The Enemy Within Why We Can’t Do Recovery Alone

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Transcript

[00:00] Episode [music] four, the official episode four of the Warriors Heart podcast. Sitting down with Shane St. John. I'm Robert Greer. Both alumni, but you are the alumni coordinator.

That's right.

The Warriors Heart.

Yeah. Thank you.

Yeah. Happy to have you here. I've interviewed you before, know you well. Yeah. Uh and we've done the Facebook live stuff and all that. Y

happy to get this on the road now that we have the proper lighting adjusted and you know it's hard to find good help these days.

It really is. I mean now that the production crew actually got their act together and and started Yeah.

doing the right thing. Yeah. So now we can begin. So

hopefully so earlier somebody was watching loud videos or something while we were recording and I don't know if the audio picked it up but

yeah it was

What kind of odd videos?

I don't know. It was you Tik Tok. you know how kids are these days with Anyway,

those youngsters,

I'm telling you. Yeah.

Yeah.

But so far, we've been getting great feedback on the Warriors Heart podcast and I'm I'm just honored and happy to be a host of I'm glad that you're here, man.

[01:04] Yeah, man. Me, too, man. Thanks for having me on here.

You're here for uh of course our big annual meeting that we're having here at Warriors Heart. Uh but we're taking this opportunity to sit down with you and, you know, kind of discuss the theme of this particular podcast, which is kind of the theme of our life and recovery. You are not alone.

Yeah. Right.

Absolutely.

And this is kind of the time of year when most people feel alone.

Yeah.

Holidays are over, family's going back home. For me, maybe this is just me, seasonal a effect disorder. You know, you know, people reference that a lot this time of year. Just everything outside looks cold and dead

and man, it's been overcast all day. Not my favorite time of year.

Yeah. You know,

yeah, that seasonal kind of depression that kind of sinks in for a lot of people. Yeah. the overcast, the cold, and just sitting at home all the time and not be able to get out and do stuff. Right.

Exactly.

Yeah.

Now, that kind of contributes to feeling alone quite a bit. But that's kind of what the uh theme of the podcast here is today. You're not alone. So, we're going to kind of talk about that a little bit. Okay.

Talk about that from the uh alumni coordinator standpoint, right? Um, so yeah, rough time of year, you know, uh, and we're going to discuss ways that we can kind of, uh, you know, get out of that isolation and talk about asking for help, you know,

[02:19] uh, not just for alumni, but also for anybody that's still looking for help.

Yeah. You know,

I mean, really anybody, you know, I mean, this kind of affects everyone, especially this time of year.

Yeah, it is. Um, you know, um, so let's talk about asking for help right now. Um it it's hard, you know, we've talked about this a lot. It it's hard for people to ask for help, you know, the way we're trained and conditioned and stuff like that, you know, uh reaching out for help is not an easy thing to do, you know.

Yeah.

Would you agree or

Oh, I mean, I'd wholeheartedly agree. I mean, you know, you're kind of trained, you know, if all else fails, you continue the mission alone, right? You know, and it's just not the way to think, man. You know, especially in this environment when we're around recovery, right?

Mhm. You know, I I knew like when I was going through I could not ask for help. Like when I was when my struggle before I came to Warriors Heart, like I was just ego a lot of it.

Fair enough.

Um ashamed, you know, to ask for help, to admit that I was an alcoholic and using drugs and all that stuff, right? But really just the the ego of it. Like I remember, you know, just constantly like, "Man, I'll figure this out. I got this. I'll get it, man. Like, I'll start tomorrow or I I'll go home. It's my plan is I'll just have three beers for dinner, you know, and and then from there I'll go to two beers, one beer, you know, and uh

[03:44] and I could just never ask for help, man. And I never wanted to admit that I had a problem either. And that was a big issue, too, you know.

I think it also has a lot to do with the enemy that we face, right?

Yeah.

I mean, you were Green Beret.

Yeah. You know, and you were highly trained and, you know, combat veteran and you know how to fight that fight. Yeah.

Right.

Yeah.

Now, did you take on the enemy by yourself or were you part of a team?

I was always part of a team. Right.

Right.

Yeah.

Same thing with me, law enforcement officer. I remember them talking about that in the academy quite a bit. There's no Lone Wolf McUade around here. Nope. You know, uh that's the quickest way to get killed. Yeah. You know,

uh and for me, if I'm getting my ass handed to me on the street, I have no problem calling a signal 70. You know, officer needs assistance. Calvary comes running.

Yeah.

Kind of the same thing.

Same thing in the military, man. I mean, you always had a battle, buddy. You never did anything alone, man. Never.

Right.

I mean, in training, in school houses, anything you ever did in the military, man, you always grabbed a buddy to go help you do it,

right?

You know, and so why do we think that now that we're out that it's instantly, oh, we got to do this by ourselves. We're all alone, right? And I think like like a lot of aspect for me on that was like

[04:54] I had a hard time relating with the civilian world.

So to ask for help from civilians because I really didn't have my team around back then or anything like that. It was just

started doing everything alone isolating being alone and just all of that man and couldn't never ask for help.

Let's see if you agree uh with this idea. I guess you know for me it has to do with the enemy right now. your enemy, you could see them. My enemy enemy as it were, you know, in the public,

I guess you could say, uh, you know, we could still see who we're dealing with, right? Uh, but the enemy that we face when we're locked in our head like that, when we're dealing with the mental health issues, when we're dealing with the sobriety issues,

can't see it. Nobody else can see it. You know, it it seems that way. It feels like the enemy is not exactly visible, right?

U, which in a way makes it more dangerous. But I think more often than not, uh, the real danger is this is the most cunning enemy that we have ever faced.

For sure.

Because it knows all of our weaknesses, knows all of our buttons to push. It knows how to get us.

[05:58] Yeah.

Right.

Yeah. And, you know, I like to call it the enemy within.

Mhm.

Right. Because it's within you, you know, and it's in your head, right? And and the addiction enemy, right?

Yeah.

And um Yeah. I mean, why would we assume like again, why would we think that we got to do this alone, man? It's like we got to can't battle this enemy by ourselves within. It's just we're never going to win,

right?

You know, we need to start listening to other people. We need to talk to other people. We need that community, the support. We need to be able to reach out and be vulnerable with people. You know what I mean? And

and that's where it's at for me.

You face that. I face that. Countless people that have interviewed on the highspeed jing have faced that. Every client that's come through here, over 4,000 so far have faced that same issue. Yeah. Right. So, you're definitely not alone in that battle. You're not unique. You know, you're not terminally unique either.

Uh which is a saying that we have around here. Terminally unique. We're so different from everybody else. Nobody else understands it's going to kill us.

Yeah.

But we learn through coming through here that there's no such thing.

[06:58] There's no such thing. And and that brought me a lot of relief, honestly. It's like when I did hear those other other warriors around the fire pit sharing their stories and like, man, yeah, I did that same [__] or I I I have that same mindset, right? like

I can relate to them. And then Yeah. And then seeing them further into progress going through treatment, you know, and they're smiling or laughing again, man. That gives you hope, man.

So, let's talk about a battle plan, right? Let's let's talk about ways to kind of combat that, right? Everybody says, uh, hey, you need to get help. Well, how often do they say what that help actually is?

So, let's kind of talk about some of those things, but let's kind of

I don't know, I guess, uh, pick apart the reason, I guess, a little bit more. Um, you know, we kind of talked about why so many warriors struggle to ask for help, you know, because, you know, it's that unseen enemy, the enemy within,

pride,

pride,

responsibility to others, right?

Uh, identity,

identity,

right?

Self-sabotaging, right? Sabotaging like you don't feel like you earn you deserve it, right?

[08:00] There's all kinds of them out there, man.

It has to do with the objections that we make a lot of times, you know, pride, ego, responsibility, whatnot. Uh, you know, I worked in admissions for over two years, you know, about two and a half years, and we were trained on how to handle objections.

Yeah.

And a lot of the things that we hear out of people is, "Well, I got my job. I got my family. I got bills responsibility."

Okay. Well, are you struggling right now? Yeah. I'm drinking myself to death. Okay. How long do you think you're going to have that job? Those responsibilities, those things in your life.

Yeah.

They're going to go away pretty soon.

Yeah.

Ask me how I know. you know,

and so I always share that with them as far as

those responsibilities, those objections that you have. Yeah. You know,

uh, but you know, you you talk to alumni a lot. What do you hear most often from alumni, you know, as far as when they're struggling, you know?

Man, that's a really good question. You know, it's just a lot of times they're defeated, man. And it's like, hey, I relapsed again, you know, and okay, you know, and a lot of times I'm like, okay, we're, you know, how far along in the relapse are we? Are we weeks? Are we months? are we a day? You know, and they're just a day and they just messed up. I said, "Hey, man, just call your sponsor, go to a meeting, man, and we'll go from there." Right. Like just slip, right? Like a lapse.

[09:10] Yeah.

Um but you know, you get some of them in there that's like just full-blown just completely just back in it.

Yeah.

And um burning it down and they're living in a crack house or living in hotels and stuff like that, man. And I just I offer them, you know, do you want to come back? you know, you want me to help you get back in? So, you know, a lot of times they do, sometimes they don't. You know, they haven't hit that rock bottom yet sometimes, man. And sometimes that rock bottom has a basement. That basement has a basement, right?

Yes, it does.

Um, so, you know, just encouraging them and just be there and just listening to them, you know.

Yeah. And I can tell you of the people that I've talked to uh that have relapsed, a lot of shame and guilt, man. Oh, yeah. I let everybody down, you know, I blew it. You know, this is my one chance. and they're not going to want me back there, you know, because I messed up.

Yeah.

Right.

Yeah.

You hear that a lot, too, right?

Yeah. That that guilt of trying to come back and face like everybody that you went through the first time with, right? Yeah. That's hard.

[10:11] You know, you know, he's talked about that quite often. You know, hanging his head, I just left here and now I'm coming back again.

Yeah. A lot of people I get it, you know, because you put your best foot forward and you put a lot of effort in it, but that's not any reason to hang your head. No, this is a hell of a fight.

Yeah.

Did I win every fight I was in as a deputy?

Nope.

Did you win every fight you were in?

Nope.

Exactly. Right. Yep.

What matters most is what?

You got back up.

Keep trying.

You keep trying.

Doesn't matter how many times you get hit. It's a matter how many times you get back up. Right.

Damn right.

Like, you know, I don't care if you've been through here nine times, man. Like as long as you're you're willing to keep fighting for it, man. Come on. You know,

and every time we're going to tell you, welcome home.

Yeah. Welcome home. And that's the thing. Happy to see you. Every time I've ever seen a lumbai come back through or whatever, you know, I always give them a hug, man. I'm glad you chose this path and not the alternative, right?

It doesn't matter what brought you back, man. You're here.

And you're damn sure not the only one that's that's had it's been over five years now. And I've had a couple slips. You know, I worked with my sponsor. after I got back in it. I've had times when I felt alone, very, very alone. We're going to talk a little bit more about how to defeat that, but there's been plenty of times when I have faced every bit of that. And there's also go through. Yep.

[11:38] But what matters most

is that you're here.

Yeah.

And we're not getting the notification of your death.

Yes. You know, and I've had I've had those moments of loneliness, too. Um, absolutely, man. I mean, just this past year, I've had some moments of loneliness, man. And and it is hard. You're like, I don't want to bother nobody. Start going into your self-pity party stuff, right?

But that's just, you know, that's where you got to start. Which wolf are you going to feed? Are you going to feed that negative wolf or you going to feed that positive wolf? Right?

You just got to battle through it. Take your ass to a meeting. Call your sponsor. Call a buddy. Call me. Call somebody.

Somebody.

Somebody. Right

now, the the key in that is, you know, we're talking about feeling alone is isolation,

right? And that's that's more dangerous to us than anything else is isolation. They taught me while I was here,

isolation leads to depression, which leads to despair.

Yeah.

Right.

Yep.

And we have a tendency sometimes unintentionally to isolate. You know, work environment, work schedule, you know, for you, you're you're there at your apartment, you know, working from there and it's It'solating.

[12:43] It's isolating. Yeah.

Uh I was in the admissions office for quite a while with a lot of people in there. Now I'm in a different office and I'm by myself most of the time.

Yeah.

It gets tricky.

Yeah. You know.

Yeah. You start getting in your head, man. And that our mind always wants to kill us for some reason.

Yeah. It does.

Always wants us to be down this negative path. Even I'm I'm three years a little over three years into this journey, right? And it still

for me it still wants to like

you're not worthy. You're not you're a piece of [__] you know? like you're just start going down that wrong mentality,

which is exactly what happens when we start to isolate. Because when we're around the positive people, what do we hear?

Yeah. Positive things.

Positive things, positive affirmations, positive everything.

Yeah.

And and what you just said is 1,000% true. When we're not around those people and we're isolating,

our mind starts trying to kill us.

Yes, it does. Yeah. It starts trying to kill. That's what's so important about the community and and and everything, you know, and being involved and being part of the the 12step program and just being part of WAS and all that, man. That's that community that will understand what your brain is trying to do to us, right?

[13:52] Yeah.

Our fellowship is what we understand each other

and how we feel and why we feel this way.

Somebody that's been there, done that. Yeah, you know, um, everybody says, like I said earlier, everybody says, "Man, just just talk to me." Well, it okay, I'll talk to you, but I'm looking for answers. And, you know, I want to talk to somebody that has some answers.

Yeah.

So, you know, instead of calling uh, I don't know, just a friend of mine from a job I used to have. I'm going to call you. I'm going to call somebody else in the program, somebody that has some answers and know what to do.

Yeah. And also somebody that understands.

Yeah. Because I mean to be an addict or you know and to be in recovery man it's it's truly a mindset you know

and nobody understands that mindset unless unless they're an addict right and they've been through it.

Yeah. And that's I I think what what makes the alumni program so important.

Yeah.

Right. And you know it's all voluntary.

Yeah.

[14:52] But it's voluntary for a reason. Uh it's it's something that you need to want to be a part of because that's where the healing is. You know,

things that we are told to do sometimes we don't always do, right? Or if we have to do it to check a box, it's not going to be real.

Of course, that's who we are, man. I mean, we, you know, that's just our mentality, right? We don't like to be told what to do.

You know, we like to do things our own way sometimes and and it's hard for us to understand that, right?

Yeah.

Um and Yeah. And that's what's so important about the alumni program. I mean, you go through Warriors Heart, man. You go through 42-day program. You go through PHP, which another eight weeks, right? Like, I mean, you're really just starting your journey still.

Mhm.

Like, you haven't really dipped into the real world when that pink cloud starts to fade a little bit and life starts to be on life's terms, right? And life starts happening

and it happens for everyone, right?

Oh, yeah.

I run into a lot of alumni and I'm like, you know, like, hey, this happened to me at this time. And I'm like, "Yeah, man. That's just standard life stuff, man." You know, this is our minds are wired a little bit different and we think it's bigger than what it is. Normal people still go through these things, right?

[16:02] Life on life's terms.

Life's on life's terms, man. So [clears throat] that's what's so important about the alumni program is that like it's continuing that afterare and a support element so that when you do run into these life on life terms kinds of things, you have a support system that understands what your mindset is going into it, right?

Yeah. It's part of your team.

It's part of your team,

right? part of your uh uh Green Beret team, part of your Ranger team, part of your SEAL team, part of your law enforcement uh SRT, you know.

Hell yeah. Just part of your team, man. You know, so yeah,

you know, when it when it comes to treatment in general, uh you know, we we refer to this rehab as training. We don't really say rehab. This is training.

Yeah.

And there's a lot of truth to that. This is like for cops, this is like the academy, right?

And what happens after the academy? You go into the FTO phase. Yeah.

Right. Who's your FTO? Your field training officer. That's going to be your sponsor.

Yeah.

[17:02] Right.

I love that.

Where's your Where's your range at? It's in those meetings. Yeah. That's where you go to sharpen your skills, right? What's your field training manual? The big book.

The big book. I love that, man. That's awesome. Yeah.

And if you don't do those things, what happens? You know, you're going to get your ass shot off. You're going to you're going to hurt somebody, hurt yourself, whatever.

And guess what? You're going to fail.

Going to fail.

And then you're going to recycle,

right?

And go through the program again. or worst case get booted out of life.

Yeah,

if that makes sense.

Oh, it makes perfect sense. And the team that's going to keep you sharp, it's not going to be your, you know, fellow Green Beret buddies, unless they're in the program also. It's going to be the guys in the group.

Exactly, man.

It's going to be the other alumni. Yeah. You know,

you probably made a lot of friends when you're here, right?

Yeah.

You're still in contact with them?

I am. Yeah. Quite a few of them. Absolutely. We call each other all the time.

Yeah. And those are your new team.

Yeah.

Right.

Yeah. And

we're calling each other on Christmas, you know what I mean? Like Christmas day.

Oh, that's fantastic.

Yeah, man.

I've and I've related this quite a bit, you know, uh the sober living book, right? I don't know if you've ever read the sober living book, but uh just how to live in sobriety, right? You got the big book of AA, you got the 12 traditions and 12 steps, 12 steps 12. Yep.

[18:15] And you got the sober living book, right? Uh, and there's a lot of other books out there, but one of the things they mention is phone therapy, right? Phone therapy. So, give you an example of how that would work out. I won't mention his name, but um, I'll just use you for an example. I'm having a bad day. [__] things are going sideways. Let me give Shane a call. I'm going to just, you know, tell him what's going on. I'll call you and either you hear me out and give me some ideas and try this, try that, go to a meeting, you know, talk it out or whatever. Or in a lot of cases, I call Shane up and Shane is like, "Hold on a minute. Let me tell you what the [__] going on in my life. This [__] did this to me, etc."

I'm thinking of one friend in particular. Uh, and I shift gears from, "Okay, well, let's see what I can do to help you out."

Yeah.

And what's the major focus of sobriety, being of service to others?

Being a service to others. So, it pulls you out of your funk

by helping him get out of his funk.

Phone therapy.

Phone therapy. I love that.

Picking up the phone.

Yeah.

And just reaching out.

Yeah. Right. Cuz somebody else is going through what you're going through.

[19:19] Yeah.

And when we try to handle it on our own, that's when we screw stuff up.

Yeah. And even if you aren't going through something, man, if somebody just happens to pop in your head,

you should probably give them a call. There's a reason something just pops in your head, you know?

So, is there anything in particular that works best for you

as in as far as staying connected and staying on top of things, you know? um just reaching out, man. I'm constantly talking to alumni. So, I'm, you know, I'm privileged enough that it's like I'm able to work with them

on a daily basis. So, that always helps me, you know, cuz like I'm I'm working a program and working with others too, right? So, um but really, man, if I can notice a difference if I miss a meetings, you know, if I don't go to a meeting for a couple weeks or something, you know, like I know like I can feel it like I need to go. I need that spiritual recharge of just going to the meetings, man, and just being around my people. Like just that will settle me down.

[20:21] Yeah.

Like coming out here, I'm like regrouped. Like this is where it's like I thrive the most in life is when I'm back out Warsart campus around my like-minded people, you know, and and when I get back home, it's like, you know, it's like I have a sponsor back home. I'm going have my meeting group, but it's nothing like here,

right?

Um, and I think that's what's so special about Warriors Heart and why we had so important that we have this alumni program so that when you do leave here, you're still connected in a way.

And I really, you know, the focus is really trying to connect other alumni in their general areas together so they can start doing fun, sober stuff together. You know what I mean?

Absolutely.

Start building those bonds. And other places may have uh I don't even know if other places really have an alumni program. I mean, this is one of the unique places where people want to come back.

Yeah.

And hang out for a weekend and recharge their batteries or come for the reunion. Um but what's of paramount importance to that is the alumni director that we have you is an alumni.

[21:30] Yeah.

So I mean you can speak with authority. I mean you've been through the program.

Yeah. I I am our I am the alum. I am an alumni.

Exactly.

And that's all it is. And it's just coordinating alumni together and just trying to bring us together, man. That's that's purely what it's about.

Which illustrates and serving others, right? And getting other warriors are out there that are still sick and suffering that don't know about warriors hard or not ready to make that commitment to change their life yet. You know, they could see the other side of or doesn't know how to,

you know. um reaching out to them through the alumni program and all of it, man. WA's everything, man. It's just it's just all about community,

staying connected.

Staying connected.

You know what what you mentioned a minute ago about um you know, you you stay connected in a lot of ways and it's part of the job, right, with with the group, but when you still need to recharge your batteries, you go to a meeting, you come out here,

uh you know, working in emissions for two and a half years, just about every day was like making a 12step call.

Yeah. Right.

Yeah.

[22:30] Uh now that I'm not in missions anymore, I'm finding that I still need to recharge my batteries in other ways. You know, I still have been going to meetings, you know, since I moved back over here, the 8:00 Tuesday night grapevine meeting that, you know, love that meeting.

One of my favorite movie meetings. Sorry. Yeah.

Yeah. And most of the time is standing room only in there, right? That definitely recharges my batteries.

Yeah. Uh but here lately, you know, I'm not in admission, so I'm not working with the guys daily, right? Uh and different obligations, travel, being sick, you know, I've kept me away from some meetings, but I have found that I need to increase the meetings.

Yeah.

You know, and that's the thing, you know, uh when you start slacking off with this program, the sicker you get.

Yeah, for sure.

This is the thing. you know, you go to the doctor and gives you a course of antibiotics because you have uh uh pneumonia, which I had again recently. As soon as you take the prescription, finish it out, you're better, you can go on with your life. Yeah. Right. But this is the one sickness that the further you get from the cure, the sicker you get.

[23:35] Yeah. I mean, you know, like your big book, man. I mean, you know, if you can't make it to those meetings, you travel. I' I'm I traveled a lot last year. Like a lot. And um I ran into some of those issues myself, you know, with not be able to go to meetings because of, you know, life and life terms kind of things going on, you know, and and I figured out too like listen to Joe and Charlie's tapes on the Everything app.

Oh, yeah.

I love that, man. And just that'll recharge my, you know, a mindset, right? So it'll recharge that spiritual I mean, and just listening to those and reading a big book and and Yeah, man. That's what I do when I'm traveling.

Going back to the idea, the stigma or whatever that this, you know, reaching out for help is weakness,

you know, give me your thoughts on where you were before you reached out for help.

I thought it was weak.

Yeah.

Oh, yeah. I thought you were you're weak to reach out to help. Like for me and my story is,

you know, I'm a goddamn Green Bray, man. Like, I'll figure this [__] out. Like, I got this. Like, I can't ask for help. I can't admit that I'm weak. You know, then it's there's a stigma across the whole green. There are a bunch of weak ones. You know, I'm weak and all that stuff, man. I absolutely would not ask for help for sure.

[24:51] How has your mind changed since then?

Man, I'll say first I'll say what took me to change my mindset was when I attempted that Facebook suicide and my children seen it. Yeah.

That was the moment in my life that I was like,

yeah, what what have I become? And I had no clue on what to do. And at that point, I just had to turn it over to God, man. And I and I did, you know, and I the Green Beret Foundation reached out and hooked me up with Warrior's Heart, you know, and

that's what brought me here. And through that process, you know, I've realized like for me being vulnerable like I am right now, that's growth.

[25:53] Yeah.

That's making me a better person by doing this right now. I don't want to be here doing I love you to death, but I don't want to be here doing this podcast.

Oh, I know.

I don't want to talk about my feelings and stuff.

Oh, no.

But I know I have to. And I always feel better on the other side of it when I do do it, right? It's always that pre-jitters kind of like coming on and doing this or doing anything new, right? But

I know that being vulnerable and sharing how my how I truly feel and not what I think people want to hear, how I feel.

Um, that's growth, man. That's courage,

you know, and strength. Yeah,

for sure.

You know, I mean, to be in a fist fighter, gunfight, whatever, man. I don't care. It's cool. Whatever. Let's go.

Mhm. was to sit there and talk about like what's going on inside of my head and how weak I feel inside.

No. And

you go to the grave with that [__] you know?

[26:54] Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Yeah.

Yeah. Keep it all bottled up.

Keep it all bottled up and keep moving on, right? And just keep going on. Just keep moving on, man. And

but that's not that's not the right mindset.

It's not. And in the shift, you know, once you fully drink the Kool-Aid, if you will, but you know,

I've definitely drank the Kool-Aid.

Oh, me too. It tastes good.

It is pretty good Kool-Aid.

Uh when you finally shift, you start to view things in a different way. You've seen the movie uh Bullet Train.

Yeah.

Brad Pitt's character way that he was just so full of positivity. That's real growth, brother.

Yeah.

Yeah. A few years back, I was watching that movie and with the woman I was dating at the time, and I started thinking, yeah, do I sound like that? And I I looked at her and I said, "Do I sound like that?" Her laugh told me everything. Yeah.

You know, and when she broke up with me, she told me, "You know, dating you is like being in a therapy session." Like, "Oh, fuck." Uh, it didn't play well for the relationship. However, I really began to analyze that, you know, and I was a very negative person. Nobody wanted to be around me.

[27:56] And when I started to face those issues, I became much more of a positive person. I have so many people in my life these days.

Yeah. which is a positive, you know, but I also felt that I was weak, you know, that I couldn't control myself, that uh I was a worthless, you know, piece of [__] because I I couldn't stop drinking, taking pills, and all these things because I was angry all the time.

Yeah.

I think my viewpoint has changed quite a bit. Let's see if you agree with this. You know, you've you've probably faced some pretty serious enemies, you know, in combat.

I have faced down some pretty serious enemies myself in my career, you know. Uh, did you think you were a badass before?

No.

No.

No.

A lot of us do in some ways, you know. You know, I'm deputy sheriff. I'm a detective. You know, I'm a all these things, you know, oppressive res.

Okay. Yeah. I mean, I had some arrogance in there like that.

[__] Green Beret.

Yeah. Right.

Yeah, for sure.

Now, after going through treatment, after facing down those enemies, this is just my thought. I mean, that's when you become the ultimate badass

[28:59] because when you can tackle what's going on in here.

Yeah.

And come out the other side and be a positive person again and have people in your life again. You fought that battle and you won.

Yeah.

[__]

Yeah.

It's it's the war of our lifetime.

Yeah.

Is the battle within ourselves to be the person that we want to be

need to be.

That we have to be right. That you know there is no other choice. have to be those person otherwise cuz that's for me that was a stuck on that loop like I hate who I am I hate who I am I hate how I become right and and then I just didn't know how to get there so finally my alternative was suicide

you know

so um just reaching out and being vulnerable man it's just that strength and courage man you know

that's that's the ultimate strength and courage like I said earlier I mean this is the most cunning adversary we have ever been against.

Yeah.

Uh and it takes a lot to conquer that.

It really does.

It's a hell of a fight, but man, it is worth it.

[30:00] It is worth it, man. If you be truly honest with yourself, you know, you have to be honest with yourself and

you have to be willing

to realize like what I'm doing is not [__] working.

Yeah.

I need to listen to somebody else that has the life that I want

in sobriety, right? So, you know, we just have to get out of our own way, man.

And lean on others that that can help, you know, for the ones that, you know, may be watching this and thinking,

I don't know if I want to, you know, take the leap, you know, and actually get some help.

Uh to the ones that have been through the program, maybe falling away, sliding back, you know, I mean, you got the strength and the courage. I mean, your career has shown it thus far.

For sure. Yeah. This is nothing compared to what we've done. But in our minds,

this is where a mind keeps trying to kill us. Right.

Right.

This is the most scariest thing I've ever done. Right.

There's

you can't you got to face that [__] within like, oh man, I got to like really look at myself, you know, and

[31:00] it's scary.

Or sometimes, you know, the feeling of I've let somebody down, you know, prevents us. in the meeting I was in the other night um I think it was uh was talking about somebody a meeting they had been in where the person has picked up a 16-year chip twice you know 16 years of sobriety bad relapse but got back on that horse got back in the fight you know and got another 16-year chip

that's awesome

that's determination

yeah it is

that's not a reason to hang your head it's a reason to be proud

that you know the guys that relapse and come back and then continue can do that again. That's that's impressive, man. Like that's awesome. Yeah.

And it's inspiration for others.

100%.

You know, if that guy can do it, damn it, I can too.

Yeah. You know,

for sure.

Yeah. So, we I don't know. We could talk for days about this, you know. We really could. Um trying to I don't I guess think if there's any other afterthoughts or anything else that we want to cover from the uh alumni standpoint. I mean, we got a hopefully we got a lot of alumni out there watching right now. Um advice, tips, whatever for staying connected. I mean, we've named some of them. Phone therapy.

[32:16] Phone therapy. Going to meetings, standing up WAS in your area. If you don't have a WA in your area, man, reach out and we can assist you in standing up a WA in your area.

Yeah.

You know, that gives you that purpose. You know, you build it, they will come kind of thing. and and a lot of the guys um especially in Virginia this year, man, they we've like five WAS went up in Virginia alone.

Oh, nice.

Yeah. And it's been awesome, man. And and they're all averaging between, you know,

six to 10 10 warriors that are attending their meetings and they're not all alumni either.

A lot of them are just local warriors in their area that want somewhere to go

um to a meeting, you know. Um, picking up that phone, man, that's the hardest thing.

It is.

Especially when you relapse, cuz there's nothing worse than a head full of aa and a belly full of beer.

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Cuz you know, you know what ride is, but something happened and you fell off and your mind at that point just starts really going down that rabbit hole, right? And just remember, man, like you know, like just keep fighting.

[33:28] Just keep coming back. If you got to come back, it's okay.

Yeah. I

promise you, there's been hundreds of people that's had to come back through this program again.

Yeah.

Multiple times,

right?

It takes what it takes, man. The fact is is that you don't give up. You keep fighting,

right?

Cuz I promise you, this life is worth living and it will get better. Sometimes quickly,

some sometimes slowly,

but it does get better.

But it does get better, man. And it's just

Yeah, man. Like you are loved.

Yeah. And for those that are, you know, maybe not an alumni that are curious what WA is, is this Warriors.

Warriors anonymous. It's purely for the Warriors class. Police officers, firefighters, veterans, correction officers, EMTs,

trauma nurses,

trauma nurses, trauma doctors,

corrections officers,

correction officers. like, yeah, man.

Anybody on the front lines, you know?

Yeah.

Um,

and it's a place that you can go with people that understand what the job entails and what you're struggling with

[34:30] and what brought you there, you know.

And the biggest thing, uh, and our alumni should definitely know this, but, you know, if you're slipping, looking for a meeting, trying to get back in the Warriors Anonymous meetings Tuesday through Saturday with sometimes meetings on Sunday and Monday as well.

Yep.

Uh, and some other meetings that pop up here and there on Zoom. Yep. Um, easy to be connected that way.

Yeah, easily to be connected, man. It's just

just keep fighting.

Yeah.

Don't give up, man. I I don't care like, you know, if you reach out to me, I don't care that you relapse. I'm going to be like, "Okay, so let's figure this out.

Let's come up with a game plan.

Let's figure it out, man. I'm here for you. I don't care if it's 2, three o'clock in the morning, man. It's just let's figure this [__] out." Cuz the one thing, man, it's just like you deserve a happy life. You went out and you served your country in whatever aspect it may be. You deserve to be happy.

Yeah.

We just got off track and lost our way. It doesn't mean you're broken. It doesn't mean you can't be fixed. It doesn't mean you, you know, your life is you're determined to internal hell. It doesn't.

[35:38] It just means you lost your way. So, let's grab the compass. Let's figure correct where we're at. Let's point north with our aszmouth and let's start moving forward to that. And yeah, man, just if you're struggling, you're an alumni, reach out, man. We'll get you back into the program or we if you don't, we'll get you an alumni program, man. Like,

get you something

something.

And nine times out of 10, when I'd answer the phone, it would be somebody that's relapsed. I'd ask them questions. You working with the sponsor? No. Are you going to meetings? No. Are you working the steps? No. Are you being of service to others? No. Why not?

List of reasons why not. Y most of the time [__] reasons.

Yeah.

I don't like this meeting because every time I go to this meeting, they're always talking about alcohol and it makes me want to drink.

Yep.

You're a [__] alcoholic. You're wake up wanting to drink. You know, I mean, but the one place that you can go where you won't take a drink is one place that you won't go.

Yep.

You know, that's what I hear more often than not is I didn't work with a sponsor. I didn't go to meetings or I was doing it for a while and I stopped.

[36:42] Yeah.

Right. Get back in there.

Something too, man. And and it takes what it takes, but

you know, going through the program too, I ask him a lot of questions about, okay, you know, what was your intent when you came through the program, right? Like,

I just did it for my wife or I did it to keep my job or whatever, man. And I'm like, you know, did you fully invest in it? Like, did you hold back stuff in a lifeline? That's a big one that I get

is they do, right? I wish I would have said this or whatever. And he still

that shame and that guilt from not sharing it during his lifeline and the shame and the guilt of what he's been carrying all those years just eats him back alive. You know,

secrets keep us sick.

Yep.

Yeah.

Yeah.

But all of us have been through that. all 100%.

Anybody that's been through this program, uh, anybody that hasn't been through this program yet or any program yet, we're all dealing with the same issues. We're not alone in that fire.

We're not.

We And that's the lie that

that our brain wants to tell. Yes.

You know, every time. Nobody will understand you. Nobody will get it.

[37:44] Yep.

I said that so many damn times, man. Like,

me too.

I remember like, "Nobody gets me. Nobody understands me. [__] You're alone. You don't deserve this. You don't deserve that. you don't even deserve people to care about you, you know, and it's just not true.

And when you get around guys like this, lifeline around the fire pit and you're talking about some of those things that you never wanted to talk about, what do you hear? Yeah, me too, man.

Yeah.

Yeah. Same here. Yeah. I feel you. I've been there. I've done that.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Sexual as a kid. Yeah. Me too, man. That's cool. Yeah. Happened when I was nine.

Yeah.

Yeah.

It happens every so many people,

you know.

Yeah. And

and I I remember that because that happened to me. Mhm.

Cuz I was sitting there at fireside and it was like a few weeks in, man. And this kid was sharing that he got sexually molested when he was a child. I'm just like, wow. He talked about that.

Mhm.

You know what I mean? Like, [__] Yeah. Me, too.

Yeah.

And it was just it was mind-blowing for me, man. Like, wow. He was open to be able to open up

[38:48] and kind of gives you strength and then gives you that encouragement to open up a little bit, man. But you just got to be willing to take that step. Yeah.

Be vulnerable. That's courage

to do something in the in strength as doing something in the face of when you're completely scared to do it, but yet you still do it.

Right.

Right.

Yeah.

Yeah. I mean, if you're not scared to jump out of an airplane, then that's not really courage or you know what I'm saying? Like

it's the things that you're completely absolutely the knots are turning in your stomach. You're shaking. You're sweating. you just completely just do not want to do this. That when you do do it, that's courage and strength, man.

Absolutely. I'm trying to remember the quote from uh that somebody told me from Tom. You probably remember the difference between courage and strength or something. Not much. I don't know. I knew I'd mess that up, but

I think it's what's the definition of courage, right?

Yeah. And I think that's kind of in paraphrasing, but yeah.

[39:52] Yeah. Yeah. Well, plus

I steal a lot of my quotes from Tom. [laughter]

He's pretty smart dude.

I steal a lot of mine from Tropic Thunder, but that's a whole other conversation, whole other episode. So, to to kind of wrap it up, man. I mean, there's a lot of us that have gone through that, still going through that. Uh the isolation, the loneliness, especially this time of year, is hard. It's, you know, the family's going back home, the holidays are over and you got that l of just blah. Yeah.

You know, nothing really going on. Yeah. You know, it's hard to get out out and do things when it's cold, wet, and rainy.

Yep.

Um, but there are ways to combat it, you know. And if you're out there listening, you want to reach out. Uh, do you remember the number they told you to quote?

Yeah. No.

855-6103.

Yeah.

Beautiful. Yeah, good job, man. TBI. [laughter]

I know, right? Then warriorshart.com/connect. There's a thousand ways to connect with us. You know,

um for alumni, you know the number. You know, Shane's number. I mean, you know how to reach out to us and get back in.

[40:57] Uh and for those that are still looking to to maybe find a place,

what are you waiting on?

Yeah.

You know, what are you waiting on? Warriorshart.com 855-610003. That's what I'm talking about. And I and I promise, man, like you know,

it's time to come home. If you need to come home, come home, man. Like, I promise we will welcome you with open arms.

Yeah.

There's no judgment.

Absolutely.

That's the big thing I was really nervous about coming here was the judgment, right? And um

Yeah, man. Like, [clears throat]

yeah,

we're going to love you and we're going to take care of you and we're going to help you get on the right track.

Damn right.

We're here for you. You were never alone.

Never alone.

Never alone.

And since getting sober, look at the things that we've been able to accomplish and look at the lives that we've impacted in our own individual unique ways.

Yeah.

We're still in the fight. We still have purpose.

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Your mission is not over.

Not over at all.

Cuz I'll tell you what, man. I I should be dead.

[41:58] Me, too.

So, that clearly gives me, you know, a sign that like something something is still out there for me. And if you're still alive and you're hearing this, there's a reason you're still here, too.

Damn right.

So, make every day count.

I'll wrap up on on this note. Uh, and you probably can relate to this

in the groups while I was here in patient. You hear all these stories of all these guys about, you know, car crashes, suicide attempts, uh, being blown up, exploded, whatever.

Myself included. You know, all these times when we should have been dead, but we're still here. I began to think, is this like some kind of a superhero academy on the down low or something like that? Are we all invulnerable? We're not, obviously.

No, but definitely not.

But the the underlying message in that is we all still had purpose. Yeah. There's a reason why we didn't leave this earth. We all still have reason and purpose.

Yeah.

So finding that is the tricky part.

Well, I caveat that. Finding that is the beautiful part. Cool.

[43:00] Because, you know, for me it's like, man, never in a million years would I thought that I'd be sitting here in a podcast with Robert Greer talking about addiction recovery and not being alone, you know, like at Warrior's Heart, helping others, man. Never in my life would I ever thought that, right?

Yeah.

So, just I don't know, man. just stay focused on it.

Especially when you love talking so much in front of camera and being vulnerable.

Yeah.

Well, Shane, I appreciate you being here, man. Shane St. John, alumni director. Thank y'all for watching and listening.

Thank you.

Yes, sir.

Cuz the first thing that they said was, "Welcome home.