

Speaker 1 ([00:00:07](#)):

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

G'day everybody welcome back to the journey on podcast. I'm your host Warwick Schiller and my guest on podcast this week is a lady from Australia named Heather Swan. And Heather was a a corporate executive for one of Australia's large just speaker bureaus. And so what she'd do, she'd spend a lot of time listening to different speakers to think about booking them. And one time she was listening to this speaker named Dr. Glenn single man, and he's a professional adventurer as well as a, an emergency room surgeon. And sh he made such an, a profound impression on that. She went up to him afterwards and they had a chat. They ended up having a coffee and they ended up getting married. And Heather went from being a corporate executive with no experience in being an adventurer to ended up breaking a world record for the world's highest wing suit based, jump off Mount Maru in India, which is about 22,000 feet high.

Warwick Schiller ([00:01:48](#)):

And so this whole podcast this chat with Heather is about how you go from being a non adventurer to doing something as amazing as that. And the story that she has got to tell about trying to do this thing is, is absolutely mind boggling, but such an inspiration. And I, I, if I was gonna give this whole podcast a bit of a theme, it would be, what would you do if you weren't afraid? And so I hope you enjoy this conversation as much as I did because Heather Swan is absolutely fascinating. And yeah, let's get to it. Hang on, Tyler. Heather's just having your mouth full of water. Sorry. That's all right. We can go now, Heather one, welcome to the journey on podcast. Thank

Heather Swan ([00:02:40](#)):

Warwick. It is an absolute honor to be talking to one of my grand heroes.

Warwick Schiller ([00:02:45](#)):

Oh wow. That's, that's pretty humbling coming from someone who's achieved, what you've achieved, you know, in the intro, I've just read out the, all these amazing things that you've achieved. And sometimes in this podcast, I wanna get into the fact that you achieved those later in life. You know, where it wasn't like you've been doing those things since you're a kid, but I don't wanna get too far into those things yet. Let's go back. And what, what were you doing before you got into what you were, you know, before you get into all that?

Heather Swan ([00:03:21](#)):

Yeah. I was a corporate executive working in in Sydney and just had a regular, a regular life climbing the corporate ladder, doing all the things that we think are going to buy us a happy life. That was me, had the BMW. And the funny, yeah,

Warwick Schiller ([00:03:41](#)):

Thinking, thinking, thinking about all those things, you're gonna think we're gonna buy as happy life. I saw an interview with Mike Tyson two days ago and he said the best quote I've ever heard. He said anybody who thinks having a lot of money will make you happy has never had a lot of money.

Heather Swan ([00:04:00](#)):

Yeah. That's an interesting quote,

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

But I know thought that was just stopping the tracks. Won't it like anybody who thinks having a lot of money will make you happy is never had a lot of money. True.

Heather Swan ([00:04:11](#)):

True.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:12](#)):

Interesting. So you were, you were on the, did you grow up in Sydney?

Heather Swan ([00:04:16](#)):

No. I grew up on the north coast of new south Wales in a little town called Wansee heads by the beach.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:23](#)):

Oh, wow. But that's gorgeous.

Heather Swan ([00:04:25](#)):

It is very beautiful. Very beautiful.

Warwick Schiller ([00:04:29](#)):

And so you got into, you were a didn't you work for a company that kind of recruits speakers. Is that

Heather Swan ([00:04:37](#)):

What worked for Harry and Miller? And I don't know if you remember him. He was one of Australia's most famous entrepreneurs and impresarios who bought big stage plays to Australia. And he was very forward thinking and progressive in all of his business practices. And I managed his speakers bureau. So I got to listen to some of the most inspirational people, powerful people, very successful people. So it was a really fascinating job. And then what Monday I happened to listen to someone I thought was going to be completely nuts. And why would I ever wanna listen to somebody who climbs and jumps off mountains? And I went along with very low expectations and was completely blown out of the water. This man who, Dr. Glenn Singman medical doctor, pioneering adventurer, world record holding extreme sports person, but a very humbled considered fascinating man who completely changed the way that I thought about pretty much everything.

Heather Swan ([00:05:47](#)):

So that day I, at the end of his presentation, I went up to him and I was kind of a bit shaky and all, and I shook his hand and said, that was the most incredible presentation I have ever seen. Could I buy you a

cup of coffee after this and learn a little bit more about how you do all those amazing things, how you overcome the fear? And he said yes to the cup of coffee. And we got married little bit of time in between. And yeah, and after that, my world was pretty much turned upside down.

Warwick Schiller ([00:06:23](#)):

So when you, when you went to that speaking engagement of his, what, what you said he did all these wild things. What exactly was he doing at the time?

Heather Swan ([00:06:35](#)):

He had just returned from an expedition to climb and base jump a Himalaya mountain called the great Trango tower. So this was the first ever high altitude Himalaya base jump. And it was a spectacular success. And the footage before GoPro, before CGI just raw it was a high eight footage. It was breathtaking of these two little bodies falling down the side of this massive cliff in Pakistan. And then they opened their parachutes and they landed on the glacier. No one had ever seen anything like it before. And this corporate Jade pretty jaded corporate audience, just all sat there with their mouths open, just gob smacked. We

Warwick Schiller ([00:07:21](#)):

Were, I bet. So he was a, he was a base jumper. Was he a Mountaineer as well? He was a

Heather Swan ([00:07:26](#)):

Mountaineer, a base jumper an emergency room doctor. He'd done some caving. He was a diver. He dove with Valerie Taylor, the famous shark woman. So he was a rock climber, very experienced outdoorsman.

Warwick Schiller ([00:07:45](#)):

Wow. Well, yeah, my son's got into rock climbing in the last few years, so I've, I've, I've looked into the rock climbing a bit and, you know, watched the, you know, Don wall and, and you know, the one with Alex, he Leonard and, you know, the, the history of rock climbing in Yosemite. What's that one called? That's a great movie. That's

Heather Swan ([00:08:06](#)):

A great movie. What's yeah, I know we watched it the other day. Cause one of our friends was there. What is it called? Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:08:15](#)):

I forget. Can't think it was called, but, but yeah, fascinating. The rock climb the whole. Thing's fascinating. So I, so at the time, sorry, get back to you here. Yeah. At the, you are this corporate climbing, the corporate ladder and you at the time, you probably think, do you, do you think you're happy at the time? Do you think, do you think all this stuff that I'm doing pretty

Heather Swan ([00:08:37](#)):

Stressed? Because I had a very, a very stressful job and a very, very demanding manager, Harry and Miller was a very demanding boss. And so I'd started to think, Ooh, this was my dream job, but it's not really feeling like that. It's starting to feel a bit hollow and, and mm, starting to ask myself a few

questions about, is this really where I wanna go? And the more powerful people that I met, the more I realize that that sort of wealth and power often doesn't equate to being a happy, healthy, well, rounded human. The two things didn't often go together.

Warwick Schiller ([00:09:24](#)):

You know, I had a, I had a guest on the podcast or probably in the first year of the podcast. She's a trauma therapist from Canada named Sarah Schlot. And she talked about, and the term I'd never heard before, but she talked about a term called coping privilege and coping privilege is to where some people, their life traumas cause them to be workaholics and basically like corporate go, go getters. But that's the way they deal with their trauma. Like someone else might be some sort of an addict and this guy's like, you know, he's making all this money and doing all this stuff, but it's still the same coping mechanism. It's just a different way of, of doing it. And she talked about, she talked about coping privilege to where the way those guys cope with their stuff looks like they're doing good, but they're inside. They're just as kind of, yeah, that sounds reasonable to me, you know, eight up as, as the guy, who's, you know, an addict of some sort, you know, it's very interesting conversation. When you look at a guy named Louis ever heard of a guy called Louis House,

Heather Swan ([00:10:46](#)):

No,

Warwick Schiller ([00:10:50](#)):

He was a all American college athlete. I think he played briefly in the NFL. He wrote a book called the school of greatness that, that sold, you know, it was quite popular, but then he had this epiphany and he realized that that it's all a coping mechanism, you know? And he ended up writing a book called the masks of masculinity. And he basically talks about this stuff in there that these things that, that men do to mask their insecurities and things like that. And one of them is this, this being productive, do we do do, do, do, do go, go, go, go, go sort of thing. Yeah. Yeah. And yeah. And it sounds like you probably were amongst a few of those people

Heather Swan ([00:11:34](#)):

I'd say so in yeah. I'd say so. So busy chasing wealth and power. Yeah. And it is a coping mechanism. It's a, a control mechanism because we all need to feel that we're in control. So I get that. I haven't heard of those books, but I get that.

Warwick Schiller ([00:11:57](#)):

And so, okay. So you meet

Heather Swan ([00:12:00](#)):

Glen,

Warwick Schiller ([00:12:01](#)):

Glen, who's now your husband have a cup of coffee and then a little bit of time passes and you're married. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([00:12:07](#)):

Which still stuns me. I don't get really why, what he saw in me, but anyway, at the time,

Warwick Schiller ([00:12:16](#)):

So what what was the first out of your comfort zone experience you had with him as far as, you know, rock climbing, mountaineering base jumping our

Heather Swan ([00:12:29](#)):

Very first skydiving. Yeah. Our very first date. He took me to the blue mountains outside of Sydney spectacular area where you can go rock climbing. But on that particular day we went canyoning. So he took me on a new canyon that he hadn't done before. And and it was a 600. We had to abseil 600 feet in total into the canyon. And I, I had done, he took, I'd done a little bit in a climbing gym, but I, but not much more than that. And we got down into halfway, I think, or a little bit past halfway into this canyon. So down waterfalls round around, over hangs and I was already right on the edge of my, I can't cope with this. I thought I was gonna die. And then he got the rope stuck. So the rope that we'd abseiled down on that we needed to abseil down to the bottom and walk out or climb back up was stuck.

Heather Swan ([00:13:38](#)):

So he, he tried really hard to get it unstuck. He couldn't, he, you know, he ju Mart up the rope and it anyway. So we had to find a way out without ropes. So I had to climb out his canyon without a rope. And we got out in the dark 10 30 at night and he was like, oh, fantastic. What a great canyon next time I'll do this and do that. And I, I never wanna see you again. I went back to the office though on the Monday and I was covered in bruises and scratches and I couldn't sit down and they said, what is this guy doing to you? That was one of our first dates.

Warwick Schiller ([00:14:23](#)):

Well, yeah, I've been rock climbing a little bit with Tyler and the climbing ups, not that big a deal, but that trust, like when you get up so that you climb up to the top of something and then you've gotta lean back out over the edge to, you know, to, to have him, have you come back again. That's a, for me, that's a, that's a hard one to push yourself through.

Heather Swan ([00:14:47](#)):

Yeah. It is have gotta have a lot of trust in the other person if you're doing it that way. I prefer an anchor. Yeah. The rope anchor to a tree and I'm in charge.

Warwick Schiller ([00:14:58](#)):

Well, even, even that, like the first multi pitch that Tyler and I did, you know, we went up and then we tied off to an anchor and just, just leaning back and relaxing on that. Anchor was very, very hard for like, I couldn't just let go of the anchor and just lean back and go, oh yeah. We're, we're, you know, however far up we are, and we're just gonna do another pitch. We're gonna do it again, just, yeah. And, and that's just because I hadn't, I haven't climbed much at all. So, you know, after a, while you trust, it's like been around horses after a while you kind of trust the whole thing. Yeah. That, that fear of that fear of Heights. Yeah. That's yeah. That's something I know. Yep. You know, and you've overcome it. So, so that was your, that was your first experience. So where did it go, Nick? Cause I really wanna know how you incrementally got into this stuff. Yeah, well

Heather Swan ([00:15:48](#)):

There's a, a saying, you know, where the dream is big enough, you'll find a way. And my dream was to be a, a full partner to Glen on these adventure expeditions. So after that, Ken, I sort of realized, right. There's some things I need to do. I need to get a lot fitter physically. I need to be a lot fitter and stronger because if you physically fit and strong, then that takes away one element of, of your anxiety that you are not physically going to be able to do the task. And once that's outta the box, then you have a much stronger ability to deal with the mental side of it. And the things that we say to each other or say to ourselves. So yeah, I started a walking program, so I just started walking and then I graduated to jogging and mountain biking and lifting weights and just gradually getting a lot fitter. And that made a huge difference. And to this day, so what is it on 25 years or something on I still run day. I still have a strength workout that I do every day. And I'm a huge believer that that is more critical as we get older as women, we need to, we lose muscle mass faster than men. And so, you know, we need to be on it. And my physical fitness is a high priority.

Heather Swan ([00:17:16](#)):

So that was a big step in the transition from corporate executive to you know, to where I ended up.

Warwick Schiller ([00:17:27](#)):

So, OK, so you got fit, but then the, the fitness doesn't necessarily require you to overcome your fears. You know, what's, what was the next, you know, what was your next big step as far as doing something that is completely outside your comfort zone?

Heather Swan ([00:17:43](#)):

Yeah. So with physical fitness in the box, so physical fitness does into psychological strength and that will to, to achieve a goal. So those two things are really important. And then with that on board, I'd learned transcendental meditation back in before I met Gwen back and, and I had been practicing that. So I paid particular attention to, because it is a critical factor in controlling your fear that you be able to be fully present in the moment. And so dealing what's happening right now, dealing with what's happening right now and bringing all of your senses to that experience. So, and you are flying a wingsuit, you have to be fully engaged. Well, it demands that you be fully engaged. You are not thinking about anything else and your whole body, mind, spirit, everything is fully in that experience. And to, to know what that feels like, and then take that to other elements of your life is a really interesting thing that we can talk about later.

Heather Swan ([00:18:55](#)):

But to answer your question, meditation became a huge priority for me so that I could settle my mind and breath control. So a lot of anxiety is how we breathe and being able to, to learn, to control that, being able to tap into that, to know when it's off it's off center, being able to, to visualize the whole what the whole challenge beforehand, knowing what skills I needed, making sure they were all in place, knowing what equipment you need and know that's all working perfectly. So that all feeds into a much higher level of confidence and control. Does that make sense?

Warwick Schiller ([00:19:42](#)):

Oh yeah. I years ago at one of the Equis in Australia, I had a lady interview me for a blog and she said, you know, you, you, this is back when I was train horses for the public. And she said, you know, you take in these horses that B Andra and Bolton do all those sorts of things. How do you go about being brave

when you ride 'em for the first time? Cuz we are all kind of, you know, between most of my readers are between 35 and 65 year old women. And you know, we're not as confident we used to be. And how do, how do you go about being brave? And I said, I'm not brave, thorough. If you are thorough, you don't need to be brave. And that's kind of, I think what you are saying, but what's really interesting is what I was trying to get at here is how did you go from, you know, corporate person to do all these wild and crazy things because that's a huge jump, but then you just gave me the answer.

Warwick Schiller ([00:20:30](#)):

You were already into transcendental meditation, you could already control your mind. You know what I mean? And you were the second podcast guest I've had, who I couldn't figure out how they got to, where they got to. And the other podcast guest he was into heavily into transcendental meditation, actually moved to whatever that town is in the Midwest. That that's where all the TMS at what, what is it in Illinois, Michigan, one of those places back there. But, and that was Jim Masterson on the, I dunno if you listened to that podcast, but, but yeah, Jim was very, very into the TM and that's, that's what helped get to where he got to. And I think that was your, for me, I think that was your in to where you already had that control, that mental control. Yeah. It

Heather Swan ([00:21:14](#)):

Gives you a, a much stronger mind. Definitely. And that's the key that and a step by step process. So I had a long way to go. So corporate executive with no backward around an adventure, I'd never even been camping outside of caravan park. And the goal. Yeah. My idea of camping was four and a half stars at the time. But anyway, the goal, our goal was to break Glen's existing world record for altitude based jumping. So the goal was together to go and climb and base jump a higher cliff than he had done. So to do that, I had to learn all of those skills. So I had to learn, well, how to go camping outside a caravan pack, how to put up a tent, how to sleep in a sleeping bag, how to pee in a bottle altitude, how to rock climb, how to Mount near how to skydive, how to base, jump, how to manage your mind in those extremely trying environments. So, yeah, so it was a one step at a time process.

Warwick Schiller ([00:22:25](#)):

So you mean, you mean to tell me that you couldn't skydive, rock climb, base, jump or mountain, and you said, you know what I'm gonna do. I'm going to start out, I'm gonna set a world record in something that requires all of those things to be perfect. Exactly. So that I can set a world record in something else. And you hadn't even yep. That's like saying, okay, I've never played tennis before, but the reason I'm gonna pick up is because I'm gonna win Wimbledon

Heather Swan ([00:22:53](#)):

Prob well, possibly not quite as bad as that.

Warwick Schiller ([00:22:57](#)):

Oh, I think it is. But wow. So that that's so the existing record, the one, the husband didn't Pakistan, how tall was that one?

Heather Swan ([00:23:06](#)):

20, 20,000 and something feet. The great Trigo tower is so yeah, say 20,000 feet.

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Warwick Schiller ([00:23:14](#)):

And then Maru the one that you actually, where you broke the world records 22,000, isn't it correct?

Heather Swan ([00:23:21](#)):

6,672 meters, I think 22,000 feet. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:23:24](#)):

Yeah. I did. I did the mats before. I, I, I saw that it said 6,672 meters. And I know that, you know, if any American listeners don't, they don't calculate in defeat rule is meters. I thought I'd figured out. And that was 22,000 feet. That's so do you need oxygen at that level?

Heather Swan ([00:23:40](#)):

No. You need to climatize. So you need to climb the mountain slowly and Mount Meru hadn't been climb from the route we were climbing was a brand new route. So we were doing a lot of route finding on the, the mountain. So it took three weeks to climb it.

Warwick Schiller ([00:23:58](#)):

So we're just gonna add that to the thing is not only are we gonna learn how to rock climb, mountain air AB sail space, jump wingsuit. We're also going to climb up a route. That's never been clown before climb before,

Heather Swan ([00:24:12](#)):

Correct? Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:24:14](#)):

Okay. You're quite adventurous lady. Aren't you?

Heather Swan ([00:24:17](#)):

Well, this was a process that took so I started in, it took six years.

Warwick Schiller ([00:24:29](#)):

That's a very, a short time to win Wimbledon from picking

Heather Swan ([00:24:32](#)):

Up a tennis show. I don't think I could win Wimbleton no.

Warwick Schiller ([00:24:39](#)):

Wow. So let's so you had to learn all those things individually. Yeah. When did, where was your first base jump? You, you had a lady that taught you how to

Heather Swan ([00:24:52](#)):

Yes. I had the most beautiful amazing coach. Her name is Marra Inot she at the time was the world's most experienced female based jumper. And she's a woman who thinks differently about pretty much

everything, incredibly inspiring, beautiful soul. And I was very lucky to have her. Yeah. Because women learn differently. And while Glen is incredibly experienced, he's not the most patient teacher, definitely not the most patient teacher with me.

Warwick Schiller ([00:25:32](#)):

Well then there's a saying in the horse business, and I think it's the same for any business is you can't take lessons from someone you've seen naked.

Heather Swan ([00:25:42](#)):

I'm not sure. Yeah. I've never thought about it that way. He's just not a that's

Warwick Schiller ([00:25:48](#)):

The general rule is you can't take lessons from someone you've seen naked. Right. So what it basically means is you can't take lessons from your partner, you

Heather Swan ([00:25:53](#)):

Know? Yeah. Yeah. Well, that's probably right. He, he's just a very, very talent to met person who gets things really quickly. And he gets very frustrated with people who don't get things as quickly as him. He just doesn't or used to he's much better now, but back then he was terrible. Not just really impatient human.

Warwick Schiller ([00:26:15](#)):

Right. So this lady that was teaching you the patient, where is she from?

Heather Swan ([00:26:19](#)):

She is from Moab in the United States.

Warwick Schiller ([00:26:22](#)):

Okay. Yeah. Beautiful place

Heather Swan ([00:26:24](#)):

There. Yeah. Yeah. I love base jumping there.

Warwick Schiller ([00:26:27](#)):

So where was your first base jump?

Heather Swan ([00:26:30](#)):

At the river bridge in twin falls, Idaho, also a very fun place. So that's a safe way. If you ever wanna go base jumping first, you, you have to learn to skydive by the way. So you should do, you know, depending on the person two to 200, 200 to 500 skydives is recommended before you do your first base job.

Warwick Schiller ([00:26:54](#)):

So these are the, these are the steps ladies and gentlemen, to get up this mountain and set a world record is, well, we're gonna learn how to, how to base jump it. Oh, but before you do that, you've got a

sky dive two to three two to 500 times. Yeah. You know, I had a lady at a clinic in Australia. She's love I've, I've come to Nara over the years. Lovely lady from Queensland, but she is Swedish and she's in Australia because she met her husband at the world, skydiving championships when she was on the Swedish team, him and he was on the Australian team and, and she told me she's had like, I don't know, 6,500, 7,000 di skydive, something like that. And I remember asking her, so how long did it take you before you weren't your pants before you jumped out the door? She said something like, oh, it was only about three or 400.

Heather Swan ([00:27:42](#)):

Exactly. It takes a really long time before. You're not, it, it, I was terrified. It terrified me skydiving. I thought I'll never get this. The gear it's the, it's very gear intensive. The gear's quite technical. And yeah, it's terrifying.

Warwick Schiller ([00:28:04](#)):

That's, that's amazing something that's a, a, a kind of a small part of the, the eventual goal that you were gonna have on its own is terrifying. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([00:28:15](#)):

Yeah. Probably. Well, I, I didn't have the best start. See we, we started out Glen decided that we should go to New Zealand to, to Queenstown to the nece the second highest Bunge jump in the world so that I could get over my fear of Heights. His, his theory was so we'll, we'll go to Queenstown. You can jump from the nece a 500 foot Bunge jump as many times as you need to, until you completely desensitized to the whole, I, you standing on the edge falling off. But we, when we went they had a, a problem with the harness and the, and I jumped when the bungee took up and all the GForce went through the buckle around my waist and blew a hole in my small intestine. Oh. So that was a potentially, that was a potentially fatal injury that required. I had to be, I was rushed from Queenstown to inva car. Have you ever been to inva car? Nevermind.

Warwick Schiller ([00:29:18](#)):

I have, yes. I've been to incar, right. I did a clinic and incar,

Heather Swan ([00:29:23](#)):

So rushed to I, my life to the emergency team at, in the cargo hospital who yeah. Rushed into emergency surgery to repair the whole. And then I was in intensive care. And then the surgeon who performed the operation said, I should never do anything so stupid it's to bungee jump skydive or anything like that ever again.

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

So, so let's, let's back up here a bit. So the, the, the, the eventual goal, we wanna have set this world record, jump off this thing, one of the steps to do this, cuz this is like horse train, just breaking it down. One of the steps to do this is to the skydive two to 500 times. But before that, we've gotta get over your fear of jumping off things. So now we're going to Bunge jumper the first time you Bunge jump, you tear a hole in you intestine. Second,

Heather Swan ([00:30:10](#)):

Second time. It was second jump.

Warwick Schiller ([00:30:12](#)):

Oh, your second time. Yeah,

Heather Swan ([00:30:14](#)):

Yeah, yeah. So that, so that created the most overwhelming fear of been, oh my goodness. Jumping off or out of anything. I, I thought I'd been afraid before, but after that accident, I was in completely uncharted territory. I was just, and I was going to give up. So at that point I thought, right, this is just ridiculous. Go back to your corporate life and just get over this nonsense. It's ridiculous.

Warwick Schiller ([00:30:42](#)):

I think most people would, would do that at that time.

Heather Swan ([00:30:45](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And I, I was on that course, but then I started to think about it and I was meditating a lot while I was recovering from that injury. And I started to think about it. And I thought that if I do that, I would be giving into one thing fear because I wasn't responsible for the accident. It was an accident. Nothing I'd done could have changed the outcome. And so that shouldn't influence the ultimate goal, which is to climb this beautiful mountain and fly off the top with my husband and, you know, be an, a, a husband and wife adventure team. I wanted that really. I wanted that really badly.

Heather Swan ([00:31:25](#)):

So obviously, yeah. So I went back to meditating a lot. I went back to building up my physical strength. Again, I lost a serious amount of weight after that and was pretty weak. So I had to start, I rebuilt again, physical fitness and meditating a lot. And then tried to go back to skydiving. I'd I'd get to the drop zone. I'd start vomiting before I even got outta the car park. So so yeah, but eventually I did go back to skydiving and broke an ankle and then kept and, and kept going. And eventually after, yeah, a few hundred jumps, I stopped being afraid of skydiving and started to understand, you know, why I, why being afraid, isn't helping and how to control it.

Warwick Schiller ([00:32:26](#)):

That's that's I'm I'm you got me in like, I, if you were a slot machine, I keep sticking money in it. Cause I wanna keep get, I wanna keep getting out. That's that's amazing. You know that I haven't done the never swing, but I've done. There's another Bunge jump in. Well, there's another jump in Queenstown that

Heather Swan ([00:32:46](#)):

Yeah, the the pipe bridge one.

Warwick Schiller ([00:32:50](#)):

No, well, I've, I've Bunge jumped off that, but the first one I did was there's another swing. It's not the never swing. It's another, but you drop, you jump off and you drops straight. The, so the ne yeah, because the never swing, I think you start swinging as soon as you drop. Whereas this one you drop straight down first, then after

Heather Swan ([00:33:10](#)):

A three. So the, no, the ne is a pure Bungee jump where you, you are falling and then,

Warwick Schiller ([00:33:16](#)):

Oh, okay, sorry. So there's a bungee and, and a swing and you, I Haven

Heather Swan ([00:33:20](#)):

Swing yeah. With the Bungee. So the bungee, theoretically, it is a perfect place to, to learn how to launch a, you know, successfully as a base jumper. Cause one of the critical things about base jumping is being able to launch really strong and confident and hold your body in the correct at, because if you don't, then if you screw up the exit on a base jump, that's one of the most dangerous parts of the whole thing. So you, so theoretically, that was a really good idea. Just didn't work out that way for me. So

Warwick Schiller ([00:33:56](#)):

Yeah. So I, yeah, so I did the, I did, the one idea was a swing, but it's, it's not a bungee, but it's a straight drop. So that never swing is a swing. This one's a straight drop and it catches you at the bottom. Then the next year I went back, I did the one off that pipe bridge.

Heather Swan ([00:34:09](#)):

Yeah. Yep. I know it,

Warwick Schiller ([00:34:12](#)):

The Tyler did that one with me too, but he had dislocated his shoulder rock climbing and he dislocated it like, and was supposed to have surgery on it. And so when you're filling out the medical forms for that thing, you know, you've got any problems with this and that. And he said, well, I'm gonna have surgery on my shoulder soon. Cause it keeps dislocating. So they wouldn't let him jump with two arms free. They strapped one arm across his body and had him jump like a, he had one arm in a salute, but that didn't give you that. Yes. Anyway. Yeah. So now you, now you're skydiving. You've got that bit down pat. So your first base jump was in Moab. How, how tall of

Heather Swan ([00:34:51](#)):

A no, my first base jump was at off the Perine river bridge in twin falls, Idaho. So that's a five oh Idaho. Sorry. Yeah. So that's a 500 foot bridge. So if you ever wanna learn to, to base go, that's the best place to learn because a bridge is obviously the most safe. You're not gonna hit the thing you jumped off. You've got clear air underneath you. Yep. And so I did a course with there with Mar and you've got a, the hardest part of that base jump is climbing over the railing. So you've got all these, it's a into state highway. So there's all these trucks raging across the bridge. The bridge is shaking and there's a giant railing and you've gotta climb over the railing, cling to the railing, get yourself organized and then jump. So that was a bit confronting.

Warwick Schiller ([00:35:40](#)):

Is that legal?

Heather Swan ([00:35:41](#)):

Yes. Legal.

Warwick Schiller ([00:35:43](#)):

Oh, it's legal.

Heather Swan ([00:35:44](#)):

Yeah. Legal, legal. We, we do legal. We don't do illegal.

Warwick Schiller ([00:35:48](#)):

Oh, you don't do illegal based junk. Okay. No. and so it's 500 feet. How much free fall do you have base jump off the audio. Just three

Heather Swan ([00:35:58](#)):

Seconds. How many? Three, three seconds. Yeah. Which feel much longer. Oh,

Warwick Schiller ([00:36:02](#)):

I bet.

Heather Swan ([00:36:04](#)):

Yeah. And it's a beautiful base jump. So you fall free, fall for three seconds. Open your canopy and land on the, the side of the, the river. It's the same place where evil can evil tried to flies motorcycle across. Oh really? Or was it a rocket? It was one or the other. So Eagle can, it was a rocket. It was a rocket. Yeah. So that went, didn't go to plan either.

Warwick Schiller ([00:36:32](#)):

And so how, how was it mentally doing your first base jump?

Heather Swan ([00:36:39](#)):

Really hard. It took me, so we came, we came from Australia and we, you know, flew over there and we, we hired an RV and we drove from from where did we drive from Los Angeles out there. And so drive all that way out there. I'm thinking, oh my God, now you can pull out of this. Now you've come far enough. Or this is too much. Can't do this. And again, you've gotta go back and, and get control of your mind, get control of your breathing. And I had to, when we got there, the others were just like, yay, let's go. Let's go jumping. And I was like, oh no, I've gotta. So I, I took me three days watching the others and just getting, getting myself centered before I was ready. But the very first time I was just pure magic. It really is a beautiful sport based jumping. If you can overcome the fear that sensation of when you step off and because all of your senses are engaged, you can hear more. You can, you are a lot more and it, it is beautiful and quite addictive.

Warwick Schiller ([00:37:49](#)):

You're in that, you're in that flow state. Exactly.

Heather Swan ([00:37:52](#)):

You're in the flow state and you don't have to take a lot of time to get there. You're in there immediately.

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

Yeah. so I bet there's a huge sense of accomplishment.

Heather Swan ([00:38:08](#)):

Huge

Warwick Schiller ([00:38:09](#)):

After you do that, cuz you know, I, I used to be like ski Heights. And so the friend of mine in Australia that was the sky diver. She talked me into to doing a sky dive there. They called it off that day because oh, there was clouds. And so we couldn't do it. And I had spent six weeks getting ready. I was gonna do this bloody skydive thing. And then we walk outta there and I've just, I've just had this big, old release. We're not doing it. And she said, we might, I might call up the coast. We could probably go a couple hours north and do it. I go, no I can't. She says, why not? And she, I said, cuz I'm not ready. And she said, but you're ready 10 minutes ago. And I said, yeah, I spent six months getting ready.

Warwick Schiller ([00:38:47](#)):

And then I just stopped being ready. And there's no way I could do that. But then what I did was I broke it down. I was in lost Vegas, judging a thing one time and was staying at the stratosphere and you can jump off the top of the stratosphere. Yeah. And so I did that and it was exactly what you talked about with the base jumping like really hard to get off the edge. And as soon as you jump off, there's this amazing feeling. And so then we went to Queenstown, I jumped off that big one and then the next year Tyler and I went back and I jumped off the, the bridge one and it got easier each time, you know, it's, it's, it's fighting through your body saying no, but I can't imagine you getting on a plane in Australia flying to LA and then driving all the way up there with that feeling.

Warwick Schiller ([00:39:30](#)):

Because when Thailand I were in Queenstown, we're gonna be there for five. And the first day we got there, we couldn't check into the hotel yet. So we parked the car, walked around the street and we, I said, well, let's go see about the, the Bunge jumping thing. And there's that one shop on the corner there that sells all the, you know, the jet boating and all that sort of stuff. And we go in there and I said, so we want to jump off the Bunge, jump off that bridge. Have you got any time this week said, yeah, we do. And I said, what time you got available? He said, well, how about three o'clock this afternoon? And this is one o'clock. I said, he said, how about three o'clock this afternoon? And, and I went, you sure? And we walked out of there and Tyler's face was green. Yep. And I said, how you feeling? He goes, oh, not real good. And I said, well, how would you like to have that feeling all week? Say I booked it for Friday. It's now Monday. Let's say we booked that for Friday. How would you like to feel that all week? Well, I was, when you told me about flying from Sydney to LA and then getting in an RV and driving all the way to Idaho with that feeling, I can imagine what that felt like.

Heather Swan ([00:40:33](#)):

Exactly. That's exactly right. And to make that horrible feeling, we had a film crew, what, you know, filming every stuff up that I made. So yeah, it is a horrible feeling.

Warwick Schiller ([00:40:47](#)):

What was the film crew there for?

Heather Swan ([00:40:49](#)):

We were making a documentary, so Glen's a documentary filmmaker. So he'd sold the documentary to the ABC here in Australia and geographic internationally. And so yep. Every, you know,

Warwick Schiller ([00:41:04](#)):

And this was all, was this the documentary leading up to the base jump? Yeah. Leading

Heather Swan ([00:41:08](#)):

Up to the world record base jump.

Warwick Schiller ([00:41:10](#)):

Yeah. Right. So you are filming the whole thing. Yeah. Oh, wow. Nothing like learning, something that scares the hell outta you while you got a camera, a shoved in your face. What's the name of that documentary in case anybody wants to watch

Heather Swan ([00:41:22](#)):

It? It's called the first one was called base climb. Two defying gravity

Warwick Schiller ([00:41:29](#)):

Base climb. Two defy gravity. Okay. So there's a series. There's another one.

Heather Swan ([00:41:32](#)):

Wasn't it? Yeah. There's a, there's three of them. There's base climb base climb two and base climb three to make life easy.

Warwick Schiller ([00:41:39](#)):

Mm. Well there you go. Yeah. Yeah, that, that feeling of, for me, like jumping off the stratosphere, then those two things. And then I've been, I've got a chest freezer in my garage here and I've been taking cold showers for a couple years. I've been ice baths and I've talked about a lot in the podcast. I don't really need to rehash it. But the, for me it was the same thing. Getting in the ices, like stepping off the thing. There's that same amount of argument with your body? No, yes, no, yes, no. Yes. And I, I, I liked that about the ice baths is I don't have to go anywhere to challenge that part of me. You know what I mean? Like you can have that. You can have that argument right there in your own garage.

Heather Swan ([00:42:21](#)):

Yeah. Yes. Yeah. Can't imagine to be that bad though. I'd rather jump into a freezer full of ice any day than that. I go back to that feeling I had flying to twin falls, Idaho, Harry contemplating my first ever bay. Cause yeah. Yeah. It was not a good feeling.

Warwick Schiller ([00:42:41](#)):

Well, I think with the base, like with a Bungee jump, okay. All the stuff's done. I've just gotta fall. You've gotta, there's a whole lot more you've gotta do to base jump. I mean you that's right. You're in control of your own fate. I mean, there really is no fate, bungee jumping less of course, something to breaks and you tear a hole and you intestine, but you know, you just gotta, all you gotta do is, is step off, but base jumping, there's so much more that relies on you doing it. Right. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([00:43:08](#)):

There's critical parts of it. So I used to say to myself, perfect exit perfect opening, which is the canopy opening, perfect flight, perfect landing. And I'd and I'd visualize those steps. So perfect exit perfect. Opening. Perfect perfect flight, perfect opening, perfect landing. And the brain doesn't know the difference between a vividly imagined and a real event. And so visualization is a very good way to practice in your lounge room safe.

Warwick Schiller ([00:43:45](#)):

Can you say that for everybody at home again, cuz that right there is one of the secrets to life. Spit that out again, please.

Heather Swan ([00:43:51](#)):

The brain does not know the difference between a vividly imagined event and a real one. So visualization is a very powerful tool for performance, for overcoming anxiety, for everything that we wanna achieve.

Warwick Schiller ([00:44:10](#)):

Words of wisdom. So there's your first base jump. How, how many base jumps did you have to do till it got easier?

Heather Swan ([00:44:21](#)):

A lot, a lot. I mean it was better actually the second and third one with a wor were even worse than the first one. Now that's really interesting going back because be the first one, your body, you don't really know what to expect. You just know that it's, it's inherently scary. I mean, it's one of our, the fears that we are born with the fear of falling and the second and third one, because you know that there's quite a lot of, to make sure that you stay safe, then you have irrational thoughts coming in as well as instinctive fear. And so that's, that was hard. But if you can recognize that they're irrational thoughts and go through the process of planning to make. So I packed my parachute properly, all of the gears working properly, I'm physically and emotionally fit. These are just irrational fears. This is just my fear, which is the, you know, I can't is the front line of our fear. And so recognizing that and you just, I just push through it.

Speaker 3 ([00:45:34](#)):

If you are loving the journey on podcast with war, we know you'll benefit greatly from his online video library, showing footage of real time training sessions, you will learn how to approach situations with your own horse in an empathetic and effective way. The video library has been life changing for tens of thousands of and horses all over the world. Warwick invites you to check out the seven day free trial@videodotwarchiller.com.

Warwick Schiller ([00:46:08](#)):

So, you know, what's funny here there is, you know, you chose some questions that we will get to later, but, but out of all 60 something podcasts, not, I haven't always all been guests, but the, the one question that everybody's chosen except you is what is your relationship like with fear? And I, I guess you probably didn't choose that one because the whole conversation is about what's your relationship like with fear. So we don't need you. We knew that and didn't need to answer that one separately. Okay. So you've, you've done your first base jump and then you've done quite a few after that. Your second and your third one were tough. How many did you do before it got easy?

Heather Swan ([00:46:50](#)):

Oh, it never gets easy because you're fully aware that any mistake we will kill you and even, you know, experts die base jumping. We lost a, a friend quite recently who was the expert's expert. And so, you know, you should never it never gets, it never gets easier. But in terms of you still, you're always afraid because you're fully aware of the consequences of a mistake based jumping, but it does get to understand what the real fear should be. So what should I really be afraid of and how do I mitigate that? How do I successfully manage the risk of this one base jump? And that, that can be done. I had very, I never stepped over my own rules. So, you know, I wouldn't jump in poor conditions. I wouldn't jump if I, if I didn't feel that I was fully prepared for the, for that jump. And while I, you know, stayed within those rules, I, I stayed safe. I never injured myself based jumping, not even as you know, not even a sprained ankle.

Warwick Schiller ([00:48:17](#)):

So. Okay. So you got the, well, so you got the base jumping. What else do you need to learn to do this world record thing? So what about you? Did you learn to rock climb in the meantime? Yeah, I had to,

Heather Swan ([00:48:29](#)):

I learned to rock climb. I really like rock climbing. I like the, the complexity of it. So figuring out the best smoothest way to the top. So flowing, if you like to the top of the climb, I really enjoy that. It's a mental and physical challenge. So I had to learn to rock climb. I had to learn to mountain here. I had to learn all about ropes and technical equipment like crampons, you harness your IES, how to stop yourself. If you fall on a mountain, how to pee in a bottle, in a tent. All right. If you're a guy at heart, if you're a woman

Warwick Schiller ([00:49:08](#)):

And you know, the, the rock you said about the rock climbing, have you ever read a book called stealing fire by name? Stephen Kotler.

Heather Swan ([00:49:16](#)):

I've heard of Stephen Kotler, but no, I haven't read that book.

Warwick Schiller ([00:49:19](#)):

Well, he wrote a book called the rise of Superman. Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah. Which was about extreme athletes. Yeah. And I think it was in the rise of Superman. He was talking about I think it was Dean Potter. Yeah. And Dean Potter said, I don't even like rocks.

Heather Swan ([00:49:34](#)):

Really. I love

Warwick Schiller ([00:49:36](#)):

Rocks. I rock climb because of the state are the, the flow state that are going to, when I rock climb. Well that, you know, I don't necessarily like rocks. I don't necessarily like rock climbing. I like the fact that in order to do these things, I need to, to you know, I need to be in that flow. And then like, he was a wing Suiter and actually poor, unfortunately passed away in a wings, suiting accident in Yosemite a few years ago. He did.

Heather Swan ([00:50:03](#)):

Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:50:05](#)):

But something else that he said about the wing suiting, he said, Hey, I can, I dunno if it was about what base jumping a wing suiting, but he said, I can, I can meditate for 12 years and get to at that point he says, but I can just step off a cliff. And I'm right there. It's that is true. It's, you know, it's about that altered state of consciousness. That's what the stealing fire book was about, was about altered states of consciousness, whether you would get it through meditation, psychedelics being with your horse, justifying experiences,

Heather Swan ([00:50:39](#)):

Being with your horse.

Warwick Schiller ([00:50:41](#)):

Yeah, yeah. Whatever it is. But yeah. Yeah. All that I've, I've read a lot of stuff. That's stuff fascinates me. What I've got into recently is have you ever read breath by James nester? No. Oh, it's all about, it's all about breathing and then he's, there's another one I'm listening to now it's called deep and it's about free divers and yeah. Yeah. All that stuff fascinates me. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([00:51:06](#)):

It is fascinating. It is fascinating. Glen, my husband is a a lecturer in the extreme sport medicine program for the university of Tasmania. And he wrote the module on the psychology of extreme sport. So he did a lot of research into the mental states, that extreme sport I elicits. And it was, it was very interesting.

Warwick Schiller ([00:51:33](#)):

Yeah. That, that whole thing fascinates me. And you fascinate me too. So let's, let's keep going towards, let's keep going towards jumping off Mount Maroo. Yeah. So you had to learn to rock climb. You had to learn to mountain. What was, what about the wings suiting? What was your first win suit experience and how was that? It

Heather Swan ([00:51:53](#)):

Again, that was really frightening because at the time wing suiting was a young discipline of skydiving and traditional skydives were very, oh, voodoo wing suits. Your arms and legs are strapped into the suit. If anything goes wrong, it's much harder to deal with an emergency. And so, yeah, there was a lot of bad, you know, bad vibe around it. But to me, skydiving is really just falling with style. Whereas in a

wingsuit, you are transformed for, you know, a few minutes into a bird. You are flying, you are gliding, you can, you know, fly around. Louds, it's just the most magical experience. So there was a strong desire to not just climb the mountain, but fly off it. And so I had a very strong desire to be a good wing suit pilot. And while the first time was scary, it was also incredibly incredibly elating. It was just pure joy. Yep.

Warwick Schiller ([00:53:05](#)):

Imagine it must kind of feel like, like you're Superman, like when you see Superman blasted off and

Heather Swan ([00:53:10](#)):

Sh around exactly. That's it does feel like that it feels the power and the, the speed and you, you, you know, especially in skydiving, in relation to cloud, so you can skim across the top of the clouds. You know, that song, I've seen clouds from both sides now. Well, I absolutely have, and I've touched them. And some of my favorite jumps are cloud jumps where you are flying across the clouds and you have a, a very visceral sense of how fast you are going. Cause we are going very, so 220 kilometers an hour forward is kind an average speed in a high performance wingsuit and with a good tailwind we've clocked up nearly 400 kilometers an hour across the Australian Outback.

Warwick Schiller ([00:54:01](#)):

Holy cow. Yeah. And, and do you, without the clouds, do you, the sensation you going that fast?

Heather Swan ([00:54:07](#)):

No. So without the clouds on a sky, you do on a base jump, but on a skydive, you just feel like you're a big glider. So you, it actually feels quite slow and floaty and and, and yeah, and really just, oh, floating along here

Warwick Schiller ([00:54:27](#)):

Flying, it's kinda like being kinda like being a helicopter when you're 800 feet off the ground, you don't realize how fast you're going until they put the chopper down just above the tree tops. Yeah. And then you're like, holy cow, we are, we are motoring. Yeah. Holy. Wow. So did you say, did you say where your first wing suit was? Sorry, did I ask you

Heather Swan ([00:54:47](#)):

Then my first wing suit was a wing suit skydive. So you cannot wingsuit base jump and live unless you've done hundreds of wingsuit skydives so our home drop zone was picked in outside Sydney. And so that's where I did my very first wing suit skydive.

Warwick Schiller ([00:55:09](#)):

And how long did you wingsuit for

Heather Swan ([00:55:11](#)):

On that job? That was a little tiny learn wing suit. So it would've been no more than a standard skydive, which is about 60 seconds. Okay. And then you open your canopy and land. So in the high performance suits that we fly, you can to get, give you an idea you can fly for over three minutes. So three times as long as that first one.

This transcript was exported on Feb 11, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Warwick Schiller ([00:55:34](#)):

So you, are you descending three times slower because you're going more parallel to

Heather Swan ([00:55:39](#)):

The ground. Yeah. Yeah. The glide ratio goes up. Yeah, yep. Is improved. Wow.

Warwick Schiller ([00:55:46](#)):

And so, okay, so you've done. You did, that was your first wing suit and you did a lot of, did you all, did you do all in Pickton?

Heather Swan ([00:55:57](#)):

Yeah, I did. Most of my wing suit skydive training in Pickton correct. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([00:56:05](#)):

So then, so you've set all kinds of records as far as like you've wings suited over the grand canyon. You've wings suited over Antarctica you've wings suited over Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, the Outback. Did they, did they come after the, the,

Heather Swan ([00:56:22](#)):

Yeah, after Mount? Oh, really? But what came before Meru? So what we did was after I had quite a few over a hundred wing suit skydives we went to to Italy, to Monte Brent, a cliff in Italy. And that is the perfect place to wing suit base jump. And that was where my first wing suit base jump was. Oh my God. That was scary.

Warwick Schiller ([00:56:50](#)):

Talk us through that because I've seen, I've seen footage of people wing suit base, jumping off off of that, that mountain. And that's gotta be, it's gotta be another level of fear, doesn't

Heather Swan ([00:57:03](#)):

It? Yeah, yeah. Very much so because that's where your arms and legs being strapped into the suit really does make it quite a difference because unlike skydiving, where you've got a reserve parachute based jumping, you only have one parachute and on a wing suit based jump, it's a completely different exit. So on a standard based jump, you jump off and you bend your body like a banana so that you you're stable in the air. You like a box and you fall down and then you reach around open, pull out your pilot, shoot, throw the pilot shoot, and it opens the canopy on a wing suit. Skydive, you've gotta lean four. You're sort of cupping the air more. So you've gotta make your core concave. And it's a completely different style of exit. And if you screw up the exit, then that is potentially dire. So we, again, we flew all the way from Australia to Frank fit and then picked up a land Rover defender and drove from Frank fit to to Arco that beautiful little town in Italy, where if you are going on a holiday, beautiful place, stunning, but we were going to jump off a cliff. And so for me, I was terrified the entire trip.

Heather Swan ([00:58:19](#)):

And and then it's a really serious back then. It was in the early days of it being jumped and there's a really serious drive to the top, sort of all these winding parts. And then you had to hike for an hour and a

half through the forest to get to the exit point. And the exit point was kind of this little, a ready thing, which was quite confronting. It's a big overhang. And yeah. So, and it took me, everyone else wanted to go, oh, let's go jump. Cause Marta was with us. And Marty and her husband was Jimmy. Yeah, I think Jimmy was with us, but they, they, yeah. Jimmy was with us. So they just wanted to go and jump. Whereas I I again sat for three, three weeks. No, I tell her lie, Marta wasn't with me on that trip.

Heather Swan ([00:59:12](#)):

She was with me on the first trip to that cliff wing suiting. It was another, another Jimmy, but yeah, so they all wanted to go and jump, but I took three days just sitting and watching the cliff, watching people jump off it, looking at the landing area, surveying the landing area, surveying all the outs. So if you don't make the landing area, where are you gonna land? So I had all of that in my head before I felt right. I can jump now and I feel comfortable that I've done all the preparation and I've mentally prepared so I can, I can go. And when I went, I had a perfect, perfect jump. It was it was magical to stand on the edge of a cliff and to spread your wings, just like a bird and just launch off and then glide out and then open your canopy and land. It's a magical feeling.

Warwick Schiller ([01:00:11](#)):

I can, yeah, I just can't even imagine what that, I mean, not just the, the feeling of doing it, the let down this, the, the, the release of I did it and I survived that's. I mean, you know, it's just, there's just so much to it, but I, yeah, but let's talk about the magical part like that. How tall is that cliff in Italy?

Heather Swan ([01:00:37](#)):

I think it's about 3000 feet.

Warwick Schiller ([01:00:41](#)):

So it's like Yosemite. Basically. We

Heather Swan ([01:00:43](#)):

We'd have to check that now. It's not as high as Yosemite. Let me see if I can find it here.

Warwick Schiller ([01:00:48](#)):

Yo is about 3000 feet,

Heather Swan ([01:00:49](#)):

I think. Yeah. Anyway I forget how high it's.

Warwick Schiller ([01:00:55](#)):

Well, it's pretty high, cause I've seen the videos. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:00:57](#)):

It's high and it it's very good for as a learner base jumper because it's over hung. So it's O it overhangs for 300 feet. So when you go, oh really? Yeah. So there's no wall, there is wall, but it's cut under. So where you jump from is forward of the wall. So if there's no wall right there. That's right. So if you have

any, any problem, you've got some time to sort it out. Whereas if you jump a sheer and you have a problem, you have a big problem.

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

You yeah. Well, you know what, there's a, there's a saying I've seen, I've seen attributed to John Wayne. I don't know if John Wayne actually said it, but the, the saying is courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway. And you went up there with these people and they're all like, yeah, we wanna go, we wanna go and you are scared to death, but you saddled up anyway. That's, that's a pretty special thing. That, that's pretty amazing.

Heather Swan ([01:01:53](#)):

Yeah. Well, I was mighta wasn't with me on that trip because she, you know, wasn't keen on wingsuit based jumping at that point. So I was the only woman and I was surrounded by all these gungho guys, like Robert picnic, who basically was a co inventor of the wing suit from Phoenix fly and yeah, young from Glen too much testosterone and sometimes.

Warwick Schiller ([01:02:22](#)):

And so you survived that one of, of of course. Where did you, where did your wing suiting go from there?

Heather Swan ([01:02:29](#)):

So we spent quite a bit of time there wing suiting off that off that cliff, until we we'd sorted out all of the elements of what we were gonna do on the high altitude wing suit based jump. So we had to hone all of our equipment, all of our communications equipment, so all of our camera equipment. So we jumped all of those elements and made sure that we were comfortable with all of it unconsciously competent in its use, because when you're at altitude, your brain doesn't work so well. And so you really need to be unconsciously competent with every aspect of what you're doing. So we, we did that and then we flew to then we flew to to Delhi to go to to Mount,

Warwick Schiller ([01:03:16](#)):

Oh, you went from straight there to, yeah. To let me, let me, let, let me get this straight. You have left Australia. Yeah. You have never wing suit based jumped. And before you come back, you were going to set a world record for wing suit based jumping, even though you've never wing suit based jump before, is that

Heather Swan ([01:03:33](#)):

Right? Yeah. Well, I'd done a lot of jumps out of a hot air blue. So before I jumped off a cliff, so first there's hundreds of skydives. Then I did quite a few out of a hot air balloon. So hot air balloon is the best way to practice wing suit based jumping because when you skydive, you are already ha have velocity. So it's not the same sensation as base jumping where you're falling into still air. So in still you have to work much harder to control your body because you don't have a cushion of air to push back working with. So yeah, once again, if you wanna learn a wingsuit based jump, do it first out of a hot air balloon. So we jump from where did you do all went out to Kundra out in yeah. Yeah. Beautiful patchwork

Warwick Schiller ([01:04:23](#)):

Is just about, you know, 45 minutes north or so of where I'm from. And, and a lot of times you drive through there and there's all those hot air balloons up there.

Heather Swan ([01:04:30](#)):

Exactly. So we went there and and one jump we did from 24,000 feet. Yeah. So that was to get the, you know, the sense of the thin air and altitude. So this is all about rehearsing, every element of what you're doing before the critical moment.

Warwick Schiller ([01:04:57](#)):

I had a guest on the podcast recently from England, he's a stunt rider and he does this thing where gallops along on a horse and he climb down one side under its and up the other side while the horse is galloping.

Heather Swan ([01:05:10](#)):

OK.

Warwick Schiller ([01:05:11](#)):

And he, he said, it is just a matter of practicing this, practicing all the basics until they're boring. And it sounds like that's what you guys are doing is, you know, you're doing this scary stuff, but you're just doing the basics over and until you're unconsciously competent, till it's boring, you don't even have to think about it's

Heather Swan ([01:05:31](#)):

Not boring and is never boring.

Warwick Schiller ([01:05:33](#)):

But no, no. I mean, but that's not boring, but yeah, you are. You're not, you're not really having to think about it too much. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:05:39](#)):

You want to be training the part of your mind that can do it automatically. So conditioned response. So you wanna train the correct conditioned response. And that's what I spend a lot of time doing with my horses, training them in the correct conditioned response. So if the, they get frightened, their conditioned response is, oh, I just look to my mum. Yeah. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:06:05](#)):

There's a lot of parallels with what you are talking about and the way I go about horses, you know, break it down at the tiny steps. Yep. That's it. Don't go to the next step till this steps. Perfect. And the thing that gives you one is, you know, you've on your homework. Yep. That's

Heather Swan ([01:06:19](#)):

Why I love your podcast and your app so much because there's just so many parallels and I love how thoughtful it is and how much it considers the horse and the partnership because yeah, there's so many parallels. It's just a, it's just a, a level, a high level, a commitment to a high level of performance in what

we are doing. And that's what I love. I think that's the, the reason that we, you know, have the brains that we have so that we can develop our our ability to perform at a very high level.

Warwick Schiller ([01:06:52](#)):

Yeah. Well, I think it doesn't matter who you talk to. If somebody can do something at a very high level, they've done all, all the steps that you were yeah. You were talking about, you know, it's, it's, you know, like the Navy seal say you don't rise to the occasion, you fall to the level of your training, or actually that I used to think that Navy seal said that, which they do, but actually that's from a Greek philosopher name, arche who was born in six 80 BBC. And he, he was a, he was a Scott poet and a soldier and yeah, he said you don't rise to the occasion. You fall to the level of your training.

Heather Swan ([01:07:27](#)):

Mm. Yeah. That is true. So you don't want any holes in your training,

Warwick Schiller ([01:07:32](#)):

Especially when you're jumping off that. Okay. So you've been in France. How long did you spend in France? In

Heather Swan ([01:07:37](#)):

Italy? Oh, sorry, Italy. Yeah. We spent a few weeks in Italy to, you know, a couple of times a day, every day. So he got very fit as well.

Warwick Schiller ([01:07:48](#)):

So the there's the, there's the fear. Okay. But then there's the being able to push through it. I'm guessing. And you tell me how it was. Did you have probably as much fear, the last one as the first one, it was just easier to tell that, make that decision I'm gonna go. Is that, how is that how it goes or does the fear get less?

Heather Swan ([01:08:10](#)):

It does get less, it, it changes in style. It changes from irrational where we don't know what we're coming into to, I know what I'm coming into and I know exactly what I need to be afraid of and how to prepare for that.

Warwick Schiller ([01:08:29](#)):

That's like getting on a horse for the first time. I know what to be afraid of. And I know how to prepare for that. Yeah. Yeah. That's that's cool. I okay, so you leave there and you go to Delhi. Was that your first trip to India?

Heather Swan ([01:08:43](#)):

No, I have been there before. Pretty it's like a parallel universe.

Warwick Schiller ([01:08:48](#)):

Yeah. I I'd so wanna go to India one day cuz I've just, I've just had so many people just tell me, like there's no way to describe what you see in India. True. That

Heather Swan ([01:08:57](#)):

Is true.

Warwick Schiller ([01:08:59](#)):

The, the colors and the smells and the just, it's just a full on

Heather Swan ([01:09:04](#)):

Visceral experience. It is yeah. Full on. And just the number of people and the, the amount of information that is being thrown at you is quite, quite astonishing. And it's a completely different headset over there. We had to deal with the Indian mountaineering Federation and we have a lot of paperwork, you know, to do to, and, and yeah. Completely different headset.

Warwick Schiller ([01:09:32](#)):

So how long did you, did you get to deli and then like head out there and start up or did you do a lot of more, a lot more preparation before you decided to do the ascent? No. No.

Heather Swan ([01:09:43](#)):

We, we were on our way, so we went, we flew into Delhi and we, then we got our our support team and we four wheel drove out to as far as we could. And then we tracked into the mountain into tap van and up past Mount siling and

Warwick Schiller ([01:10:07](#)):

Away we went. So when you say you tracked, are you hiking at this point in time?

Heather Swan ([01:10:10](#)):

Yeah. So from from, from Chapa van you're, you're hiking around to the base of Mount Mero.

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

And how long did that take you?

Heather Swan ([01:10:25](#)):

So actually we walked from a town called gang go tree. So that probably took about a week,

Warwick Schiller ([01:10:33](#)):

A week of walking. Yeah. And now you're at, and now you're at the base of Mount Mero. Is that right?

Heather Swan ([01:10:39](#)):

Yeah. So what, the first thing we did, we went up to the landing area and and scoped out where we intended to land. So we did a Reiki, what they call a Reiki of of our landing area, which was the base of the sheer wall of Mount Miro. And then we Trek around to the other side of the mountain and set up our base camp in, in this valley and then started to find the route up the mountain.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:08](#)):

What time of the year was it?

Heather Swan ([01:11:11](#)):

It would've been, it was it was August. Oh, no, no, no, no. It was may sorry. May April may.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:24](#)):

And so that's is that that's Northern hemisphere. So summer

Heather Swan ([01:11:31](#)):

The climbing season. So the same as people climbing Everest, they go in, you know, April, may.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:37](#)):

Yep. And when you're at the base, your base camp, that's not in it's, that's not in snow level, is it?

Heather Swan ([01:11:43](#)):

Yeah, it was in the snow.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:45](#)):

It was in the snow.

Heather Swan ([01:11:46](#)):

Yeah. We we'd been in the snow for quite some time. By the time we got to our base camp, that was all snow, all ice.

Warwick Schiller ([01:11:54](#)):

Yeah. Oh, wow. And so once you got your base camp set up, did you just go, or did you, were you there for a few days doing some after you did all your reconnaissance stuff?

Heather Swan ([01:12:03](#)):

Yeah, so we set up base camp and we we spent a little bit of time at climatizing to that altitude and just getting all the gear ready to, because you've gotta climb up with all the base jumping rigs and the camera equipment and all of that stuff. That's not on an ordinary out nearing expedition. So you get all that set and we repacked our base jumping rigs. So we repacked them on the ice on tops because they can become disrupted well, that's the superstition that they can become disrupted on an international flight. So you imagine that packed job, oh, it's gotta be so right. Every crease of the parachute has to be folded perfectly. And so we did that and then we started the climb up

Warwick Schiller ([01:12:52](#)):

And the climb up took you how long? Three

Heather Swan ([01:12:54](#)):

Weeks,

Warwick Schiller ([01:12:57](#)):

Three weeks to climb to the top of it. Yeah. And how many of you were there climbing up? Cause you're obviously camera repeat.

Heather Swan ([01:13:05](#)):

Yeah, there was myself and our cam climbing camerawoman, a Swedish lady called Tova Edison, Glen a climb, a skydiving friend of ours, mic hill, a base jumping cameraman, Jimmy Freeman and and another New Zealand climber. So not very many, not big team.

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

And you've gotta carry three weeks worth of supplies and your wings, suiting stuff and your skydiving stuff and your camera stuff. Upper mountain.

Heather Swan ([01:13:37](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And we had our, our Indian support company. We had two high altitude sheers who were helping us had two high altitude porters who were with that. But yeah, we, I carry my own rig all the way up.

Warwick Schiller ([01:13:50](#)):

Yeah. The I just watched a documentary the other day. I think Jimmy chin might have made the documentary, but it's on this, this Tibetan shepa dude that climbed yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:14:05](#)):

All 14 high, 8,000 meters.

Warwick Schiller ([01:14:09](#)):

I know 14, eight meter. Wasn't he a hell a

Heather Swan ([01:14:13](#)):

Dude? Well, he must have some sort of really interesting physiology because it takes most people three weeks to climatize, properly to high altitude. And that's why we had that timetable. We'll climb up, you climb down so that you're really well climatize so that your brain will work and your body won't shut down.

Warwick Schiller ([01:14:37](#)):

Yeah. That, that

Heather Swan ([01:14:38](#)):

Movie was amazing. It was amazing sitting on the like we just sat there going, oh, I can't believe that

Warwick Schiller ([01:14:45](#)):

I was sitting on the couch on the edge of the couch, like, oh my goodness. Yes. Yeah. Pretty amazing stuff. So then you, you get up there, do you get there and jump or do you get there and camp and go, okay, tomorrow we're gonna jump.

Heather Swan ([01:14:59](#)):

No, we had to find the exit point. So we had to find a suitable place to jump from it. Wasn't gonna be the summit cuz the summit had an overhanging glassier on it. So just down from the summit, there was a perfect ledge, but we had had to chip it out because it was all covered in ice. And so I had to get all that ice off so that you won't slip when you exit. And so we dug snow cave, we dug a snow CA at high altitude and we lived in that snow cave for quite a while, waiting for not only for the exit site to be prepared properly, but also for the weather, we had fairly appalling weather and which was completely unsuitable for jumping. So we just had to wait

Warwick Schiller ([01:15:41](#)):

And this is all in the movie.

Heather Swan ([01:15:43](#)):

Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:15:45](#)):

I can't wait to watch this. I mean, I'm, I'm excited here and I can just picture it. I've seen, I've seen some of the pictures of you guys climbing that thing and like, oh yeah, I'm mesmerized by the whole thing. So you, you, you dig a snow and you live in the snow cave for a while and you finally get your opportunity. Did, did the opportunity come like, okay, there's a clearing. We're gonna go now or is like, did you like, do you, did you know an hour ahead of time, two hours a day, three minutes. I mean, what was, what

Heather Swan ([01:16:13](#)):

We were doing was so once we established the exit point, we would climb up and we would sit on the ledge waiting, but there was, but Meru is sits in the center of a a circle of mountains and Mount Shing is in front of you and, and it was all in cloud and you just can't jump into cloud in the Himalaya because you could run into Mount Shing. So we would just wait and then we did that for a while. And at that point I we'd lost all lost a lot of weight. We were starting to get a bit weak and I said to Glen, I can only do this one more day. And then we're gonna gonna have to drop back down to base camp and, you know, build back up again and then come back. So that particular day we climbed up and we were waiting, waiting, waiting, and it wasn't looking promising. And then we got a call from our base saying, you have a 15 minute, the, you can get into your wing suits and be ready. You'll have a window in which you can jump safely. And so trying to put a wing suit on it, that altitude on that, you know, in that situation like the cliff is really steep was pretty interesting. So we got into the wing suits and we, and we waited and then we got a call from from landing camp saying right when you're ready guys go,

Warwick Schiller ([01:17:39](#)):

I'm having a visceral sensation here. Just, just you telling the story. So, so you obviously pretty mentally prepared, but when you got that call said, okay, put your suits on a go like, just got real. Like, did you like, I'm getting a visceral sensation just thinking about it, but did it, or were you so prepared? It was like, okay. And off you went well,

Heather Swan ([01:18:03](#)):

We had been really prepared for a particular jump, but our wingsuit our cameraman had got, had, hadn't been able to climb the mountain. He got altitude sickness at camp two and had, had to go down.

So I had to assume that his camera helmet and I'd never jumped it before. It was a big camera and I'd never, I've seen it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:18:31](#)):

I've seen what it looks like. Yeah. So

Heather Swan ([01:18:33](#)):

I was a bit freaked by that because we'd practiced this other exit. The three of us we'd practiced over and over and over again. And now I had this extra responsibility of flying the camera. And so, yeah, so it wasn't the jump that we'd practiced. So I was worried about that. That was in the back of my head, but other, I thought, well, yeah, I'm ready. I, I can do this, but it was we were definitely doing a lot of breathing on that ledge,

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:03](#)):

But, but think about this ladies and gentlemen from being scared to jump off a bungee New Zealand to I'm on I'm at 22,000 feet on top of a mountain in India, we've just got the call and I'm ready. Yeah. Like that's confidence. That's that's I think that's amazing. It's

Heather Swan ([01:19:20](#)):

A, it's just about being able to send to yourself when you need to. And that's one of those skills that, you know, TM and breath control gives you, I think.

Warwick Schiller ([01:19:33](#)):

And so tell us about the jump. I mean, that's, that's gonna be

Heather Swan ([01:19:37](#)):

So that it is Mount Mero is the, the mountain at the center of the universe in Hindu mythology. It is a really stunning mountain. It's a sheer vertical cliff that we were falling down and the other side is a beautiful snow ramp. And the view from him from on that ledge, you are looking out at Mount Shing, which is the seat of Sheva in Hindu mythology. So the seat of the gods and straight down the the beautiful glassier. So the view can you view was just spectacular. So, but I was jumping behind Glen. So he was, we were on a tiny little ledge and we are sort of jiggy Jing there trying to get out, you know, everything ready so that you're gonna get a clean exit because

Warwick Schiller ([01:20:27](#)):

You like a, you like a penguin when you're in that suit, aren't you? Yeah, yeah,

Heather Swan ([01:20:29](#)):

Yeah, yeah. A bit like a on the ground. They're pretty awkward your feet and your arms are zipped into the suit. So you gotta shuffle, shuffle, shuffle to get to the edge. And then you spread your wings and curl your arms so that you get the optimal launch position. And then Glen went off first and I followed him and the thin air was a bit of a shock. And also we'd lost a bit of weight so that the suits weren't so tight as they normally are. So they felt a bit different. So yeah, it was a bit of a fight to get control of my body and the camera in thin air. But once I got control of it O out across the glassier, like, you know, super woman

Warwick Schiller ([01:21:17](#)):

And I bet then it was just all fun.

Heather Swan ([01:21:20](#)):

No, because no, you know, I was trying to concentrate on where I was going. And and also I was very aware that when we landed, I had to not land in a glassier and not land in a slot in the glassier. Yeah. So the flight was meant the flight was beautiful, but then, you know, I pitched, I opened my canopy and I went, oh, it's open perfectly. But then I, right now don't land your in a hole in the class and no one will ever find you ever again.

Warwick Schiller ([01:21:57](#)):

Yeah. I was gonna ask you about the thin air and how because the air would be different, not just because it's because of the height, but because of the temperature, wouldn't it? I mean, it's not, you're not jumping out of a air balloon over canal.

Heather Swan ([01:22:13](#)):

No, it's minus 23 on the ground and pretty cold. Yeah. And so all your fingers and everything that don't work as well, and you really need a lot of dexterity in your hands to be able to operate the the pilot shoot. So you gotta pull the pilot shoot out of its pocket behind your back law, the pilot shoot right out into clean air so that it drags the canopy out. So yeah, there's a bit to think about in a bit to to get right.

Warwick Schiller ([01:22:43](#)):

So how was the feeling when you, you and Glen both landed? Did you land close together? No,

Heather Swan ([01:22:48](#)):

No. I messed up. I land, I landed in the wrong place. So we were a bit apart and they were all worried where's Heather, but I was all right. I was really proud of myself that I didn't land in a hole. So I was just packing up my canopy. I did it, I'm off in the world and I'm alive and upright, not a scratch on me. And now where's the tea. I wanted a cup of

Warwick Schiller ([01:23:15](#)):

Tea and when a cup of tea that, but that must have been an amazing feeling, not just, I mean, there's just so much to it. There's all the proper, there's the danger, then there's the exhilaration. And then there's the, all that, all that preparation and it all worked the

Heather Swan ([01:23:33](#)):

Way you were supposed to that's. Yeah. And I, and I didn't mind that I landed on my own because it was quite a spiritual transcendent moment. That was, that was honored by being completely alone and this vast environment and looking back up at the cliff where, you know, we'd take them three weeks to get up there and three minutes to get down and, and feeling small, but also feeling enormous at the same time, difficult to put into words, but it was an incredibly expansive inclusive. You're so much more than this little human shell feeling. Really. It was a spiritually moving feeling, standing on that glassier.

Warwick Schiller ([01:24:16](#)):

I can only imagine, wow, was this, I'm having a bit of a moment here, this, listen to you talk about it. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:24:25](#)):

It was, it was one of those moments that, yeah, well that, you know, spiritual, it was quite spiritual.

Warwick Schiller ([01:24:35](#)):

So, so that was a world record. When you guys, when you guys got back from that words, there were a lot of, was there a lot of media attention about that?

Heather Swan ([01:24:45](#)):

Yeah, we, the media attention started even before we got we were in, we were only back in gory and we'd turned on our mobile phones just to see if they were working and it rang. And it was a journalist from the ABC in Australia who wanted an interview. And so, yeah, there was a lot of attention and it felt kind of strange because when you're out on that mountains, you know, you're a long way from anywhere. No, I other human contact and that's one of the things I like about expeditions that you can be completely removed from all of the you know, the bombardment of modern life. And so you find a, a much greater sense of stillness out there. So it was a bit of a rude shock when we got back and we were bombarded with with media requests, but at least I had a positive story to tell I did it. I didn't know.

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:42](#)):

So you guys have been on 60 minutes, three times, haven't you? Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:25:46](#)):

60 minutes. A few times. And Australian story and, and various things. Yeah. We've had fun with,

Warwick Schiller ([01:25:55](#)):

You've had fun with 60 minutes

Heather Swan ([01:25:57](#)):

Taking Liz. He took Liz Hayes skydiving finally.

Warwick Schiller ([01:26:03](#)):

And how did Liz hazer? Oh, she

Heather Swan ([01:26:05](#)):

Was, she was frightened, but she was amazed.

Warwick Schiller ([01:26:11](#)):

Rightfully, rightfully so. So you get back from there then, then do you go back to like having a normal wife for a while? Or do you go let's, let's do the next one.

Heather Swan ([01:26:23](#)):

Yeah. It's pretty odd. You come back from an expedition to come back to normal life. There is a, a come down a let down and that can be quite hard to manage, especially because you've been so hyper and so, so stressed for so long that you you need some time just to rebuild physically and emotionally and then think, well, what did I learn from that? What, where do we wanna go next? And yeah, so we took a little time to, to process the whole, the enormity of the whole thing.

Warwick Schiller ([01:26:59](#)):

And so you've done, you've broke three world records. Was it? That was the highest,

Heather Swan ([01:27:08](#)):

Yeah, well, we've broken a few lucky with our balloon jumps and other various things, but that was the, that at the time that was the highest wing suit. It was the highest base jump, the highest wing suit based jump. And it was a world first and only for a woman hasn't been no, you know, still is a world first and only for a woman. I'm the only woman who's done a high altitude in Alan based jump and in a wing suit,

Warwick Schiller ([01:27:34](#)):

How's that feel to be, to be that person? Well,

Heather Swan ([01:27:37](#)):

I'd like to inspire someone else to have a go.

Warwick Schiller ([01:27:43](#)):

I, I think you're inspiring lots of other people not to have a go at that, but to have a go at whatever's outside your comfort zone the Anta one, you, what was the, what did you guys do over theta first wing suit over theta? Is that what

Heather Swan ([01:27:55](#)):

It was first wing suit skydive over Antarctica. Yeah. And that was the most beautiful jump that we've done. That was spectacular again, another, oh,

Warwick Schiller ([01:28:06](#)):

What's the video. It, this

Heather Swan ([01:28:07](#)):

Afternoon quite spiritual. The way that the sun, there was a ring around the sun and we flew over Mount Rossman. It was magical, just breathtakingly. Beautiful Antarctica is so beautiful. And to be able to fly over it in a wingsuit is as close as you get to, you know, being a bird flying over it,

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

You get the same view as Santa gets gotta be sleigh.

Heather Swan ([01:28:35](#)):

Yeah. Only better. Cause you haven't got, you know, other things in the way. It's just you and the,

Warwick Schiller ([01:28:41](#)):

You all that you haven't got all that reindeer poop flying past you. Yeah. Yeah. That's

Heather Swan ([01:28:44](#)):

Right. You and the environment, you're not worried about the reindeer, anything to do with the reindeer.

Warwick Schiller ([01:28:52](#)):

So let's talk about what you do as far as is being like would you call yourself a motivational speaker?

Heather Swan ([01:29:03](#)):

I don't, I really am uncomfortable with that term. I'd rather, I mean, I dunno why I'm uncomfortable with it particularly, but I prefer to say inspirational. I just, I tell the story and I, and I weave through it, the methodology, how I did, what I, I did, how I still do what I do. And people find that I think quite inspiring and useful because let's face it. There aren't very many people who wanna climb mountains and base jump off the top, but we all wanna feel centered. We all want to feel that we in control or have a measure of control in our life. And we don't want to be in a state where we are feeling anxious. We wanna be able to have that sort of childlike wonder and joy that we had when we were children, without the adult, you know, monkey mind getting in the way. And, and I learned a lot about that state from this whole process, but you don't have to jump off a cliff to do it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:30:11](#)):

I was listening to an audio book by Ramdas one time didn't know who Ramdas is. Yes. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:30:17](#)):

I've heard, I've read a few of his books. Yeah.

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

He was talking about, he he'd just come back from India and he's giving this talk, you know, he's all these talks all over the place and all these people show up to listen to him. And mostly they're young and dressed in like white robes and white flowy dresses and things like this. And he said at one time, he's still in this talk and there's a lady sitting in the front row and she's about 75. You know, she's got a little Sundre on, she's got a little knitted cardigan on or whatever, with a little pattern, leather shoes or whatever looks totally a, a place. And he's talking for a while and she's like, beaming. Like she's just loving it. And he says to her, what, what brings you here? And she says, oh, why I knit? Of course I knit just that, just that beam present with the knitting needles and, and the, and the, and the wall and just being in the moment, that's her spiritual practice. And she's come to see Ram does I knit? So it doesn't have to be jumping off the building. Absolutely not.

Heather Swan ([01:31:20](#)):

Doesn't no present moment. Focus is such a gift. If you can develop the strength of mind to be present moment focused more and more, it's a gift it's just such, it's the best,

Warwick Schiller ([01:31:37](#)):

You know, instead of, so when

Heather Swan ([01:31:38](#)):

You what's that Winnie the pooh quote, you know, about pig piglet says it's the best day it's today, or it's the best moment. It's this moment.

Warwick Schiller ([01:31:48](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So when you are doing your, so not on motivational speaker, an inspirational speaker, what would be the, you know, the, the gist of what you try to tell people, would you say like mindfulness, meditation, what else

Heather Swan ([01:32:10](#)):

I try to tell? I try to embody that as we, you know, as we get older, we don't have to get more feeble and that we have a lot more power than we can. And then we imagine a lot more power in our mind, a lot more power in our body and a lot more power to take personal responsibility for what we want out of life. The what and the why. I mean, they're the big things that the big one of the powerful things about their at expedition, we had a very clear what and why. And so I like to define do that in life, you know, define what and why.

Heather Swan ([01:32:52](#)):

And so we, I had very clear goals and I think having goals, writing them down is very powerful. I talk about that in my presentation. I talk about I talk about fear a lot and how to recognize irrational fear from a real fear, how to genuinely analyze the risk and how to mitigate the risk so that we can have experiences that, that deliver what we want without you know, fear spoiling them. I like to say fear is the I can't is the front line of our fear. How can I ignite our creativity? So how can I achieve this? And just let your subconscious come up with all these ideas. And sometimes I'll come in, you know, odd moments or in dreams, but yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:33:45](#)):

Do you get, and do you get like downloads, you might call 'em, but do you get, when you meditate, do you get collective consciousness information? Do you get, do you get stuff from when you meditate? Well,

Heather Swan ([01:34:03](#)):

I often when I meditate, I try, I just I focus on in tea, am you have a mantra? And then the mantra slips away and there's an expansive, just oneness. That's very peaceful and very warm, and it feels very you know, it feels like everything's okay. And so if I go into meditation with something that's bothering me, or I need an answer for it, it generally doesn't come in the meditation, but it often will come later. It'll just pop into my head, try this, or, you know, or I'll be attracted to a certain or something I'll be attracted to a certain book or a certain podcast or something that will give me an inkling of, you know, where I need to go or where I could look for the answer to that.

Warwick Schiller ([01:35:00](#)):

I thought you'd say something like that. You know, I better get to your questions here by the way.

Heather Swan ([01:35:04](#)):

Oh, the questions,

Warwick Schiller ([01:35:07](#)):

The questions. So for you podcast listeners, you know, that I would, I give my guests a choice of 20 questions and they get to choose a few of them, which I stole from Tim Ferris's tribe of book. And like I said before, Heather's the first one who hasn't chosen the question, what is your relationship like with fear? Because the whole podcast was about that. So we didn't have to answer that one. What was your biggest failure and how has it helped you?

Heather Swan ([01:35:33](#)):

Well, we failed in our first two attempts to, to do the world's size based up we failed on on and we failed on the great TGO tower. And at the time it was absolutely devastating. I just thought, you know, we'd put all this work in, made all the effort, climbed them out and I could do it. And, and we were really, really devastated cause I thought it was gonna be a film and we've let down the sponsors I've let down everyone who believes in me, but looking back, it was the best possible thing that could have happened because I wasn't a wing suit sky over or bass jumper there and climbing and, and wing suit based. Jumping Mount mirror was a much more complete experience than it would've been to have repeated Glen's jump. So I'm so happy we fail.

Heather Swan ([01:36:28](#)):

But at the time I just thought, oh, I can't do that again. I, you know, it's completely devastated. So it taught me that, you know, a failure while it might feel devastating at the time can open doors to something much more satisfying and much more true to the initial vision of what, you know, my initial vision was. And I found that, you know, in other areas of life too, that failure is, is shouldn't be deemed as, as a, a bad thing. It should just be, what can I learn from this? You know, or that, wasn't what I was meant to do.

Warwick Schiller ([01:37:04](#)):

So what, so the, the two of those things that failed, they were, they weren't wing suiting. They were just based

Heather Swan ([01:37:10](#)):

On, no, I was gonna just do a standard base don't we set out to do a standard base jump from mama to bla, but the edge, the ledge was on suitable. So the ledge had a the, the exit point had alleged at 500 feet. So if you didn't get a absolutely perfect exit, which, you know, you were gonna hit the ledge, so unacceptable risk. So we didn't even attempt it, but we were out there ready to go. Beautiful mountain means mother's jewel box. I thought it was my mountain. So it was really devastating. So we went for a plan B, which would've still been a world record, a high exit point on the great Trigo tower, but we were avalanche. And and then it was, and then again, unacceptable risk. So home again. So, you know, climbing all these expeditions, take an enormous amount out of you and not to achieve what you you came to do is pretty devastating. But again, they were not my mountains in the end, Mount me was my mountain.

Warwick Schiller ([01:38:13](#)):

I love how you just kind of skipped over, oh, you were at, and then we went home. What, what is we were avalanche involve?

Heather Swan ([01:38:21](#)):

Oh, it involves the most scary thing that you can encounter in mountaineering because you don't have control. You know, it's when the mountain releases it's, it's totality on you. And we were lucky because we were securely anchored and it, it avalanche away from us. So, but it still, the mountain was unstable and, you know, to go on, would've been an unacceptable risk and we have very clear, you know, I have, I have a very, a very developed fear factor that says I don't step over my, what my definition of an acceptable risk is.

Warwick Schiller ([01:39:03](#)):

You know, I love that about this whole thing is that you, you know, it's not like you guys are dead devils or whatever. I mean, it's all a very calculated, it's like, you know, it's like starting horses. Like people go, you know, people like, I couldn't start my own horse. It's too dangerous. It's like, if, if it's dangerous, you're doing it wrong. You know, if, if it's dangerous, you've obviously skipped some steps somewhere. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So that was your biggest failure, your favorite quote, what is your favorite quote?

Heather Swan ([01:39:33](#)):

Well, I've got two and I can't choose between them and they're short. So I'll tell you the both of them. So my first one is whatever you would do or drill it. Boldness has magic power and genius in it by Gerta. So that's been my quote for a really long time. And the other one, which I love for my, for my horses as well is slow, is smooth and smooth is fast. It's fast.

Warwick Schiller ([01:39:59](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's yeah, yeah. That, it's definitely a, a horse one right there, but it's, it's probably a, it's probably a boardroom dancing, one in a mountain climbing one and a, it's an fun one. It's

Heather Swan ([01:40:09](#)):

An everything. One when you slow, you know, you slow life down, slow your mind down and and take the time to be fully present in the moment and to notice how much beauty there is, or just to notice, because the modern world, we are going faster and faster and faster that booked by James gleek faster is a really great summation of how our modern world is just bit nuts. And so to stay centered in it, you need to just consciously slow everything down, slow. You're breathing down slow. You're think down until you're not thinking till you're in a, doing, being inclusive mind state. And I love the other quote by Gerda, whatever you would do or dream, because that's where I started out with this big, impossible dream that you know, everyone said pretty much that I wouldn't be able to do it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:41:08](#)):

Well, it is one of those. It's not like, yes, I'm an experienced guide over. And I gonna add rock climbing, mountaineering base jumping and wings suiting to, to my, to my, to my resume resume here. It's like you had, you had nothing on the resume, nothing to break a world record Absolut requires about seven world class things. Yeah. That's pretty crazy. Okay. What's the most, and you've probably answered this already, but what's the most worthwhile thing. You've put your time into something that changed the course of your life.

Heather Swan ([01:41:40](#)):

My marriage, my partnership with my husband. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:41:47](#)):

I must say you are, you are quite the partner cuz you're married this adventurous guy. And instead of, instead of going, well, I'm just gonna settle him down. So he doesn't do all this dangerous stuff. You just stepped outta your comfort zone and jumped right in there. So that's, that's pretty amazing. You know,

Heather Swan ([01:42:04](#)):

Well he used to go skydiving without me and it terrified me. I used to think every weekend he went, I would think he's not gonna come home, which is a WFI away of thinking about it. And and, but then I, I saw how happy it made him and I thought, well, there must be, you know, there's gotta be something more in it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:42:28](#)):

I love how you made that shift though, from, from that, whatever, you know, whatever head space you're in before about, you know, I can't do that because it's scarier. What if, what if, what if, what if, and you push through all that to, to, to do all this amazing stuff you've done, that's a, you know, that's a, a huge shift in perception and you were, how old were you when you did your first skydive or when you jumped off the, did the, the bungee and punched you innards 40.

Heather Swan ([01:43:01](#)):

Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:43:02](#)):

See, so you are 40, like people don't use, they take up adventurous things at 40. If they, you know, you don't go from being non

Heather Swan ([01:43:13](#)):

That's. Right. You know, I was the old woman at this drop zone, which is populated by a mostly young, heavily tattooed, heavily pierced guys. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:43:25](#)):

Yeah. And so, yeah, that's that, that's, that's one of the, I, the story itself's amazing, but going from someone who was involved in that at all to jumping in with both feet, because it didn't really interest you, but because your husband was doing it, that's, that's, that's great marriage material right there. Well, I really part the

Heather Swan ([01:43:47](#)):

Material. I really admire his his ability to control fear, I think, you know, and he takes that into other areas of his life. So into his work, as an emergency physician and it, you can clearly see that being able to control your mental state is hugely advantageous. And because I had absolutely no idea of what was involved, I was a bit, no, you know, I didn't know what I didn't know, but I did think what a beautiful

thing it would be. So if you weren't afraid wouldn't you wanna climb and jump off a beautiful mountain. Oh,

Warwick Schiller ([01:44:22](#)):

I mean, you know what, what's that saying? You know, what, what would you do

Heather Swan ([01:44:26](#)):

If you weren't afraid?

Warwick Schiller ([01:44:27](#)):

Yeah. What would you do if you weren't afraid? Yeah. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:44:30](#)):

Everyone would wanna stand on the edge of a beautiful mountain and just fly off. I mean, it's the stuff of dreams.

Warwick Schiller ([01:44:40](#)):

Yeah. Surely is. Okay. Next question for you. And this is a, you know, these questions came from Tim Ferris's tribe, mentors book. And so he's interviewing a lot of really interesting people. And the question is, what advice would you give people about to enter your occupation? And then in, you know, in parenthesis, he kind of says, given, and this is odd, given that most of us have a, an occupation that's not really an occupation, you know? So let's start out. What would you say your occupation is?

Heather Swan ([01:45:09](#)):

Well, right now it's pharma.

Warwick Schiller ([01:45:12](#)):

Okay. Well,

Heather Swan ([01:45:15](#)):

So I've got a few occupations, but because of COVID and yeah, right now it's, it's pharma and horse carer and dog, you know, mother and yeah. But if, when, you know, for my occupation sky over, I would, my, I would be, if you are attracted to, to skydiving, then don't listen to, I can't focus on how can I focus on developing the physical and mental attributes that will enable you to manage the fear and be successful. And also don't listen to people telling you, you can't

Warwick Schiller ([01:46:03](#)):

Well, you obviously didn't.

Heather Swan ([01:46:06](#)):

Yeah, it was pretty awful though. I mean, you know, when we started out there were a lot of people who said some incredibly nasty things, one of them, you know, one based jumper said, this woman will never base, she'll kill herself. She'll be an embarrassment to our sport. Glen will be a single man. Again, Glen's last name is single man. So, so, you know, comments like that are pretty hurtful. And really, they

just speak to the lack of emotional intelligence of the person saying it and have nothing to do with the person trying, but, you know, for the person trying, it's not helpful.

Warwick Schiller ([01:46:50](#)):

No, no, definitely not. So that's skydiving. What about, and I suppose, inspirational speakers, you know, it's one of those things, that's not really an occupation. You don't go, you know what, I'm gonna be an inspirational speaker. You've gotta be inspirational.

Heather Swan ([01:47:06](#)):

I think so. I guess, I mean, there are people who, who it out just to be inspirational speakers and they find a topic. I don't, I don't get that. I relate best to people. Who've got something to say and who develop their skills to say it in a way that's accessible. And they, they think about the audience in terms of, well, this is valuable time for these people. How can I, I frame this story in such a way that it's not about pumping my ego, it's about delivering something that's interesting and useful for them. And that's how I think about it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:47:42](#)):

But don't you think though, that story is a great way to teach people concepts, especially.

Heather Swan ([01:47:48](#)):

Absolutely. It's the way we learn, especially,

Warwick Schiller ([01:47:50](#)):

Especially vulnerable old stories, stories that you know, where it's not like I'm the expert and you guys are gonna hear what I'm gonna say, but this is where I screwed up. And you know, and this is, this is where I was scared and this is where I struggled. And

Heather Swan ([01:48:02](#)):

Yeah, our brain is structured to learn from story. And so stories are powerful. We remember them. And so having a story as a framework and then, you know, hanging all these little bits of useful information on it is the most powerful way to learn. And also not being, you know arrogant as the expert in, I come across a lot of arrogant experts in, in learning. Cause I started in horses like too, you know, I wanted a horse when I was a little girl, but never got one. And so I started in horses when I had a skydiving injury that grounded me and and I had an opportunity to have a horse and that's where that started. And I had a lot of people saying, oh, you're too old. You'll never get the seat. You'll never get the seat or in, you know, it's pretty interesting. And when I look back on it, it's a, an arrogance thing. When people say that

Warwick Schiller ([01:48:59](#)):

They obviously didn't know who they were talking to at the time, did they?

Heather Swan ([01:49:02](#)):

Well, you know, I don't think that's something that any trainer should say to anyone, but there you go.

Warwick Schiller ([01:49:12](#)):

Yeah, there is. I'm, you know, think there's a lot of instruction given in the horse training sphere that is not presented in a way to make the information. And I, and I don't mean the information. I mean things are presented in a way that's abrasive to the person who's supposed to be receiving the information. So they're almost rejected as it's good information, but the way some people frame it, you know, it's almost like an accusation or, you know, they, they, they tend to put people down, not build them up. And I, I, I never learnt very well that way, you know, and I don't, I don't particularly like to teach like that either.

Heather Swan ([01:49:57](#)):

Good. Yeah. That's why I like your videos.

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:02](#)):

Okay. Next question. And this is about your profession again. What do you feel is the worst advice given in your profession? Whenever? Oh, well, the worst

Heather Swan ([01:50:09](#)):

Piece of advice I was given is don't do it. You can't do it. That was the worst piece of advice. And that was repeated over and over again. Don't even try, you're wasting your time and you'll be in embarrassment to our sport.

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:30](#)):

You know, you did set yourself up for that though.

Heather Swan ([01:50:35](#)):

Yes, that's true.

Warwick Schiller ([01:50:37](#)):

Like I, like I said, I know I have never done any of these seven disciplines. I need to be world class at, pull off this thing and I'm gonna pull off this thing. I mean, you, you probably have out of anybody I've ever met, that's probably the, the most outrageous goal I've ever heard of. How interesting the most outrageous. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:50:57](#)):

Interesting. Well, I don't think, well, the trick is understanding exactly what you need to know to do it well and to do it safely and focusing on that. And and that's what I did.

Warwick Schiller ([01:51:09](#)):

Yeah. I mean your inspiration that way.

Heather Swan ([01:51:11](#)):

Cause it's, I didn't need to be the rock climber all the best mountain near, but I needed to, you know, to be the best at combining all of those things. And I also needed to be the best at raising the money, getting the permissions and all of those things, what that go that back it up, the big planning part of it. That's just as challenging almost as the physical side of it. Oh,

Warwick Schiller ([01:51:33](#)):

That's, that's a, another whole,

Heather Swan ([01:51:36](#)):

Yeah. You imagine going to a sponsor and saying here I am, and I wanna jump off the highest tip in the world. You get a lot of people laughing at you

Warwick Schiller ([01:51:45](#)):

And I want you to gimme some money to help me do it. Yeah. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([01:51:48](#)):

I need a lot of money to do it. So can you sign a check please? Mm.

Warwick Schiller ([01:51:56](#)):

Yeah. I'd say that you almost need to have as bigger balls to do that as you do to jump off a cliff.

Heather Swan ([01:52:02](#)):

Well, I got none of those, so I can't speak to that

Warwick Schiller ([01:52:07](#)):

Metaphorically. Yeah. okay. So next question is, what do you think it means to be a leader and a follower?

Heather Swan ([01:52:14](#)):

I think I think great leaders. I, I wrote some ideas here now, cuz I wanted to remember this, so I hadn't eaten anything so great leaders in my view, they're inspirational because they have a high level of emotional control. They're not easily triggered. They're not driven by ego, they're highly, but open to new ideas. So in the Glen was our expedition leader and he was constantly working on all of those factors. How can I, you know, be inspiring even when I'm stressed. So that's what I think a great leader should be. And a happy follower needs to trust and feel respected, valued, heard, inspired. And so this is, I try to apply these elements to when I'm, you know, working with my horses that, you know, I wanna be a great leader for them, but I also wanna give them the opportunity to be heard and to follow them when you know that the situation dictates it. And yeah, I think it's an evolving skill leading and following and emotional intelligence is underpins both, you know, that level of confidence trust centeredness, present moment focus. They all play into being a great leader and being a great follower when it's necessary.

Warwick Schiller ([01:53:49](#)):

I think that's the best answer to that question. I've heard. That was, that was great. And the last question, which is pretty, quite simple. Do you have a favorite horse

Heather Swan ([01:53:58](#)):

Now? I have, well, I have 11 horses and obviously my main horse Boaty is probably pips the post, but he's got a he has got a a clone. My bohi my ex, my E exerciser. And so he's a big favorite too. I've got an

Eiser by Frank. What's his name? The jockey Frank LoDo. And I love him because he enables me to practice all of the things that I wanna just on my real boat without annoying my real Boaty.

Warwick Schiller ([01:54:34](#)):

Oh, you've got one of those mechanical horse things you're at, he's not

Heather Swan ([01:54:37](#)):

Mechanical, he's you powering, but he's got a metronome. And so you can sort of, since I started, since I got him, my seats improved, my balances improved, my confidence has improved because you know, I'm the big one for visualizing for simulating for practicing everything before you, you know, do it for real. And so I feel like I can practice all these things on boating my E izer before I go out with Boaty, my real horse. And yeah, it's really good. It feeds into that of, I really believe that for our horses, we need to be fit and strong and able to have our own self carriage. So when we're asking them to have self courage, then you know, we need to do the same. And so I love my Boaty, my ex exerciser along with my 11 other horses.

Warwick Schiller ([01:55:35](#)):

Sounds like you got two favorite horses. So you've written, I just was looking my notes here. You've written some books, haven't you?

Heather Swan ([01:55:42](#)):

Yeah. I wrote my first one defying gravity, defying fear for ABC books after the first failed expedition to Trigo and then I wrote no ceiling after we came back from, from Mount Meru and then I we did a summation in, or sort of an amalgamation called love flying, which we published ourselves.

Warwick Schiller ([01:56:10](#)):

And what about a fearless life? Did you ever put that one out?

Heather Swan ([01:56:14](#)):

No, that's not mine.

Warwick Schiller ([01:56:17](#)):

I thought I was re I was, I'm thinking I'm done on my research and it's, she's got a new book and it's called a fearless life and I wanna hear all about it and I it's not your book.

Heather Swan ([01:56:25](#)):

No, but it's something that I've thought about writing how interesting I look to see if you had a book? Cause I wanted to read a war book, but I couldn't no war books.

Warwick Schiller ([01:56:36](#)):

There is, there is one very, very close

Heather Swan ([01:56:39](#)):

To, oh yay.

Warwick Schiller ([01:56:41](#)):

It's very, I was supposed to write in 2018. What I realized is writing a book is a lot different than talking 10 hours a day. I figured if I can talk 10 hours a day at a clinic, it's pretty easy to put that into a book, but it's yeah. It's not exactly the same thing. No, it

Heather Swan ([01:56:58](#)):

Isn't. Exactly. Yeah.

Warwick Schiller ([01:57:01](#)):

But yeah, it's, it's, it's come along. There'll be, there'll be one. So how do do people find out more about Heather Swan? What you do, what you've done?

Heather Swan ([01:57:12](#)):

Well, pretty low key. You know, I'm not a big social media person, but we've got a website [baseline.com](#), which I should update. I haven't a link a bit with it since COVID, but we could put a link to the video I gave you in the podcast and they can watch that they can go on. I've got a new Facebook page for the farm dark horse farm because one of the things that I wanted to set up here was a place where women could come with their horses and their dog and learn about the techniques that I use and ride on safe trails. So that's what we've got here. But that's sort of in the development phase. Yeah. So [baseline.com](#) would be the best place.

Warwick Schiller ([01:58:01](#)):

So you had my interest at have women come there with their horses and their dogs and learn. So learn like the mental aspect of stuff. Is that what you're talking about? Exactly.

Heather Swan ([01:58:08](#)):

The mental to land the physical. So, wow. You know, do do a, because Glen's a doctor, he can supervise the the physical side of it. So how do you transform your health? How do you get away from most people's health is quite habitual. So moving away from that to a designing your health so that you can be fitting into your seventies and eighties and beyond that's our focus now, cuz I wanna, you know, I came to horses late, so I've got years to catch up on. I've got young horses, I've got one that's one and two and I wanna be the best, you know, horse person I can be for those horses. And that means I need to stay feared. I need to stay flexible. I need to have a, a flexible mind. I need to have a mind that can you know, can control the fear and, and be centered and focused.

Heather Swan ([01:58:58](#)):

And so we can share everything that we've learned. And I wanted to do that in a beautiful, supportive environment where people can, can explore all those ideas and that's what we've created or what we are creating here. We've only been here two years. So we moved from Sydney to Y and Dan and that was a big deal said, oh, how, what, what, what are you doing? You, you know, and the big learning curve again. And, but we are loving it and, and I can see that vision. And that's where, I'm where I'm heading.

Warwick Schiller ([01:59:36](#)):

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Well, I'm, I'm very excited to see where that goes because I think the skills and the knowledge and the vision that you bring to the table about that is going to help a lot of people. So that's, that's pretty exciting.

Heather Swan ([01:59:53](#)):

Thanks. Work. Yeah. I'm excited about it.

Warwick Schiller ([01:59:56](#)):

Yeah. And I, and I have no doubt that whatever you put your mind to you're gonna achieve, because you are probably the most tenacious person I've ever, I think you've ever spoken to. Yeah.

Heather Swan ([02:00:04](#)):

Well, I dunno.

Warwick Schiller ([02:00:08](#)):

No, I think you're, you're pretty amazing. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us. I was just absolutely mesmerized by all that, as I'm sure everybody was at home listening and yeah, just thanks so much for joining me on the podcast.

Heather Swan ([02:00:20](#)):

My pleasure work. Thank you for all the help that you give us. Learning horse people. It's really valuable. I appreciate it so much.

Warwick Schiller ([02:00:30](#)):

Oh, thank you. And everybody at home who's been listening. Thanks so much for joining us on the podcast. We'll catch you on the next episode.

Speaker 3 ([02:00:40](#)):

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