

Epstein_Ep11_POD

[00:00:00] Hey everyone, Charlie, I'm sitting here and welcome to my yield of dreams podcast. This is the show that asks the questions. What does it take to be pursue your life's passion? I mean, to really go for what you've always dreamed about to do what you truly love and why does so many people sell out their dreams and aspirations for job they hate and a paycheck.

[00:00:22] That's less than fulfilling during the show. I'm going to interview different people about how they've strived to go for their passions in life. And how do they balance that with the need to earn that paycheck. We're going to hold up in the light, your myths about money, not to try to change them, but to illuminate them.

[00:00:42] And have you begin to discern, where did these come from and how do they impact your life in the decisions that you've made and to see if you'd be willing to just let them go. And maybe replace them with a new money strategy that will produce a better result and ease your pain and suffering [00:01:00] about your money.

[00:01:02] So let's dive right into today's show.

[00:01:07] Hey everybody, Charlie Epstein here at yields of dreams. I appreciate your being on with me today. And this is the podcast that answers the question. What did you want to be when you grew up? What are you now? And what happened and what does it take to pursue your passion and not give up your life for a paycheck and, uh, be pining for what you really want to do most.

[00:01:29] And I am just honored and thrilled today to have Kenny Thomas on the podcast with me, Kenny. So appreciative. First of all, let me just say how humbled I am and grateful for your service. Incredible. I've got three kids in the air force. Smart. I know, I love that. I'm going to start off by holding up Kenny's book.

[00:01:52] Get it on in the book. You actually mentioned that you say you want to have the best job going to the air force, but [00:02:00] instead, what arm of, just tell everybody what arms of the service did you decide to go into and how did that happen? Yeah, I ended up in the army just because my dad, I think if you asked any veteran out there.

[00:02:14] Did they have a family member that served before them somewhere in the 90 percentile, you're going to get a, yes, it's a family business. It always has been the same families, keep serving over and over and over again. And it was what my dad did. He was a ranger in the Vietnam days. Originally I went in seriously.

[00:02:33] I went in because I wanted to fly mean it's top gun. And this is, like I said, I'm, I'm gonna go do that. And I went to the Navy recruiter and I knew I wasn't going to be able to fly right away. Cause I didn't go to any of the academies. The Navy recruiter was just, he was just the wrong pitch for a guy like me.

[00:02:48] He's like, you know, the Navy will give you a skill that you can fall back upon in case you do not complete your seal training. And, and I was like, Hmm. Yeah, I'm not worried

about, I got a college [00:03:00] degree, man. I'm not really worried about a skill to fall back on. And the, uh, the army guy, I was like, Hey, we'll give you a flight slot.

[00:03:06] So I was going into fly helicopters. And then the Gulf war broke out and being when you're young and you're impatient, you're like, Oh, Ugh, I gotta go now. And he's like, well, you don't get your flight side. You don't even start training until the end of the year. So I was like, well, I'm going in now? So I went into the Rangers.

[00:03:25] I got to ask this because you know, you went to college for, right. I did not to be in the army though. There it is Florida Gator, Gator, Gator on Gatorade. I didn't spend like five minutes trying to figure out where I was going to place this guy. Okay. I love it. Performers. It's always about placement. Yeah.

[00:03:46] Well, Hey, I think you can watch it. If you've been watching like the ESPN and the sports centers and stuff, you can see now, the guys that when they do the remotes from home, they've gotten a lot better with what junk they have in the background. And it had everything. And now [00:04:00] that got like, just a few things on there.

[00:04:01] That look pretty good. So you gotta be careful. You gotta be, you have to pick what pick and choose what you put up there, but you went to, you went to college to get educated. I did well. I mean, I grew up in Gainesville. I grew up in Gainesville, Florida, and that's, that's what you do. It wasn't really a option.

[00:04:18] In fact, if your kids, any of your kids ended up going to college or they go the air force first. College. And then the same thing, you know, air force, like the old deal, our stepson, who was a, he was special forces, Iraq and Afghanistan three times. He's a PA and he just got his PhD in orthopedics. Like he doesn't stop.

[00:04:36] Oh, wow. Unbelievable. I wasn't, he was a medic. Yeah. He's down in San Antonio at the Lac that day. Literally do all the medical training down there. Yeah. Yeah, I have my degree. I just graduated and then the war broke. It broke out. So it was soccer, do my thing. And it never was supposed to be a career. I stayed in a little longer than I thought I would, but I really, it [00:05:00] was because of the guys I was working with.

[00:05:01] I really enjoyed it. Yeah. Well, I want to dive in because there's, there's so much, these things keep popping out. Folks. There's so much just perspective in your book. And I, I got to read this, you talk about it. You say most of us want to make a difference in this world. We want to know at the end of the day that we matter, that we counted for something, those who wear the uniform, the us military need not worry about that.

[00:05:24] But for the rest of us here in the real world, we wonder how do I make a difference? What can I do that really matters? How will I be remembered? I mean, that just struck me so powerfully because as I say, most people go through their lives waiting for someday one day for things to turn out and they don't.

[00:05:42] I feel like they make a difference. Right? What most people don't want understand is they've got that opportunity every, every day. If you just, I always tell people,

what's the person on your left and right. You impact that you don't have to do these gigantic shotgun blast where you change the world, [00:06:00] that the world's too big of a weight.

[00:06:02] It was never, your shoulders alone were never designed to carry the weight of the world. But you can't impact the people around you and you start doing something positive for them. I believe that team around you become stronger, the community become stronger. And then that, that built ripple effect, right.

[00:06:22] That you're talking about. But I wanted to ask you, because the journey that you went on and the people listening don't know all the details, but, uh, you were, you were called. In Mogadishu when Blackhawk down, when they went down and you're a platoon had to go in and rescue everybody. Well, so the way that the mission and went down, just to kind of clarify that there was task force ranger was made up of a handful of different special operations units.

[00:06:50] So mainly Delta force guys from Fort Bragg Rangers from Fort Benning and the one 60th special operations. Eric regiment, which was the pilots [00:07:00] and their crew. That was the main bulk of it. There were some, uh, Navy you guys in there with small tattoos of sea mammals arms. They, they don't like that. And whenever we talk about being there, but they were there, the, the mission, the mission that day was just a raid.

[00:07:14] We were hitting a building. We were getting a tart where there were two guys in this building, supposedly that were on our most water to list. And it was, we knew it was a dangerous part of town. We knew going in, in the middle of the day. Wasn't a good. That's not preferred because bad guys shoot at you.

[00:07:30] And if you know they're going to be shooting, you prefer, they don't see you. That's that's why you go in at night, they met in the middle of the day and we went in after him and the raid was success. It took about 30 minutes from start to finish. Delta guys hit the building, clear the building. The Rangers were on the outside, Poland security for everybody.

[00:07:50] And then we got about two dozen people out of the building. Didn't there, who was, who yet kind of put the little plastic, zip ties on their hands and got him the trucks drive up, throw everybody [00:08:00] on the trucks and they drove away and not left about 80 of us on the target building. Totally. We were waiting to go home like the mission was.

[00:08:06] So imagine you guys, are you done with work? You're in your car? You're heading home or you're waiting on the bus to come get you're waiting on the train. And then all of a sudden, bam, just like that, that first helicopter gets its hit and it, it immediately, the mission changed. They were, we were all part of the same package.

[00:08:29] So there really wasn't it, there wasn't really a thought process of, Oh, what should we do? Should we go help those guys? Because w we won when you're, when you're trained in that. Special operations community. They teach everybody to. To be leaders. And when I say that I don't mean a rank or position or a pay grade, w K make it very clear.

[00:08:58] They teach everybody at [00:09:00] the, the leadership is the example we're setting for the people we serve. So everything that we do is always about serving others. So

when the helicopter goes down, you really, you don't have much of a choice. You already know that you're going to go help. But, you know? Yeah, absolutely.

[00:09:16] And I tell people, it's what you would do. If you were standing on the corner and somebody got in a car wreck, you would go over to help them. That would be your immediate human race. When you said that in the book. And I immediately said to myself, Oh yeah, I remember being in school in London. I was at a party and a friend of mine went out.

[00:09:36] He wanted to smoke a cigarette and a car went by us and crashed into a lamppost. Oh, like right in front of us, right at the end of the street. And I just remember, I just took off after the car to see what happened and he froze. And when you told that in the story about you either respond or you don't. I went, yeah, I remember I [00:10:00] responded, I got to the door, the car, the guy was kind of crazy in the car.

[00:10:04] I wanted to help him open the door. He slammed the car and reversed, hit the car behind him. And then he took off around the corner. His license plate fell off. Yeah. I picked it up and I went into the phone was called the police, and then we went around the corner. But sorry, you just made me think of that.

[00:10:22] And I bring that up because I, I think what you're saying is so important for people that are listening about how do you respond in life? Yeah. Well, so ask yourself this one, something's going down like that. And it's a difficult situation. It's almost always, we didn't see it coming the bad times. Very rarely present themselves with the exception of like a hurricane, you know, that's common.

[00:10:47] Most of the time, we don't see those really unexpected travesties and, and I always. I can relate it to folks for them that I can't imagine what you guys are thinking. I'm like, yeah, you [00:11:00] can. It's the same thing. It's people are getting phone calls. Hey man, dad's in the hospital right now, or dad's got COVID and you need to get here now.

[00:11:09] Cause they're not, they don't know what to do with them. Or you get the email from the attorney while you're on deployment saying, Hey. Uh, sign these papers cause your spouse, isn't going to be there when you come home, she's done with the deployments and we've got examples with your kids. That same thing.

[00:11:28] It's like, Oh my God, I can't believe this is happening. And that's what, how many times have we found ourselves saying that in the last six months, I'm like, I can't believe it's happening except for our listeners. You're got 50 pounds of equipment and that equipment is firearms grenades, right? Yeah. We're well-armed that's for sure.

[00:11:50] And we've got a lot and we got a lot of support well-armed well-trained but the point is in those moments and you hit on this, Charlie, especially with your, [00:12:00] with your friend who didn't react. I never asked people. I don't, it's too easy to stay on there and do the strike, the special operations pose and be like, you need to do the right thing because.

[00:12:14] The point, the truth is that most of us, if you ask a room full of people, what the right thing is, it's always going to be slightly different unless you're a tight knit unit and you're a team and you defined your values and you know what the right thing is, everybody's gonna do something a little bit different.

[00:12:31] And the challenge is, is that most people don't believe that they're part of a solution. They don't believe that got it in them to make an impact in those types of situations. And so what they default to is doing nothing and nothing. I don't, I'm giving everybody the benefit of doubt. I don't believe people are necessarily cowards, but I do.

[00:12:51] I think nothing. Takes the shape. It looks like this it's sort of, Oh my gosh. I can't believe that that's [00:13:00] happening. And Oh, Oh. And then this back coming. Ooh. Ooh. Oh, I hope they're going to be okay. And then that's all the good intentions. And then finally the tear and the only reason I can preach on this is because I catch myself saying it at times, here it comes, man.

[00:13:15] Somebody I'll do something about that. Yeah, somebody ought to do something about that. There is no better time than the election to listen to people say somebody else ought to do something because of the problems that I have. Then I hear that voice in my head saying, Kenny, who's the somebody, and what can you do in this situation?

[00:13:37] And you got three choices. It's very simple. We can lead. If we, if we know exactly what to do, we can follow because I'm a good follower. You, you know what to do, I'll come help or get out of the way. Don't be part of the problem. Stand around point, their finger and scream and complain and are doing zero for the solution are [00:14:00] basically getting in the way.

[00:14:01] And they're part of the problem. Fortunately, in an elite unit, that's not something you have to worry about. And so we all knew what had to happen. The plans were already in place because we were very well-prepared. We trained on those types of scenarios. So, and the bird only went down about five blocks away.

[00:14:19] So that's where it became sort of this foot race running through the streets. But it's interesting. Cause you just said only five blocks away. And I want our listeners to understand, like when you read Kenny's book, it's bullet by bullet. It's inch by inch. Those blacks might as well have been. I mean, my gut was turning cause I'm telling you, man, those blocks were like miles with what you talked about that you had to get from those five black acts.

[00:14:47] So I just don't want to have you belittle the power of what you and your guys did that day. And I know you don't coach Charlie. I love that.

[00:15:00] [00:15:00] I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You know, you're you're you're right. It was a, it was a fast, smooth movement, but it was, you're fighting the whole way to get there because the whole city, what, when you describe one of your guys on his belly crawling. And your reaction was like, wow, that's pretty smart.

[00:15:26] That works. But I do want to touch on a couple of things cause you really have gone through so much in your life. And one of the big questions for me is what you've had to make peace with. That's made the difference in who Kenny is today versus who you were when you walked out of that situation. Yeah.

[00:15:45] Can you talk about that? There isn't a day that goes by in my life where I don't at some point think about that battle or those guys. And I'm not, not in a traumatic post traumatic type [00:16:00] way, although there's, it has affected me in a post-traumatic way, but it's evolved for me. And what I've learned from that.

[00:16:10] Changes or comes what I've learned, comes to the forefront, depending on where I'm at in my life and where I'm at in my walk and my faith and my family and who I want to be in this moment. I think what that story has taught me the most is just the value of the people in your left and your right and the responsibility I'm using that word, that responsibility.

[00:16:37] And that sense of duty to those people as I, as I become like you and I were in that position now we're. Hey, we've all hit the 50 yard line we'll get or not, if not, we're getting close. And so we're movers and shakers, and we've got to start using that experience of our life. How do we better benefit the people around us?

[00:16:58] It took [00:17:00] me a couple of decades of struggling with my purpose. And you would think, you know, being honest stage everywhere that it was easy. Oh yeah, he's doing great. But the stage was easy because I own that spot. Like nobody's up there. Like I can hand I own it. It was walked off the stage and I had to deal with people and I had to deal with relationships that just kept falling apart and I couldn't figure it out.

[00:17:26] And it was really because I hadn't really dealt with the negative impact of that battle. And I hadn't hadn't. So I didn't dive into it. I didn't do a deep dive. And when I finally started doing that hard work and realizing that there were still demons chasing me around from that, from that battlefield, as you talk about survivor's guilt, right?

[00:17:53] And that's you you've named it. It, you get the, the demons that were following me, and this is. [00:18:00] The, if you were to go and sit down at a room full of veterans, let's say from Afghanistan and Iraq, and you start talking to them about the transition, like, how did you do when you came back to the rural world, they would all tell you it was a little bit more of a challenge than, than they thought it would be.

[00:18:19] And the reason it was a challenge is because. They no longer had that person on their left. And I no longer had that person. I didn't have the perfect, they didn't, they didn't know in our human level, at our core center of our heart, we all want to be connected and want to know that we matter to the people around us when you can pinpoint what it is that most people are struggling with these veterans, then you start saying, well, okay, well, let's go a little deeper.

[00:18:48] Why is that? Why do you not connect? Because there's people that are trying. You're stuck because what I keep hearing you say is people out here in the real world, don't

get it, man. They don't, nobody [00:19:00] wants to be a part of the team. I'm like, yeah, I think that they do. I think they just don't know how to approach you.

[00:19:06] So you're going to have to learn to speak their language. And what is it that's causing you to not allow yourself to be happy when the good life was closing in on me. Man, I have record deals. I'm out on the road, I'm eating fans. I've got everything that you possibly could have wanted to happen, and I'm still not happy.

[00:19:26] I'm angry. Why is that? And you hit on it for me, it was because most of us walk around with this odd sense of guilt that we shouldn't be here because. Lorenzo. Didn't make it dominant. Didn't make it Casey. Joyce didn't make it Pilla. Didn't make it like all these people that didn't make it out. And so we're not allowed to be happy.

[00:19:49] Right. And, Oh, you can come to grips with that one and allow yourself to be happy. Allow yourself to be loved. Allow yourself to care. [00:20:00] You're going to be stuck and you'll go to the grave. Being an angry old dude. Yeah. Yeah, but I don't want my listeners to think, Oh, well this is a decorated veteran on the Warfield.

[00:20:14] That's different. What I want my listeners to understand because Kenny, first of all, I appreciate what you're saying is it's not different folks. Cause everybody wakes up with this mind that has doubts. I have an expression. If you want to doubt something, doubt your doubts. And everybody feels guilty about something in their life.

[00:20:34] I remember when I was going through my divorce and my first marriage and it was all my fault and I was just, just riddled with guilt. Worked really well because my lawyers could take advantage of my guilt and make more money still billable hours. It was like, what is that? There's gotta be something wrong.

[00:20:55] Like you're saying, why did I survive? And they didn't. Why was I an asshole?

[00:21:00] And they weren't right. I mean, how the flip the switch, I don't want to get away in the book because one of the things that you say is God talks to you. And I say, if you know, if you've got ears to listen and he spoke to you when that 80 some odd your soldier talk to you that day, the veteran, right?

[00:21:20] I think that was the story. Okay. Ski Herman. Yeah, where's the gap.

[00:21:29] And that's just one of the times now. Uh, I can't remember. I put it in the book or not, but a buddy of mine that fought in that battle with us became a pastor. And he was a chess in the army because Jeff, I was strong. I had gotten the Nashville, it was Oh four. We had been three years over there in country now fighting it.

[00:21:48] And I felt like I should be back over there. Like I've got skills, but what am I doing? You were going to go to Iraq back. Jeff called me out of the blue and says, Hey man, I don't, I know why you want to come back. I [00:22:00] get it. He goes, but I don't think you should. I think you can do more with your guitar and your voice.

[00:22:04] You're the voice of taskforce ranger, whether you like it or not, that's your job. You see better figure out what you're going to say. And you better figure it out fast because

you can do more. With what you got in this opportunity, then I can do with a, with a lifetime of sermons. Like I said, when a pastor calls you out of the blue like that, Hey God, give me a son.

[00:22:24] Wait, no, wait, wait, give me a more clear. And I did so I, I T I didn't, I took, I didn't take the job. I stuck with the music and lo and behold, six months later. We had our first hit, got a record deal and then got the writing deal and everything started falling into place. I want to talk a little bit about that because the entertainment industry is the toughest.

[00:22:51] You want to go into something where the stats are stacked against you. It's probably second to going to rescue that black Hawk [00:23:00] down crew. Yeah. Where does that passion come from? That music passion for you? Where did that start? Uh, well, I I'm sure as many people as you've talked to that are musicians.

[00:23:09] It's a disease that is you can't curable and there's nothing you can do about it. It's just, you're always drawn. I always, Mike, my nephews and my friends, kids who, who are becoming interested in playing, I always tell them. And you don't ever have to tell a musician to go pick up an instrument or play it because they're going to get drawn to it.

[00:23:33] And I was planning. I had a band, even when we were in the army, it was just a local band with some local kids from Columbus, Georgia. And we got to be a big fish in a little pond and it just, it kind of took off and then your brakes will come. They will. What was your big break? Well, There's a series of them because as you open one door, you have to go to another level of place.

[00:23:56] So think of like the NFL, just because somebody he [00:24:00] got drafted into the NFL doesn't mean they've made the team yet. Then even when they make the team, it doesn't mean that they've got to start again, position that they want. I think 10 Teebo, here's a guy who had everything going for him and he couldn't get the position that he wanted.

[00:24:12] It doesn't always happen when you get into Nashville is there's so many things, right? Haptic doors that have to keep opening. And then the biggest one is. When your song finally does go to radio, are they going to play it? Is it going to react? Is the staff that's pushing the song up the chart, going to stick with it, or is someone else on the label going to come along?

[00:24:33] It has a faster moving single, and they're going to take part. It's still a lot of things that happen. Han solo never told me the odds. Like I would, I wouldn't want to go up. No one would try if they knew how much it was against them. Yeah. I used to tell people the reason I went back into acting because.

[00:24:50] Because I wasn't getting enough rejection selling life insurance next

[00:24:57] rejection. I try and [00:25:00] tell people it's like you were born to be rejected. Yeah. That's that's the key. Yeah. What Tom petty said, it takes rhino scan and elephant balls at you. You have to, you get used to. That's Gator talk. Yeah. You can use to people telling

you no. And you start realizing that it's got very little to do with you and your abilities and it has everything to do with what they imagined that they're looking for.

[00:25:29] And you're just not. Yeah. So don't take it. Don't take a person. That's a life lesson right there, man, if you and I got stopped by how many times we were told no, or that someone said. We would never be where we paid. We'd be on a park bench with a Brown bag, the New York. And I got to see, uh, my commercial agent and Don Buchwald and associates, and most actors did it for the money.

[00:25:53] I did it because I wanted to learn the art of walking in, in less than two minutes and trying to [00:26:00] nail that moment. Yeah, it took me 60 auditions to book my first commercial.

[00:26:09] Well, that's probably ahead of the power curve. What did they tell you? It takes 10,000 hours to become an expert. You know, you can get it in 60, so good job. And then I was like, Hmm, I don't want to do that anymore. I'll just be working on this stage and the show and that kind of thing. People often artists often say, what's the drive.

[00:26:31] And I think, you know, you've talked about it with the mission coming out of the battlefield. The other thing is I just, I just was so overtaken by your face and how strong that is and how critical that is. And just the way that you, it was like an artist brush throughout the book. I really appreciate the way you share your face is inspirational.

[00:26:53] It's not, I don't know the right word. It's spiritual. I think [00:27:00] that's the right word. I appreciate that because I do believe, and I tell people and you say it throughout God speaks to every one of us. It's just a question of, we have the ears to hear and, and if we're, and if we're listening and so many people are negative to come on, what do you mean God speaks to you or the angels speak to, right.

[00:27:21] But it's everyday. Yeah. We could do an entire, another program on, on, on that one, I will tell you there's a couple things that I learned from that. The book was a great awakening for me. When I go back and read the book, the faith part of it almost feels a little JV to me because I was still learning myself as I went along, but it was perfect for where I was at in my life.

[00:27:48] And I never set out to write. A faith-based book, but this guy right here, so Ollie North was on a label, a book label called Lifeway. [00:28:00] Lifeway was known for all of it. It mainly did Bibles and Bible studies. And, but they had this little imprint, it was sort of this God country patriotism thing, and Ali and I had crossed paths quite a few times.

[00:28:12] And he's like, you know, Kenny. You really ought to think about writing a book and you could use the whole armor of God thing for what you're doing. I'm like, Oh yeah, I never thought about that. Yeah. Thanks. And then he ends up getting us the interview with Lifeway and Lifeway loved the idea of the pitch.

[00:28:32] And so then when I started writing, I started realizing I got to sit down and. How do I read this in the easy part of it was the biblical storytelling, the whole old Testament, and the new Testament is all storytelling and that's all I was doing. So it, and there's nothing new

under the sun where what I could talk about, I'm sure I could find a story that was biblical and it, and, but then again, I'm also quoting for Scump and then in the book.

[00:28:59] So I'm [00:29:00] not all that theological. I use the word amplification because you're amplifying wisdom that already exists. Yeah. I used to think if you, if it ain't original, it ain't great. And then I discovered, I don't know when so many people don't know the wisdom that already exists. That's leadership. If you can take your story and the wisdom that already exists like you did, and mesh those two together to share that with people, that'll create that inspiration for somebody.

[00:29:31] Part of our responsibility as, as leaders. What we touched on earlier, when we get to that point where we become these men, we, we we've been the cowboy. We've been the warrior breaking away from that warrior mode was a tough one for me, because it was an easy, I was comfortable in it. And now I have to go to where it's more of, like, you got to start thinking like how a King would think.

[00:29:56] You're taking care of people and you have to do make [00:30:00] tougher decisions. And whether your kingdom is your family or your people at work or your fan base, somehow you have to take responsibility and guide that in a positive way. And if you think that if you're sitting out there and you're thinking, well, you know, it's easy for you, Charlie.

[00:30:15] You're funny. And it's easy for you. Can't you, you had music. What do I have, if you think for one second? Yeah, every day. I don't know how it happens. So I don't know. I just look at that album cover.

[00:30:32] I tell people if you're, if you're selling yourself short, which we're all magnificent at doing, we T we saw in South shore constantly, who are you really selling short? You're selling your creator, who your fuel, fearfully and wonderfully made. You're made in his image. So quick to talk down, talking yourself, and then.

[00:30:55] To you're selling the people around you, that you have that opportunity to [00:31:00] impact in a positive manner. And I think you're sadly undervaluing the gifts that you've been given to go out there and help and be part of something bigger. And when you can be part of something bigger than just ourselves, You will feel that sense of purpose in that pride in your chest will stick out a little bit more.

[00:31:20] You'll feel what we w we had every day when we, when you wear the boots. Yeah, it's amazing. I asked a question as a performer. I'm always curious about this performance, a lonely life. People think it's exciting and you've got the audience. But at the end of the day, it's it's, it's you alone. I mean, you have your band around you, right.

[00:31:47] But you've written the song and you're putting it out there and you're hopeful for the response. I know like this one man show I'm working on yield to dreams when I get on that stage and I perform, [00:32:00] and I want to connect with the audience, but at the end of the day, it's that, it's kind of that balance between embracing the audience.

[00:32:09] And then also this element of it's your voice that you're trying to get a part. I don't know what I'm trying to get at. That's kind of this ying yang thing. Maybe you

understand what I'm saying? I don't know. I do. I, I don't. I think your, your listeners might not though. They've not stood on a stage and felt that, that exchange of energy.

[00:32:31] So, you know, it's a live moment. Yeah. And it's a spark and you know, it, like, I remember the first time I did stand up in New York city at stand up New York. And the interesting thing was the week before backstage magazine had an article and it said if you're going to do stand up, make sure you do it out of the city first and never have your first time be in New York city.

[00:32:53] And I went. Okay. I screwed that up. Yeah. And then I was doing improv in somebody and I said, Hey, I need people to come and buy [00:33:00] drinks so I can perform. And the improv instructor said to me, you're going to do stand up. I said, yeah, go stand up. Cause he was doing impro. I said, I said, it's only 10 minutes.

[00:33:12] And without missing a beat, he says that's 6,000 seconds. And I was like, Oh, is that? But when I got up there, the first time it was home. Yeah. Talk about home for you, what's home for you. W what are some of the things that they've called that that's called being in the now right in the moment to moment to moment, to moment to moment, very few things in our lives, that where we get to feel that, which is why it is a bit of the stage is a bit of an addictive thing.

[00:33:43] The combat is a bit of an addictive send. You've never felt more alive than when you're under fire. Because you're so present. And so in the moment, things you get super power. So like I watched, I could see things happening [00:34:00] in slow motion time because I was so censor my sensors, my sensory was so acute.

[00:34:07] Cause I was so in the now and when you're on a stage, The beautiful thing of it is you, you're not taking about your bills. You're not thinking about the problems in your life. You're not thinking about what is isn't working. You're not thinking about anything, but that moment and that connection that you can feel to the audience, I'll tell you the confidence boost or so general pattern.

[00:34:32] His, his advice was single most important trait and a great soldier is self-confidence and the confidence comes from and your case from the repetition and in the feedback, knowing that it works. If you've been reading that if I've been reading that magazine, what was it called? Backstage magazine that you were reading and said, the first thing you should do is never what it should have said.

[00:34:54] The number one things is the first thing you should do is never suck. Like don't suck like that. [00:35:00] That right there puts you above. Most of the norm, kids will ask them out like, Hey uncle Kenny, you got, you got any advice? It don't stop. I just go out there and be, be better than the most by working hard at it.

[00:35:13] And so that, that will, your chances will come. Doors will open. Don't suck when they do move through the doors. And then once you get through there, have a vision and a plan. A mission statement, if you will, that makes your choices easier because you will begin to get choices that will steer you down paths that you don't need to go.

[00:35:38] And I don't necessarily mean they're bad paths. If you're doing a financial evaluation there's things like I could go open a donut shop right now, and it would make more money than what I'm doing right now. But is that really part of your mission statement? Well, I call it your passion statement, right?

[00:35:57] Your passion state, because most people have, [00:36:00] you know, if they have a mission statement, that's a small, but what's that kind of passion statement. Hope you write your mission statement that is in accordance with what you're great at. I am. My message is my passion for sure. Well, you talk about having a creed and I love that, but I want to, I want to touch on something that's stops most people and that's fear because you talk about fear in the book, on the battlefield.

[00:36:24] But there's fear every day in people's lives. And you actually say it right in the book. You just say it straight out. It's okay. To be afraid. And how you take that fear with you, right? Like it's like 50 pounds of gear that you had on as a soldier. It's interesting to me, because somewhere in there is also that fear that you took with you.

[00:36:48] And then as an artist trying to break through and perform. Just talk a little about overcoming. I don't know that it's overcoming fear because I think people try and overcome fear and that's an obstacle you can't overcome. [00:37:00] You have to take it with you. You just have to package it up and take it with you.

[00:37:03] Here's a choice. That's the way they taught us. It's a choice. You overcome what you said, character overcomes fear character. Is that moment where you find yourself in a situation. Yeah, I get it. You're afraid. You're fearful. But you do it anyway. What's your motivating factor in a situation where it's combat that the motivating factor is very basic and very corridor or being it's not, it's not for American freedom.

[00:37:39] It's not for. Our way of life. It's not for the greater glory of the ranger regiment. I bet. If you went back as far as Gettysburg and talked to those boys on both sides of the line, none of them will tell you. I'm doing this because of state's rights or slavery or a union. No, one's going to tell you they were [00:38:00] fighting against Germany because of the atrocities against the Jewish people.

[00:38:04] No one will tell you we were fighting the Viet Cong for the spread of communism, Roald tear, global terrorism, ISIS. Al-Qaeda none of that. The only thing that you fight for in those moments is each other. And you just, you don't want to let those people down and you can't because you're responsible for them.

[00:38:23] And so the fear factor just becomes, gets, overcome something more important than the fear, that little voice in your head puts it in the back seat. And you do what needs to be done when it needs to be done. My buddy of mine called it that the last quote I have in that book is do the right thing because it's the right thing to do that will overcome the fear, move into a job, or it's walking on those stage or life things.

[00:38:51] And you find yourself, what if I blow this? What have I sought? What if, what if, what if, what if, what if, what if, what if, if the end state. Is [00:39:00] more important to you than the fear itself. You will overcome that fear and you will go do it, but what a shame. People

have no idea how close they were. Charlie, when they quit and quitting gets easier to do the more you do it.

[00:39:17] And it takes on an S it's insidious, it's it? It is a it's like counter-terrorism at its worst fear just kind of gets in there. And it, it disguises itself. It's like a lack of confidence or it's excuses or it's somebody else didn't do something that, or. Good enough. I'm not good. That's the biggest one.

[00:39:37] I'm not good enough. Especially men, we all think, Oh, I'm not good enough. And we're all harboring this little secret. So you see all this people front and, and posing because they don't really they're. They're afraid that they're going to be discovered that they suck and you don't, or maybe you do, but you overcome your suck them.

[00:39:57] I have to agree [00:40:00] if you're going to stand. If you're going to walk up to the starting line. You better be ready to run that race. That requires an insane amount of preparedness. You know, we call it a training train as you fight, fight as you train, because you're only going to be as good. It's gotta be hard.

[00:40:19] It's gotta be difficult people. I'm sure that you've done team building exercises out there with some of the corporations you get to work with. I've seen, I've been parts of them. And then the ones that they asked me to come in and do, I'm like, Hey look. The team building stuff that I'm doing as not feel good, we're going to sit around and hang out and go, Ooh, that was fun.

[00:40:40] And involves a happy hour. You know, that's not a team building exercise. It's a team building step you're going to do with us. In my eyes leadership school is you're going to have a ruck on your back and we're going to go out into the woods and we're going to walk five miles to a target building, and we're going to have bad guys try and stop us.

[00:40:57] You are not going to want to let the [00:41:00] people down around you by the time it's all over and you can't do it by yourself. Cause you're just not good enough to do it. Cause we put you in situations and these are team building exercises that most people shy away from. We just. I've seen it out there. What's been inspiring about the time that we're in right now, as I see people stepping up because people need help.

[00:41:23] And what's disheartening is I see a lot of people. In fact, the majority begin to start. They don't want to be inconvenienced. They don't want to. Be put out, they don't want to go through any kind of hardship or difficulty. And so they just put others at risk. It's the C word comfortable. Yeah, we got comfortable.

[00:41:49] Right. And I, I tell people, well, you talk, it's all about grit being willing to do the work practice. I mean, as an actor, it's all about [00:42:00] rehearse, rehearse, rehearse, and then rehearse more. And that's what you did as a soldier every day. Yeah, in order to anticipate and you know, it's, it's, it's I tell people, you, you gotta want it, whatever that want is what's that passion.

[00:42:17] And do you want it more than anything else? Cause it'll load. That will be enough to drive and overcome that. Yeah. Yeah, exactly. So I want to let people know how they can

connect with you. Cause you just talked about is downrange part of that experience that you're talking about. Yeah. The downrange experience is what we've been working on as of late and it's.

[00:42:38] It was a slow burn because it took it when people at companies would say, okay, I want to go. And then they would come and be like, this is amazing. And they would come back and try and get there. They would be like, well, how come I have to go to that? They didn't have that burning thing to push themselves.

[00:42:57] It finally started catching on and it's, [00:43:00] um, it took a minute because it was uncomfortable. But what thing that you've accomplished in your life? Ever meant a ton to you. What's something that you had to, it was difficult if it came easy for you, it doesn't. Does it mean that much? Like if you weighed the things that, that you've worked for hardest in your life or the things that took the most to make work.

[00:43:28] Yeah, I think that's why people who are still married into the thirties and they're 40 years anniversaries. They'll tell you, marriage is hard work because they realized that they came through something difficult together. No one was like, it's easy. We just punk it. No one will ever tell you that. And that they value it because of the work they put into it.

[00:43:48] You value your college degrees. You value that championship ring because. They don't just hand those things out. Yeah. Well, you'll be talking to Nick and Nick will tell you [00:44:00] Sammy. No, you can say that me, man. I know it's like 16, but Hey, you got an Emmy. He won't tell you it's that, that makes you, that is the measure.

[00:44:12] It's not the ranger tab. It's not the badge. It's, it's the work that went into making that happen in the recognition for it. That's why we value those things. Yeah, it looks better on TV than it does in person. It's kind of cheap, but we value it because of the work that went into it. When, when you, when you finally see your song top the charts, you're like, it's not just that one song.

[00:44:38] It's that whole combination of body of work and years and years of the sacrifice, it makes it worthwhile for you. Well, on behalf of myself and the country, I just want to thank you for your service, your inspiration, the space of grace that you hold and doing that. And I mean, that really sincerely I'm just when I was reading [00:45:00] the book and thinking of talking with you, I was like, so humbled.

[00:45:03] I was like, Oh my God, great word, Charlie. You should write that down space of grace, grace space. That's a great. That belongs in titled titles and chapters like, um, water walkers now, times in life, where I've been in the space around the space of grace and reading your book as, as, as brutal as it is, it was, it was also very clear of the gracefulness in which you operate.

[00:45:30] I wish you just so much continued success. Like I don't have to because you're going to do it anyways. Well, thanks. Just it's magical. It's magical. You're using words like grace that's, you know, that's God coming through. So that means I'm kind of getting out of the way. So that makes me happy. You know what, and I love what you just said.

[00:45:48] It's a good place to end on. It's called getting out of the way folks. So much of us are trying to get in the way. And when you're an actor, it's all about getting out of your way. So the performance can come [00:46:00] through when you're an athlete, it's about getting out of the way when you're a soldier, it's about getting out of the way.

[00:46:04] And when you're spiritual, it's about getting out of the human way and that kind of thing. I want to encourage everybody go to Kenny Thomas website, download his music, share his music. So for your listeners, if they go to the website, there's a link right at the top of the homepage. It's just a bar across the top and they can get the audio book version of that for free.

[00:46:25] For everybody. So here's what I'm going to say. Buy the book. Okay. Buy the book. Hey. Yeah. And I'm buying a hundred for our clients. You're going to be writing a lot of signatures on those books. This is a book we're given out this year, cause I was just blown away. Just absolutely blown away. Thank you so much, Kenny Thomas, this album is given away.

[00:46:54] I say. Write a check and then you can have it his way. [00:47:00] Thank you for your service. Thank you for your music. Thank you for your inspiration. And thanks for being a part of a yield to dreams means a real lot. We appreciate it. I appreciate it. I want to thank you for listening to my podcast, yield of dreams and learning how you can create paychecks for life.

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