

Speaker 1 ([00:00:12](#)):

You're listening to the journey on podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick is a horseman trainer, international clinician and author, whose mission is to help people achieve a deeper connection with their horses through his transformational training program.

Warwick Schiller ([00:00:34](#)):

Hi everyone. And welcome back to the journey on podcast. I am your host Warwick Schiller about a month or so ago. I was contacted by a horseman in Texas who has a podcast and the podcast is kind of about mindset. And he wonder me, wanted me to be a guest on the podcast, which I agreed to do. And then before the podcast happened, I was chatting to this guy on the phone one day and he said, oh, and I've got this other guy that helps me compare the podcast and he's Australia. And I thought, oh, well, that'd be fun. Another Rosie, you know? And then he said, yeah, he's an Australian that he came came to the U S fighting in the UFC. So the, you know, mixed martial arts and the UFC. And I was thinking, ah, no, that's not gonna work very well.

Warwick Schiller ([00:01:20](#)):

I mean, you know, what do some meathead aggressive Australian in a fighter and I have in common. But when I actually went on that podcast and was a guest on there, I was pleasantly surprised. Not only was this guy, a UFC fighter, but he's he was a, he's a horseman, he's a satellite, he's a farrier. And funnily enough, he'd watched quite a few of my videos, much really into the whole connection thing with horses, which just blew me away. And what it really made me realize is that there's a, probably a bit more to this guy than just the fighting thing. So I thought I might want to get him on my podcast. So today my very, very special guest is Brendan O'Reilly. And if you think, and I'm not sure I want to listen to this guy on a podcast, let me tell you that, you know, he I'll give a bit of the game away before you listen to the podcast, but he didn't really get into the, the mixed martial arts because he likes to fight. He got into the mixed martial arts because he thought he looked at it as a test of himself. And, and you know, this is the journey on podcast and this guy has been on a lifelong journey to really know himself and test himself. So yeah, fascinating conversation. I hope you liked this conversation.

Warwick Schiller ([00:02:49](#)):

Brendan O'Reilly, welcome to the journey on podcast. Thanks.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:02:53](#)):

It's good to be here.

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

Yeah. Good to have you, Hey, I've just been looking through your Instagram here. And I just to read out a quote that you put up, not sure when it was, but this is a quote from somebody, cause it's an inverted commerce. It says, but not all men seek rest in peace. Some are born with the spirit of the storm in their blood. And then you say every day, I'm grateful for the adventure adventurous life I've had. And I'm still leading. We are the, some of the situations we encounter and how we handle them. Don't hide from the hardships. Character will take you places, money can't. Wow. That's a good way to start the whole thing. So yeah, we want to dig into some of these adventures you had, you have had. So like me you're Aussie boy grew up in Australia now live in the U S

Warwick Schiller ([00:03:38](#)):

What brought you to the U S in the first place?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:03:41](#)):

So when I first began coming over to the, to the state's work, it was I was competing in mixed martial arts. So some people don't know what mixed martial arts is. I know probably more they may know it as cage fighting but it's one of the fastest, if not the fastest growing sport in the world. And and I was lucky to, to get to the top level of it, to to fight in a company called the UFC, which is the pinnacle of the sport. And so that brought me over to the U S cause obviously the majority of their flights are over here in the U S so that's when I first started coming over. And after one of my flights, so I was just sort of having some downtime traveling with a buddy who is a professional saddle bronc rider. And and during that time, I long story short, I fell in love and ended up Neil I'm married to an American. And yeah, so that's what keeps me that's what's kept me in the states. So, yeah, it's that was the long story short. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:51](#)):

You just got married recently. Yes.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:04:53](#)):

Congratulations. Thank you. Yeah, a couple a, it was about two weeks ago.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:59](#)):

So are you still here on a, some sort of a spotting visa?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:05:03](#)):

Not anymore. He like legit now, so I you know, I was originally back in the day on a sporting visa, like an athlete visa, and then on a business visa where I, you know, I was able to do business, but you're not working, but you can, you know, like work on business stuff basically for Australia. And now being married. Yeah. I'm on like a, you know, I'm a resident or

Warwick Schiller ([00:05:31](#)):

Whatever, when you say, if you get a green card yet.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:05:33](#)):

Yeah. Got it. In the mail the other day. So,

Warwick Schiller ([00:05:36](#)):

Well, you've been, you've been through all those interviews and stuff. Cause I remember, I remember when Robin and I got married and we went in for the, I think maybe, maybe it was after I got the green card. Maybe you go in for how long is yours for two head only that

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:05:50](#)):

It's a conditional ones basically. It's like for two years we have to continue to collect, provide evidence that it's a real relationship, you know, it's not just yeah. I'm not just an being an actor. Yeah. If anyone

like people who know me know how bad my acting ability is, I'd have to be going above and beyond to pull that off. Cause I'm not very good.

Warwick Schiller ([00:06:15](#)):

Yeah. You know, when we went in for that interview, I think it might be the one at the end of the first green card, but you know, it's just like in the movies they ask it, you know, what side of the bed did they sleep on? What color is their toothbrush? How do they have their coffee in the morning and all that sort of stuff. So that's not just in the movies.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:06:31](#)):

Yeah. It's pretty and it's so funny because yeah, you start under the pressure, you can start sort of second guessing yourself and then you think mic out. Do I sound, do I sound like I'm telling the truth? And I'm like, why, why are you overthinking this? Like you're in a real relationship. And yeah. It's, I guess it gets so built up you know, people make such a big deal of it that you kind of might think is a big deal too, but in the end it's like, man, they're gonna, they get good at their job too. And their jobs seeing if something's real or not. So I wasn't too worried,

Warwick Schiller ([00:07:05](#)):

Funny stuff. So you you're a bit of a Renaissance man. You're a bit of, you know, you sh you a Saddler, you shoe horses, you coach mixed martial arts. You do a bit of everything, but let's what I really want to talk about is this martial arts thing, because you are like like a Marcus Aurelius, like you, like you quote Maya Angelou and, and CS Lewis on your, on your Instagram, you know, that's, it's, you kind of like the warrior philosopher. I really want to pull out the pieces and figure out how does one get to be that way. Cause it's, it's, you know, it's not something I tend to run into the, the, the mental outlook you have in the, and the, and the things you've done. And especially getting to the upper level of, you know, what you've done in your life. So I got on your Wikipedia, you have a Wikipedia page, you might be the first podcast guest who who's ever had a Wikipedia page, which make it easy to research, but it said as associate, you started training for martial arts in 2008. And you had your pro MMA debut in 2009. Is that, is that right?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:08:16](#)):

Yeah, it was actually, it might've even been closer, closer together than that away. Yeah. It would've been the end of our weight. I started training to start about nine. I had a profile and it was like, it wasn't that it was a handful of months that I was training properly. And yeah, I, so I'd been boxing a few years just traditional boxing through high school and was in high school rodeo and competing in high school rodeo and saddle bronc. And and I just had that like a mentality of wanting to, you know, going back to that quote that you brought up at the start, like just wanting to answer the storm, you know, metaphorically and just, and find out what I was made of. And I think that's more was the drive then the sport, you know, I wasn't so attracted to just the, the sport necessarily.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:09:12](#)):

I didn't even know what it was. Until someone showed me a a deeper burn DVD of some fights and then said, you can have one of these fights. There's some coming up in like a couple of months. And I said, yeah, I'll do it. But it was just that like wanting to put myself into the, in there and just see, not so much, like, see what happened. Like I was just rolling the dice. Like I wanted to see if I could control myself and my energy and my emotions enough to, to do well. And and then, you know, I did at that level, and then

I kept progressing and kept improving. And yeah, so that was really the journey that I was on. Really. It was like, it was, it was kind of a self discovery and and yeah. Training at the same time, like training, my mind was mainly what I was doing it. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:10:08](#)):

So what got doing into the boxing, cause you don't, you know, you've got this to me, you've got this pretty cool laid back sort of energy and you don't come across as your typical agro bloke sort of thing, you know? And so how did how'd you get into the boxing?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:10:27](#)):

Yeah, boxing again was just, I just wanted to I always, so growing up since I was little my dad would tell me always stories. Like my dad would tell me bedtime stories. He still is the king of bedtime stories. He tells them to my my nephews, my little nephews now, but but there were always in hindsight, there was always like a consistent theme of like a like, I guess essentially, almost like a warrior on a journey, but it was never just like, it was always like a worry a poet or like a warrior philosopher. It wasn't just the guy that always in his stories and sometimes he'd just make them up sometimes our true stories. But they always were that that makes it, so I guess, subconsciously that guy was always what I wanted to be. And and you know, another quote that I live by and I like to tell young guys that I'm coaching is it's better to be a warrior in a garden and a God not in a wall.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:11:34](#)):

And and you know, I think it's so yeah, I mean, like so much of, especially in modern society, we everything's set up now that, you know, like if you can source a good education things that, you know, there's, there's great stuff set up about that around that, but there's almost like a especially these days, like in recent years, it's almost like taboo to be a warrior now. And because you're in one, you either have to be in one box or the other, you know, and that's kind of what society is trying to push people towards is like, if you're a warrior, then you, aren't a scholar. And you, you know, on an academic and you can't have feelings either, you know? And and so I just kind of, I guess, always idolized. And even if they, it wasn't a real person, even if they didn't exist the idea or a guide that could be that a warrior that could still empathize with people and talk to people on an intellectual level as well.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:12:43](#)):

You know, and I guess and I guess, because I was so interested in that I just followed that path myself. So, and, you know, just started after school. I would go into a boxing gym in fortitude valley in Brisbane, which is like a pretty notoriously, like was a pretty tough area. And and this gym that I went to has produced like some really good boxes. And I just was lucky to be a young kid in there around them. And I just, you know, would just watch them and try and absorb it and that sort of thing. Yeah. So,

Warwick Schiller ([00:13:26](#)):

Yeah. It's interesting what you say about that whole you know, the way society is these days last year, I went to a a men's emotional resilience retreat, and that was something they talked about. There was, you know, that, yeah, you're either one or the other and these days it's not cool to be the warrior sort of thing, but something you said a minute ago made me think, I just read a book recently called dopamine nation. And I listened to a podcast today by a neuroscientist from Stanford university about dopamine. And he was, you know, this, if you have no dopamine, you have depression. And there's, you know, there's an epidemic of depression these days and his son. And he's talking about your, your set point for

your dopamine. You know, you have spikes of dopamine, but you have a set point that you come back to and your basically your dopamine is relative to your pain.

Warwick Schiller ([00:14:19](#)):

You know, if you, if you only have good stuff, if you have no stress in your life and you know, everything's good and you have good food all the time and you get to do what, you know, like you're on social media and the dopamine is just comping, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing. After a while it doesn't work anymore. What resets it is, his pain, his hardship is things like that. And I've for a few years now, I've been taken ice baths. You know, I got into the Wim Hoff stuff and, you know, Wim Hoff kind of calls it rewilding. You know, you, you resetting your body back to what it was meant to be able to withstand. And they took in this book, they talked about one of the things they talked about was ice baths and what they've done studies with people like with, you know, with and drawn blood on them before they had the ice bath during the ice bath, after the ice bath. And they, they test their adrenaline or epinephrine norepinephrine, which is turns into adrenaline serotonin dopamine, mean all that stuff. And ice baths are really good for dopamine production because it stresses the body. And I can imagine what you've been doing for a long time, you know, I bet your dopamine reset points. Pretty good. Yeah.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:15:30](#)):

Yeah, I think so. Yeah. and I, yeah, I don't, I'm not sure if it, if it was naturally, you know, is that the chicken or the egg, you know, like if, if it was naturally, which allowed me to do okay in that world, or if I, if I learned, build up a tolerance, I'm sure there's a little bit of both. But definitely putting myself in those stressful environments. It, I think it's, yeah. I mean, you can't, I it's so invaluable. And I tell that to people that I coach, I mean, I literally taught it to people an hour ago at the gym there that there's so much more to, to the training, whether it's, you're doing ice bars or whether you're training Brazilian jiu-jitsu is then what you're actually doing. You know, people on a surface level, if you're doing jujitsu, they see the jujitsu, but what they don't see is the mental, the mental toughness and the ability to think under pressure.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:16:27](#)):

And same as in, you know, when you're, I know I've done some last bods before, and all you're thinking about when you start doing it is like breathing is, is like trying to control your breathing. And you don't, you're not thinking about anything else. And it's kind of like the most pure form of meditation that you can get. And and then in a, with a fire you basically, once you're experienced, you achieve that same state of when you're sitting in an ice bath, only thinking about breathing, you're, you're doing that same thing in the middle of a fight. So what some people, what majority of the people in the world see as the most chaotic and scary thing, you're almost in a state of meditation as you're moving through it. And for me, that's a really powerful skill because then other things in life seem, you know, like they they're slow they're happening slow.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:17:22](#)):

And so when people think that that I'm pretty relaxing and you know, laid back it's, that's, that's a big reason why is because you can, I've, I've kind of trained myself to be able to slow everything down in the middle of chaos which goes back to, you mentioned Marcus Aurelius before. And that's something he would say is, you know it's not necessarily like the Zen mentality of trying to go somewhere nice and quiet and ah, and meditate there. It's like being able to find that state in the middle of chaos and how do we do that? You know, so I think that's a journey. Well, that's the journey I'm on all the time. And I think

a lot of us are on it or want to be on it. You know, I think a lot of people would benefit from being able to try and find that find peace in the middle of chaos.

Warwick Schiller ([00:18:15](#)):

You know I didn't mention before I said, you're a Renaissance man, and you're a Saddler and a fairy, but you also train horses too. And, and, you know, I help a lot of people with their horses. And a lot of times they're people who may not have not a lot of horse experience or have had some accidents with their horses and they, you know, they have some concern around their horses and it's kind of the same thing, even though it doesn't have to necessarily be chaos, but, you know, around a, you know, a large farm animal that could run over the top of you. And it probably has in the past, having people slow things down and just be present and, you know, just slow themselves down is what slows the, the, you know, the whole situation down.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:18:57](#)):

Yeah, exactly. I couldn't agree more, you know, like I yeah, like you mentioned, I I'm lucky enough to train a few horses and have worked with some really good horseman and I don't ever claim or imagine to be a, a great horse trainer in the sense of a single discipline. And you know, like as far as like cutting goes or raining or anything like that, but where I've done well and excelled is in that sense where I working with people just building that relationship with their horse and teaching them like that step one is to control their energy. And then you can start to see that, like, build that relationship with your horse, because, you know, you can see whether that horse is looking for a leader, which a lot of them are. And if you don't trust yourself, then, then it's really hard for the horse to give you that trust.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:19:52](#)):

And and once people start to grasp that concept and really take ownership of their energy, they start to see the changes, you know, and and I say that to, to some of the young fighters I would love to get them out, working with horses more because it's honestly so close. You're, you're, you're in a, I mean, especially if you're in a cage, it's essentially around pen and you're just trying to control your energy to the point where it can influence the other individual's energy that's in there with you. It's just, when you're working with a horse, you're trying to get in sync with them usually, you know, and, and work towards that. And when you're in there with an opponent as a fighter, you're trying to find that you're trying to get in sync only to break that rhythm, you know, but it's they're really both really similar. So yeah, there's a lot of,

Warwick Schiller ([00:20:48](#)):

Yeah, you just did the whole warrior philosophy thing there because there's a friend of ours that lives on not far from here and she's a psychologist and she does equine assisted therapy. And she has a thing now it's called a circle up experienced. He calls it natural human ship, but she says, there's four things you've got to have in any relationship. And the first one is you have to, what you have to know what's going on with you. Number one is what's going on with you? Number two is what's going on with them. Number three is what's going on between the two of you. And number four is what's going on in the environment. And most people around their horses are not aware of number one or number three. They're very aware of what the horse is doing. And they're very aware of, you know, what's causing their horse to do that in the environment. Yeah. But yeah, it's funny here, I'm talking to a mixed martial arts guy, and he's saying the same thing, our friend who does, who's a psychologist and does equine assisted therapy, same thing.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:21:47](#)):

Yeah, yeah. It's yeah, it's this. And then like, it bleeds out into normal life, too, you know, your relationships and your interactions with other people, you know, other humans, whether it's in a business meeting or anything like that, like you said, like most people aren't aware of their energy and what it's influencing around them and then the interaction of that energy with other people, or whether it's with their horse or that sort of thing. And I always say that whether it's someone that I coach in mixed martial arts saying that they're having some trouble with, you know, I can't escape this position, or whether it's someone with a horse that's similarly having like an issue. I just check in that they are aware of like, are you even aware of, is this, is there something you're doing that could be causing that? Because sometimes, sometimes it's not, sometimes it isn't, but usually we all know, usually it is, you know, it's usually us first.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:22:45](#)):

So yeah, once people, it's a pretty, I mean, it's simple, but it can take a bit of like, it can be a hard pill to swallow, especially, you know, like once you give up that, once you give up that control of thinking that, like, you're always, I dunno, in, in the ride or not even in the right, but in control, it's hard to admit that maybe I'm not, as in control of my emotions as I thought I was, you know? And once you do that and start being more aware of it, things start to really things start to happen. That are pretty cool. So, yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:23:20](#)):

Yeah. I think that's where things go from a dis from a sport to a discipline, you know, the, you know, the, the, the discipline is, you know, it carries over to everyday life and kind of fundamentally changes who you are. If you, if you get into it in, in the, you know, you get deep enough into it. You know, some people might get into mixed martial arts because they want to, they want to fight, or they want to be able to protect themselves in a scaffold or whatever. And some people, you know, they want to take their horse for try ride, and that's what they want to do. And after a while, then they run into some problems and they, you know, they work on a bit more and you get further and further into it. And at some point in time, it stops being about the horse and starts being about the yourself and your journey. And, and it's interesting, you came at this mixed martial arts from the, the other end you came at it, you knew it was a, you knew it was a journey and you, it was a test of who you are before you started it. And that's, I think that's the fascinating thing about you, how your dad sounds like pretty cool, dude, like, you know, imprinting that into that earlier on. Did he, did he box or anything like that?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:24:24](#)):

No, he didn't. He he, my dad was just a man, Jesus, like a really interesting very like real smart guy. But like really socially good too. Just like, I'm not just the nicest person I've ever met, you know, but, but when he has to be a really strong or firm, he is as well, you know, and that obviously growing up, I just saw word. I just, I guess I just thought it was normal. Yeah. So I, I guess I thought it was a normal, you know, like, and then as I've got older and now seen you know, other, other guys now as an, as an adult, I realized, yeah, he was pretty special, my dad, but yeah, he was more into, he was in like the army reserve in, in Australia and into like military history and a lot of the stuff he used to talk to me about was yeah, like military tactical stuff and stuff about like great generals and history and that sort of thing. So I think that was a huge influence on me as well.

Warwick Schiller ([00:25:40](#)):

Fascinating stuff. So you, you go into the mixed martial arts and then you got into a TV show called w it was a TV show on the ultimate fighter. So you're in a, what was it called? It was called, I've got it written down here ultimate fighter nations. And it was Canada versus Australia. Tell us about that. How did you, what made you decide to want to get into that and how did you get selected to be in, because you went into a, like a house didn't you like big brothers sort of a house.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:26:10](#)):

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So basically the it was it's, it, it is still may actually, but it was one of the main recruiting tools, I guess, for the UFC, the company, the UFC to recruit new talent into the company, they would either be out with that would either have like, sort of scalps looking for new fighters, or you could enter through this show called the ultimate fighter. And and basically I got invited to the tryouts for it. They were doing, like you said, that in an Australian team versus the Canadian team for, they do different seasons and this particular season was going to be Australia versus Canada. And I got invited to the tryout, so I think about 400 or 500 guys went got sent, we got invited and turned up to the tryouts. And then we basically went through an elimination process over about a week.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:27:10](#)):

The, the initial tryout was like a week, I think. And then and then they deliberated on it for a little while longer and pick the team, but it went from it went from the original 400 or so down to eight, they picked eight guys from Australia and eight guys from Canada. And so I was really blessed to make the Australian team. And yeah, basically it was like a big mansion in Quebec, in the country, out in Quebec. Like you said, kind of the big brother house where there's cameras everywhere. It's like big brother, except every guy is a professional fighter. And it was it was interesting dynamic is every guy where he came from was like the alpha male. And then, you know, so suddenly you put 16 of those guys who was the alpha male, where he comes from into one house and they just coexist.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:28:06](#)):

So, and then we had no TV, no phones, no radio. And yeah, I had a, I had a blast. I had a great time. Some of the guys understandably, they had family, they had like a wife and kids and stuff. So it was a lot tougher for those guys, but at the time I was young and single and yeah, I was living pretty lean back in Australia. So, so living in a mansion getting the train all day with world-class guys, I thought that I didn't want to leave. I remember when the filming ended, I asked if I could just stay, stay on in the Manchester. They told me to get out.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:28:48](#)):

So where did that, where did that thing? It aired like worldwide. So he was on I think it was on, it was on Fox in Australia, I think Fox in America as well. And I'm not sure where else, but yeah, you can still find it. You can find it around the web somewhere, but I've got a pretty bad, like, thinking times were tough back then for me. So I was cutting my own hair and things were pretty bad. So if anyone stumbles across photos of that period. Yeah. Don't judge my hair. I did that myself. I was also the self appointed barber in the house too, because yeah, we didn't, we didn't have, like, they didn't just to add, I guess, some spice to the show. They're like, yeah, no haircuts, if you want to cut your own hair, you can. So I just became a self appointed Barbara and was doing all the haircuts in the house. And it was a good old time. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:29:42](#)):

And how long were you in the house?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:29:45](#)):

We were there for, it was originally meant to be, I think, eight weeks. And there was a couple of, there was a, it was in the middle of winter in Quebec. So I think there was some filming, like hang ups because of the snow and whatnot. So we ended up being there for about 10 weeks, I think. So. Yeah, it was, it was good. I loved it.

Warwick Schiller ([00:30:08](#)):

And so where did your mixed martial arts career go from there?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:30:13](#)):

So after the show, so basically the premise of the show is if you advance through the rounds so week to week, there's a fight, you know, so on TV, every week in the house, they pick a guy off each team to fight each other and you advance through an advanced or advanced route. And the premise of the show is the winner of the show gets a con contract with UFC. But the UFC also uses it to kind of like see who they, what talent they might want in the company and could be an asset anyway, you know? And I didn't win the show. There's a spoiler alert. So but I, you know, train really hard basically. I lost my fight in the house. And after that, at that point, I was like, well, it's not like you don't get kicked off and sent home.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:31:07](#)):

You're you're there anyway. Right. so I thought, well, you know, you see a PA I've seen in past season, some guys Moke around and, you know, don't put in any effort because they know that they're, they lost, you know, and I was like, I could, you could be that guy. Or I could be here with world-class coaches and world-class training partners and get the most out of it. I can. So I still go home better, you know, and that's what I did. I just took the opportunity and just went, yeah, just went at it super hard and loved every second of it and trained as hard as I could in every session. And and I guess they were happy enough with that. So I didn't get a contract straight out of it. I went back to Australia and was training for another flight in a different organization, and then an opportunity opened up and they offered me a fight.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:32:02](#)):

So that will be my, you know, my opportunity to start with the company basically that also would be a con contract. And yeah, I took it. So for me, it was one of my favorite lessons in a life in general, just of like you know, you can see something as a, as a roadblock or a stepping stone and and just finding the silver lining in it and just doing that and taking the up, you know, taking whatever opportunity was there. It's still open to it all for me, which, which went on to change the rest of my life. Really. So, yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:32:38](#)):

So in my research, it says you've fought in Japan

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:32:41](#)):

And China as well. What was that like? Yeah. that we're both pretty cool. G definitely Japan was super interesting. I was lucky enough to fight both fight there and take fighters that I trained over to Japan

too. And I coach them at as they for them. So I got to see it as a fighter and a coach. And Japan is, I mean, it's almost like the spiritual home of, of martial arts. It's got such a, such a deep history of martial arts and, and like the warrior culture there with the samurai and everything. And even more than that, it's kind of ingrained in their culture to the point where they, the everyday people rope motto got him everyday people, the public really respect martial arts and fighters to it to a crazy level. I mean, they just reveal fighters.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:33:45](#)):

They're just the general public. So that was pretty cool coming from a country where like back back then it mixed martial arts was still a real fringe sport, almost an underground sport in Australia. So you were almost all my, I wouldn't say an outcast, but you know, people didn't accept it if you said, oh, I'm an athlete. And you told them what it was. That'd be like, you're an athlete. You're like a, some sort of, it's like human cockfighting. Whereas in Japan you get to Japan and those, they just love, love the fighters and respected and that. So just being being able to be in that country and just see why they respect it as well. And the funny thing with Japan, as opposed to the U S or Australia, or most of the rest of the world, to be honest where we look at, you know, wins. So everyone wants to know what's your record, you know, how many, what's your, how many wins, how many losses and Japan do not care, they care about how hard you fight in the fight. That's all they care about. They don't, you know, so they would, they would rather go, I lose and go out on his shield, so to speak then you know, just have a lot of easy wins. And that's what, one thing I loved about being in Japan and love that about the Japanese culture of respecting that warrior spirit. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:35:13](#)):

And what about your trip to China? Was that cool?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:35:16](#)):

Yeah, it was really different. I mean, I fought in Macau, which is which is an island off, off of Hong Kong, but it's a Chinese it's Chinese rant owned, I guess. And it's man. Yeah. It was quite different because it was originally Miquel was like a Portuguese colony and is now Chinese. So it's got this weird mix of like cold culture there. I am, I enjoyed it. But yeah, it was, it was definitely different. I mean, always, I don't know if this is right, but I heard that, like, the casino that I fought in has turns out maybe more money than like all of Las Vegas put together in a day. Just a huge amount of of gambling goes on there. Which is, it's just yeah, it was, it was very different aside from the actual fighting, it was more so just as a S a social study, because it's obviously a part of China, which is like this, this we weird mix of, you know, it's still, I guess, you know, like a communist country, but it's also got this huge, there's a huge amount of like capitalism as in as well, because, you know, we see all this stuff that's like made in China and that's obviously generating a lot of money.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:36:38](#)):

So it was definitely just an interesting, interesting place to be aside from even just the fighting. So I was lucky to be there with one of my longtime training partners and mentors, and we just kind of cruised around, cruised around the island, just on an adventure. We got stuck in a Buddhist temple. I think it was a Buddha. I think it was a Buddhist temple, but it was on some celebration where they were setting off fireworks in the temple. And we didn't know, and we were in there when they went off and this was the day before the fight. So I nearly died of smoke inhalation the day before the fire. So, yeah, it was a good adventure.

Warwick Schiller ([00:37:18](#)):

So then you end up fighting in Las Vegas, Nevada. I mean, that's like, that's gotta be like the, the pinnacle of your chosen discipline to fight in Las Vegas. Tell us about that.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:37:35](#)):

Yeah, it was obviously, yeah, I mean, it was, it was, it was great. It was amazing. And it's one of those things that I can always look back on and be like, man, like I made it, you know, if I, if I would have told that an 18 year old Brendan, that I would be fighting in Las Vegas in the, in the premiere, you know, mixed martial arts company in the world. I, I, yeah, I honestly just wouldn't have, wouldn't have believed it, which is weird because I always believed in myself, you know what I mean? It's, it's hard to say I wouldn't have believed it, but it just, everything, same, all I ever thought about was today. Like I want to get better today. And then the next day I wanted to get better that day. So I kind of never thought that far ahead to even dream of it.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:38:26](#)):

Like, I honestly didn't dream of getting there because I only ever thought about right now. And then, you know, the next day I'd think about right now. So I couldn't, I couldn't really say it was a dream come true cause I never really dead to dream that far ahead, you know, but once, but in hindsight it's one of the coolest things. And you know, they talk about, you hear people talk about regrets and and like, I don't really have any regrets so to speak, but if I like one thing, like I always tell young guys whether they're in the fight game or I've had some buddies that have like qualified for the NFR. And and I say like, I don't, I don't want to give them unsolicited advice, you know, but I kind of just wish someone had said it to me before I fought in Las Vegas.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:39:22](#)):

And it's just like, when you get there, just take a moment to like, take a, take a deep breath and just let it all sink in and in and enjoy it, like enjoy the fact that you even just got there. And, and and I don't think I did that when I was there. So I remember just looking out my window in a nice, really nice hotel room that I couldn't afford before this, that myself, you know, that the UFC obviously put me up here and I just meant I could have been in Wogawoga Australia, you know, like it didn't matter to me because all I was thinking about was the fight, you know, and what I had to do to win all that. And which, you know yeah, you carry a pretty big burden as an athlete and and that sort of thing, but I just, yeah, I probably, if I ha if I could change one thing or if I could just have a chance to do that again, all I would do would just be to breathe it in and and enjoy the feeling of just being there and just leave the feeling of what I had to do to win, give it five minutes, you know, and just let it soak in.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:40:34](#)):

But the good thing is like, do that now. And if I'm ever in a situation that's, you know, kind of cool. And and I think, you know, that's a memory that I'm going to have later in life to look to a fond memory. I just take a minute to just let it sink in and just, and just be grateful for that moment and not worry about the result, you know? So yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([00:41:00](#)):

What I might do now is, you know, oh my, if you haven't listened to the podcast before I send my guests 20 questions that actually stole from Tim Ferriss, his tribe of mentors book, and I have them choose, you

know, five, just four to seven over the questions that they'd like to answer. And some might ask you some of the questions here I'm going to start out. Well, I think this is one of the early ones in the, in the question thing. What book do you recommend most?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:41:28](#)):

Oh yeah. So a book that I yeah, I recommend it to a lot of people or to everyone. I mean, like, people are probably sick of me telling them to read this book, but it's called the Alchemist. And I don't know if you've read it or okay. Yeah. And I just man, I've read it a ton. My friend actually gave, gave me the copy and his copy. And I'm not sure if he wanted it back, but he hasn't got it back yet, but it's traveled the world with me. I mean, it's been around to a bunch of countries and I'm very like always go back and read it. If something, if I'm just in a funny point in life and all, you know, I just find it hard to make a decision on something or whatever. I just start reading that book again.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:42:16](#)):

And it's just, for me, it's got a ton of answers in it, but what I love the most is it's not trying to give you the answers it's, it's given, it's reminding you of like a journey, the journey that you might be on and helping you find the answers for yourself. And that's why I like it. And that's why I recommend it to my friends because yeah, I just, I've never been quite into those books where it's where the person who wrote it is trying to give you the answer, because they're trying to give you a different answer to the next guy who wrote a book, you know, whereas I just find the Alchemist. It's like, it is a guide to help you find your answers. So that's why I really enjoy it. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:42:59](#)):

Okay. There you have it. There's the warrior philosopher right there. The mixed martial arts guy, reading the Alchemist. That's, that's worth the price of admission right there. I think that's cool. Okay. Next question. What what's the most, we may have already gone through this, but what's the most worthwhile thing you've done in your, put your time into something that has changed the course of your life?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:43:27](#)):

Oh man. It's, it's hard to say if there's one thing for me because there's so many little things that I think have helped, you know, but I would say as a, as a umbrella thing, because I could say, you know, like martial arts, you know, but, or, but then a lot of the similar things I got from working with horses or young horses, especially, but I would say getting comfortable, being uncomfortable is the one thing is what I developed pretty young and deliberately put myself in those situations to learn. And that has shaped my life for the better and opened a lot of doors for me and can we'll continue to as well because yeah, just, I think it's a great skill is being, you know, get comfortable being uncomfortable. And then you can just operate on a where a lot of people aren't ready to. So that's definitely that's, that's it for me, I think. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:44:38](#)):

Yeah. I'm kind of late to the party on that one. I, you know, in the last probably four or five years, I kinda realized I've kind of taken the easy path through life. You know, I got to obstacles and I went around, you know, I went somewhere different than into the obstacle and it's, I've got to this point and I'm, I'm going all right. So it wasn't all bad, but it wasn't all bad, but there's something I think I was missing from my life. But there's something missing from your life if you haven't got comfortable with being

uncomfortable. And so that's the, you know, the cold showers and the ice baths and things that I, I yeah, things that I, I find a little uncomfortable and I've never, I've always been, you know, I hated being cold. I've never liked being cold of. She will never like cold water. And yeah, I I've, I've found that yeah, that getting comfortable with being uncomfortable and, and, you know, reading stuff lately, it's kind of pops up everywhere in like centuries old philosophies and things.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:45:41](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's, I think it's a secret that like, people that have achieved great things have sort of known for yeah. Like you said, centuries, probably millennia millennia, but it's such a, and I think, and that's a risk within the world with the world. These days is everything is becoming so instant and so easy, you know? And that's great sometimes, you know, like but, and that's why I think we have to seek it. I mean, a couple of few hundred years ago, you didn't have to seek it out because life was just hard. So, you know, they, weren't having to go to the gym and put themselves under stress or do ice baths. Cause they probably just got really cold in winter then. Yeah. Nowadays, cause life is so convenient. I think it's important for people to maintain that skill because it's, yeah, it's a skill.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:46:33](#)):

And and it's kind of scary if we lose that as human beings, I think, Hey, that ability to, to know how far we can push ourselves and you hear like, I used to be really obsessed again with like some stories my dad would tell me, like growing up with like the selection courses of the SAS or, you know, special forces around the world and not yet their selection, but then also like some of the feats of insurance they did on missions. And and so much of that and relay back to their selection was they put them through that installation to remind them they can do it so that they can draw on it years later on a mission if they have to. And and you, you hear examples of them doing that, where they might be, you know, years later they might not be as fit as they were when they got into that, you know, the special forces or whatever, but they draw on that knowledge that they could push that far from their selection.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:47:37](#)):

And it's always there, you know, and I think that is no matter how you do it, whether it's ice baths, martial arts or anything like that once, you know, you can push to a level your body, you know, your fitness might not be there and, and that sort of thing, but you know, it's like a familiar place now, you know, you can survive there. So it's okay to go back there. And I think that's important that people come to learn to go to that place. And so it's pretty quiet. I enjoy seeing the ice baths and stuff are really starting to catch on. Wim. Hoff is doing some really good work in spreading the word of that. And he's a cool guy. So that's that's awesome. Cause I think it's the more people in the world that, that remember that we can survive in that those uncomfortable places. I think it's going to benefit the world.

Warwick Schiller ([00:48:29](#)):

Yeah. I, you know, I mentioned before about, you know, the epidemic of depression stuff and yeah, it's fascinating that that book I was talking about just really made me think, huh, this is why we have all this depression these days. You didn't have it in years past, you know, because life wasn't easy then. So you had the, you had the hard times, you had the good times, you had the hard times you had the good times. I mean, you know, we, we don't get that sort of stress on our body. And I really think it's not, you know, being comfortable with being uncomfortable is not, it's probably going to be different for everybody because it might not just be physical discomfort. It might be you know, it might be showing

your emotions. It might be public speaking. It might be an if anybody's ever done any of those things, like not shared your emotions for a long time and then start to share those emotions.

Warwick Schiller ([00:49:22](#)):

You get more comfortable with it. And it's, I imagine you would have seen the movie fight club. Yeah. You know, th the guy ed would not get addicted to going to alcoholics anonymous meetings. You know, all sorts of support groups because you get to sit there in front of a bunch of strangers and spill your guts and cry and, and, and share those emotions. And he, and he ends up being he has you know, a different, a different one each night of the week. And he goes to all these things because there's something cathartic about getting that stuff out to you. Yeah,

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:49:59](#)):

Yeah, yeah. It's a mean, yeah. If people that's, yeah. I just couldn't recommend enough if people have a fear or something that makes him uncomfortable to kind of lean into it a bit, you know, and I'd go to it, go at it. And only good things come from it. I mean, in the moment, it's, it can be terrifying, but after you get that rush of, of an accomplishment, you know, that's, it's bigger than an external accomplishment too. Like, it's not like you're winning a trophy or anything, but it's more powerful than that because like, you know, there's like your soul knows you did something that it wasn't sure it could do. You know? So

Warwick Schiller ([00:50:44](#)):

It's an, it's an intrinsic motivation, not an extrinsic motivation. Yeah. Awesome stuff. Okay. So this next question, I knew you'd pick this, but everybody that I've had on the podcast has chosen this question. I think this is the only question that everybody has chosen. And you've probably talked about this already, but what is your relationship like with fear?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:51:11](#)):

Yeah, my relationship with fear I obviously have like fears, like we all do. My, I guess my relationship with it. Yeah. Since I was pretty young, has been to like push, push into it and go, go at it go towards it and kind of, yeah, just learn more about it. You know, it's, it's a funny thing, like a fear and fear and bravery to me and sign is like violence and valance and like peace they're, they're like really closely linked. I mean, they like sit, they sit side by side. It's like, they're like holding hands, so to speak, you know? And it's funny people, I think that don't get to know that their fear intimately enough, they think that it's something that's in a far off place. It's like the boogeyman out in the woods, you know when really, it's just, if you get to know it and spend time there, it becomes, you know, like it might still kind of scare you, but you understand, it's like a, it's like a person that you, you get to know.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:52:28](#)):

And, and yeah, so I've just modern relationship with, it has always been to like push into it and go towards my fear. And then yeah, it just sort of ends up not being a fear anymore, or at least it's one that I know well enough, it's like a friend that might be a little bit volatile, but if you know them well enough, you know how to handle them, you know, or a horse, you know, it might be a, have a few little quirks, but if, you know, and I was like that back home that like, I love and Kim loved doing a dice work on it, but some people might not just that one of those personalities, but it's, if you spend enough time there you, you, you get comfortable there. So yeah, that's been my relationship with fear is go towards it and, and understand, understand the fear. Why is it that I'm scared and spend some time there with it. Yeah, that's, that's it

Warwick Schiller ([00:53:29](#)):

Awesome stuff. That's kind of what I thought you'd say. So this next question, it kind of has a caveat on it in the book and it has the caviar in here because a lot of times the people I interviewed don't necessarily have a normal occupation, but the question is, and you chose this one. What advice would you give about, give someone about to enter your occupation and you, you've got to figure out which occupation you want to talk about, where you want to talk about mix professional, mixed martial artist or farrier or horse trainer or settle maker.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:54:06](#)):

Yeah. I'll go with a little salad mix martial artist. Yeah, what I say too. I mean, this is just for people in whatever they do anyway, but especially in in mixed martial arts is just your main focus should be on, on today. Like getting 1% better today. Can you, you know, pick out one thing to get 1% better at today and over the course of a year, and then, you know, five years and a career that's going to really add up. And I think obviously I love to set goals and set, set like medium and long-term goals as well. But I think sometimes if people you know, young guys would come and say, well, I want to get into the UFC and I'd say, okay, what are you going to do right now? Where are you going to do today?

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:54:56](#)):

That's going to get you a little bit closer, you know, 1% closer. And the people that are so do that whether they were doing it consciously or not, they have improved greatly because all that, that they just focus on one little thing a day, one little thing a day. And if you know it, it's not like everything improves your one, one thing might not be as sharp as it was yesterday, but if we're still moving in the right direction, we're still moving forward. We're still moving forward. Then they're eventually going to get there. You know, so two people in mixed martial arts, but it goes into any, any field, like any pursuit they want is, and to get 1% better today than you were yesterday. And the long-term goal is going to take care of itself. And and as far as work with horses, like horse training and anything to do with horses really, but especially horse training one of my good friends and mentors poorly Daniel, who I think, you know he once said to me, and it's like, it just resonated with me so much that I think it all the time.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:56:09](#)):

And if I feel it's kind of like the Alchemist book. If I feel I'm getting a bit off track or if I'm if I'm working a horse and something's not working out, the first thing, you know, I think about what I've been doing. And he said to me, I was doing something once I was thrown, I I was, we were breaking in a horse and I was throwing a lead rope over this horse to the, to desensitize it. But it got to this point where he was obviously desensitized. And he goes, how are you doing that for yourself? Or are you doing that for the horse? Because the horse is fine with it. And I think at this point you were doing it too, to make sure you're comfortable and now about which is fine, but then you start pushing into the PO, then you start, keep doing it to try and make yourself more comfortable and you push it to a point where it just gives the horse, the shins.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:56:57](#)):

And then if you're, if you're not self reflective enough to recognize that, then you see that as a horse problem, you go, or the horse has got an issue here. And really what it was is you didn't. I failed to recognize the point where I stopped doing what I was doing for the horse. And I started doing it for me. So now yeah, with my horse training, I basically just what I'm doing, I'm trying to do it for the horse. And if the horse tells me it's ready for the next step, I go to the next step. And if it, if it doesn't tell me it's

ready then I go to the next step, you know? And yeah. So I just that's, I think that was really sound advice. And that would be advice I'd give to anyone because they, whether they're a world class trainer or someone who's new to horses, I think you can always ask yourself that question, like is what I'm doing, working to my horses benefit. And as horsemen, I guess that's what we're all trying to do. So it's a good, good mindset. How are they

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

Great mindset? You know Martin black is a very, very, very good horseman. He talks about you know, sometimes you can bring the human up to the level of the horse, but sometimes you've got to take the horse down to the level of the human. And, and the part you're talking about here is bringing the human up to the level of the horse.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:58:19](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So that can be hard. And yeah, it's, I guess it's like anything, like, it's similar to the, how we, we're talking about that being uncomfortable. It's like, once you find, if you can experience, if you can get there and experience it, you can, you can feel what it's like to have that connection. You can try and find it again and again and again. And obviously it was some horses it's easier to find that, that point of connection and get your energies sort of in sync to where you can, where you're working towards a common goal. But if a person can find it with one horse, that might be a little easier, they can try and replicate that with other horses and, and find that spot where they're in sync. And for him, to me, when a horse, even horses a little bit more rank, once I work out that you're trying for them, like you're trying to meet them on their level.

Brendan O'Reilly ([00:59:19](#)):

I think they give a lot more of themselves to you, even the rat, the wall, the ones like I've worked with some like Brumbies in Australia, which is like the Australian wild horse for those that don't know. And and some Mustangs here. And I found them to be really a lot like that, that were super like operating in that self-preservation mode until they really believed that you were doing something for them, not, not at them, but like for them. And then I just gave themselves to, you know, so I think that's a good, a good place to be trying to get to with any of our horses. Are they,

Warwick Schiller ([01:00:06](#)):

Yeah. Great advice. You might have covered this before, but it might've been your Las Vegas thing, but your next question was, do you have any regrets you'd be willing to share with the world?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:00:20](#)):

Yeah. So that is a good question. I guess it kind of, what does relate a bit to the, to the Las Vegas Las Vegas thing, but I guess, cause I've already covered that a bit more broadly, like I was so driven and, and this isn't, I wouldn't class it as a regret, but it's definitely worth talking about is I was so, so driven in my early twenties to be a world-class martial artist. I mean, and like I said earlier, I didn't necessarily have that long-term goal of, I wanted to be in the UFC, but I want it to be as good as I could be. And I was just pushing every day and pushing every day to be that good, that like, I guess I wasn't present in in, in moments and in relationships with my family, you know, like my parents who I've always had a great relationship with them, but I wasn't present.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:01:22](#)):

I mean, I would be at a dinner or at a birthday and my mind would be on tomorrow, like tomorrow's training session, you know, who am I inspiring? What am I going to do? What's my next meal all that stuff surrounding like fight, you know, the fight game in general. But yeah, I wasn't for so many of those years I wasn't present. So for me now in what I do, and I'm still trying to be world-class at the things I do, but I'm trying to find that balance of being world-class or working towards being world-class and also being present. And that's really important to me. So like I said, it's not really a regret because I don't go back and like dwell on it. It's just more like a lesson, you know? But it's definitely something that I think about a lot now it's just trying to be more present in my relationships and dealings with everyone and all at the same time, finding that balance to also push your head in my pursuits and I'm trying to be good at

Warwick Schiller ([01:02:28](#)):

Yeah, yeah. That whole band present thing. That's the secret to life right there.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:02:33](#)):

That's it? I it's man, it's the, it's the magic right there. If you can be, if you can be in the moment that's where all the great stuff happens. That's what we have, you know, if you want to get really philosophical, because as I say, yesterday is gone and tomorrow is normally at, so

Warwick Schiller ([01:02:53](#)):

Yeah, you were talking before about when you were in the UFC and you're pro you know, you're focused on what was going on now. Not, you know, not in the end. And one of the most spiritual of the ancient Hindu practices is something called karma yoga and karma. Yoga is focusing on the process focusing on a task with no thought of the outcome. Yeah. So it's just about being present right there. Or as a good friend of ours from New Zealand who was a previous podcast guest, she's an equestrian mindset coach. And she said, if you're doing the work while focused on the outcome, you're not really doing the work.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:03:30](#)):

Yup. Yup. That's so true. And it's Bruce Lee said it too. I, I think of that all the time. And that changed my mindset in fighting because when I started, you know, I wasn't doing it for like accolades or whatever, but I was obviously, you know, if you're in a, in a fight or a competition, you want to win. And and I read somewhere him saying, it's essentially what your friend just said. There was, he said, don't think in absolutes, like win or lose. You know, if you're thinking I don't want to lose or I want to win, that's an absolute, and it's not helping you right now. So I helping you in this moment. So instead of thinking in absolutes, like what, in this second gets you closer to where you want to be, you know? And if you do that second after second after second, then you're going to win.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:04:19](#)):

You're probably going to win. You know, if you're if you're doing the, the right thing, you need to get closer to the outcome you want, you you're going to win. But so many people, if they, they, you know, and especially people that talk to me about nerves before fights or competitions, they talk, they talk in terms of absolutes, you know, they're like, well, what if I lose? Or, you know, I don't wanna, I don't want to lose, or I don't want to, whatever, but if I forget the absolute outcome and think about the second to second action you know, thinking in terms of actions, instead of emotions, because emotions don't get you anywhere, emotions don't have any progress, you know, as far as in a, in a competition, you know I'm, I'm all about like being in touch with your emotions, but if you're in a five minute round of a fight,

there's no time to be thinking about if you're going to be upset. If you lose, you know, you got to think about that right now. What do you need to do in this second to get to the next second? And that kind of goes back to that karma yoga thing of being in, being completely in the moment.

Warwick Schiller ([01:05:30](#)):

Yeah. You know, just listen to you talk. I talked about that men's emotional resilience retreat. I went to last year and a large body of the work at that weekend was a book, was following a book called king warrior lover, magician. And it talks about the four archetypes and each one of those archetypes, you know, like the king he's, he's the doer of deeds for the good of everyone. The warrior is the warrior. The magician is the thinker and the lover is, brings the emotions to it. But every one of them has a shadow side. So if you get it wrong, you get something else. And the shadow side of the king is the prince. So the king does, the king does things for the good of everybody. And the prince does things for external validation, like what somebody thinks of minute.

Warwick Schiller ([01:06:25](#)):

And that sounds, you know, I would imagine a lot of people who get into maybe the mixed martial arts or anything at the level you got into where you are going to be known, like your fight in Las Vegas and you're on TV or whatever. There's a level of that, that you know, external validation that you're doing it for. And it seems like you just seem like that was the last thing on your mind. You just, this whole conversation I've had with you, it just sounds like you were only challenging yourself. It was all about challenging yourself and not really giving two hoots what anybody else thought of you?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:06:59](#)):

Yeah, it was strangely like, it was like that. And like sometimes I think, you know, people ask me about it, like w w w I have the rotate chats with people about it. If they, if they talk to me about it, cause they want to ask me about my career and then, and that sort of thing. And and sometimes, you know, when, when you dig deeper and dig deeper and peel the layers, peel the layers off, like sometimes I feel that the level I was competing at, like, it was almost almost to my detriment, but ultimately, like, I'm happy about that because you know, I always say like, who you are is more important than what you are, you know? And I think though that the fact that I really didn't care, it's not that I didn't care. I mean, I wanted to win, you know, and I was undefeated outside of the UFC.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:07:52](#)):

I had some losses in the UFC against like top level guys, but but it's not, so it's not that I didn't care. Like I wasn't trying to win, but the fact that there was no, there was pretty much no, like, look searching for external validation. I mean, I knew my parents were going to lie. I always say to people like the people that loved you before are going to love you after, and the people who didn't go didn't like you before, they're probably not going to like you after anyway, either. So, you know don't think that it's really going to change, you know? And so maybe if I was trying to impress someone, I might've found another level in fights, you know, but that's not what I was there for, you know? And so basically all the questions that I went into that storm looking to answer, I got answered, you know?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:08:45](#)):

And so that's where, like where the journey kind of ended happily for me is that it's like I achieved everything I went in there to achieve, which was nothing externally, like validation wise. It was all, you know, finding out what I was made of. And yeah, so that, yeah, that that is something I'm really happy

about. But yeah, as like what I mentioned just before, about who, who, who you are is more important than what you are. I think sometimes people get caught up on being whatever, you know, I've got to be a, a, I've got to be a fighter or look like a fighter. I've got to be a cowboy, you know, and I've got to dress a certain way, or I got to be a cowboy, you know, to be at this. And I'm like, man, you could, you can dress me in whatever you want and put me in whatever situation and I'll do it.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:09:39](#)):

I'll do what I gotta do. If I'm good at it. You know, there's plenty of situations. I might not be good at that, but you know, you could dress me in whatever you want to put me on a horse or you can dress me in whatever you want to put me in a cage and I'm going to be fine. I don't need to wear the brand name stuff, you know? And I didn't even have any MMA gear until I was in the UFC and sponsored to have I used to buy shorts from Lowe's, you know, which is like Walmart over here and like high viscous, like board shorts that you got at the Beijing just cut a big slit up the side so that I could kick a bit higher and they cost me like \$9. And that was what I would find in, you know, so yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([01:10:22](#)):

Yeah. After I was on that podcast with you and Todd, I found a podcast you were on. And I remember hearing that story in there. That was, that was pretty funny. Something else I got out of that podcast that you were on that really kind of stuck with me though, asking you your pre-fight ritual. And I think for most people there would be, and I'm not talking about most people that all I'd probably even most people who are in the UFC, but for most people, the thought of going into a combat situation like that, you would either have, you know, like fear or anger or aggression or whatever. And I remember you saying, I just felt happy. I just felt like it was, it was the word happy or ex wasn't excited. It was like a calm, I was like, yeah, this is going to be fun. That's that's more what it came across. Like, is that how it was?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:11:20](#)):

Yeah, probably. I can't remember, but better probably was. Yeah. I dunno why I've always had that.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:28](#)):

I, that is that is that is a rare skill right there. My friend.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:11:32](#)):

Yeah. I'm not sure where that, I don't know if that's a natural thing or whatever, but I've just always had that, like if someone, I mean, I, I don't really think in these terms these days. Cause I'm older and more mature, but like if someone, if I was somewhere and someone said, man, it's 10 guys coming to kick this door in. I'd be like, okay. Okay. They just never really, I don't know. It just never really worried me. That sort of thing. It was, it was a strange, yeah. And same with like rodeoing, you know? And like I was riding board, I think the last time I wrote a ball was in 2018, but, and that's also why I stopped though, because I didn't get that like that. I wasn't getting worried. I mean and so I was like, this is not good because I also didn't have the thing with fighting is like I've put in the hours and then I have the confidence that I can, I can handle it, you know, but I was not, not practicing bull riding anymore or anything.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:12:46](#)):

And I so I knew that was not going to end well if I just get, but I just didn't have the worry of getting on anything. So yeah, it's, it's, it's strange and I, it's not, I don't think it's a it's not like there's no fear. It's not like there's a glitch in the matrix and there's no fear. It's more like this calm, like I'm going to be okay. Like I just have this belief that I, everything. And if I can control myself and my energy and my emotions and I can control the situation and I think that's what it is. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:26](#)):

Have you ever seen the movie for a free solo?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:13:31](#)):

No, I haven't been people who've told me that I need to watch it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:34](#)):

He's a movie, but you know, if you guys at home aware what it is, it's about a guy named Alex. Honnold, he's probably the best rock climber in the world. And he free soloing El Capitan in Yosemite national park. And El Capitan is about 3000 foot straight up of sheer granite. And he does it with no, because when you rock climb, rock climb is my son's a rock climber. And it scared the hell of my wife for a while, till she realized how safety conscious they actually are. You know, you've always got fail safes, you know, you roped in and all sorts of stuff. But Alex Honnold was the first guy to free solo El Capitan. So there's, there is 3000 of no mistakes, not a slight mistake. And they did in the movie, they did a, like an FMR eye on him and they said his amigdala is, you know, so your medulla is your body's smoke detector, your fire alarm sorta thing.

Warwick Schiller ([01:14:26](#)):

And here's this abnormal. And when I saw that, oh, well, I wonder if he's done that from building up over time, or he's maybe a little abnormal, but I read something the other day that when they did the FMI. So this guy, you know, basically has no fear when they did the FMR, when they're going to slide them in the tube, he had a panic attack about going into the tube. So like Alex Hornell, having a panic attack about going a little too, but he can climb 3000 foot sheer rock face. And, but the thing about, you know, the thing about that rock climbing, there was a guy named Dean Potter who died a few years ago in a wing suiting accident in Yosemite. And he was one of the best rock climbers in the world as well. But I remember reading a book and the book was about, I think it was about the flow state.

Warwick Schiller ([01:15:15](#)):

You ever read the rise of Superman by Steven Kotler? No, it's about, it's all about the flow state. And they ask Dean Potter about, you know, rock climbing and stuff. And he says, I don't particularly like rocks. Like it's not, I don't particularly like rock climbing. He likes rock climbing because of the state he has to go into do it. Like there's only you and the rock you have to be present. I might have done a little bit of rock climbing with my son and there's just you and the rock. And what's funny for me is I'm not real crazy about Heights, but you'll climb up something that's 80, 90 foot high, and there's not till you get to the top and you, you know, you look out at the edge and you go, holy cow, but you don't, you're not thinking about that on the way up. You're only thinking about where you're placing your hand and where you're placing your feet. And yeah. And I think that's kind of, you know, kind of what you had to do with martial arts.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:16:08](#)):

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Like the way you put it, there is, you're not thinking about the whole, the whole thing. You're like thinking about where, where you put your hand, where you put your feet, all that is exactly. That's exactly what a fine is. I mean, it's like a what does Jerome call it? Cause fight, you know, professional fighting at that level human chess with dire physical consequences. And that's kinda what it, that's kind of what it's like. It's like you literally plant chest, like you're, you're you make a move and then you wait on your opponent to make them countermove. And you're doing this the whole time. I mean like the fractions of seconds and fractions of millimeters, and you're just having this exchange the whole time, totally engaged in the moment. And and it, if you Zig, when you should as aid and move your chest piece wrong, it's it can go real bad.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:17:01](#)):

So it's, and same, same obviously, same as rock climbing, especially for that guy in that you know, that example. And I think that is yeah, I think it just takes you to another, another place mentally that other things just don't get you, you know, and the good thing is, I think then it allows you to find the state of peace in normal life that maybe some people that haven't been able to experience that. I mean, if you, if you can train yourself to move your chest pieces that, that, you know, quickly and accurately to keep you alive climbing 3000 feet free solo or fighting in a cage against the, some of the best guys in the world then everyday life things aren't so scary anymore. So I think that's probably what a lot of those people are chasing, you know, but do those tasks. Yeah.

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

You know, while you were talking there, Brandon, I was thinking about, you know, you're talking about the mindset of the, of the fighting and, and, you know, it's like human chess with dire physical consequences. There's, there's that part of it. But you mentioned before when you're at a, like a family function about, you know, what are you going to eat is as a, as a UFC fighter, is your diet I wouldn't say restricted, but like if you have to have a lot of discipline with your eating

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:18:29](#)):

Yeah, yeah. You definitely do. And some guys struggle with that. I think all five or professional fighters would admit that the white car is way worse than the fought. I mean, most guys love the fire glove, the actual bat, and it's just the lead up and the white car. And then that that is really annoying. And some guys, I mean, everyone's different. Some guys blow out after their fight and put on weight and have some time off and then have to work really hard to get it back down. And I was always pretty disciplined to keep my weight. I mean, it's not low, we're not doing like what jockeys have to do, you know, but maybe for a couple of days before the weigh-in, but we're not there they're riding multiple times a week as a jockey. We're doing it, you know, we're fighting maybe three times a year, but yeah, the CA the the diet can be pretty restrictive.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:19:23](#)):

And and so for me, that was cause I was self-managed as well. Like some guys will have a manager and you know, they're pretty, they're pretty well handled, you know, they, they turn up to the gym and they put in the work and there's someone kind of doing all that, whereas always self-managed so I was like the point of contact for them to negotiate stuff with me and all that sort of thing, and sponsors to negotiate with. So that plot, you know, having, having to manage my own diet and then do that other stuff was just probably I probably should outsource to, you know just to take some of the burden off, but yeah, to answer your question, yeah. The diet can be pretty restrictive and it can suck a bit.

Warwick Schiller ([01:20:15](#)):

How do you, how do you like restrict your white, but get enough energy to do what you do? That's gotta be a juggling act, is it?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:20:24](#)):

Yeah, it is. And there's some, some guys obviously in the sport now that are very good at managing that. So I was lucky in my last Y I worked with George Lockhart who is like probably the best guy in the world at it. And he, where he recently worked with Tyson fury, who for the other night for the world, heavyweight boxing championship, he works with Conor McGregor. He's a, he's just a real, he's got it down to a fun science of how to get you just enough and, you know, get you enough energy to get all your training in by you're still at a deficit that you're losing the weight. But that is, that is really tough. Basically what I would do is just time eating around my training and you know, try and get in some good natural carbohydrates right after I trained pretty hard to replant replenish that glycogen.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:21:20](#)):

But you know, we were all kind of leading up if you had to lose weight for four year out of count calorie deficit, which means you're expending more calories than you're taking in. And that can be pretty hard. And then a lot of it is just getting it out is like, it's just that mental fortitude of of just knowing you have to do it and doing it. It's tough for weeks and weeks and weeks leading up to the fire. Like, it's just, it does get tough, but for me, the white cut right before the fight, I'm it never bothered me too much. The process. Some guys really hate it. That's where you, so there's basically, there's losing weight where you're actually losing body weight. And then there's the white cut where we basically pull water out of our body whether it's in a softener or in a hot bath and you pull that water out as close to the way energy can, and then you make weight and then you start to prove back on. So it's kind of like a false, it's like a false reading because a guy could, he could weigh in at 155 pounds and then be 175. By the time he fights

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:37](#)):

You find

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:22:37](#)):

That both 1 55, which is lightweight and one 70, which is well, two, I afford both of those. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:48](#)):

And so do you have to put weight on, to be a welder weight or did you, you know, which one of them do you normally naturally sit in?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:22:54](#)):

So I walk around at about 180. I, back then I was walking around at probably between 180 to 180 4. So I was actually heavier back then. Just cause I just, I was training all the time. I probably had a little, little bit more muscle on me. And so basically I would, nothing would change whether a 4 55 or 70 which was what, what was kind of crazy. So you were afforded at one 70. I would just be smaller than my opponents, basically, always. But I would never go to out strength. I was just a small world away. Cutting to 1 55 was more, you know, like I looked more even with my parents as far as like weight and size when

it was just a tough cut, like I'm pretty pretty muscle dense. Some guys it's like, they got like bones or something that where they, they look muscular, but they make the white easy.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:23:56](#)):

They're like they kind of a lighter and some people would just dance, like the muscles that dance binds a dance in it. And so 55 was a tough cut for me, but yeah, like I, I fought once a waiting one day at 155 and for the next day and I was, I was like 182 pounds when I, when I, yeah. So like, it's it can be a crazy manipulation of way getting, you know, and that's, that's got a lot of controversy and stuff these days now because, you know, there's been some people that, you know, get a bit sick doing it. And also now there's more and more evidence, you know, people talk about CTE, like brain trauma, traumatic brain injuries from getting punched. And, you know, they say, if you're really dehydrated, there's not as much fluid around your brain. And therefore there's a greater risk of brain trauma and that sort of thing. But yeah, that's all, you know, that they throw that around these days too. But back in the day it was just bang in my day it was like the wild west. And you just did what you had to do, but yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:11](#)):

Well, so let's let's see if you can give us some like parallels between, you know, horses and mixed martial arts, like, you know, I, I personally just listening to you, I'm, I'm like being, being, being like, yeah, that's the same, that's the same, that's the same, that's the same. You would find that because you've done both.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:25:35](#)):

Yeah. I definitely found it a lot. I mean, on every, on every level of of, of it, I find similarities. So it's really like how deep you want to go with the, with the similarity. One thing that I mean, yeah, I can only speak from personal experience, but you know, for me, the beginning of the journey in both is kind of a journey at outwards. Like whether it's in mixed martial arts or with horses, it's like, you're looking, obviously you're learning. So you having to look outward at other people and seek their advice and their yeah. Approval to a degree to say, yeah, you're doing the right thing. You're on the right path. You're doing well. And then competitively, I think at the start, even if you don't, you know, like, I, I like to think I wasn't really seeking out outside approval in my martial arts journey to a degree was because I was still seeking the approval of those coaches that I was like looking into it to, to see that, am I doing the right thing?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:26:51](#)):

So that's why I say like at the start, it's a journey outwards. Like you're looking for approval out outside of yourself. And then, and then it reaches a point in both like martial arts and horsemanship, where it becomes a journey in words where like the only answers you can get now is from you or in the case with horses, from the horse. And I think that's something I've I've learned to do more with, with horses is like let them give me the answer is to whether what I'm doing is working or not, rather than trying to watch more instructionals or read more. And I'm all, I'm all for that as well. I think we've got to always be seeking mentors and, and trying to learn, but I think sometimes people do that to the detriment of just asking the horse is what I'm doing working, you know, because I always give us the answer and sometimes we don't worry about what they're trying to tell us when we go ask someone else.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:27:53](#)):

And so, yeah, that's a, and, and similarly in martial arts, like especially as we were saying, it's like human chess with dire consequences where the dire consequences tell you the answers is maybe if what you're doing is working or not. And sometimes you want to ask the coach all the time and you forget the fact that you're getting punched in the face a lot. So maybe what you're thinking is working is not working. So yeah, I think those are two real great parallels is like you know, getting your answers from there instead of always asking outwards, you know?

Warwick Schiller ([01:28:33](#)):

Yeah. Sounds like yeah, it sounds like this, listen to you the whole time. It sounds like. Yeah. That once you get to a certain point, it's all about, it's all about the inward journey. Yeah. That's, that's awesome. Brandon. Well, Hey, it's been a pleasure having you on the podcast. How do how did people find out more about, about you?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:28:55](#)):

Well, yeah, well I'm pretty active on Instagram, so I've got like a personal account. I have people want to keep up with what I'm doing there, which is a relentless underscore Badger on the school UFC.

Warwick Schiller ([01:29:12](#)):

I was going to ask you about that. So that was your nickname in the UFC, wasn't it? Relentless Badger. And where did you get that?

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:29:21](#)):

So there's this funny, a clip that was like doing the rounds on YouTube years ago of the Honeybadger,

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:29:31](#)):

The world's most feel as animal. And cause I was in the, when I was in the ultimate fighter I was in the welterweight division and I was like by a long shot, this, the shortest and smallest guy there. But I just, yeah, I didn't take like a backward step of, from anyone or whatever. And someone said that I was like that Honeybadger. Cause those Honeybadger is like fight lions and and like, yeah, like all good nicknames by didn't like it. So it's stuck and now I've embraced it. I just embrace it for for the compliment that it is, you know, that, yeah. I guess I'm a fearless little creature of Africa.

Warwick Schiller ([01:30:19](#)):

Okay. A relentless under school badge underscore UFC.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:30:24](#)):

Yeah. That's my personal Instagram. And then I have a business one, which I'm a lot more active on. It's got like my my saddle making and my cold starting and, and that sort of thing. And that is Riley underscore cult and saddle. And it's just all one more like a Raleigh underscore Colton saddle and a yeah. Find it and have a look. And yeah, you kind of between the two of those, you keep up with my daily activities as well, where I'm most active on there. So yeah. And feel free to like shoot me messages or comment or whatever. I like interacting with folks. That's all good.

Warwick Schiller ([01:31:01](#)):

And you can go there to get your Maya Angelou quotes to

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Brendan O'Reilly ([01:31:05](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I do love a good quiet, you know, I've got to go on, I've got one tattooed on here and that one is Latin and it for he conquers who conquers himself. So I do love a good, quiet, you get plenty of my Instagram chain in.

Warwick Schiller ([01:31:23](#)):

That's a good quote. He

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:31:26](#)):

Conquers

Warwick Schiller ([01:31:28](#)):

That, that would sum up probably everything you've been saying on the podcast. So Hey, thanks for joining us. It's been great chatting with you.

Brendan O'Reilly ([01:31:35](#)):

Yeah, no worries. Work. It's a, it's been a pleasure and I appreciate you having me on and I appreciate it. It was really going to listen to this and enjoy it. So thank you.

Warwick Schiller ([01:31:44](#)):

Okay. Thanks guys for listening and we'll join you next time. On another episode of the journey on podcast.

Speaker 1 ([01:31:50](#)):

Thanks for listening to the journey on podcast with work Schiller Warrick has over 650 full length training videos on his online video at videos dot Wark, schiller.com. Be sure to follow Warrick on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, to see his latest training advice and insights.