

Jerry: Hi, Dylan. It's good to see you.

Dylan Bowman: Hey, Jerry. Thanks so much for having me.

Jerry: Sure. Sure. Before we get started, why don't you just take a minute and introduce yourself?

Dylan Bowman: Sure. So, my name is Dylan Bowman. I am from here in Boulder, Colorado. However now, I'm living up in Carbondale outside of Aspen.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: [00:00:30] And, um, I'm an athlete first and foremost. That's sort of h- how I've always identified, where I've always found my self-worth, and my motivation and my drive.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And, um, I am a professional athlete. I run, uh, professionally travel the world competing in super long distance mountain-foot races.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: Um, so what people would normally call an ultramarathon.

Jerry: Right.

Dylan Bowman: That's sort of what I specialize in. Um, usually races between 50 and a hundred miles. And, uh, yeah, that's, that's me in a nutshell.

[00:01:00]

Jerry: What- what would be helpful to talk about today?

Dylan Bowman: Sure. So, I think for me, the last 12 months have been easily the hardest 12 months of my life, not only as a human being but also as an athlete. And obviously, there's a lot of overlap there, because when one is off, the other suffers. And in this case, both have been, (laughs) quite off.

Jerry: Hmm.

[00:01:30]

Dylan Bowman: And, uh, as you know, um, we have a mutual friend-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: ... who has gotten a lot out of your work and who-

Jerry: Yeah, that's Brett Jackson.

Dylan Bowman: ... my- yeah, a good friend of mine, Brett Jackson, who I grew up with here in Boulder, went to school with growing up, and somebody who I've always really, really admired as a bright, um, intellectual business person. And, uh, somebody who I've always seen as a, as a kindred spirit whose advice I've always really, um, taken to heart. And he and I met in Aspen a few weeks ago. And, um, we had a really amazing in depth conversation about some of the struggles I was going through, and how they were similar to some of the struggles he had gone through in the past.

[00:02:00]

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: And he recommended your book to me.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: Um, and I bought it the next day. And just as, uh, I was getting into it, uh, I sort of hit a little bit more adversity, uh, which is something we can talk about, but basically just, uh, another injury occurred.

[00:02:30]

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: Uh, which gave me more time to, to sit with the book. And long story short, I read it in a few days, and it had a really big impact on me. And, uh, yeah, something that I'd love to talk about.

Jerry: So, I just wanna just, um, so first of all say thank you. Um, uh, just a word about the book. One- One of the experiences that I've been having is, um, I had, uh, stilled myself for having been, uh, vulnerable in the book. I prepared myself well for that. What I did not prepare myself well for was the impact the book might have on other people.

[00:03:00]

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:03:30]

Jerry: And so, I just wanna acknowledge that and recognize that, but, um, but I- I- I think there's an opportunity here to sort of, um, understand what's up for you.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And, um, so what's up for you? What- What- What's it been like? Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: (Laughs) Sure. So, at this point, last summer, and we're recording here in the beginning of September, I was sort of winding down what was probably the best season of my career as a professional athlete. Everything had gone amazingly well. Things in my life were clicking. Um, my training was coming easily, and everything was then reflected at the most important point, which for me is the day of competition.

[00:04:00]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: Often times, you show up feeling ready, and you don't perform the way that you like to. Last year, everything just clicked for me.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:04:30]

Dylan Bowman: And I think this point last year, I sort of felt like I had everything figured out, you know? Like I had somehow found some cheat code about how to train, when to train, how to eat, how to rest, how to care for myself, all those important things as an athlete. And I figured I could just take that template, and sort of copy paste it every year going forward sort of thinking-

Jerry: Lather, rinse, repeat.

Dylan Bowman: Exactly.

Jerry: Lather, rinse, repeat. Right.

Dylan Bowman: Just feeling like, "Okay, I've figured this out. This is how it's gonna be."

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:05:00]

Dylan Bowman: And I think when you have moments like that, the universe has a way to sort of show you that you don't have everything figured out. And for me, it's been a really difficult struggle since then. Basically, almost exactly 12 months of hardship for me.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And the way I can best walk you through without taking the entire, (laughs), um, out of time that we have was, I sort of just fell into a really bad depressive episode near the end of last year.

[00:05:30]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: Really for no reason at all other than, uh, general feeling of unsettledness in my life, which I think we can talk about in a little bit more depth, because I think that's sort of been one of the major things for me, um, that sort of led to this pattern of, um, the sort of struggle and setback. Um, and a lot of it was self- created as we can talk about too, but basically then coming into this year's competitive season, uh, I- I really just didn't feel like myself.

[00:06:00]

And it was ... It's now then outwardly reflected in some you know, very obvious ways. So for example, I started my season this year in January by going to a hundred kilometer race in Hong Kong. When I arrived in Hong Kong, again, I was sort of just feeling really worn down, and really just depressed. You know, no other way to put it, but just like depressed. When I arrived, I picked up some sort of traveler's flu. I was very, very sick, ultimately not able to do the race. Very disappointing after traveling across the world.

[00:06:30]

Fast forward a couple months, I was gonna be doing a ski mountaineering race in Aspen where I live with a partner, a good friend of mine who lives in Montana. Two days before the race, this time I come down with, uh, some sort of viral chest throat infection that makes me not be able to start that race. Then, (laughs), uh, my next sort of running competition that I had scheduled was d- due to be in the Canary Islands in Spain in May.

[00:07:00]

And because we had such a intense winter here in Colorado with lots of snowfall, particularly where I live, I decided to go out to Portland, Oregon to do some training for a few weeks before I flew to Spain to do this race just to get on some dry, dry land. Drove all the way out there. And the first day I was there, on my first run, I rolled my ankle so- so- so bad that I fractured my fibula.

[00:07:30]

And so that was a really good opportunity for me to sort of get my shit together for lack of a better word. And unfortunately, I didn't (laughs) really take that opportunity to give myself the time that I needed to to rest and heal, even though clearly I think that's what my body and the universe was sort of telling me to do at the time. It was some outside pressure that we can talk about as well.

[00:08:00]

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: Um, it sort of led me to feel like I needed to get back to training right away. Um, and so I sort of was pushing myself to get through this. And ultimately, my body, my foot, my ankle, my achilles on the foot where I had the injury, um, sort of got to a point where I can no longer train. And this is about the time that I met with Brett Jackson, and he told me about your book. And then, uh, the next day, (laughs) because I was no longer running, I went out for a bike ride, crashed my bike, separated my shoulder. And so I think that sort of catches you up, (laughs) on the main sort of-

[00:09:00]

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: ... um, acute moments where this sort of internal turmoil I think has been outwardly reflected. And when I then was sitting at home trying to come to terms with what had happened when I separated my shoulder and just like trying to understand what the lesson was in this-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:09:30]

Dylan Bowman: ... long pattern of really severe disappointment, I started reading your book. And it- it really helped me reframe the way that I was approaching myself-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: ... my identity as an athlete, what was really important to me, why it was important to me, and what I could get out of the experience and how-

Jerry: Hmm, the experience of being injured?

[00:10:00]

Dylan Bowman: The experience of being injured and just this underlying feeling of just like being unsatisfied and unsettled.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: Um, and I've sort of had that feeling now for a year. And I'm somebody who, (laughs) has luckily dealt with very, very little trauma and adversity in my life.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: And this is really the first time in my whole life I can say like I've been depressed.

Jerry: Hmm.

[00:10:30]

Dylan Bowman: And in a prolonged way. You know, obviously, I've had my ups and downs, but nothing that's been this challenging.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: And, um, yeah so just, um, uh, reading your book and having m- uh- sort of change in perspective, and, um, a lot of great just thought-provoking-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: ... uh, journaling exercises eh- and things that you include in the book, uh, to
[00:11:00] help me as an athlete understand you know, that I'm not just an athlete, right?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And- and to g- m- make sure that my self-worth isn't only caught up in that
identity.

Jerry: Okay. Oh, I appreciate you're sharing all of that. And, uh, um, there's a part of
my ego that would love to dive deep, and now on a discussion about the book,
[00:11:30] but I'm gonna actually suggest we put that to the side for a little bit, because
here's a feeling I had when you were talking. It's hard for you to breathe. Does
that resonate with you?

Dylan Bowman: It does. And it's funny you say that, because I have had this visceral sense of
just being clenched, you know?

Jerry: Yeah. Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: For 12 months.

Jerry: Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: And even when I go running sometimes-

Jerry: Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: ... I'll just like feel this weird tightness in my body.

Jerry: Yeah. Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: And, uh ...

[00:12:00]

Jerry: So, so, I'm gonna try something I don't think I've ever done on a podcast
before, but I've done in person sessions before. I'm gonna suggest that you
uncross your legs, and that you actually just, haaa, take a deep breath with
me. Ooh. We're gonna breathe together.

[00:12:30]

Jerry: [00:13:00] And I wanna reflect back, you've kinda had an ass kicking. And it wasn't just ... It was like this, it was like, you were down and then got kicked. And then the universe after kicking you had turned around, walked away, and they came back and kicked you again. Does that feel ... ?

Dylan Bowman: That's how it felt. And it- it seems to come at strange times too.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: Sort of at least from my perspective, coming at moments where I'm finally starting to feel some momentum, you know?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: [00:13:30] Star- Finally starting to feel like I'm figuring it out. I'm working through it, and the wind might finally be at my back. And then something will happen like crash my bike, or breaking my ankle where it's just like so defeating. And, um, yeah I mean, the external injury component is just one component of sort of how I feel. And that goes back to me sort of saying that m- me as a person and me as an athlete are both ... have both been out of sync. And obviously, there's, there's a lot of overlap into my performances as an athlete.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And that being my lifestyle and my livelihood. And v- my general feeling of being settled and content in my personal life.

Jerry: [00:14:30] I wanna reflect back, and just follow my intuition on a couple of things. You used the phrase "figure it out" twice if I can recall correctly. The first time was when you would describe the fact that you thought you had it all figured out. And then you talked about just now figuring it out, still trying to figure it out. And earlier, you used a phrase that really caught me, stuck with me, "I gotta get my shit together."

[00:15:00] And just now again, you used this phrase of around a kind of, uh, ease. I'm remembering what you said to me and what is internalized as, and I could be wrong here, so correct me if I've got the language wrong, but they didn't suffer a lot of trauma. It's kind of a life of ease, and I had it figured out.

Dylan Bowman: Yes.

Jerry: And then all of a sudden, "I didn't have my shit together."

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: I know I still don't have my shit together. And I have been ill at ease, is all my words now for the better part of a year. And I had to get my shit together. What does the phrase "get my shit together" mean?
[00:16:00]

Dylan Bowman: I think for me, it's generally just again, going back to the feeling like things are clicking along, you know?

Jerry: Clicking along.

Dylan Bowman: Like you know, you can sort of go about your daily life without much labor, without much forethought, without eh- much complication.

[00:16:30]

Jerry: You show up, you- you- you- you do a f- a hundred mile run, and everything just goes, whether or not you win, it just goes.

Dylan Bowman: Right.

Jerry: That's most of your life, has been most of your life?

Dylan Bowman: I mean, sport has always been my life. Even before I was a runner, I was a team sport athlete, and that has always been my love. You know, outside of being an athlete, I love following sport. I love watching sport. I admire athletes. I follow athletes. Um, and so that's always been sort of like my love. And I think part of the reason why I love it is because it's ... the environment in which you either have your shit together, or you're exposed as having not have your shit together. And-
[00:17:00]

Jerry: And you've always in effect had your shit together.

Dylan Bowman: Yes, and-

[00:17:30]

Jerry: And so you love having the feeling of having your shit together.

Dylan Bowman: Right. And there's ... It's a very controlled environment, right? Because you have this period of training whereby it's all ... it's up to you and your coach, and you know, the people that you have on your team to do the work that's necessary to make sure you show up at the competition with your shit together. And if you do, you either or you- you either win, or you have a performance that you're proud of even if not victorious.

Jerry: You might ... Personal best kinda thing?

Dylan Bowman: Right.

Jerry: Uh-huh.

[00:18:00]

Dylan Bowman: Um, and if you slack off in practice, if you don't do the little things that ultimately feed the larger things, which feed the larger success, then you get exposed. And I think that's why I've always, uh, enjoyed sport, because there is that level of control over your own destiny, and over your own, um-

Jerry: And whether or not you're exposed.

Dylan Bowman: Yes.

[00:18:30]

Jerry: And whether or not you're exposed is not having had your shit together.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Or whether you've slacked off.

Dylan Bowman: Yeah.

Jerry: When did you first learn that you should not slack off?

Dylan Bowman: Again, it probably goes back to my earliest days of you know, being an athlete. I mean, I remember distinctly when Sports Illustrated would show up at my house. You know, I'd basically read it cover to cover-

Jerry: How old were you?

Dylan Bowman: Young, I mean like it's-

Jerry: Like before 10?

Dylan Bowman: Yeah, 10 and earlier. Uh, and I've always sort of had this weird kind of, uh, photographic memory with statistics and-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: ... you know, where people go to college, and um-

Jerry: The James Abstract, right?

Dylan Bowman: Yeah, and yeah results of racism, things like that. And so it's always sort of like ... then this thing that comes second nature to me. And, um, yeah, I- I- I think that's probably the time at which I, I mean, sort of felt that for the first time. Uh, it's always that related-

[00:19:30]

Jerry: Felt that love?

Dylan Bowman: ... to, to sport.

Jerry: Felt that love?

Dylan Bowman: Perhaps. Yeah, potentially.

Jerry: You said, "I love."

[00:20:00]

Dylan Bowman: Yeah, yeah. I mean, still in, in my personal life, my best friends are people who I met through sport, whether it's the guys I played lacrosse with in college, the guys I compete against now in running, my friends who I train with. Sport has always been sort of like the core of my life. And that's why my identity is always been so wrapped up in it. And that's ... But- and- and I've always been motivated to perform well.

[00:20:30] And when you're performing well, you know, it obviously suits your, your ego too, and you're getting something very valuable back from sport at the same time. And so this year is really the first time for me where it's like failure after failure, and then you start to feel like you're kind of a fraud, and then like (laughs), "Wait, maybe I'm not this great athlete." Like-

Jerry: You're exposed as not having your shit together.

Dylan Bowman: Exactly. Yeah.

Jerry: Um, when did an accident become a failure?

Dylan Bowman: I'm sorry, an accident?

Jerry: Yeah. 'Cause an injury is an accident.

[00:21:00]

Dylan Bowman: Yeah. Yeah, so again, I think all of this is- is self-created, right? And I think internally in my heart of hearts, I know that breaking my ankle was not like my fault, and it doesn't make me a bad athlete, or-

Jerry: Y- Your adult brain knows that.

Dylan Bowman: Right. But you know, at the same time, and just to add a little bit of context, at the end of last year, sort of right when I was falling into this sort of depressive episode, I was renegotiating all my contracts with my sponsors.

[00:21:30]

Jerry: Uh-huh.

Dylan Bowman: And because I had such a great season last year, obviously, I was compensated as such, right? And then you come into this year, 2019, with all these new contracts and new sponsors along with the old sponsors who I've been with for a longtime. And then sort of hit this rough patch. And even though internally in my heart of hearts, like I said I know it doesn't make me a bad person that I broke my ankle, or make me a bad athlete that I broke my ankle.

[00:22:00]

At the same time, it's so hard to feel like these people are compensating me as if I'm performing well, and winning races, and-

Jerry: But you were.

Dylan Bowman: I was, right.

Jerry: They compensated you ... So, I- I- I know I'm interrupting.

Dylan Bowman: (Laughs)

Jerry: I apologize for that, but I'm trying to unpack it. Were these the best contracts that you'd gotten to date?

[00:22:30]

Dylan Bowman: Yes.

Jerry: Like in order of magnitude like significantly better?

Dylan Bowman: Yes.

Jerry: Okay. I'm gonna quote from the book.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: I'm gonna quote my father, and see if this lands with you. "The higher up the pole the monkey climbs, the more his ass shows." That's a pretty high spot on that pole that monkey went up to, isn't it?"

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. I mean, and it's- it's so easy to when things are clicking like last year where I felt like, "Okay, this is it. Figured it out. Copy paste, next year, year after that."

[00:23:00]

Jerry: And then I'm done.

Dylan Bowman: Yeah. Oh yeah, and-

Jerry: And they'll never know that I'm really a slacker.

Dylan Bowman: Right. And I feel like I've always made the smart and right decisions at the critical moments. You know, for example, a lot of my friends who I came up with in the sport have dealt with you know, major injuries, or have done too much. And in our sport, that's a serious thing whereby you sort of fry your energy system, and can't really compete at the same level for a couple years, if not, forever. I've never been somebody who trains too much. I've never been somebody who races too much.

[00:23:30]

Now, I felt like I've just always sort of have my shit together, right? And again, going back to last year where I was just having success after success, of course, (laughs) all your sponsors are happy everybody-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:24:00]

Dylan Bowman: ... everybody wants to talk to you, you feel like you're an important person in the sport. Your ego feels good, and you have sort of this self-worth in your identity as an athlete. But yeah, then your ass shows when you're up at that high level on the pole. And you realize that you don't really have it figured out. And the universe will make sure that you know that you don't have it figured out right at the moment that ... where you feel like you do. And for me, that's just how it's felt for the last 12 months.

[00:24:30]

Jerry: Hmm. You said that, uh, you were able to start reframing both because of the book, but also because of the work that you've been doing. How are you holding the experience now?

Dylan Bowman: Much better I would say, in a much more healthy way. And the book honestly has been instrumental in that. And it found me at the most perfect moment, which you know, again, going back to the universe feeling like it won't give me a break. That was a moment where it- it felt like, "Okay, here's what you need right now." And I've said this to you in email as well, but even though the book is focused mostly on business people, entrepreneurs, founders, I feel like you could substitute the word "athlete" in on every page, and it would resonate-

[00:25:00]

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: ... and have the exact same message and impact. At least they did for me.

Jerry: Hmm.

[00:25:30]

Dylan Bowman: And I think there is a lot of overlap too between business people and athletes, because we do have these moments of just like amazing success, or just like you feel like you have conquered the world and achieved something so

[00:26:00] amazing. And then you have the obviously just like the mundane day to day, the training, you know, the stuff you do when nobody's looking, the ... just, um, average day is over and over and over that are obviously, uh, orchestrated, or oriented towards some future goal, but are just generally-

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: ... average days.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And then again, on the other side of the spectrum, you have just this crashing, crashing failures and moments where it just feels like it's never gonna get better. And so that's why I think the book was so good for me at, at that moment, and why I think-

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: ... um, it's just as applicable to athletes as it is to business people.

[00:26:30]

Jerry: To ... W- W- What was it that, uh, you were able to reframe things to? What- What- What- What is the ... 'Cause what I'm hearing is, uh, uh, and I think this is a universal challenge that goes beyond leadership, goes beyond entrepreneurship. This notion of hanging our self-esteem on, on I think as I said in the book, the whisper of an idea, the notion that we are only that, which we accomplish.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:27:00]

Jerry: And the danger, and that what I'm sensing Dylan is that is you pay the price for the pursuit of excellence, always getting your shit together.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And the benefit here is really important to acknowledge. The benefit is you've had an amazing life.

Dylan Bowman: Right.

Jerry: And the downside to that has been, um, painful. There's a cause associated with that, but what was ... Tell me about that reframe for you. Where ... Yeah.

[00:27:30]

Dylan Bowman: So, I think the most important thing for me was to acknowledge how lucky I've been in the level of privilege that I've been subjected to in my life.

Jerry: [00:28:00] Th- And I'm waiting to interrupt. The level of luck. The level of privilege was a direct result of the hours and hours, and hours of sacrifice that you've put in.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right, but the- the things-

Jerry: It wasn't that you were subjected to.

Dylan Bowman: Right, but the things that I can't control, you know?

Jerry: Sure.

Dylan Bowman: The family I was born into. The-

Jerry: The- The- The ... Your whiteness.

Dylan Bowman: My whiteness.

Jerry: Right.

Dylan Bowman: My maleness, my straightness, all those things.

Jerry: Everything.

Dylan Bowman: [00:28:30] And again, sort of learning more about your story in the book, and how you had dealt with this crisis as well, sort of in a moment where externally, you seemed like you had your shit together.

Jerry: Right.

Dylan Bowman: You kept having these successes, and uh- uh- career advancements, and yet internally, you were kinda miserable. Um, and understanding for me then the mismatch there that-

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: ... the external can't be your main source of internal satisfaction.

Jerry: Amen.

[00:29:00]

Dylan Bowman: And so for me, one of the major things that I took from the book was that, just thinking to myself sort of like, "What is it about me that needs to beat people in races, or to win in competitions in order to feel like a good person." You know?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:29:30]

Dylan Bowman: And coming to terms with the fact that I actually am a good person even outside of winning races. And when I'm not at the top, when I'm not you know, on the podium, that I still have positive things to contribute to the world. And again, because I've been an athlete my whole life, that's always been my identity. That's always where I've had my self-worth. For me, that was so like a profound thing.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: [00:30:00] You know, it was a really good feeling of like, "Oh wait, like, I don't need to be crashing it this year in order to have a positive impact." In fact, to the contrary, sharing my experiences as an injured athlete, and the hardships and lessons that come from it is probably more valuable to the people who follow me than pictures of me holding trophies.

Jerry: Why so? I think you're right. Why so?

Dylan Bowman: [00:30:30] Because everybody goes through it. And that's the other thing too with the book and your story is that even people who are seemingly uh- have their shit together, have everything figured out, have all the, uh, sort of external metrics of success that you would be looking for in terms of family and career, success and wealth, they're dealing with shit also. And for me, having this life uh- a- e- r- reached my 33rd year w- having never dealt with an episode of serious depression or feeling like I was floundering, and life was never gonna be the same, and never gonna get better-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: ... to learn that even those among us who seem best off are dealing with their own stuff.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: That lifts a certain level of sort of self-loathing, I think.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: Um, just understanding that you know, you're not alone in the struggle.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:31:30]

Dylan Bowman:

[00:32:00] And even if it seems kind of overwhelming on its face, with some perspective when you learn about other people's stories, when you truly understand that you're not the only one going through it, there's sort of like a, uh, you sort of share that burden with other people a little bit more, and you understand that, um, it's not yours alone to carry, and that you can help people by speaking honestly about what you go through.

Jerry: Yeah, I ... You know, um, I'm quite moved by what you're saying. Um, you read well, (laughing). But, um, and I relate to what you're saying, um, to my own story. And, um, I'll take it one level further. Um, this could be a projection on my part, so reject it if it doesn't feel like it fits you. Uh, but there's something really powerful in taking our wounds and turning them into something sacred. And that, uh, jujitsu move of the sacred wound, um, is incredibly powerful.

[00:32:30]

[00:33:00] And here you are at 33, um, I see you're wearing a wedding ring. Are you married?

Dylan Bowman: Yes, married. Yup.

Jerry: Any children?

Dylan Bowman: No children.

Jerry: And so we got out, the rest of our lives. And the truth is just as, uh, my early career shifted, your career may shift.

Dylan Bowman: It will shift. Yeah.

Jerry: It has to.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:33:30]
Jerry: Now, knowing you, you probably will be fitter than the average 20-year old when you're 70, okay? You remind me a little bit of my client, Ben Saunders whose been on the show. Ben is the polar explorer who in his off seasons will t- run hundred mile marathons.

Dylan Bowman: Yeah.

Jerry: Right. Okay, so he's nuts like you.

Dylan Bowman: (Laughs).

Jerry: But the sacred move here is to never ever forget what this last year has been like.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:34:00]

Jerry: Because just around the corner is somebody who just rolled their ankle and broke it. And just up the street is somebody who just got sick in Hong Kong. And you know what that's like? That's compassion. And whether you're coaching them in its future date, or being a sport psychologist and sports coach with this kind of awareness, or just another athlete walking shoulder to shoulder with somebody, you can reach into that pain. And you can say, "I know what it's like." Yeah.

[00:34:30]

Dylan Bowman: For the first time. (Laughs)

Jerry: Excuse me?

Dylan Bowman: For the first time.

Jerry: For the first time.

[00:35:00]

Dylan Bowman: Yeah. And the, um, the experience has been valuable for me even though it's ... It feels you know, even though like e- it's still going on and, uh, it's never gonna end that, I- I- I think it has prepared me for like you said, the inevitable end you know, when I do age out of being able to compete. Um, and when I do ultimately have to come to terms with life after athletics, at least after competitive athletics, which again is how I've always see myself, and where I've always felt my best.

[00:35:30]

Um, and that has been also, uh, incredibly valuable thing for me to sort of come to terms with now.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: You know, while I hopefully still have several good years ahead of me to finally sort of have this glimpse into that pain, and that loss of, uh, having your identity and what you loved to do your whole life. And these skills where you get all your self-worth, you know, and people are congratulating you, and, um-

[00:36:00]

Jerry: You're literally getting medals. You're getting ribbons.

Dylan Bowman: Right.

Jerry: V- And right as you cross the finish line.

Dylan Bowman: [00:36:30] And so you know, if, if I hadn't gone through this year, and got to the end of my career with having never faced, uh, this year of setback and disappointment, I'm sure it would hurt even more.

Jerry: Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: And I feel like I will be better prepared for that now. And it has also strengthened my result to fight like hell against that encroaching, and at the same time-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: [00:37:00] ... and continue to do the little things, have my shit together in order to keep doing it. Because it is what I just love, you know, and I miss it so much. And it's given me so much, and I still feel like I have so much left to give.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: [00:37:30] And that's why it's been so hard, you know, to just feel like my body's betraying me, but like my heart and mind, and soul want nothing more than to be back on the start line. And I was in Europe last week for a race that I was supposed to be doing, but obviously due to the circumstances, had to pullout of, I was there doing media stuff, and sponsor stuff, and commentary, and, uh, things like that. And it just like ... I had moments of just like, "Man, I love this so much." And also just deep moments of depression of like, "God, is it ever gonna come back?"

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: [00:38:00] And, um, so you know, the, you know, the dichotomy is still there you know, like being okay with the situation as it is, (laughs) and struggling against it, and thinking like, "How can I avoid this?"

Jerry: [00:38:30] So, let me give you some observations and reflections. Um, the first is to remember that it's all a process. And that, uh, part- in that process, part of what we are seeking is, um, continue evolving, and eh- eh- integration of the experiences. Um, we don't ever arrive at the place where we are done. We just keep moving in that direction. So when you find yourself on the sidelines giving media commentary, feeling perhaps envy-

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: ... feeling lost, or noting as you just said, "My body betrayed me." Dude, nobody betrayed anybody.

Dylan Bowman: The ... Yeah, uh- uh- uh, and again, in my adult brain, I understand that.

Jerry: Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: But in my lizard brain, (laughs)-

Jerry: Yeah.

[00:39:00]

Dylan Bowman: ... I guess it's ...

Jerry: Yeah.

Dylan Bowman: ... It's just hard to ... Uh, it's just so hard to come [crosstalk 00:39:04]-

Jerry: Well, but you ... S- but you- you- you- you- you feel this like this self-critical do loop that get started. My body betrayed me, I betrayed my body by not properly training. I know better. And then dog is chasing its tail.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: It's called, "life." It's called, "loss." And the piece that I'm really gonna ... well, there's two pieces here that I'm gonna recommend you work with. One is this notion of attachment, which is the Buddhist notion that so much of our suffering stands from attachment. And the answer is not detachment, right? Attachment, the- the belief that my self-esteem and my self-worth is dependent upon some preconceived notion, some preconceived concept of what life is supposed to be like.

[00:40:00]

And then when it doesn't turnout that way, we're knocked on our asses. And the answer to that is not to not care about anything, but the adult's test is to care as much as you've always cared, and take joy out of that care, and to grieve. And here's the other move for you, grieve the losses. You know, uh, in chapter eight, which is a, a chapter I think you resonated with. This is the one about the movement, um, from heartbreak, to resilience, to equanimity.

[00:40:30]

[00:41:00]

And I talk about life on a roller coaster. The piece of that book, that chapter that I, I did not share, um, was the inspiration for that chapter for me. And it's simply because we didn't get permission to quote the poem. And it's a poem called, "Lead" by Mary Oliver. In which she speaks about, uh, coming across a loon, dead on the beach of a lake. And it is one of the most poignant poems I've ever read on the nature of grief.

[00:41:30]

And I think one of the unexplored pieces, I didn't do a justice. But one of the unexplored pieces that might be available for you is to actually do some grief work around the passing of time, around aging. There's no betrayal.

Dylan Bowman: Hmm.

Jerry: It's just time.

Dylan Bowman: Yup.

Jerry: And it hurts like nobody's business.

Dylan Bowman: It does. And this was really the first time I felt it.

Jerry: Hmm.

[00:42:00]

Dylan Bowman: And I felt the years wearing on. And because, and I don't think I've mentioned this yet, but this is really the first s- like set of injuries I've ever had. And I've been an athlete my whole life as I've said. And so I've always had this, I think, arrogance about my health, you know?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: [00:42:30] And always have just assumed that I was gonna be fine, because I had no counter examples to point to in the past where my colleagues and competitors who I race against, they all deal with injuries. We all ... And everybody in sport deals with injuries, and I just sort of had this feeling that, no, I'm immune to it, you know? And-

Jerry: So, uh, I hear again, I- I- I hear these whispers of self-criticism that keep coming in.

Dylan Bowman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:43:00]

Jerry: Was it arrogance? Was it a childlike belief in your body's immortality? Aah, it feels more appropriate.

Dylan Bowman: Yeah. Well, eh- and I don't mean it in a v- very self-critical.

Jerry: Good.

Dylan Bowman: [00:43:30] What I mean is that, again, having the universe teach you a lesson that you need to learn at a time when you need to learn it. And to your point about attachment, that has been one of the biggest things for me with this whole episode and specifically as it relates to your book, because when I f- fell and crashed my bike, and separated my shoulder, it- well, it finally hit me or got me to a point where I felt like, "Okay, whatever I'm doing is not working. I really need to in this moment let go."

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: Stop trying to force myself to be healthy, and give my body and mind an opportunity to get healthy.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:44:00]

Dylan Bowman: And so, one of the things that I've done that sounds kinda silly, but has helped me with the detachment is to try and dissociate a little bit from my identity as an athlete, um, even though it's painful. It- and-

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: ... uh, feels unnatural to ... at some- at sometimes. Um, but for example, like every piece, almost every piece of clothing that I own now is like sponsor-branded, you know?
[00:44:30]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And it hit me as I was reading your book of like, you know, I'm really kind of putting on a show. I'm putting on a uniform.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: And I'm not necessarily being true to myself, you know? And that-

Jerry: The self was underneath the sponsor clothing.

Dylan Bowman: Exa- Exactly.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:45:00]

Dylan Bowman: And so I ... Even though I'm sort of wearing this stuff today ...

Jerry: (Laughs)

Dylan Bowman: ... Like I went out and bought new T-shirts, and bought new hats, and like-

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: ... actively sort of like take off the uniform, stopping so attached to who you are as an athlete. And stop putting all your self-worth into that, you know?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: [00:45:30] It's okay that you love it, and it motivates you, and it's what you want to do, but it can't be the only place in which you find your worth as a human being.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And that I think really help me sort of with this attachment that I feel to m- the- my identity as an athlete and the ego, um, rewards that, that have come with it.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: [00:46:00] Uh, being so well-supported, having fans, having success, and trophies, and medals to show for it. That can't be the root of what makes me cool with who I am-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: ... as a person.

Jerry: [00:46:30] I think you've, you've, uh, experienced the limitations of that as a strategy. And perhaps now, at 33, which is a magical age by the way. Well, offline we'll talk about why 33 is a really magical age, but at 33, maybe the calling is to come up with a new way to see yourself, a new identity that is above and beyond, and separate from that, which has been so successful and gotten you to where you are today.

Dylan Bowman: Yeah, and if you wanna have that conversation online, we, we can-

Jerry: (Laughs).

Dylan Bowman: ... because I- I think it's actually kind of interesting, because I have an older brother-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: [00:47:00] ... who's just one year older than me. And he last year, in his 33rd year, went through his own episode of just darkness. And it just killed me to see it. And our mother, when she was 33, had also a very depressing year.

Jerry: Hmm.

Dylan Bowman: And it's strange to sort of like see that, sort of, (laughs) you know, s- stick-

Jerry: Well, so what I was thinking and not to call you Christ for any event, but Christ was 33 in that seminal year of his life. And as far as I remember, I could be wrong on this, when the Buddha sit out for his journey of enlightenment, he was 33. Um, there's something very magical about that time. And I know that folks out there listening will know the- the- the story of that better than I. I tend not to track it so well.

[00:47:30]

Dylan Bowman: No, uh, I agree. And it goes back to what we were just talking about, about me sort of feeling my age for the first time.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Bowman: And, and feeling like I'm not a young person anymore.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:48:00]

Dylan Bowman: And understanding that I am not invincible even though I've sort of proven to myself that I am over the course of many decades, uh, to finally sort of feel the vulnerability of age, and the accumulation of time and miles on your body, (laughs). It's something that comes around this time in life.

[00:48:30]

Jerry: So, so perhaps, and we'll start to close with this, perhaps the next part of your journey, and I'm really glad I've stayed away from raising metaphors, or any of those warning metaphors. The next part of this journey is really, um, about accepting your humanity. Because what you are as a man, frail, capable of extraordinary feats, uh, soaring great heights, and crashing and separating your shoulder. And that humanity is what brings you into community. And community is a salve, it's a balm for all [analysis 00:49:20]. Um, it's what Brett gave you when you, when you talked. It's what I gave with the book. It's that sharing.

[00:49:00]

[00:49:30]

And that's what's ahead of you in your 34th year, in your 35th year. That's what's available to you. So, so Dylan, I'm gonna wrap us now. Um, uh, and I really appreciate your coming on the show, and, uh, sharing with me on a personal basis, just sharing with all of us the story, but also your journey.

[00:50:00]

Dylan Bowman: Jerry, it really is a pleasure. And thank you for the work that you do.

Jerry: Thank you. Thank you for saying it.