What ‘Welcome Home’ Really Means | with Tom Spooner

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Transcript

[00:00] [music] You psyched? You ready?

I'm ready.

Let's do it.

I'm excited. This is excited.

Try to control yourself, sir.

I am.

Okay. I mean, it's it's a monumentous

episode, man. It is the very first episode of the Warriors Heart podcast. Man,

that's pretty cool.

That's really cool. It's really good stuff. I mean, the the possibility of reaching a lot of people out there is just is phenomenal. You know, with the advent of technology and people podcasting these days, we can really really get the message out. So, inarguable I can't even say the word in arguable episode of the Warrior podcast.

It's something like that. We'll spell it later. Maybe we'll do some uh some subtitles, some captions.

How about the first

the first? Welcome to the first episode of the Warriors Heart Podcast. I'm Robert Greer. I'll be your host for the podcast. With me today is Mr. Tom Spooner, co-founder of Warriors Heart. Thank you for being here, sir.

Thanks for having me, sir.

Absolutely. So, yeah, it is a big deal, uh, being able to get the message out to everybody that's listening, that's watching. We got a huge following already. So, this would just kind of, you know, further that mission.

[01:10] So, the mission is what we're talking about here today. How it started, where it started, and specifically the welcome home.

Yeah. A little walk down memory lane. The mission started with you and Lori meeting uh Josh and Lisa Lane and coming up with the idea for Warriors Heart, but there's certain segments of it that are kind of nuanced. Right. Right.

That people don't really think about so much. For example, the welcome home.

Right.

That's something that we want to talk about today. Take us down that memory lane there where welcome home came from.

Yeah. So, for uh for context, for setting the context of it, it was uh time frames. I hadn't had a whole lot of therapy, so I was a bit more rough around the edges. And I hadn't spent that much time with the Lannis who've been doing this mission. Uh not the Warriors Heart mission, but the mission of recovery, you know, with alcoholics and addicts, mainly civilians, you know, in the private sector. So, um, so that's what they were doing, you know, I mean, and we had gotten together of like, hey, we're we're the next facility, which was going to be their seventh if we continued that route, you know, was, uh, going to be for veterans and first responders. So, uh, after I met Josh, the families came together like you said, and then it's like, okay, um, what's next? You know, and so we knew it was going to be hard. We knew it was going to be different, and thank God Josh and Lisa knew what they were doing. [laughter] and uh and uh and so we we met in Scottsdale, Arizona in 2015. Uh we hadn't even fully picked out the property yet. Uh we had two hopefuls and um so what we were there for though was a two-day planning session just going through all of it. And uh and part of that session was uh you know we set up our mission, we set up our vision, we set up the goals, you know, and then we were going through this process that I wasn't familiar with because it was all about visualization and emotions and feelings and things which I wasn't like fully processed into yet, but I was I was going with it because it made sense.

[03:08] Those are things that we suppress in our industry, right? We don't really want to deal with those things.

Yeah. So I was I was like, "Okay, this is going to be great." And uh and it was I was excited because it was like hey this is a new experience and uh and another reason why I was super excited about the potential of Warriors Heart what it what it could be which what we were in pro in the process of doing at that time was like cuz I know what I had done at that point for you know 23 years you know me and my big book sponsoring dudes and you know help you know watching the miracles happen through the process you know and um so the the big thing for me was is like, man, what if, you know, because I was limited to just me. I could only sponsor so many guys. I could only affect so many, but man, if we had this organization that could affect like a bunch of people like, so that was what was really in my mind. I didn't know how it was

going to be pulled off, but you know, that was in my mind. And when we were there, we um this guy named Tom Wright. So, who was in the session was uh Josh, Lisa, me, Annette Hill, which is who was our first clinical director here at Warriors Heart,

[04:16] and a guy named Tom Wright. Um, and he Josh Lisa knew Tom from Kiasaki and all the Rich Dad stuff that they would do together.

And so, we were going through this exercise and it was uh it's like, okay, we want you to visualize like, hey, you're you're we didn't say coming through the gate because we didn't have a gate. It's like, hey, visualize coming in like, hey, what does it look like? what does it feel like? What are people talking about? And I'd never really been through an exercise in that much depth. And they were serious about it, too. You know what I mean? Not like just for a few seconds like like no, like really go there. And um and then whenever they said, you know, all the when we did that little exercise and then asked for feedback, okay, what were you thinking about this? What were you thinking? And all these words were being used and all these phrases like uh you know just kindness you know love, support, welcoming, secure, stable, you know all these different words and you know and the biggest one was the kindness and the love and all of that. And whenever I was sitting there, I was like, man, all these words that we're talking about is describing like the most ideal home, you know, that's

[05:32] right.

You know, we all kind of looked at each other and was like, yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, and then um and so that's where the whole then we started going down that route like, okay, well, tell me more about home, you know what I mean? And so we started just ex going through an exercise of of different ideas, just different thoughts, you know, whatever would come up in the room, you know, which is how we teach and how we learn, you know, is from each other. And um and so we started talking about like, well, a lot of our guys and gals, you know, I mean, they're physically home, but they're they're not home, you know, and um you know, and them Vietnam veterans, you know, they're you know, the nation didn't welcome them back. So all of those kind of conversations and it all landed on it's like well when they come to us we're going to say welcome home you know and um so that was like how it all came about and uh as far as coming up with that phrase and it was so solid with us that we were going to make it that solid into the culture. You know what I mean? Like how we do with every staff member like you meet a warrior whenever they come in. You know what I mean? you tell them welcome home. Even whenever we do interviews for other staff members, you know what I mean? And they pass our selection process, you know, when we're bringing them on board, we tell them welcome home, too. So, that's uh that's that's kind of where it came from.

[06:57] Two simple words. It can mean a lot to people. Do you remember the feedback you got the first time it was said to a client or were you there?

So, it it varies. Uh I don't know about the first time it was. cuz I know the first time I said it to a client, you know, and then and then thereafter is, uh, you know, it all depends. We talk about at Warriors Heart, we meet everyone where they're at, right? No matter where they come from, inside or outside, you know, we meet them where they're at.

So, so my response to a welcome home, you know, is is like very emotional, you know what I mean? It's like

because I understand the mind, body, spirit, you know what I mean? And I was physically home, but I my mind was still in war, my heart was still in war, like all those different things. So I I got it right. And um

and a bunch of therapy helped me get there. But uh

so I got there. So I I I love doing social experiments, you know, and uh and seeing how humans react and how they the w their wise and all that stuff. And and some of the guys and gals that you know, warriors that came in, I said, "Welcome home, man." And then you see it cut right through their soul, you know, tears welling up, man, and just

[08:06] and just start pouring it because we mean it. You know what I mean? Our property means it, our staff means it. Each individual one of us means it when we say that. It's just not a saying,

as you know. And um so that's on one end of the spectrum, you know, and then uh and then I and then I run into the guys that remind me of me uh before I got sober, you know, and say, "Welcome home." home and they're just like whatever, man. Right? Because they're so far removed, which I can really relate to that person. I can relate to the first person in sobriety, but I can really relate to the to that person. It's like, man, this ain't my freaking home. What was that? Some little cool little snappy saying you got there, you know? I was so condescending, so twisted up and and angry and everything else, you know? This is my home. Welcome home. That's stupid, you know. But then what I wa witness with those guys and gals, with those warriors is over time, you know what I mean? Sometime whether it was a few days, few weeks, maybe after the lifeline maybe,

[09:10] but at some point, man, they're like, "Oh, oh,

they get it."

Yeah, I I know what you mean now.

I was one of those people.

Imagine that. I can't imagine that.

Believe it or not, I was one of those people. Yeah. Home is a sanctuary. is our safe place or safe space where we're supposed to feel

normal and and at ease, right?

Uh I didn't feel that at that time in my life. And the reason because I'd already lost my home to the bankruptcy, you know, when I lost my career, we were living with her parents and then she had asked me to leave. She had booted me out.

At that time in my life, I was sleeping on a mattress on the floor of a buddy's house, you know, after he had moved out. Uh still had heat and air and everything else, but it wasn't a home. It was just a place for me to lay my head.

Yeah. Shelter.

Yeah. Shelter. Basic shelter. And when I first came in here, I was in such an angry, agitated state. A lot of people remember that. Uh, and when they said, "Welcome home," initially it was off-putting.

You know, for that same reason. Uh, this ain't my home. This this is a place I'm going to get help. But then as the weeks progressed,

[10:14] oh man, it really did sink in. It really did. Was there a particular time, Robert, or anything in particular, or was it just a gradual slow and it just occurred?

It was a gradual build, right? The more I heard it when it's repeated, you know, people tell you when I first got here, you know, people would tell me, "Welcome home." Yeah, whatever. Okay. And then the next guy would say it and then after, you know, about the 15th time here, I'm like, "Son of a bitch." All right, stop. Right. [laughter] That's enough. But it just kept getting repeated.

But it wasn't just a phrase that somebody utters just because they're supposed to. Everything about the place did make me feel at home to the people who run the place, the the clinicians, the staff, uh you, Lori, Josh, Lisa, everybody. Seeing the people here and hearing them repeat it.

Yeah.

And sitting down eating lunch with you or something like that. That helped it to sink in quite a bit. Right. And it really did begin to feel like home. It really did begin to feel like a safe space because home is where you heal. And this is where I was healing.

So over time, it began to really sink in. Before you left, did you end up telling other guys as they were coming in, "Welcome home."

[11:20] Absolutely. Right. [laughter] They would come visit me in detox, say, "Hey, welcome home, man. My name is John." Or whatever. Okay, whatever.

But then I found myself being the same same guy. And I still do it. You know, when I see a new guy come in, hey man, I'm Robert. Welcome home. Let me show you where this is. Let me show you where that is. Right. So, it really did begin to sink in. And it does feel like home.

Yeah, man. And it that's and the home when we say home you know a lot of people don't maybe they didn't come from a good home maybe they don't have a good example of what that would be you know I mean some people folks come up real rough so I mean but but we provide that here that demonstration with our behaviors with everything of that is is you're accepted you're trusted hey there's rules you know what I mean there's because there's rules everywhere and we got to learn to live by them but it's uh but the biggest thing is is like man y'all accept accept me for who I am,

right?

I don't really know many places where I can if you really knew me and everything about me, you would still, you know, me welcome me into your home, you know? So, it's

[12:24] yeah, that's one of the things I think I know I'm personally and I know we all are just so proud that that we provide that and we know it,

you know. We know what we know what we provide and that's like a a good level of of pride that we have, you know, professional pride.

Absolutely. And for many people who join the military or first responders, you know, uh they're escaping a home that wasn't so great, right? And they found that home again in their service. Yep.

But then when that service is over, they're homeless. They have no family and they're searching for it.

Yeah. Yeah.

And initially coming in it's it's I don't know if this is the right place but then as you participate it sinks in and it does feel like family. It does feel like home.

In fact you know I stayed here for quite a while with sober living and IOP at the time. It's PHP now but I stayed here for about seven and a half months.

Yeah.

Went home uh to Louisiana tried to pick up the pieces and I remember scheduling a recharge to come back on that first year my oneyear anniversary of sobriety. uh stayed here, you know, spoke on main campus at the fireside. Uh as I was coming into Helotus, going down 16, going through those hills,

[13:34] I start to get that giddy feeling, you [laughter] know, like I'm home again.

Truly, it was amazing, you know, just the the sensation of just getting close to the place again really made it feel like I was u getting back with family.

Yeah.

The family aspect. And then I what I've heard heard it somewhere someone described home is like home is where you go when no one else wants you know home is where you go whenever you've screwed everything up or right

everything went bust you know like hey you go home to regroup re you know what I mean get filled back up you know what I mean and then get back out in the fight again you know so

yeah it's it's just the it's such fitting words because it's the truth

you know what I mean it's I've never had any warrior come through, you know, the entire 42 days and not leave knowing that this is, you know, they're their only home, but this is one they can come back to anytime they want,

which is a story in and of itself. We could do a whole episode on just the recharges, right? I mean, who wants to go back and hang out at the rehab that they went,

[14:39] right?

You know, but people do it. I love doing it. Oh, yeah. There's plenty that do. Yeah. Uh but we take them from the welcome home all the way through the coin out, which is something not a lot of people understand. Not a lot of people know about the coin out, right?

Yeah.

Uh so let's delve into that a little bit, you know, because that that welcome home doesn't it doesn't stop once everybody says, "Hey, welcome home. You're here. All right, now get to work." Now, it's continuous while you're here through the therapy, through the electives, and all the way through the coin out process. And the coin out process is basically just the graduation, right? Yeah, that and I'll refer it to it like as part of the home too because uh just like in any home like there's rules, you know what I mean? And there's uh rights of passage, you know what I mean? And there's oh here's your vehicle, you know what I mean? I mean there's

we do the same thing here and like you said to the coin out,

you mean the coin out is uh you know that's earn earn you earn your coin. Um, it's not get along and get by, cooperate, graduate kind of thing. Like you have to you have to earn your coin. I mean, you can complete the course and not get a coin. You know what I mean? Because you haven't met the standard, you know, that that's rare, you know, I mean, but it does happen and and again, it's got to be hard and it's got to be meaningful for our population or it don't mean nothing. It ain't worth it. You know, you just give me something and like, yeah, whatever. You know, make me earn it and work for it. And as you well know, you work for that here. But in that coin out ceremony, you know, the interesting thing that I've seen happen, not interesting, the amazing thing is um you know, we're not especially in early sobriety, you know, 42 days sober, let's say, you know, you're not used to taking compliments. You're not used to people saying good things about you. You're not It makes you very uncomfortable, you know, cuz

[16:29] cuz cuz I mean, you don't know what I've done, but I know what I've done, right? Right. And that's always in here, you know, if and then so at that coin out ceremony when the coin's going around and each warrior is saying a word and a story, you know, that about their experience with that warrior that's uh coining out, you know, man, it is probably one of the most powerful things that goes on out out here and it's right before you leave. All the good stuff, all the feedback. I mean, what was yours like?

Oh, yeah. No, I agree. That was 100% it was the the culmination of of every bit of it. And with mine uh I was in a bit of a state that day, I'll admit, because uh I'd gotten sideways with one of the clinicians. [laughter] Go figure. I still had an attitude, right?

And uh Miss Vonnie

Miss Vonyie had to do a little bit of corrective action on me. We we'll put it nicely that way. Uh but so I was in a bit of a state. However, uh it's on my office wall right now. uh the when when we do the coin out and for those who who aren't familiar with the program or haven't ever been through it, the coin out is simply the graduation of the program. You receive a challenge coin

[17:39] uh with the warrior's heart images on it and the the the wording on the side of it with my last breath.

Yeah.

Um

you're presented with that coin and every warrior that is in the group during the coin out, they will hold it in their hand and press a word into it and say a word for you.

Yeah. and somebody is recording all of that and writing it down and you're presented with that document when you leave. So mine has all the words with my name on it, the Warriors Heart logo, all the words and then on the back who said them laminated and it's hanging on my office wall. So I don't forget what people thought of me. Yeah.

Right. Because this is my new family. This is my new home. Yeah.

And for me that coin is kind of like a key to the house. Yes.

Right. Knowing that you can always come back to mama's house because she gonna take care of you.

Yeah.

In a lot of ways. Wow.

But with the coin out, just the hearing the feedback from everybody else

is humbling but also healing.

Yes.

Because as you stated, that background that we had before we came in, most people wouldn't want to have anything to do with us. Yeah.

[18:42] I had ghosted a lot of people in my own life. I know you had been through some similar things.

But when we get here, we're around like-minded people and they accept us.

Yeah.

And those words we can look back on because of the negative cognitions and negative I want to say affirmations, but it's not exactly an affirmation. The negative thought process we had is reversed by the feedback we get from the other warriors saying those positive words because it's the truth because they've seen us.

Uh they know how that

uh dynamic has changed in our lives and we're accepted into a new home, into a new brotherhood, into a new fellowship.

Yes.

Yeah. So the coin out is mine was mine was great and I've attended a lot uh for other warriors but also been invited by some of the warriors that I've helped get into treatment.

Right.

That is a beautiful process.

Yeah, man. It's magical.

It is

to watch it from the beginning to the I mean it's the accurate word is miraculous, you know. I mean it's there's no other way to explain it

[19:43] exactly

that I found anyway. And one of the things I like the most about that challenge coin, they they're not given out.

No.

To people, you know, as a hey, you know, I'm Tom Spooner here. Here's my place, right? You got to earn the damn thing.

Yep. Only staff and uh qualified staff, you know, and then um and alumni, you know what I mean? Graduate where's no one that don't Yeah. to your point is and at the alumni reunion um I was talking to uh

looks like a garden gnome.

Yeah. And he Yeah, that's him. He said um we were sitting next to each other, you know, and he he was telling me this story about like he had been to Black Rifle Coffee in in Bernie there and they had, you know, a lot of challenge coins up and uh he said, "Hey, you know," he was talking to me one-on-one, you know, we're sitting in that little group out out in the woods and he said, "Uh" he said, "Man, they don't they don't have a warrior's heart coin there." I'm like, "No, they don't." And he's like, "Man, we you know, we got to get them. Well, you we got to get a warrior's heart coin up there. You got all these coins. I mean, it's that black rifle. Like I said, I said, "No, man. We won't ever put a coin there." And he he's like looked at me like I was crazy, you know? And I But he didn't know what I told him next. And and that was what we had just said. I was like, "Hey, brother, that the only people that get those coins are the ones that earned them.

[21:07] They don't they don't get handed out to anyone. Don't don't care who you are. If you hadn't sat in one of those seats, whether on the staff side or the client side, you don't get a warrior's heart coin. And that makes it special. That makes it how as it should be.

Oh, absolutely. And like you said, if it ain't worth uh if it ain't hard, it ain't worth having. Yeah.

They don't give out Ranger tabs. They don't give out that Marine Corps saber. Yeah. Unless you earn the damn thing.

Yeah.

I love that. That makes it special. And in talking about that war in particular, I'm sure you've seen a lot of breakthroughs happen. a lot of a lot of moments where it just clicks with somebody when they come through here. Yeah. Any of them stick out to you?

Not at this moment. Hang on. I'm supposed to have one, [laughter] but

but uh I've seen so many of them. Um like I said before before Warriors Heart, you know, I would been I've been doing this for 33 years. So I'm not by any means desensitized to it. The, you know, that journey, the process that happens when uh you assist someone to save their own life, you know, and then in mind, body, and spirit. Um to me, it's expected because I've seen it work so many times. And um but there's just so many folks that uh like uh one that comes to mind um one particular female that uh that came to us uh literally came in sideways, you know, uh lot going on on the law side, lot going on on the personal side and had been living

that way for a very long time. someone that if uh like if you were betting on horses, you wouldn't bet on that horse, you know, just like, man, that like I don't see how this is going to we're going to get the end product that's needed, you know, and um and yet again, you know, it all comes down, as you well know, though, to to uh the Warriors effort,

[23:10] right?

Right. It's initiative based training, you know, mean we're not going to run around and tell you what to do, you know? I mean, uh, we're going to offer it to you and what you put into it, I guarantee you'll get tenfold back, if not more. And this particular warrior, um, she put in the work and she got the results and she's still sober today, years later. And, uh, I I mean, every time I see her, I just start smiling, you know, because it's like, yeah, one of the person, one of the ones like me, hopeless, you know what I mean? Like just hopeless. like ain't no way and there it is.

I I get it. I was pretty rough when I came in here myself. Lots of anger,

lots of angst, yelling and screaming at people all the time. Was going through a lot.

I've seen some transformations while I was here as a client, but also while I've been here as a as an employee, as staff,

and I'm not sure exactly which uh warrior you're talking about. Did it involve a stolen U-Haul truck?

It sure did.

[24:10] How about that? I'm thinking of the same person. legendary. Absolutely legendary. Absolutely.

And she is a fantastic person. Yeah.

But we've seen a lot of those trans uh transformations happen. Right.

I think in large part it's, you know, part of that peer-to-peer

uh connection that we have here, right? Which is part of the reason

why this place was set up the way that it was, right?

So from your background obviously in the military, you know the power of that.

Yeah.

But you also came from a place in the military where you saw a lot of soldiers taking their lives, right? Yeah.

And you knew the power of the peer-to-peer. Let's let's talk about that a little bit.

Yeah. So, not only I was in the military, but I got sober in the military, right? Whenever I was 20, 1992, you know, and um and so that meant I got sober on Fort Bragg. So, that was with other warriors.

Mhm.

So, we weren't impatient, but it was the same setup, you know what I mean? And then, of course, the law enforce law enforcement and fire guys and EMT, you know, we all hang around because we're all the same cut of cloth.

[25:11] Mhm. And um so I experienced that in my early sobriety, you know what I mean? My sponsor was a soldier also, you know, I mean, and everybody that I was around and during those time frames like the the old-timers that I had in there because in 1992 there weren't many young folks in AA,

right? [laughter] I mean that just

so um but uh man I had all of these not just from a military perspective but from a an alcoholic and addict perspective in sobriety you know I mean I was sitting next to guys that were in World War II Korea and Vietnam

right you know and and they're talking about how hard early sobriety is you know I mean it's like whoa you know I mean so and then I would watch them and I would see how they were doing and you know what I mean And so I had the benefit of of of experiencing what we do out here at Warriors Heart in my sobriety coming up. And then when I started sponsoring guys primarily they were the same. I didn't pick or choose anybody. Plenty of civilian folks I've sponsored. And um

[26:17] but mo probably at least 60% of them, you know, were military, law enforcement, first responder. And um so and I personally knew the power of that, just the common language, the shared experiences, all of that. And so whenever we, you know, were sitting in Scottsdale coming up with welcome home and the curriculum and

and hey, will this work? you know, I knew the military aspect would work, but I didn't know, you know, if you had a a firefighter, EMT, a combat veteran, you know, law enforcement, like it it briefs well, but is it is it really going to work? And uh

exactly.

So, I had a little bit of uh hesitation, man. I mean, you know, we fig did all our figuring and everything and it's like, well, yep, it's got to work, you know. And, uh, but the first time around the fire pit, you know, I mean, within that first year, you know, and I saw that mix, you know what I mean, of of every single one of our population setting around the fire pit, man, it almost took a sigh of relief is like because it was it proofed out, you know, and there's no pressure like peer pressure, right? like we say and um

[27:29] and that's why I mean back to our our mission statement you know what I mean our mission warriors healing warriors you know it's not a slogan it's not something that we say it's uh it's what goes on like yeah we have the property we have the licensed professionals and we have a curriculum and we have a program and structure but as you well know the real magic that happens is at the fire pit after all the meetings are over or in between or when a buddy's having a bad night on the backside of Mason Creek and slept for two nights, you know, and all of those kind of things. That's where the staff and myself get to just witness, you know, a lot of stuff. I mean, now I mean, you being staff, too. I mean, we get to witness a lot of things, man.

And that uh that back to the peer network and back to the warriors, healing warriors, like there's uh there's nothing more powerful. Um, we need our licensed professionals to help crack us open and break through our hard heads and you know and you know and hard-headedness and uh but at the end of the day

[28:36] it's just like uh when you said when you went back into detox you know and said told that new guy welcome home you know and uh

it's much different than staff members saying it like I can say it to them like one thing but man if it's one of

you know because I'm not inatient you know but whenever they're in there and they're doing it. I get to witness it and and it's it's amazing.

Every bit of that resonated with me quite a bit. You know, when I when I do a tour of the facility or I share my story about this place, I always tell them, you know, I was just a cop. And I say it just like that, right? I was just a cop. When I was first presented with this place, I I took a look at it on the internet and I'm like, I'm I'm not military. I can't go there. The person who was introducing me to it said, "No, it's for first responders, too." But in my mind, I I held

minimized everything.

Yeah. I mean, like I said, I was just a cop. And combat vets, military guys, they go overseas, they they're in combat. U they're on a higher plane than I am. I don't deserve a seat at the table. Right.

[29:38] Right.

That's a home that they have that I'm not welcome into. Right.

Because I'm just a cop.

And I brought that idea with me into Warriors Heart when I came here as a client.

And it changed around the fire pit.

Got corrected. He got corrected real fast with that peerto-peer with the welcome home with everything else cuz I'm sitting there smoking cigars, you know, just listening to these guys talk. There's SEALs, Morso, Marines, infantry guys, mortar guys, whatever

and they're talking about their experiences and I'm sitting there listening and yeah,

then they encourage me to open up and talk a little bit and I start talking about uh

I don't know, you you know, investigating juvenile sex crimes, you know, as a detective.

Uh one, I can clear a room real quick when I open up about that. Yeah.

Two, it's the feedback I got from that was what was really healing,

right?

The those guys looking at me and saying, "Oh, damn, man. There's no way I could do that. You're a badass." You know, that's

that's awesome stuff. And I'm like, "Time out. Supposed to be saying that to you, not the other way around."

Right.

But when they gave me that feedback, when they welcomed me into their world, into their home,

[30:38] Yeah.

I accepted the PTS diagnosis.

Yeah.

Right then and there. And when I can accept the diagnosis, then I can begin to begin to really heal from it.

Yeah.

You know,

and that kind of started that process, just being around the fire pit,

which kind of takes other peers from

other peers, which kind of takes you back to that welcome home idea, right? Sitting around the house,

around the campfire, around the fireplace, whatever,

talking and opening up to each other.

Yeah.

That peerto-peer is where it opens up and

healing starts.

Yeah.

Yeah. I love it.

It works, man.

It works. It really does.

It really does.

The cool That's the one of the cool things about everything that we've talked about is like,

you know, there's no g whiz new wave ideas that we're practicing here. You know what I mean? We're back, we're going back to the basics, back to the fundamentals, uh back to uh what we should have been doing all along, right? But we got off track somewhere along the way. Maybe super early, maybe late, whatever. But it's like, "Hey man, how do we get back into the into the stream of life?" You know what I mean? How do we get back to serving? You know what I mean? Because all of us when we're at the, you know, the height of our low, you know, of uh of our bottom, you know, just selfish and self-centered, the opposite of a servant,

[31:59] you know what I mean? Which fundamentally is a moral injury for myself because I believe in serving and now I'm only self- serving. I mean, that's a moral injury that I caused myself until we get around others, you know, and then we we get settled back in and man, the next thing you know, we can enter back into that, like you said, that family, that home life, you know, and that way of life and and again, it's back to service. Like we've

I love what Shane says, you know, our mission's not over,

right?

Because I thought mine was, you know,

yeah, those days are gone. I mean, there's certain aspects of it that absolutely they are, but man, it's still life or death business that we're in here. So, it's just like being on the streets or overseas, man. Someone's going to die. And um and that's the importance of of what we do.

And the way that you exit that former career and that former family kind of dictates which way you're going to go in life, right?

[32:59] Uh some people follow it all the way through and retire after a successful career. Others like myself only make it about halfway through and was terminated from employment due to my issues. There's a lot of us that fit in that demographic. Yeah.

I don't feel like we belong again. Right.

Like my law enforcement mission was over when I was terminated. Right.

Right. Unless I go back into the field, right?

But now I have discovered a whole different mission.

Right.

Trying to help law enforcement officers across the nation find places like this and find that healing.

Yeah.

So the mission isn't over.

No. And it's fulfilling.

It is. gives me a sense of purpose again, which is what most of us got into the service to begin with. A sense of purpose.

Got to have it without a sense of purpose. I mean, from the time my feet hit the floor, because my head kicks in even before my feet hit the floor.

So, I got to know why I'm here and what I'm here to do, right?

You know, who am I and what am I doing? You know what I mean? I got to have those questions answered. And that's where my purpose comes in. Because if I don't have a purpose, you know, my purpose is, you know, twofold. my my blood family,

[34:03] you know what I mean? Which is what comes first. And um

but then after they're taken care of, then I got a whole lot of I got a whole another family to take care of that needs me to take care of them that needs me to be my best self, you know, and uh and to be for them when when they need me. So, um it works.

It does. It does us. and just being open to the next step in life, you know,

trying to figure out what to do with my life after that career ended was was tricky, right?

Yeah.

Uh I think somebody said something to me in treatment at one point, let go and let God.

What the hell does that look like? Somebody explain that. I know what you mean.

Yeah. You know, I I think it was one of the daily meditations that you put out when you said basically do the work on yourself and leave the results up to God.

Yep.

Right. That does make sense to me. Yep. you know,

very logical, very practical. Just get to working,

right?

Work on yourself. Leave the results up to God. You never know where it'll take you.

That's for sure.

I mean, even with podcast stuff, you know, this is the first podcast that we're doing with Warriors Heart. There's going to be many more as we continue to tell the stories of the inner workings and new things happening with the business and everything else.

[35:13] But just my journey to be sitting here in the seat with you.

Yeah, that's pretty cool. a buddy of mine, you know, Kyle, you know, Kyle Miller, you know, uh, couple years ago, he was like, "Hey, we're starting a podcast. Why don't you come tell your story?"

And that morphed into me becoming one of the hosts of the podcast. I've been doing it for like three years now.

If you'd asked me years ago if I saw myself being a podcast, I was

No.

Yeah.

No. I got a face for radio,

not a face for cameras and stuff.

So, but it it has brought on a whole new purpose in life.

Yeah, man. You know, but it started with that do the work on yourself and leave the results up to God.

Yeah.

I was doing the work on myself where I met Kyle

and I remember my brother coming by the food truck I was running one day and you know trying to figure out what to do with the rest of my life and he had suggested that start a podcast.

All the excuses that we can put up. Don't have the money. Don't have the knowledge. I don't know what I'm doing with it.

And then somehow or another here I sit.

Yeah.

But there's going to be many more like this and that's the beautiful part about this. There's going to be many more podcasts from Warriors Heart uh kind of talking about what we do here.

[36:16] Yeah. And I'm so glad we have a platform too to get the history out because we have like I mean April will make 10 years. So I mean we've got story after story after story or history like uh

yes

it's all pretty and it all goes back to that stuff like hey do the work and then I mean I'm not in the results business anymore. God's in the results business. I mean, but our job is to do the work individually and collectively, you know, what we do here and then the results are, you know, his business. So,

again, all we got to do is work hard. And I've been working hard since I was 10 years old. So,

there you go.

I can do that.

You can. So, can I?

Yeah. Exactly.

And the results so far have been over 3,000 warriors coming through the gates now that we have gates. Yeah.

Coming through this facility and the facility that we have in Virginia. um lives being changed, families being changed, dynamics being changed.

Uh and the history of the place is pretty cool. You know, I've heard the stories. Not everybody knows the stories of how the property itself was purchased.

[37:17] Yeah.

But it was very some very much something like a uh a mob sit down almost, right?

Yeah. And it wasn't for sale.

Yeah. It wasn't for sale. [laughter] How do you buy something that ain't for sale?

Right.

Right.

From a a big oil guy that was like the richest man in New Mexico for many years. So that kind of money

Yeah.

Yep. That's that's a story that's a whole another story.

That's a whole another story.

But the story of welcome home itself, you know, that that's a beautiful story in and of it. And it's a story that keeps getting written with everybody that comes through here. Everybody that adopts the phrase welcome home,

uh, it really means something to them.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And it doesn't ever get old, man.

No, it doesn't

because we always need a home. You know what I mean? Like always.

Absolutely. Yeah. And knowing that you can always come back. Mhm.

That's the beautiful part of it. You know, we don't turn our back on family. You know, we do everything we can to help you out as long as you're participating in your own rescue.

Exactly.

Uh we will do what we can to help.

Y

Now, for those out there that are listening, you know, wondering how they can get the same kind of help. Uh go to warriorsheart.com. There's plenty of ways to connect on the website, whether it be a phone call in. Emissions office is uh 0700 to 2300 Central Standard Time daily. call in, talk to uh to the staff members and get the admissions process started. But warriorshart.com. We also have another phone number 855-61010003 for anybody listening that wants to call in. And of course those that are unfamiliar with warriors. Our demographic is active duty military, veterans, first responders, whether they're current or retired. first responders to include law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMTs, uh trauma staff, trauma nurses, trauma doctors, anybody that's serving on the front lines. Give us a call 855-6103 or log on to the website. Come see for yourself what welcome home really means.

[39:08] First thing that they said was, "Welcome home.