, I love to tell that story to people because. ^{2s} I want him to think. The thing I'm telling you is not my opinion. This is why I like to quote the talent care. This is not my opinion. It's been proven. This is how.

U1

100:01

The elite level. Anybody does anything is they they perfect the basics. I did a clinic in England one time and I was talking about this and I said, is anybody here? I know there was a guy sitting there watching and his head was nodding up and down like he knew what I was talking about. And I said, are you an expert horse person? He goes, no, I've just got into horses. I said, you're an expert, something or other, because this is resonating with you. What do you do? And he says, I'm the coach of the women's.

U2

100:32

And the.

U1

100:34

The sorry, I'm the coach of the English Under 18 cricket team, like the national Under 18 cricket team. And and he said and I said, well, tell me a story about basics. And he said, we have this, uh, we have this drill called drop ball. And so you'll have a concrete cricket pitch and the batsman will be there and someone stands near them with a tennis ball, holds it at a certain height and just drops it on the ground. So it's going to bounce up at a certain height and over in the distance they have a couple of garbage bins, and you've got to hit that ball and hit that garbage bin, and they'll do it over and over and over and over. And these kids get sick of doing drop ball. And he said a friend of his is the opening batsman, I think, for the English women's cricket team. And she came to visit him one time and he took her to training. And all these underwriting boys are like, this woman can hit sixes all the time, you know, like. For Americans, that would be like a. When you hit it over the fence, I forget what they call it in baseball, but they're excited because she's coming to practice. So we get to see what she does.

U2

101:40

You know, we know how to hit sixes. And so she gets there and and he says, well where do you want to start? She said, well, let's do a couple of hundred drop balls.

U1

101:49

I know. I know the

U2

101:50

boys looked at him like I thought we were gonna see or hit sixes over the fence, but no, she wants to do a couple of hundred drop balls. And yeah, everybody I ever meet who's an who's elite level, that's something. Rather, they'll tell you the same thing. And I love collecting those stories to tell people because it sticks in their head like, oh, this is not just this guy's opinion. This is everybody's opinion. 1s Yes.

U1

102:16

Any elite coaching. I think you will see that attention to basics is. 2s Yeah. Where is that and what everything else gets built on. 2s And I did a clinic in Scotland one time, and the guy that organized my clinic was a black belt in karate when he was younger. But he said when I. He said then I wanted to be a second hand black belt in karate, and I thought I was going to learn all this new stuff. And he said to be a second hand black belt in karate. You go back and you start at the beginning and you relearn everything you've already learnt. But with a black belt, eyes and a black belt mindset and you can't learn it first time around with a black belt mindset and a black belts.

U2

103:03

Overlooking view of it. You have to learn it the way you can learn it first, and then you go back and start again.

U1

103:11

Yes. There's a wonderful quote from T.S. Eliot. Um, and I'm going to paraphrase it. I don't quite have it, but it's something like we shall never cease from our exploring. 1s But we'll find ourselves back at the place where we first began. As if we see it for the first time. 2s And I think that keeps happening and keeps happening and keeps happening. 1s And that that is the hallmark of somebody who's working on mastery.

U2

103:44

You've read Mastery by George Leonard.

U1

103:47

A very long time ago.

U2

103:49

Yeah. It's another one of those books that 1s made me go. Hmm. Yeah. 3s Very cool. And the last question

U1

103:59

I have for you concept.

U2

104:01

Yes. The last question I have for you is what is your relationship like with fear? 2s Well, that's an interesting one. I certainly grew up riding in the area of instructors who went, come on, go get on that horse. What do you mean you're frightened? Don't be so stupid. 1s And that kind of messes with your head, you know? Yeah. And, um, speaks to how much good training wasn't around in this country at that time. And I was a very frightened child. 2s Um. 2s I would say a lot of that fear is not in my system any longer. Sometimes if my horse jumps, I jump too. It does happen. 1s Um. 2s So. You know I've done the feeling. Feel the fear and do it anyway. That was definitely me. Eventing. I was very nervous before I went cross country. And as I said, loved it. It brought out the best in me in many ways. I loved it. Um, 1s so. So I don't run towards fear. 2s I do deal with my own psycho physiology. If I'm in a situation that gets difficult. I mean, here in the UK we ride on roads, you know, which I think not that many people do in other places. And sometimes some motorist is thundering down towards you in. 1s Way faster than you think they ought to. 1s Um, so I get to deal with my own physiology in that moment.

U1

105:38

I actually love zip lines when I'm on holiday. I love zip lines. Stepping off a platform high up in a tree on the top of a cliff for the first time on a series of zip lines, I'm kind of going, oh my lord, am I really doing this? Oh my gosh. And the road I get going. I think it's fabulous. 1s Love ziplines. Have

U2

105:59

you ever jumped out of a plane? So.

U1

106:02

No, I don't think I would.

U2

106:04

What about bungee jumping in New Zealand? Jumped. Haven't bungee jumped.

U1

106:07

No, I didn't bungee jump in New Zealand. No zipline, but didn't bungee jump.

U2

106:12

You really should bungee jump. It is.

U1

106:15

It is.

U2

106:18

Um. That that. 1s That standing on the edge of that thing and you know. 1s A lot of you is saying, we're going to do this. And there's that part of you saying, there is no bloody way I am going to do that. And having that internal dialogue, it's,

U1

106:35

it's it's pretty cool. 3s And you're hanging there upside down, bouncing up and down at the end thinking, that was great. Uh,

U2

106:45

the bouncing up and down the end is not much fun. I get queasy pretty easy. Yeah,

U1

106:50

but no, just. 3s I have done. 2s Our Lord. What is it? 1s Um. You do it turned in with a somebody else, and you run off the edge of a cliff. Paragliding. I've done paragliding. Oh,

U2

107:07

wow. Okay, well, that's. Yeah, that's close enough.

U1

107:10

I was kind of going, are we really going off the edge of this cliff? Okay. That I got seasick in that. That made me think of it. I never imagined when I thought, am I going to do this? Do I want to do this? Um, I just imagine being up there and floating backwards and forwards and looking at the view. I didn't imagine we get bump around and I had a little bit of travel, sort of nausea type feeling doing that, which was a pity that spoiled it a little bit. Yeah, I had the same thing. Um, when I. I've only skydive once, but you jump out of the plane, you're coming down. It's great. And then they start swirling around to bleed off speed at the end. 1s Uh, I get, you know, I can get. I used to get carsick when I was a kid, and. Yeah, that didn't feel good. That bit at the end. So we have to ask you, how do people find out more about you? Where can where can people find your book? Where can people find out about your courses and things like that? 2s Um, so my books are on Amazon. Um, you can also get them from my website, which is Mary Hyphen wallace.com. 2s Um. 1s I have a very recently started Instagram under my own name, Mary Wallace. So please like my Instagram page and get that one going. Um, on Facebook right with your mind would be the place to go to. 1s And the website that's a membership site that has lots of video type information on my work, um, and ways in which you can really start to learn the break it down into its ABCs. Way of organizing your body on a horse. It's called dressage training TV.

U2

108:54

Oh, okay. Very cool.

U1

108:56

So that probably does Instagram, Facebook, my website. Dressage training TV. That's it. Really?

U2

109:04

That's it. Really. Well, thank you so much for joining me. It's been. *1s* Such a pleasure unraveling how you got to view the world, the way you view the world. And it. I love how many different, um, you know. Such an eclectic version of things that you've brought to the table. Which is why you probably have the the status that you have because you've, you know, looked at things outside the box and you, you know, you didn't just go, we're going to do what writing instructors do. You found other places to, um, draw information from. And I, I really resonate with that with what I do too. So thank you so much for joining me. It's been such a pleasure.

U1

109:48

And that's what's made my life very rich, I feel. *1s* Mhm. Thank you.

U2

109:54

Thank you. Oh you're welcome. And you guys at home thanks so much for joining us. And we will catch you on the next episode of The Journey On podcast.

U1

110:03

Thanks for being a part of the Journey On podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick has over 850 full length training videos on his online video

U2

110:11

library at Videos Warwick schiller.com. Be sure to follow Warwick on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram to

U1

110:19

see his latest training, advice and insights.