

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 19

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Guest Speaker

Darren Stockton - Trauma

Kim Fauskee

Some people don't believe in heroes. But then again, you may have not met today's guest, Darren Stockton endured a 10 year legal battle to gain custody of his daughter. Through a court system that constantly fought him. Experts continually berated him and the child's mother whose own mental health issues caused her daughter immeasurable harm. This is a story told straight from the heart for a man whose enduring love for his child outweighed the mental, physical and financial toll that ultimately took, you may need a tissue or two for this episode.

Dr. Dana

There are two basic motivating forces fear and love. When we're afraid, we pull back from life. When we're in love, we open up to all that life has to offer with passion, excitement, and acceptance.

Fear Me Out

Coming to you from our studio in Santa Barbara, California. This is the fear me out podcast. We're not your typical Self Help Program. Our show takes a deep dive into those psychological issues that affect us on a daily basis. We hope to shift your perspective and have you experiencing emotions differently. Now here are your hosts, Kim Fauskee. And Dr. Dana Saperstein.

Kim Fauskee

So Darren, welcome. Thank you, it's good to have you here. I know that you've had a history as a professional athlete and a cyclist in Europe and had done some other things in your life. But that's not what we're here to talk about today, are we you've been on a quest for some years. And in terms of you and your daughter, which is a very compelling story. And we're having you here to talk about that today. So tell us a little bit about yourself and how the story started.

Darren Stockton 01:52

Well, and I guess before I get started with anything, I just want to preface this by saying that I'm a very private person. And so it's not the easiest thing to come in here and even talk about myself. But as it relates to the safety of my daughter, as I'm going to delve into that subject, I would just ask anybody out there that's listening to this, if you don't really feel that you can respect my daughter's privacy, you know, and this and that you wouldn't use this podcast, you know, for your positive benefit, then I would just ask you to click this episode off. We appreciate that. Yeah. So thank you.

Kim Fauskee 02:34

So you grew up here in Santa Barbara,

Darren Stockton 02:37

born and raised here in Santa Barbara, and grew up in a fabulous neighborhood kind of up in the hills up by a kind of Coldspring school area, which is my school and grew up kind of living outside and climbing trees. And you know, having a fun life and found my way, I always grew up riding riding bikes and found my way through a love of two wheels and actually turning a love of it into a professional career as a racer,

Kim Fauskee 03:04

and I think is Kurt older than you. Yeah, Kurt, because I've always known you too as brother. It's always been the Stockton brothers. That way, so that a

Darren Stockton 03:14

lot. Yeah. So my older brother was a professional bike racer also. And so it was a fantastic journey for the two of us to realize that dream together and train together and race together and actually be able to compete as part of the same team, you know, and compete together. So. So that was a really great experience as far as the racing side of it goes. And then once I got out of racing and retired from competition, I from the bike industry, I have done product development, work, product design, things like that, and had taken a job that had after my racing career that had moved me out of out of Santa Barbara and I ended up finding my way into training professional motocross athletes, which I still do. And so that was kind of the start of the journey of the whole second half of my life, which is taking everything that I've learned, you know, as an athlete and helping coach athletes to find their best self.

Kim Fauskee 04:07

It's interesting that there must be a parallel between cycling in in motocross somewhere there.

Darren Stockton 04:12

Yeah, there is, you know, I just grew up on two wheels, and long before I ever even before ever even knew that professional bike racing was a thing you can do. I was just on my bike, I would ride it to school. You know, get out, get out with my friends. And then I actually grew up riding dirt bikes. Also my parents, you know, we're into racing, I never raced them, but I just love riding them and there's just something about the joy and freedom and the dynamics of being on two wheels that just always stuck with me. It's just a joy of mine still today. I feel fortunate I have a lot of friends who are ex professionals who I would talk to them like, Oh man, I haven't ridden a bike in a year you know, I'm overhead and I'll just be like really? I couldn't even imagine, you know, not riding for a year like to choose to not do that. So. So the two wheel journey has been really Great. It's just opened up my life to so many so many amazing things. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 05:06

So start telling us about this quest of your being a father and getting custody of your daughter and how that hole materialized.

Darren Stockton 05:21

Well, I found myself in a position where I had a daughter, but I wasn't with the mom anymore and my daughter lived out of state wasn't in the same state. And so did you.

Kim Fauskee 05:36

Did you? So was she a certain age already? Before you found out? Or did you know that your partner was pregnant? Or

Darren Stockton 05:47

I'll just say that I found out pretty early that I had a daughter, okay. Yeah. Yeah, pretty early on that I had a daughter. And as that whole scenario unfolded, I just ended up kind of finding out things about her mom that I really didn't know before. And over the journey of that, unfortunately, part of what I found out about her mom was that she had some personality disorders that were you know, we're trying to find the right word here. Maybe tragic, I could say towards my daughter,

Kim Fauskee 06:33

and how long were you with this woman? During the relationship? Or

Darren Stockton 06:39

were a couple for several years. Okay. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 06:42

And none of those red flags or anything spoke to you at that time when you were together with her?

Darren Stockton 06:50

Well, you know, it's an interesting question. And, and part of the reason why I'm in here, in spite of, you know, the sweaty palms that I might have right now, opening up my life to people is, you know, I haven't realized until later in life, my more intuitive side. And I had gone through a period of life where I was married previously, before, you know, my daughter and her mom and had gone through a divorce. And I would say, kind of, up until that time, when I was in my middle 30s, I'd say my life had kind of gone about as I would expect, not that life ever goes exactly how you expect it. But it seemed like things were rolling along pretty well. And then I went through divorce. And for the first time in my life, I found I had never even lived by myself, you know, it's always had roommates when I was younger, things like that. And, and so I kind of went through a period of time where I had new friends and different things, I had stopped competing professionally. So I maybe partied a little bit more, you know, just just had some fun, not that bad. But I went through a period where I would say that not realizing how good my intuition was, I kind of pushed into the boundaries of how I had lived my life. And I think part of that was not realizing how intuitive I was, and I probably are not probably, but didn't follow some of the little feelings. And so when you talk about red flags, I mean, I guess in hindsight, you could say it, but at the time, the situation, it wasn't really like red flags, but they're just little things that over time felt like they didn't add up. And so in looking back, I realized, oh, that time that I was like, kind of that's kind of weird, you know, was my voice saying, hey, that's kind of weird, pay attention. But I was like, you know, just just, I think I was in a personal space where I was, like I said, in the spot where I was kind of pushing

out against my boundaries, and I maybe had lost sense of my intuition and self awareness. So I really didn't put together some of the signs that I was seeing.

Kim Fauskee 08:57

Was it that you didn't understand your intuition? Or was it just at that point, or was it just you didn't pay attention to it?

Darren Stockton 09:08

Well, both, I think, but I didn't understand some of the abilities that I had really until I found Dana, later on, and we kind of talked about it and, you know, it's funny, my my, you can tell it chokes me up. I'm a very sensitive person, which most people looking at me from the outside would never guess I do a very good job of, you know, just not letting people know. I feel you there. Yeah. Of coming out. And so, you know, when I was younger, I never realized I could not sometimes it's not all the time but I could look at people and look into their eyes. And it would be like I could read their mind. I mean, you No, no all this type of stuff. And I never realized that everybody wasn't like that. I just thought that's the way that everybody was. And so I never really was aware of it. And and when I started off this journey with my daughter, it really, you know, I had to figure out first of all, how, in fact, I found myself in the position and, and through that and the help of Dana, I, I really realized that, you know, like I said, I just have this innate sense where, where I can feel what people are going through

Kim Fauskee 10:39

your daughter wasn't or was living in the same town, as you

Darren Stockton 10:45

know, she was always out of state out of

Kim Fauskee 10:47

state. Okay. Yeah. And then when did you begin to have a relationship with your daughter? What age?

Darren Stockton 10:53

I started having a relationship with my daughter, when she was a little younger than two. Okay. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 11:02

And was the mother willing to allow you to have that relationship with her?

Darren Stockton 11:10

No, I mean, other than what she may absolutely had to do wasn't? Now she, she really wasn't?

11:20

Why do you think that she was so against you being connected to her?

Darren Stockton 11:29

I mean, the makeup of her psychology, you know, in some of her personality, sorters is I've learned, you know, over time, and because ultimately, I had chosen not to be with her with, you know, her mom

that that put me from the side of loved and trusted to mortal enemy. And that, you know, was a tone that had carried on.

12:01

Are you comfortable describing some of what you found out about her mom? Or is that something you'd prefer to keep private?

Darren Stockton 12:07

Well, you know, I know one of the big things and I would say this, because I actually helped out a close family member with this recently, through my experience one of them was understanding borderline personality disorder. Which is that, you know, light switch, either love you or hate you. And when you get on the hate side of somebody like that, it's for real? And

12:31

what about the financial situation that happened that you didn't really understand at the time?

Darren Stockton 12:36

Yeah, there was. And this led into the situation that was so hard on my daughter that I had, I had found out after my daughter was born, and I started trying to have a relationship with her. And it wasn't easy. No, it was a family court situation. And that's part of the reason why I wanted to come in here and talk to you because as a male in family court, it's not the best position to be in. I've been there. Yeah, and let alone if you have a child who's been with the other parent, you know, in the mom, especially from birth, basically, yeah.

Kim Fauskee 13:12

And I was warned about that, that the proclivity of the courts is to side with the mother. Yeah, the majority of the time. I

Darren Stockton 13:20

i mean, if I could, you know, have \$1 for the amount of time somebody told me, you are never going to get your daughter out here. I, you know, I probably wouldn't have to work. You know, it's just just Yeah, nobody really thought that, you know, that there was a possibility based on the court system. And so part of that backstory was that I had found out after the fact, we started getting a family court that that her mom had actually faked having cancer. And that was something that I had known about before her mom and I were ever a couple. I had known her through professional circles. But it came out afterwards, you know, that not only had she picked up cancer, but had taken donations of money from people for treatment and things like that, for an illness that it turns out, never happened. And so, you know, that was a pretty, pretty shocking revelation. When I found that out. And without going into all the details of it. I could say that that was kind of maybe the biggest thing but a bit of a Pandora's box that really opened up for me to really see what was going on. Yeah. If my

Dr. Dana 14:37

recollection is correct, she also told you that she was infertile because of the cancer treatment, right?

Darren Stockton 14:42

Yes, that's true. Yeah. Yeah. And again, yes. Yeah, she did. And so.

14:51

Yeah. So the deception started, and the manipulation. I guess you could call it not just borderline but sociopathic behavior started very early. early on.

Darren Stockton 15:00

Yeah, yeah. And really, it was there, as I found out before she and I, wherever a couple?

15:07

Well, my recollection was that, you know, she, she told me that she was not fertile because of those cancer treatment. Right. Right. And so naturally, you know,

Darren Stockton 15:18

right. I yeah, I could say, I mean, I guess I may be at a point where I'm, you know, looking at at comfort of privacy as it relates to my daughter, okay, you know, if she were ever to hear this, with respect to her mom, but I could just say that, that I, you know, I had come out of the divorce of my marriage before I met her mom. And because of kind of the dynamics and how that worked out, it really left me like really open to get taken advantage of by somebody who had this type of mentality unbeknownst to me. And for anybody out there, I mean, who's coming to experience these people, you know, how it feels, if you feel somebody's you're confident, you know, your partner in a relationship, that type of stuff you share with them. And then to come to a point where you realize that every one of those things has been cataloged to use by somebody to, you know, to try and annihilate you. It's a pretty, a pretty sobering experience, to say the least. Yeah. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 16:26

So how often with your daughter living out of state, how often were you able to see her in,

Darren Stockton 16:30

you know, I will go back, I will go back at least every three months, usually, you know, about four times a year. And it was, you know, on top of this, it came at a period of time where I was living out of town and was involved in the business of professional motocross trade training. And when the housing crisis hit, I mean that the economy of that sport just tanked. And so it wasn't like, the whole rest of my life was great. And there was this one thing to focus on. I mean, I went from, you know, having a great income and doing all this stuff to like literally evaporating, which in a way is kind of good, because it precipitated my move to coming back up here to Santa Barbara was a choice that I made, and the amount of people that I've come in contact to in the sport, it's the support, and everything has been so phenomenal that in a way, you know, you always look at the silver linings and everything at the time, it should have feel great, but but it allowed me to come back up here and kind of maybe refined part of me, that's really great, you know, and important to me being my best person.

Kim Fauskee 17:31

So while you're going back and forth and visiting your daughter and establishing this relationship with her, finding out more about the past history of her mother, which seems to be very negative and potentially harmful. When did you consciously make the decision that maybe your daughter would be better served to be with you than her mother?

Darren Stockton 17:59

Well, I mean, I knew it instantly the instant that I before I even knew everything. I mean, before I even realized the whole cancer thing. I just knew there was, you know, as soon as she had that power over me. I knew right away, like, what's unfolding, that's the truth. I was like, I have to get her out of there. I mean, that was pretty much from the outset.

Kim Fauskee 18:26

And there was no reprisal on for her faking this counselor thing and taking other people's money and

Darren Stockton 18:33

the statute of limitations was out, you know, as far as it being like a prosecutable offense and no, really, really nothing. Yeah, nothing you could do. You know, and also to it was, you know, I would say that in my entire life, I can't really ever say that I felt shame really that much. I think maybe I'm fortunate in that way. But this whole situation was the first time in my life that I had ever really felt shame, just for feeling like I got tricked, you know, by someone to find myself in that position. And so at the beginning, it was, you know, I was probably more protected about it and didn't reach out to people as much as I should have, which just made it even harder, because then you know, you're holding it in, you're turning it over. And you find yourself in those awkward situations where you want to tell people, but then you're afraid of if they'll judge you on it or how it will affect things. And so it was just a pretty difficult, yeah, sequence of events. And so I actually went in really immediately and tried to get my daughter out of what I knew is just going to be a bad situation and went to family court and lost.

Kim Fauskee 19:49

Did you go to family court locally, or did you have to go into the state that you're not even from? Yeah, it

Darren Stockton 19:55

was in Minnesota, and that's why I laid the backstory when you asked about half and I went out to traveling. See her, I mean, I would have gone out for, you know, 10 times a year if I could, but because of just the financial situation, what happened my work I really couldn't, I was kind of building a whole new life and a whole new whole new business and everything. And so that was also, you know, the one of the hardest things about this entirety of this whole scenario has always been somebody raised to be independent, you know, I could take care of myself, I could do all that. And I could say that, even through the ups and downs of life, I had been able to do that. And this was the first time I had been involved in something where I just couldn't, couldn't you hit a wall? Yeah, I couldn't provide I mean, I'd never been able to provide I could remember, one time, years later, you know, my daughter, I would go out and visit, she would come out. And there was one year where she'd come out for, you know, at that time, like the best visit she'd ever had in Santa Barbara. And I was gonna go out to visit her and a few months later, and I just didn't have the money. I mean, literally, like, had no money. And.

Kim Fauskee 21:07

And yet, I'm guessing again, based on what you said earlier, the mother wasn't helping you in any way, in making sure your daughter got to see you and wasn't willing to say, Okay, I know you don't have the funds to do this. Now. Let me help her, we'll figure something out. It was all it was all on you.

Darren Stockton 21:29

It was exactly 100% The opposite of somebody being open and supportive. Yeah, as bad as you could imagine.

Kim Fauskee 21:39

Did you even know at that point, what her mother was saying about you to your daughter? At that point it was your daughter relaying any of that information? Or were you just assuming that everything that was being told about you was probably negative?

Darren Stockton 21:56

You know, what, one thing you know, you learn about people who if you get the point where you really realize like when I really realized what the truth was, I had to go back and look at our entire relationship and you start off kind of going, Well, gosh, I'm wondering what's the truth and what's not because you're, you're trying to, like get a, you know, some bearing on what the where the truth lies, and where it doesn't. And, you know, at least for me, what I ended up having to do is just basically kind of clear the slate. And realize that even though I'm sure there was some truth mixed in there, there was only one person that knew what the actual truth was. And she was never going to tell me what the truth was. And so really, I just yeah, I didn't know and so I just had to take every single thing at face value, but also understanding the background that knowing that the majority of it had an ulterior motive, nothing was ever on the surface when it appeared there was always another angle being worked and I am not somebody who operates like that I just like to come right up and tell it how I see it or you know, be open and real with people and so to to be involved in something where that was really kind of an impossibility was unbelievably challenging.

Kim Fauskee 23:17

So the family court Minnesota told you now to begin with, by a whisker by a whisker and I can't even imagine how emotional and deflating probably that was to you. And so what was your next step?

Darren Stockton 23:36

Well, no, fortunately, even though I wasn't able to get her to safety in that first round of things, the the judge on the case really spelled out you know, in family court, you get like an order you know, a court order for people who don't know and that kind of lays out the groundwork of what you do and he really did every single thing he could to make that a great experience and so it gave me you know, more time with my daughter and at a certain age she would start coming out to California and and visiting but you know, as you learned in family court, you can have an order but in family court if somebody doesn't want to do it a lot of times there's not a lot you can do about it at least it's not like hey, you can call up somebody and it will be rectified it's just a long process you have to go back right everything takes time and money you know when if you don't have it is extremely hard to do let alone traveling you know, and doing all of that. So yeah, so that side of it was extremely, extremely difficult.

Kim Fauskee 24:38

So at least you had a judge that kind of understood your position allowed you some more visitation and and and so on. How long did that last for before you've started realizing that? Okay, this is maybe worse or you already knew it was worse, but maybe it is getting worse, and I have to really do something about this. Go back to court, get another attorney, whatever it's going to take to get my daughter out of harm's way.

Darren Stockton 25:09

Well, I mean that it was instant. And it was really once the court didn't favor me, it was almost like an open season. For her to just, you know, make it even more difficult you think it would have been the opposite way? I mean, in some respects, it was better, obviously, because you do have, you know, the courts there, but it was, it was instant. And that was the first round was when my daughter was three. And that was really when the screws started to get turned on to my daughter was about three and a half.

25:43

She was being poisoned. Yeah. against you, especially.

Darren Stockton 25:48

Oh, yeah. I mean, you know, the, all the things that I've learned through the journey of this and researched about parental alienation and all these different things. I mean,

Kim Fauskee 25:59

it was happening and apparent when you were visiting her.

Darren Stockton 26:02

Oh, yeah, it was, you know, in just a little things, and again, intuition and stuff. But also, you know, the weird thing was, yeah, yeah, it started happening immediately. And just, you know, the hard part about it was if her mom was kind of like, you know, her mom is extremely intelligent. And that didn't make it any easier. You know? Because he's there, there's a lot of room for maneuverability, and like the court systems and behavioral health and stuff. And if somebody wants to get in there and just utilize that, you know, they can. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 26:43

So you said your daughter was about three and a half, during this first round of court hearings? And yeah. How long until you took another run at this?

Darren Stockton 26:57

I was about five years later.

Kim Fauskee 27:00

Okay. So you were you, you kind of shouldn't say you kind of complied with a court order. Had the visitation gone back there, hopefully, your daughter came out at that time and visited you. So you

established this relationship with her and, and did what you could in a sense, and, and not for lack of respect, you're better an absentee father, right at that point. So you said about eight years later, you went back five years, five years later, I'm sorry. But

Darren Stockton 27:27

you know, and I would say in thinking about it, like after that, you know, from the time she was about my daughter was three until six, I would say those first three years, while everything was still going on, it wasn't, I was able to at least go back. And you know what I was actually, before I started, she started coming out to California, but I would be able to go back and have visits. And it wasn't, it wasn't near the escalation that happened later. And then about the time that my daughter was six after her first visit out. The screws really started getting turned on the situation. And it would be, you know, the end of the night, before I'm scheduled to go out on a trip, I you know, would get an email from my lawyer that an ex parte motion, which is something that's filed, like literally in a day or two, you know, be filed and just, you know, the genius of her mom, and the situation to use that word was, you know, as I found out in the behavioral health world, unlike, say, the medical side of it going in and getting treated, it's it can be really manipulated. And if if somebody goes in as your mama do, and lay out a story, and is extremely convincing, if I would show up after the fact and talk to a practitioner or something, I found that they were I mean, really in years, I never found one that would entertain what I had to say. And it was so frustrating to try and explain to them something that was going on and just having it fall on deaf ears of like gold standard medical professionals who are supposed to be there to be neutral and help and I mean, all across the board. You know, I could remember going back the first time and wanting to be involved in my daughter's school. She was in preschool and going hey, you know, have a parent teacher conference. Yeah, my daughter's doing and you walk in and there's three teachers in there. And you can tell the instant you walk in the room, you're the enemy. Yeah, they look at you just like you're the worst person ever. For somebody who's never even met you because of what they've been told by the mother. Yeah. And then when you have the ability for them, those people to be manipulated and start putting things in records and things that reflect poorly on me and then the next person reads that and goes, Oh, that must be true. It's in a record. And it just kind of goes down the line. It's So that that part of it as a side note, from everything else I went through was extremely disheartening and eye opening,

30:08

but how did you handle it on an emotional level?

Darren Stockton 30:13

I mean, I guess because I'm sitting here today talking to you, I could say, I made it through. But the first thing that popped into my mind, we asked that question was not well, you know?

30:26

Well, you know, I know you quite well, and to have somebody, you know, describe you as being an abusive father. You know, that only had his interest in himself, and was just looking to, you know, damage your daughter and hurt her mom. Right. And that was everything that her mom did everything she could to convince everyone. Yes, that you are really a very evil person that had very bad intentions with this girl. Yeah. And to watch you go through that was incredibly sad and, and overwhelming.

Darren Stockton 31:04

Yeah, I mean, I could just, you know, I had never experienced, you know, anxiety, and I had heard people talk about it. And I could remember, I'll never forget it this one day, you know, it was in the first round of court. And I remember, first time I ever felt like my, my analogy is having an 800 pound gorilla sitting on your chest, like you just can't breathe. Luckily, I have a good sense of humor, which has really helped me through and I can remember this one day, I woke up and I was like, woke up in the morning, I'm like, like, can't breathe. And you know, from somebody who's a prep professional athlete, right, I mean, you have to put yourself out there and not only road bike racing, which is physically demanding, but then I had a career as a professional Downhill Racer, which would be like downhill skiing, but on two wheels, so you, you can't be in the Start Game at the top going, oh, boy, I better not hit that rock, I better not hit that tree, you know, otherwise, you'll hit every rock country on the course you have to put all the fear out of your mind and just go after it. And to be in a position where I was like, I really don't know how I'm gonna get through this was the first time ever in my life. And so I remember getting up and I had this big dresser look out over the window of the place I was living, which is a beautiful kind of ranch I lived in. And I remember having my hands on the edge of the dresser and I was kind of leaning into it and just going to breathe, man, breathe, you know, breathe, and I was breathing in and out. And I said, You know what, you're going to open your eyes. And it's just all going to be a dream. This isn't even happening, you know, it just can't be. And I remember opening up my eyes looking around, and I was still in the same place and went " Well, shit, I guess this is real life. You know, and, and I guess the practical practical person in me would kind of tackle it like that. But what it threw me through emotionally was, I mean, just the most soul and heart gut wrenching thing, you know, to ever go through. And, and I you know, the only thing I could like, and what I was going through would be if you were a parent, your child had some type of a medical condition that you knew could be fatal. And there was felt like there was nothing you could do to help. And, you know, and for me, I mean, kids and family was always a dream of mine. And I grew up in a great family and my brother, a mom and dad and and to then be in a position when I have the thing I wanted more than anything's beautiful child. And to know that not only it wasn't just hard to see her but that she was being poisoned. To me it was just Yeah, I mean, it will, it will really let you know what you're made of.

Kim Fauskee 34:10

You talked about being a very private person. This is obviously very difficult for you to talk about which we appreciate you being here to talk about it. Were you able at some point to be able to lean on family and friends for some support going through this? Or did you just take this mission on by yourself?

Darren Stockton 34:30

No, no, no, I, I couldn't I mean from right at the beginning, I have a fantastic family like biological family and also just a close group of friends. You know, I'm not the person that might have the most friends in the world. But the ones that I have are, you comment to in the morning? On the side of the road? They're like, I'll be there. I mean, I have those people and so I reached out immediately. I mean, my uncle, he was also an attorney not and family law. He was spectacular. I mean, I you know, you don't want to say I couldn't have done it without all these people, but I can't even imagine how I could have without that support. So I really did have that support. But the hard part was about, you know, you know, I was also, in the time when this was going on, I have moved from, you know, I lived for 11 years

out of Santa Barbara. And so I moved back up. And so while you have a few close friends, your whole kind of big network isn't there. And, and that was, you know, one of the things, you know, and again, I'm here because I want to help people who have gone through the same thing, you know, I said said earlier, it was probably the first time I'd felt shame about anything in my life about being tricked and finding myself in a position. And that kind of fear associated with that led me to kind of not tell more people about what I was going through in the beginning. And if I could change one single thing about my pathway to get my daughter out, that for sure, would have been the first thing that I would have changed as I would have opened up to people more, you know, right off the bat. And again, that was the personal privacy thing that I just, you know, I had a hard time reaching out to, which I, ironically, at a certain point got over. And because I really was hurting so badly emotionally, that I I had to reach out to other people, I had to talk to other people. And you know, the, one of the most amazing things about it is if you have the courage to put yourself out there. You can't believe what you get back. And, you know, people had known for a year or two for decades, I would tell him a story. And it would open this just floodgates, and they would be safe, we're having somebody else tell them. I mean, they told me stuff that I was like, oh my god, I almost feel lucky that I'm only going through this compared to some of the stories that I heard about people. And so

Kim Fauskee 37:10

it is kind of amazing what we keep in and what other people keep in. And then when you have that cathartic moment with a real friend, yeah, about how it changes everything

Darren Stockton 37:20

you have when they open up about something that's just so horrible, you know, and I think that's probably one of the many, many big lessons that I've learned about one of the things I learned is, man, it doesn't matter if you have \$5 to your name, or 500 million to your name. Everybody goes through stuff. And you just be surprised how many people have gone through heavy, heavy stuff like this that you would never know, right?

Kim Fauskee 37:47

Did you ever consider relocating to be closer to your daughter at all?

Darren Stockton 37:51

I did. Yeah. And I really did. But ultimately, I decided against it, because I felt that I would be so vulnerable and exposed out there without having anybody around,

Kim Fauskee 38:08

you know, that no support system there. Right.

Darren Stockton 38:12

I and I still to this day, right now, I know, that was the best decision not to do that. And that was a tough one, you know, but but I just felt like I could better fight the battle from where I was at.

38:23

You know, Darren, I want to ask you, if you could, you know, you're describing a situation where you're being, you know, basically be abused by this woman, and, and she's doing everything she can to turn your daughter against you have the sad thing is it got way worse from there you have. And so I think it's important to talk about how it evolved, even though it's an incredibly tragic story. And again, this is why I've always told you, you're my hero. Because if every dad was willing to do what you were willing to do to take care of their child, I think the world would be a very different place. But I do think it's important if you're comfortable enough to talk about how things default from Yeah, from that point.

Darren Stockton 39:12

Yeah, I can and you know, and I can tell you that I, I mean, really, you know, I talked to friends, you know about what I went through, and I've had male friends who you know, some who don't have kids, and they're like, man, they say, I can't believe you did that. I could have never done that. And I go, I don't know if you say that now, but you know, until you have a child, but for me, I couldn't not do it. And there was a moment. Very, very early on I had never met my daughter. Remember, there was a day where I had to make a decision as to if I was gonna go forward and like before, the first one on family court or anything and say, Okay, I pretty much knew what was going on. I mean, you never know what really was going to happen to but I knew the path that it was going down and I thought to myself I I know what I'm going to be turned into my daughter's eyes, I know all this stuff that's going to happen, she's maybe I would be better, just laying back and not being a source for her mom to pull from and use against my daughter and vilify me and everything would be better just showing up at age 13, which will be amazing, because my daughter is still not that old. So you know, and maybe for another podcast, and we have more time, there's a whole backstory to the amazing moment of that situation, and what helped me make the decision, but I just knew, I mean, I had to entertain the idea, but I just knew there was no way I could not not do everything, you know, for her. And so you know, what happened is, is once my daughter started coming out to visit, and would have these longer blocks of time where her mom wasn't around, I mean, our relationship just kept blossoming, blossoming. And, and, you know, I always felt like it felt like any obstacle that was put in the way of my daughter and I being together, I would work through it, and it would make our relationship even stronger. And that was one of the things that I held on to the whole time through it is, it felt like anytime our love was attempted to be interrupted, when I would work through it, it would just make it even better. And that was really the tipping point, once my daughter came out and started to visit of her mom, really escalating things, to the point where you know, and I have to pause here as I'm thinking about the privacy of my daughter, but I could say that.

Kim Fauskee 41:42

So the mom wanted to sabotage the relationship consistently. And with your daughter coming out here, she's, like you said before, she's an intelligent woman, right? So she's realizing now this bond is really forming. Yeah. And this could be really something because my daughter's falling in love with her father, and maybe she's gonna come say, I want to move with dad at some point. And God forbid, that's never gonna happen.

Darren Stockton 42:04

Yeah. And it really was. Yeah, so so, you know, part of the intelligence of her mom and her, you know, personality disorders. She was very adept at using the medical system, to abuse my daughter, and also

really use that to get in the way of my relationship with my daughter, like I said, going into practitioners and painting them a story. And then they would, I mean, I saw documents supplied to the court saying I was just the most horrible father ever from a person who had never met me had never talked to me had never even seen my daughter and I together and you show up and see a document that a respected practitioners willing to submit to the court and put their name to that says, This guy's terrible, you know, was terrible. And that was not even the worst of it. And what essentially happened was her mother was able to coach and get my daughter to display behaviors that were so tragic that it started a pathway where my daughter was just in parts of the medical system in behavioral health and poked and prodded mentally and everything that it was just I mean, to watch what my daughter had to go through. You know, it's indescribable and to be a dad and go okay, you know, every time you go back there every time you try and fight for your daughter, it's worse for her. You know, you start to go what's what's the best for my kid here? And I mean, I even had professionals who would said I don't know which which was better. You know, meaning do you just stay in and fight fight, fight, fight fight or war and you have to back away a little bit but you know, there was an escalation that happened when my daughter was eight which happened right before a long summer trip that she was coming out to visit for a month that really put my daughter in peril and And ironically,

Kim Fauskee 44:29

do you feel comfortable describing what that was or

Darren Stockton 44:35

not right now. Okay, moment. But as I talk, maybe I will I'll figure out a way to say it and still respect her privacy but I found out I mean, you find out your daughter has been going and seeing people in doctors for years that you have no idea about you know, ironic Leave in the court system when you go through like a family court and I tried to get custody and lost it the only way that you can ever even go back in to try and change that there has to be a major shift of events that happens. And so the, the irony of it is I'm always you know, I'm I'm such a cup half full guy, I might look at a cup that's got two drops in there and be like, oof, I don't even know if I can finish that, you know, I somehow am able to just believe that it will, you know that it will happen. But so the silver lining in it was that the escalation that her mom did that put my daughter in peril was enough of a change of circumstances, then it actually gave me the ability to go back in and fight a second time, which ultimately was what allowed me to be successful and get her to safety. And I mean, as Dana knows, a lot of the stories will have some of the most incredible stuff happening through it and people reaching out and some of the most horrible stuff. But my daughter, I mean, she's so strong and amazing. It just blows me away. But I went through some of the most horrible, unimaginable stuff that as a parent, you could ever have to see your your daughter go through and based on the science of everything of this type of personality disorder and where it was at and multiple disorders, there was basically about a 9% chance to almost one in 10. That it is for kids in that situation that they don't live to see their 18th birthday.

Kim Fauskee 46:59

What with a change of circumstance, it did take multiple court appearances, or was it just a single court appearance where the evidence was multiple? Me beyond

Darren Stockton 47:12

multiple it was from the time that event happened. It was almost a year and a half for that to come to its conclusion. And

Kim Fauskee 47:23

yeah, so she's hiring experts. You're hiring experts. Everybody has an opinion on this and it's up to this judge to decide what's best for your daughter ultimately? Yeah, and your fates in somebody else's hands.

Darren Stockton 47:36

Yeah, I mean, and there were so many twists and turns. I mean, the one judge who had really seen things for how they were even though he couldn't ultimately see the pathway, the first time to get my daughter to safety, he ended up having to retire. Right before we were going into the meat of everything. I mean, and I remember seeing the email from my attorney, and reading that, but fortunately, at that time, I was in a better place with it. But I remember at first reading that and going, oh, you know, F No, right. And then I said, You know what, this is going to be good. And maybe that's that positive side and me are tapping back into my intuitive feeling. But there was a you know, there was a period where you know, and I use being a cyclist, I always use the analogy and you know, in cycling, just like in say football or basketball, you where people are different positions, you have say, you know, quarterback, your running back or in basketball, you have your forward or a point guard or whatever, in cycling, it's the same thing. And I was a sprinter, which is you know, a bigger build, which in cycling isn't necessarily advantageous, but I was the guy that on the hills would suffer but on the flatlands you know, that was where I earned my money and and I can say that there's probably no tougher tougher task than being a not quite genetically gifted enough sprinter to say make it all the way to the Tour de France, because cycling is just a sport about suffering, really, it's just about hanging on for dear life through the worst of it digging in gritting your teeth to get through that moment, and then you know, and then and then be able to get to a better place. And so that's kind of how I took it on. I use that cycling metaphor, and I had got to a place where I felt like the wind had been blowing in my face just so strong for so long, and I felt the wind starting to change. And so even you know, talk about that change. And there were many along the line and I guess this was part of coming back into my intuitive self was I just had to put all the horrible stuff all the fear out and get right to it and I said no, this is going to be good. I mean, I'm literally having to decide if you are going to have the ability to get rid of this judge or not and having to look at a person's picture and read through their litter Return their history and just close your eyes and try and feel if this is the right person for the situation. I mean, you know, and and so yeah, so the twists and turns would take 10 podcasts, and I still couldn't tell all of them of the ups and downs. I mean, really, and I don't say that, jokingly, of all the ups and downs, and I had people who have been involved in the family court system for 30 years who said they had never seen anything like this. I mean, it was like, you know, of my very interesting life, I hit some gold standards. I was happy that that was one. But But yeah, and so the twists and turns were just amazing. And, you know, ultimately it was, you know, I was very fortunate that I, the attorney that I had was retiring. And I found this one through the most amazing circumstances that turned out that she was just the one. I mean, she was just without her. I don't think that could happen. She was that amazing. She was the Pippo with the big teeth that you needed. Yeah. I mean, and even beyond that, just like, you know, amazing. Yeah, I mean, it's and

51:12

she also help you find the person that was able to put your, to put her mom's mental illness in contact,

Darren Stockton 51:22

if it was actually the opposite way. And, and the funny thing is about that story, and this is, you know, the part of it is, is I had gone out on this big event changed happen. And I was out, you know, in Minnesota, and dealing with just all this stuff through the behavioral health system that my daughter was going through. And, you know, I was out and I was just out there by myself, staying in a hotel, and I had just been out during the day and gone through all this horrible gut wrenching stuff. And I, I came back to my hotel, and it was like, you know, two in the afternoon, and I went to get something to eat. And you know, and I went down and the restaurant wasn't open, the bar was and I sat there, and I ate about four or five beers for lunch, you know, not not happy to admit that, but it was that I really couldn't even deal with what I was going through. And I just went up to my room after that, and I laid down in bed and went to sleep. I mean, like, I couldn't deal and I woke up and my girlfriend at the time, you know, I called her up, and she was starting to do research on these type of personality disorder. And so I'm googling, you know, and I'm gonna, I need to find somebody who's an expert in this, I need to find somebody who knows what's going on. And I'm using Google, I'm searching, I'm trying to find people, I can't find anybody. And I finally was so stressed out, I didn't know what to do. And then she had sent me some links to these videos talking about this disorder. And I, she sent me these links, I started watching these videos of testimonies of people have gone through as adults, what my daughter was going through, and I'm like, I can't even watch this. And I just went to sleep like it was all I could do. I went to sleep and I woke up in the morning. And I fired up in the search engine again, and I typed in the exact same things. But as you learned about search engines, they pull up new information based on what you've been searching. And this renowned expert pulls up and I'm going, Wow, this is amazing. She was great. And I click through and I go, I look at the map, I go her office which is like five minutes from here. I am amazed. And it was July 4, the day and so I go man, she's I know she's not gonna be working on the fourth. And so I look and I see an email, but I go I better not email or today, I'm gonna wait until tomorrow morning. So if she gets a lot, it's at the top of the queue. I sent her this email and she calls me back and I can explain briefly what I was going through. She says will you know if you have time in the next couple of days and I was like, if that really felt like a first break that I got. And I went in and talk to her and she was the first person ever that when I told her what was going on she said we got to not only she say you got to get your daughter out there but she said I really think that you can and that was the first time and that led me to find this attorney who was just you know, miraculous and

Kim Fauskee 54:12

was that the first time you actually really felt that you had hoped now? Yeah, within skysea Yeah, I couldn't remember that this kind of being kind of came in and yeah,

Darren Stockton 54:23

absolutely it oh, I can remember I can remember driving and calling up my you know my girlfriend and while I was driving to some other appointment and telling her that it was a possibility and I mean I couldn't stop crying which if you know me might not seem like a big deal as I can turn on the

waterworks but really that was you know of different moments that are seared in your memory. I can remember that one because it was the first time I really felt hope.

54:52

They don't. I know that it's really hard to be specific but I think it would actually happen if you feel comfortable enough to tell Talk about what the condition was in this room. Yeah, an expert. Yeah, it will. I think that people really need to know that it exists and that it's real.

Darren Stockton 55:09

Yeah. And yeah, and I will and so that the condition is, it's probably best known as Munchausen by proxy. Nowadays, it's called factitious imposed upon another Munchausen. And it's parents, but almost always moms who abuse their children through the medical system, and all different types of abuse, you know, you know, poisoning this and that. And in my daughter's case, it was all emotional and mental abuse through the medical system. Yeah, and it turned out this, you know, this person was an expert, and they're not easy to find on this very thing and had dealt with multiple cases where, where you know, that she had done this with people and dealt with a bunch of mean, up until then, I don't think I'd ever even talk to a person. I had dealt with a level undefined. Somebody's like, oh, yeah, I know this. And I've dealt with this a bunch of times.

56:04

Well, I remember when I was in school, I worked in a psychiatric ward for a number of years. And every once in a while, someone would come in and appear to be incredibly mentally ill. Yeah. And they were like, like an expert at whatever the condition was, if they were representing. And usually after about four, maybe five, six days in the hospital, people would start to figure out that maybe this wasn't as kosher as you know, as it appeared to be. And then as soon as the person realized that they were going to be discovered they would just disappear.

Darren Stockton 56:41

Oh, yeah, cut and run as soon as they're found out. They disappear. Everybody from this from that note wouldn't know anything about him. It's gonna move on to the next Yeah.

56:51

Now this is Munchausen syndrome. In you know, itself. It wasn't by proxy the the people that are mine encountered, they were the they were the rest that that exhibited the symptom but the breaks the proxy part of it, which is so tragic, is that they use their children correct as a as a as the symptom.

Darren Stockton 57:12

Yeah. And so with Munchausen people make up fake illnesses to get sympathy, money, things from people like faking cancer and getting you know a lot of money in donations. And you're correct once Munchausen by proxy, they then use the child to get that sympathy because I mean, who doesn't have a heart for a sick child? Right? Yeah.

57:32

So when you found out that your travels being used in this way, that's when the emergency lights went on inside your head? More so than before? Or? Well, was there just a confirmation of what you'd already know?

Darren Stockton 57:46

Yeah, I would say more or less. But it you know, the onion just kept peeling back layers as time went on. And you would realize how even more pervasive it was, and finding things out. So yeah, it would just got continually worse and worse and worse, which if you study any of you know, because I've read tons of cases on it, that's pretty much always the way it goes, it's gets worse and worse and worse until the child finally has enough strength usually right about when they're 17 or 18. To maybe realize it and just take off, or because you know, tragically either way. Right? Yeah.

58:23

You know, it is a disorder that's really hard for people to believe that it's real. Yeah. And I think that one of the reasons why I wanted you to mention my name is because some of the people that you went to see, you know, are not like normal schlubs in the world. I mean, these are like, gold standard people, standard professionals,

Darren Stockton 58:43

and would just look at me and just refuse to believe me, refuse not and not even believe me to even entertain that that could be a possibility. Nope. You know, I was the enemy. And that was it from you know, a practitioner,

Kim Fauskee 59:00

are gonna ask Dan, a question about Munchausen is that Munchausen is predicated upon a deeper seated personality disorder or mental illness disorder? Do you know you know,

59:12

it's kind of a category that it's separate from other diagnoses? It's just it's just another

Kim Fauskee 59:20

so it doesn't come from somebody with a bipolar background or narcissistic?

59:25

You know that it's possible for people like they do. You know, I'm sorry.

Darren Stockton 59:31

I was gonna say it's, it's almost always wrapped up with many or never. Yeah, from what I understand standalone, never a standalone. No, there's always some other component there. But they really, they don't know. What causes it. Yeah. It's one of those weird ones.

59:51

It is. It is hard for people to believe that it's that it's real. Yeah. But, you know, I saw people in action and when I first met them, they appeared to be actually more schizophrenic in a certain way than

somebody who had schizophrenia, they had the symptoms and the behavior so down that, you know, there's no way in the world that you would, that you could tell until days go by, and you start to, you know, when maybe you see the person when they don't know that anybody's looking at them, or whatever, the cracks start to show up. And then eventually, a psychiatrist or somebody starts to think, you know, I'm getting worked here. The person always comes in through the emergency room, it's never, because they're seeing a professional and the professional, they miss them in the hospital, because they're worried about them. It's always an emergency situation. And as soon as the person leaves, they just go to another hospital, and oh, yeah, and that's how they live their lives. So they live for free. There's no cost to them, because they don't ever pay their bills. They're most of the time, they don't even know who the person really is. Because they use, you know, a false identity. Yeah, and all that stuff.

Darren Stockton 1:01:00

Now that, you know, the modernization of the medical system, and electronic records and stuff actually makes it harder for people with this, you know, disorder to work the system because it used to be a lot easier if you'd leave. And it's paper records. You don't tell new doctor with the old doctor, then they don't know what's going on. You know, the interesting thing about Munchausen by proxy, or I've seen it and you know, is his one eye again opened up to people I can't tell you. I mean, I have one guy who's a doctor, a friend of mine, his doctor at College Hospital, and I told him what was going on. He goes down, he goes, I see it all the time. And I go really? And he goes, Yeah, you know, I had a friend who I've known for 25 years. And I was telling him the story about this one. And he stops calling and looks at me. He goes, my brother is going through the exact same thing with his wife right now. Wow. And I was like, I mean from somebody who I hung out with and had beers with. And, and it was amazing. Again, another part of reaching out, you find out that it is more common out there. But you're right. And it's so hard for people to believe. And when I say gold standard of medical professionals of trying to diagnose something like this or see things I was gone through to seek out these people the best and best to help my daughter. And they were fooled or didn't see things just just like anybody else. It was just amazing. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 1:02:29

So it took a year and a half to this expert that was on your side, finally to explain to the court what actually was going on and your daughter was actually not only being harmed, but in continual harm's way. So you prevailed in court. Yeah. And then the court give you full custody of your daughter at that time and allow you to move your daughter to California.

Darren Stockton 1:02:52

Yeah, that was always what we had gone into. It was what were

Kim Fauskee 1:02:57

the ramifications from the mother at that time, because I'm sure she just didn't wave the white flag and say, Oh, you might gigs up. Well, where did she

Darren Stockton 1:03:07

know? But I can say that. And this is probably, you know, it's kind of funny, you and you talked about the court system not being favorable. You know,

Kim Fauskee 1:03:18

it doesn't matter whether it's Minnesota or Santa Barbara, it's the same way.

Darren Stockton 1:03:20

Yeah. But what I will say this, which is interesting, and this was part of the tide turning is I would say that, you know, somebody like her mom could convince a practitioner who was a woman almost always went to women, and was able to turn them against me, right? If a woman sees a dad, that's a bad dad, they think or whatever, you know, what you get from them is not pleasant. But I will say that a woman who then sees that it's a woman who is actually the one that's doing it to the child, the flip, or I should say the support that I received in that situation was more positive than the negative the other way, if that makes sense. Like that. Yeah, the support I got from some of the people that were just in the court system, I didn't get to choose them. They were just selected by the courts. It's a very random procedure and everything. I mean, that was, that was a big part of you know, of what made it happen not only just from the technical details, but for me feeling like I really, you know, really had that support for my for my daughter. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 1:04:27

So that was four years ago. That was

Darren Stockton 1:04:32

two and a half, two and a half at the end of 2019. And so yeah, my daughter and I came out here to California to live and then about four months later, a pandemic hit and we went into complete lockdown, so it was a pretty interesting

Kim Fauskee 1:04:48

if you didn't know her, then you surely know her now.

Darren Stockton 1:04:50

Yeah, no, we, you know, my, my daughter and I, I mean, from the moment I met her, I could just tell you We just had this thing and, you know, I never never have been somebody to, you know, be a part of say, like organized religion. And I would say that I didn't even have what I would call a spiritual side until I, you know, until I went through this journey, but from the very first time I met her, we just had this thing. I mean, I can tell it was it was, it was there the whole time, even though it was beat down and suppressed from her side. But there was just this connection in this love that was undeniable. And you know, the first time I ever got to see my daughter, which was an hour, one day and an hour and a half the next day in a supervised situation, not the time that you would ever, you know, the way that you'd ever think of it happening, I remember seeing, you know, gone down to the airport to fly home and I was sitting there with my mom, she had come out with me and we were sitting, you know, ordered some dinner and I said, you know, I gotta go use the bathroom. And I was thinking about my daughter and I got up to walk across the terminal to the bathroom. And I couldn't feel my feet. I felt like angels picked me up and just carried me I tell my daughter about that all the time to Dad, is this that sappy

story about the angels, you know, I tell her after first man like, sure understand later on in life, sappy story about the angels, but but it really was. And so all through it all along. And I think that's one of the things I just did, it was just there. It was. And, you know, when I talk about the spiritual side, I, you know, you think about, okay, why did this happen? Is it just, you're just a person and you got fooled or whatever? Or is there some deeper connection, and I just know, no matter what it was that I was selected, you know, by the universe, because I've really realized my life as an athlete, and then working with athletes and everything that I know, could not have prepare me any better for the task, that the sum total of the skills and everything that I needed to pull off, it was like, the life journey and whatever great things I may have accomplished myself as a racer, and working with other athletes and all this stuff, I felt like really, all of that was just preparing me to be the person that could actually go do this for my daughter, because, you know, she, she, that soul was going to come into the universe, I believe, but the fact it needed me to help her to get to safety.

Kim Fauskee 1:07:41

The Is there a relationship with a mom at all? So?

Darren Stockton 1:07:45

No, no, not? Not really? Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 1:07:48

And how was your daughter? Again? Like you had said that? When all this happened, and COVID happened? How's your daughter adjusting to living someplace else? She is a preteen. Yeah, now. Yeah. And so you know, not only the emotional abuse that she suffered, but you know, being somebody that grew up somewhere else now having to relocate and things like how, how it all that? Go? Well, I

Darren Stockton 1:08:20

I guess the answer is she's doing great. She's doing amazing, doing fantastic if you didn't know, and again, which is why hold her, you know, her privacy is Oh, dear, most people you'd never even think good, just looks like a normal kid. And it's very interesting that the science on this type of abuse, and this is what the expert explained to me is that it's almost like, like the Manchurian Candidate, that movie where it's you, you are, you're brainwashed. But as soon as you can get away from that abusive parent and get a new environment, I mean, it's a certain part of it is like a light switch. Now, granted, it's been a process and obviously, you know, it's it hasn't been easy by any means. And there's still hard parts of it. I mean, you could imagine, no matter how much she loved me in the fact that she'd been out here and new people and stayed with me for you know, weeks at a time and everything like that, even still, you could imagine, just for any kid to, you know, to go to school one day and think you're gonna come home to your normal family. But you know, your uncle picks you up and the next morning, you're on a plane to California, and your life changes without even really knowing what's going on. You can imagine for even just a normal well adjusted healthy kid and not in that situation, what that would do. And so that's why I say I mean, her resiliency is amazing. I could remember one of the experts, one of the court experts, actually, like I said, that's just selected by the court. I remember her telling me at one point she goes, she goes your daughter is so strong. She goes if my kids had to go through this, she goes they would have cracked a long time ago. I mean, this is from somebody who had been working in

that Hold for 30 years and it's a year it's just I can't even believe how strong your daughter is. And she's just got that thing in her, you know, it shows up in in other areas too. But she, you know, she's amazing. She's, I mean, I haven't tell her like she's willing to do work that I know a lot of adults aren't willing to do, you know, to really get to a better place. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 1:10:22

Well, she's amazing, because she has a father like you. Thanks that I was willing to go to battle to do what was right. Yeah. So Darren, we thank you for being here today and telling your story. I know, it wasn't easy. Yeah, there's a lot more you have to say. So we'll have you back in the future. And we'll have some more of these discussions. But again, thank you, I'm sure this is going to be meaningful for people out there that are either fighting for custody or have fought for custody, because your story will surely resonate with them. So yeah,

Darren Stockton 1:10:51

yeah, thank you. And I guess you know, one last thing I would want to say just, you know, and, and the biggest reason why I came in here to speak again, in spite of, you know, the sweaty palms that I had walking up the stairs today, and everything else about it is just because I really learned for me, how much reaching out to people helped me and, you know, it's a pretty scary thing I was, I was talking with Dana about this, you know, and he had kind of brought it up to me one time, like, normally, if you as a person in this world, if you see malevolence, you know, evil, right, right in your face, you get to go do it, I'm going to turn and cut and run and go the other way, which is what you should do. And, but in this situation, if I wanted to save my daughter, I couldn't. And so I could just say to people out there, if you're, you know, if you're going through something like this, just always think about your kid and what they need. And, you know, anything's possible.

1:11:57

Um, Tara, would you like to spend just a minute talking about the kind of help that you need right now?

Darren Stockton 1:12:03

Yeah, yeah. So I had, you know, through my, my business here in town, I myself, you know, coming up to be a professional athlete was given a lot of help by coaches and people in the area of Santa Barbara, which is just great, really, you know, mentorship that helped guide me into a professional career. And so through my business, I, you know, I donate time, and I help train. I was a, you know, Kid athlete that went on to become professional, and I donate my time for high school aged athletes and helped coach a bunch of cyclists. And I'd had this I, you know, kids and through high school and help women, and, you know, I really realized, in my life, how much athletics helped him molded me into the person, you know, that I was, and like I said, when I was going through the worst of this, I'd be like, okay, you know, if you can ride 120 mile race in the rain in Belgium, where you feel like crap, and you're number 105, in a line of 120 people suffering all day, you can do this, you know, and I pulled from that all the time. And my brother who is a professional, felt the same way as one of my very best friends growing up who raced bicycles with me, also, he went on to become a mountaineering guide. I mean, you know, climbed into bed and led three week expeditions on Mount McKinley, and we would talk about it you guys, I can't tell you guys how many times because we like have to push into camp and I was hungry, and we didn't have time to eat and my whole body's hurting. Because I would

remember those bike rides we did, I mean, we're like 16 and 17, you know, going up the coast. gavia just gone as hard as you could hang it on by your, you know, by the skin of your teeth to try and try and stick with it. And so, you know, cycling through my coaching kids in cycling, I really realized like, yeah, okay, maybe somebody could become a professional or not, but I really realized the benefit of it was just using sports, you know, obviously cycling oriented, but sports in general and athletics to really help kids of that age find themselves and, and it you know, I had so many kids who had told me how much you know, what we did, had meant for them, and they're, excuse me out in college, and I get a phone call or a text message know, where they, you know, thank you so much, you know, for what cycling taught me and so I'd had this idea some years ago about trying to actually you know, create some type of a program where that's really the focus of it. And so I've been working on that again recently. Because the backdrop of COVID You know, one of the things when the lockdown the app and you know is my daughter's very physical person in Minnesota, she was a cross country skier and always outside and you come out here and you're You're in a lockdown. And you guys stay in house all day, let alone the fact that we didn't have a whole friend system, she had never been in school out here and, and she was really suffering not having that outlet. And you know, a little over a year ago, I found an outlet for her, she does what's called Ariel, you know, it's like, what they would do Cirque du Soleil that type of stuff. And, and I just saw how she transformed, you know, and not only just from the emotional side, but you know, kids, especially these days, and again, I'm sure many parents can resonate how in COVID, kids attachments and connections of friends have been through screens, you know, tablets, and things like that, which I'm thankful for. But also, there's a lot of maybe not so great parts of that and, and so I have been wanting to create a program to use athletics, you know, as a backdrop to really teach kids about resiliency and strengthen independence and ultimately help them reach their full potential. As human beings, regardless of whether they ever had a career as an athlete, I've really found that and so. And so I've started a project called ACE, which stands for athletic centered evolution. And it's a program for using athletics to really help teach kids about life and learn to teach them what their potential is, you know what they can do. And again, it's amazing when you reach out to people, you know, this, a sequence of events happened, where there's a property has come up that some friends of mine have that they're, you know, splitting off and settling part of it is like, if you could have written down everything you would want to make a program like this happen that would like check every check every list. And so I amazingly had reached out to a few people, it's amazing what I've received already as basically like an endowment and start to try and go out and get this, this property to try and build a program for kids. And so we're going to start accepting help from people and donations to try and help secure a property and build this ACE program.

1:17:17

So how can people reach you if they want to get them? Well, the best way is

Darren Stockton 1:17:21

I just set up an email for this program, and it's the ACE project to to like the number two to Gmail. And you know, if you email me there, again, it's the ACE Project 22.

Kim Fauskee 1:17:37

And we'll put that in the show notes so people can reference it there as well. Okay,

Darren Stockton 1:17:40

great. That would be great. Yeah. And, it's just such a fantastic opportunity. And so many people I talked to about their kids during COVID, as you're just having a hard time struggling I mean, it's kind of universal for a lot of them. And so, yeah, getting this project off the ground, whatever you've received already is pretty amazing. It's a small part of what I need to make it happen. But yeah, so that's really something that's close to my heart, not only for what I saw the help and benefits for my daughter, but myself and close friends who have used sport to help build us into the people that we are.

Kim Fauskee 1:18:15

Yeah, well, it sounds like you're headed down the right path. And again, all we need is somebody that cares, and you're your caring person and, and I can see how you have that impact on other people's lives. So again, thanks for being here. And, again, we'll have you back and we'll have some further discussion about your depth and your life. So

Darren Stockton 1:18:39

great. Thank you. All right. Thanks, Dana.

Fear Me Out 1:18:44

We appreciate our listeners and are interested in your comments and suggestions. Feel free to email us at yourmeoutpodcast@gmail.com If you're interested in becoming a sponsor for this podcast, please email us at fearmeoutpodcast@gmail.com Thank you for listening. See you next time.