

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Robert Andrews

JVN Hey curious people, I'm Jonathan Van Ness, and welcome back to Getting Curious. Boo boo boo. Do do do do do do do do do that. Parrot cat cat cat. You know what time it is? The Olympics start on Friday and I can't take it. You know that I am a gymnastics figure skating. It doesn't matter if it's winter games. Summer games? I am here for the Olympics. Are they capitalistic nightmares? Yes. Are they environmentally sustainable? No. As a progressive, should I be as obsessed with them as I am? Probably not. But guess what? NBC got a lifelong fan out of me in 92, and that's not going to change. So I cannot wait for USA gymnastics. I cannot wait for a girl. I cannot wait for our guys. If we had a non-binary team, I'd be really excited for them too. But speaking of that, we have some fun non-binary moments coming for just in a few weeks. But anyway, you know that I'm a huge Simone Biles fan. I love her, and I think I love how Simone has handled herself through her whole career. Really. And what happened to her in Tokyo with getting the twisties, what it is to be a high performance athlete under that much pressure of something like the Olympics. Also like even just taking it back to 2018, I moreno-garcia like famously like talked to herself at the beginning of the team program. And that was like I saw her doing an interview, talking about how like working with a sports psychologist really helped her. And I think sports psychology is something that whenever there's like an Olympics that comes into the lexicon a little bit more. But what is sports psychology? How does it work? Like what it is there anything for people that like, aren't competitive athletes? Can we get anything from sports psychology? So to learn about what sports psychology is, how it works, we've got none other than Robert Andrews. Now, let me tell you about Robert Andrews. Robert Andrews is the founder and director of the Institute of Sports Performance in Houston, Texas. Robert has 30 years of experience and private practice as a mental training consultant and licensed therapist throughout his career. Hold on to your seats. Robert has worked with Olympians and Olympic hopefuls and the last five Summer Olympic Games. He's basically like the Oksana Truth. That's a lot of sports medicine. He's contributed to the success of numerous athletes who have clinched Olympic gold, silver and bronze medals and world championships. His expertise spans 11 countries and 13 sports, including men's and women's gymnastics, trampoline, swimming, diving, basketball, fencing, judo, track and field sprints, pole vault, a middle distance, to put a name on it for track and field and rhythmic gymnastics. Today we're asking, how do Olympians use sports psychology, and is there anything in it for me? Robert, welcome to getting curious. How are you?

ROBERT ANDREWS I'm doing well, all things considered, here in Houston, Texas.

JVN So yeah. So let's talk about that for a moment. So you survived a hurricane this week. You were in, like, the direct path of barrel, right?

ROBERT ANDREWS We took the eyewall right through our part of Houston here. And it was. I could send you videos. Our neighbor across the street lost five trees. Two went on the house right next door a minute. It was horrific. It it was it was pretty horrific.

JVN One. Thank you for making time for us. Two. We're so glad that you're safe. Thank you. And three, I am, to put it like, lightly, Olympics obsessed. I am that person who has like the main feed going on my TV. But then I have an iPad so that I can have like the vault feed, the

floor feed like, so I can follow team USA to every apparatus. Like I am such a gymnastics superfan. Also a figure skating super fan depending on what season we're in. A but you know this is summer games. Come on Perry, we're going for it now. And your bio you work with so many different types of athletes. You work with gymnasts, both in trampoline and artistic gymnastics. You work in swimming, diving, basketball, fencing, judo, track and field, rhythmic gymnastics, sprints, pole vault, middle distance. This screams one question to me. What's your problem with winter sports? What do you have against winter sports? What's going on? Is it just too hot? And Houston.

ROBERT ANDREWS I love winter sports, but for whatever reason, I've never made. I worked with one skeleton athlete. You know where they go face first on a little sled? Yeah. I worked with one skeleton athlete in Winter Olympics. I would love to work with Winter Olympic athletes, but for whatever reason, I'm a summer guy, so we'll just go with it.

JVN Well, if I was a figure skater, like a competitive figure skater, I would so come to you, I already know. Hey, I love the Olympics. I'm so obsessed. But then whenever I hear someone that they're like, like, it's usually because it's become commodified has become branded. I'm like, yeah, well, those packages are everything. I'm sorry. Like those little, like, you know, athlete profiles beforehand. Like, I'm just obsessed with the pomp. I'm obsessed with the circumstance. I love it, but I. People that are going to the Olympics, like they gotta deal with the pressure that comes along with that. How do you work with athletes to prepare for that? Well, it.

ROBERT ANDREWS Starts years and years before the Olympics for most, although I had I had an athlete in the Tokyo Olympics contacted me three months before the Olympics, Olympic trials, and she said, is it too late? And I said, no, let's get to work. And she made the Olympic team in her sport and only worked with her for three months. So but she was. That is so cool. But she was ready to roll. I mean, she was so open and so ready to work. But, you know, like, I had a guy that was an Olympic trials that I've worked with since he was 12 years old. He's 25 now, and, yeah, I've worked with him since he was a little kid, and now he's just 25 year old man. And he did not make the team this go round. And he said it said that he should have but you know, that's over a decade of preparation for this moment, you know. And so it's devastating when you don't make it. But, I was at the Olympic Training Center, probably 2011, I think it was. You remember the name Jonathan Horton? Of course. So I was talking to Jonathan, and there you just kind of lean on the mats and talk, and we're talking, and he says, this is amazing. Quote. At this stage of my career, my gymnastics is all mental. My body knows what to do. It's about getting my mind and my emotions right to go be my best. And I thought that just said it all. So for me, at this level, at the Olympic trials level, the Olympic level, their body knows what to do. It's about learning how to handle distractions, learning how to bring your focus into a point where nationals, Olympic Trials and Olympics to where your mind, body, emotions and I say spirit meaning your love and passion for what you do. Those have to come to a focal point of readiness. And if you're like, I worked with athletes who are staying up late because they're working on their social media presence going into the Olympic trials, you know, get to sleep, find somebody else to do that for you. Or my family's having a big welcome party for me and the the U.S. nationals are in my home town or have it the night before. No. Don't go. Do not go to that. So I kind of have to grab them. It's almost like a GPS system. That's the metaphor I use. So anytime you take

a wrong term mentally or emotionally or physically, I teach them the tools how to reconnect and get back on track again.

JVN So that makes me famously think of Michelle Kwan, 1998. I remember there was like all of this press when like, she didn't stay in the Olympic Village. And I actually just recently went back and was watching the women's long skate. And I mean, Tara Lipinski, gold medalist from 98 Nagano games. Amazing. Great. She performed amazingly. But it's like the commentators were even saying, like, you know, Tara Lipinski, she stayed at the Olympic Village. She experienced every single moment, you know, whether it was opening ceremonies. I think maybe Michelle Kwan, like, didn't walk the opening ceremonies and stayed like outside the village to focus. And she kind of got dragged for it in the press. And now it's like you wouldn't have the commentators saying that. Now you have like, you know, hundreds of thousands of people, millions of people on Twitter all giving their \$0.02 about or I think of like Emma Raducanu. Just recently she pulled out of the mixed doubles with Andy Murray to, you know, focus on her singles and like people were just like ripping her apart. Like some were saying, you know, yeah, she has to focus on hers, how she's just coming back from these two surgeries. But others were like, man, you know, you fucked over Andy Murray. Like, how do you do? You just teach people to, like, we've been talking about this a lot in the podcast with like, happiness and like my engagement in social. Do you just teach people like, don't fucking read the comments. Like, don't go on there. Don't look at what people are saying, because it's only going to make you feel like shit. And even that they're saying amazing, great things, then that's only going to like prime you for a fall, because when they aren't saying amazing, great things, then you're going to feel like shit. So so is your advice. Just don't engage in that stuff.

ROBERT ANDREWS It's recommended not not, not that many follow that advice because we are addicted to these things.

JVN We are fucking addicted.

ROBERT ANDREWS Yeah we are. And athletes get addicted to reading their own highlights and seeing comments. But you're right, if it's if these are destructive comments that are going to get you angry or upset or afraid or anxious or sad or whatever that is, I call them energy leaks. You know, I have this model that I use called the Energy Pipeline. Actually, it's when I, when I go out to do presentations or I'm working with an athlete, it's a, it's I put it up on the screen and it's a big pipeline and the pipeline gets smaller. And over here there's this performance cup. And the pipeline shows leaks mentally, emotionally, physiologically meaning in your body and your behavior. Recognize how you lose energy in those four areas and learn how to keep that pipeline sealed. And there's an abundance of energy going into that performance cup. So if you're sitting there scrolling, looking at this. Is looking at this and you get angry and you're firing back responses or. Guess what? You're losing energy mentally. You're losing energy emotionally. You're losing energy physiologically. You might change your behavior. You might become withdrawn. So whatever Michelle Kwan needed to do to win, that's what she did because it was about her having the best Olympic experience. It wasn't about pleasing the fans or pleasing the media. Good for.

JVN Her. So the first question is how do like when someone doesn't make it? That's devastating. If someone becomes, you know, the traveling alternate or the non traveling

alternate, or they or they don't make the they don't make the team at all. What how do you help someone come back from that?

ROBERT ANDREWS I ask their family girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, wife, partner, whoever it is, I'll get them involved as part of the support system that they don't go through this alone. Like the guy that didn't make the men's team left the arena and went into the hotel. And there's his friends and his former teammates and his family and his girlfriend, he said it just lifted him up. No, I remember I was at the oh eight Olympic Trials in Philadelphia and a gymnast that I that I work with, that in all accounts, I think had a really good chance he should have been on that team. He wasn't. He went back to his hotel room alone and he called me just sobbing, just sobbing. So in 2012, with the men's program, I said, we need to have a support system outside of the room, that when those guys come out of that selection announcement room, they've got people there to love them up, to hold them if they need to cry. And then let's follow this up for a while. And they did. I don't know if they kept doing that in 2016 and in this Olympics. They just that they already knew what the numbers were. So the guys are on the floor and they know who made the team because it was totally analytics, which that's a whole nother story. On another topic.

JVN Oh no, you know, I like it. Let's do that. Let's talk about sports psychology as a whole. So I loved it. In your work it's not only sports, it's performance. It's high performance people. So whatever your job is, whatever this is like this is to apply to to all of us, not just Olympians, but what is the field of like, sports psychology or like performance psychology all about?

ROBERT ANDREWS Well, it used to be about breathing, visualization, positive affirmation. I call that neck up sports psychology, just head stuff, right? Like I used to have people in my practice who had master's degrees in sports psychology, but they weren't licensed mental health professionals, so they would get to a certain point with an athlete. In our weekly team meetings, they would say, I have an athlete who's struggling with, anxiety, depression. Well, you need to find them a support resource because that's out of your scope. And it didn't work with those people. So I now I bring people into my practice that are licensed mental health professionals. So neck up sports psychology has now become all encompassing at whatever's causing interference. I had a college baseball player call me one time surfer, point man. He gets on the call, the zoom call, and he says, well, what do you do? And I thought for a minute, and I said, I help remove interference. And he got this big smile on his face and he goes, I like that. And so we can look at issues with your like, I have a really cool story. I worked with the college baseball player, right? And he couldn't throw strikes. He said, I just feel like when I go to throw my hands all over the place and I said, well, if your hand's all over the place, your mind's all over the place. What's going on? He had issues with his girlfriend. He is then in an argument with her. He was ashamed of how he was pitching and hadn't talked to his parents for several weeks. Way behind in his school work. Unpaid parking tickets on campus had a nail in his tire, always having to stop and and put nail in his, air in his tires. And so his breathing and visualization really going to help with all that? No. So I made him write it all down. I use a stress worksheet that looks at the energy cost, the brain power, mental emotional energy cost to each of those distractions. And he agreed that he could take care of all of those. So he went out, called his parents, took his dinner out to grow the girlfriend, out to dinner, stayed up five nights in a row, took care of his schoolwork, paid off all his parking tickets, went to Discount Tire, got a new tire, comes back in, he says. I

feel like I just emptied my backpack full of rocks. I feel great. We'll go tell your coach you could do some work with me. Ask him to give you another chance. Coach gave him another chance. He was lights out. Became their middle reliever for the rest of the season. Does any of that have to do with visualization and breathing? Well, maybe, but it was more of a what we call a whole person approach. And that's what today's the field of sports psychology today has evolved into. It looks at like roars back at 0708, he says, I don't want to leave any stone unturned. Let's do whatever we need to do to help me become an Olympian. I worked as a professional baseball player. He was a pitcher, and after the first session he goes, I had no idea. Sports that college. It could be this complicated. I said, what do you mean? He goes, well, our team guy just tells me to see myself throw in strikes and say, I got this. I said, what else do you work on here? He just tells me to see myself throw in strikes and say, I've got this. He says, this is a whole new world and it is a whole new world.

JVN Yes. I loved what you said earlier about the rituals for readiness. What are the rituals for readiness?

ROBERT ANDREWS I have a pretty cool story with that. And Roger won't let me share in the story. So he's an alternate at oh eight. Right. And then Paul Ham breaks his hand a couple of weeks before the Olympics, and Roger calls me. He says, I'm ready physically, but what do I need? How do I get ready mentally and emotionally? I said, well, everything is a step by step process when you're packing your bag in Houston. There's intention around that. When you fly to San Jose to get your Olympic credentials, there's intention in that process to bring your focus in and calm down distractions. And when you get your Olympic gear aboard that flight to go to Beijing, that's a ritual for readiness. When you see yourself landing in Beijing. Everything is a step to getting closer. You get your Olympic credentials, you step into the village, you go to podium training to wear what he walked out underneath that USA banner. He was ready to roll. And and Tim Daggett called him the spiritual leader of that team. And it was because of that foundational work that he had done to prepare for the Olympics, but also realizing every step. And that can be broken down into, before you walk into the arena, leave everything in your hotel room or your car, like I have athletes actually sit in their car and breathe and leave all the stress and distractions behind, and then they walk into the arena and that step into the the arena is a ritual for readiness, the warm up. You know, I always have athletes, gymnasts tell me all the time, oh, I had a bad warmup. I'm going to have a bad meet. I was like, what's the purpose of a warmup to get my body ready? What else? To get in the right place mentally? To get run the right place emotionally, to get used to the equipment? There's no such thing as a bad warmup. So I tell gymnasts all the time, please eliminate the word bad from your vocabulary because it just sends your brain off on this tangent and they go, oh, that makes sense.

JVN How do you find with athletes or like the professionals that you work with, like what does work best for them? Is it just kind of about being present for like how you talk to yourself like, oh, I like that, and oh, I didn't like that. Or how do you like test different strategies?

ROBERT ANDREWS There's a learning styles evaluation. Have you ever heard of the learning styles vocabulary learning styles.

JVN Evaluate like visual.

ROBERT ANDREWS Visual aural read write. Kinesthetic. So like for example, I had a gymnast who know this was a pole vaulter and her coach was all aural. Just words, words, words. She's a big time visual kinesthetic learner, which means, let me work with this. Let me struggle a little bit, show me less. Watch videos. Now let me go work with it some more. Kinesthetic Lee. All she was getting was words and the coach would get frustrated and he would turn and walk away and he'd yell at her. And so she left and found a coach. It was more of a visual, kinesthetic learning kind of coach. So we have to as coaches, you have to figure out how do my athletes learn? And if you're too lazy to figure that out, like I've done learning styles evaluations with an entire team and it blows these coaches away because they're just they're just oral. They just speak words to coach. And they have a whole team of visual kinesthetic learners. And so we look at learning styles. What's the most effective way for you to learn. So it's not it's not the same for everyone. Like I might start out with an athlete who's highly reactive, you know, gets mad and throws their racket or stomps off or gets emotional. So I don't go into a performance assessment with them. First I go into, well, let's teach about the difference between being reactive and responsive. If something happens in you react. What's the outcome to that? Well, I struggle, I suffer, or someone else might come in and say, I was fine until I tore my ACL. Well, I'm not going to teach them performance concepts because their brains trying to process the trauma of an ACL injury. So we treat the trauma of the ACL injury first, and now we can work on performance concepts. So it's whatever they come up with I follow their lead. And then I pull from my tool belt and use whatever I think is going to be effective with them based upon what it's not. A cookie cutter process is what I'm saying. It's different for every athlete.

JVN Like Marina Garcia has talked about this. Michelle Kwan is kind of talked about it, but it's like what happens when someone's competitive career is over when they go into retirement. Like, have you seen any like, how do you feel? Because I wrote down like, end of career, like depression. Like I remember when I performed in like my sixth grade talent show or not talent show, which I also did perform. And by the way, as long as we're talking about it. But I played like Mike Fink in this, like, Huckleberry Finn performance or something. And I remember the day after our last show looking at my mom and I had never been I never had the skills. Like, mom, I don't know what this feeling is. I feel so let down. I was like, I'm so sad. I feel let down. And she was like, well, why? Like the performances were great. You got the part, you won. And I was like, it's over. Like, I did all this work and it's over. I just couldn't wrap my head around that. It's over. And how do people deal with that part? Do you work with people on, like, the after part? Well.

ROBERT ANDREWS It's. And again, that's to me, that's another value to our process as we look at. You're not the Olympic gymnast. You're not you're not just the Olympic swimmer diver. Whatever it is, there's other aspects of who you are that are very, very important. So we we look at creating a balanced life. And I used to do, transitional workshops for one of the universities here in, Houston. And I did a lot I interviewed a lot of athletes who had had successful transitions out of their sport, and some that didn't, and the ones that had successful transitions found something else to channel that passion and energy into. And. Is it opening up a dog farm or going back to school or, you know, whatever it is. You have to find something to channel that passion and energy into. Interestingly enough, that that that university called me and says, well, we can't pay for your these workshops anymore. Would you do them for free? And I said, no, you know, there's value in this and this needs to be and

you need to invest in this. Is that important? We can't do it. We can't pay it. They couldn't find a little bit of money in their budget to provide transitional resources for their athletes, which is. And I've worked with universities that say, you know, we value mental health, and. Okay, well, let me come do this. I did a, workshop on athletes, mental health and coaches wellness at the NCAA Final Four, last year when it was in Houston and two marches ago. Right. NCAA Coaches Association asked me to create this workshop. So I put on this workshop on athletes, and it was great. There was a great workshop, approached a few universities to, oh, we don't have it in our budget. They don't even ask what I'm going to charge for it. This, this, it's not our budget. Well, what does that mean? It means that you give it lip service, but it's not important.

JVN We got to value people's humanity. That's really what it is. We just got to value people's humanity and. And that their humanity doesn't stop when the Olympics are over. Or whether they make a team or they don't make a team. And in the same way that that's true, that's also true of ourselves. Like if you were up for something that you really wanted and you don't get it, or if you were really hoping that, you know, you were going to get a certain answer, and that wasn't the answer that you got in your life, you still need to honor your humanity. And what I hear you saying is, is that we got to ask for the support that we need to, like, get back to, just to, to if the plan was to get the job or to get the thing or and you don't get that wasn't the plan. It's like asking for help to make a new plan or create a new a new plan, a new idea. Would you say that's accurate?

ROBERT ANDREWS I think it's accurate. And, I have a couple of thoughts here. One, if you want to watch a really get into a really cool sport where everybody celebrates celebrates everybody's success. Pole vaulting. I work with a lot of pole vaulters, and I love the sport because if somebody clears a high, everybody goes crazy. It's not oh, miss, miss miss miss miss know it's everybody's happy and everybody's celebrating and everybody's on their feet. And it's a community and it's wonderful. I get happy tears when I think about this right now. It might be right now one of my favorite sports to work with because it's such a great for humanity sport. And I go to the Texas Relays and I go to the state championships and watch high school kids. I've never heard anybody talk to pole vaulter or yeah, he missed. She missed. No, it's everybody's in this for the greater good of every athlete on that runway. Check it out. And what I was going to circle back to was something we talked about earlier. I had a, pole vaulter in the Olympic trials in 2021, and I had four in the recent Olympics trials. And you can watch and you can tell when they start melting down, you know, their their rituals before they run down the runway change or facial expressions change. Sometimes they get emotional go. They're done, they're done, they're done. And then you see those three rise to the surface and they make the team. But they're kind of the kind of brings everything that we're talking about here together. You know, performance tools, sports psychology. But also I like what you said, the humanity of the sport, because I was thinking I talked to a parent, today, they're called me about their daughter tore his ACL, and, their coach is giving her a hard time because she's not back on the coach's terms, you know, overriding the doctor, overriding the physical therapies. The coach wants her back. Now, I talked to a young tennis player yesterday whose parents stand behind the fence. His opponent's parents stand behind the fence, and you know you're cheating. You're a cheater. That's it. Are you cheating? No. My parents video the matches I'm calling. They're the ones that cheating. And I was driving over here to the office this morning, and I said, what's happened to Mans or this? This concept of man's inhumanity? Inhumanity to man is killing

our society. And it's happening in the world of sports also. And you see fights and parents fighting in the stands at their baseball games and basketball games, and players giving elbows to the head during games and taunting. And, a guy dunks and he stands over, the guy looks down at him, or somebody does a vicious hit on the football field, and they walk over him and taunting to me, there's no place for that. I, I played on a great state championship program in Friendswood, Texas, where I grew up, and we had a state championship reunion last October. And I asked one of my high school coaches is still alive. I said, if we had done things like that back then, what would you have done? He said, I would have pulled your butt out of that game so quickly. Your head. What a sport.

JVN I. I mean, it's interesting because even like, I play pickleball recreationally and you would think I was fucking Venus Williams. I get so intense, like, I have to, like, prevent myself. Like, if someone mishit something and we're behind, I have to like. Like I like, I'll be like, yeah. Oh, no, sorry. You'll get it next time.

ROBERT ANDREWS Hey.

JVN What happens when. When we injure ourselves and our brains? Like, how do we deal with, like, any tips for, like, people dealing with injuries that maybe they aren't competitive athletes, but how do we deal with the trauma of an injury?

ROBERT ANDREWS Well, if you notice, I just sat up in my chair because this is this is what got me into sports. I did traditional psychotherapy for about 10 or 11 years, and I've done training, and I did like imagery and eMDR, which are the two most effective trauma from Dr.. I've used the for 29 coming up on 30 years. It's remarkable. But I was at lunch with my wife 17, 18 years ago, and all of a sudden I just had this like a vision out of the out of nowhere. And it said, use this trauma protocols to help injured athletes. And I started crying. And my wife goes, what's going on? I said, I know what I'm supposed to do next. And she says, what? And I said, I'm supposed to help injured athletes, the athletes, through the traumatic nature of their injury. And she said, where did that come from? And I said, yeah, it's a God thing or something. You know, it was a spiritual experience, I felt it. I still get emotional or I remember it all those years ago. So I hung up my shingle and I started seeing injured athletes. And that's about 60 to 70% of my practice now. So what happens is when we're going through sports, there's it's called the prefrontal cortex. That has to do with rational thinking, but it also has to do with confidence and belief in ourself. And it's kind of running the show. You know, there's other parts of the brain about balance and muscle memory and all that. But what when a, when an athlete is running down a field or lands a vault and tears their ACL or plants and feels a pop in their knee, there's a part of the brain called the limbic system, and it lights up and it it monitors. It assesses threats, it regulates emotion. It stores certain types of memories. So it lights up and it starts gathering information. And you ask any injured athletes that's been in an injury, just like anyone who's been in a bad car wreck. Do you remember what happened? Oh yeah, man, I remember the pop. I remember what it sounded like. I remember what it felt like. I remember laying on the ground and my teammates looking down at me. I remember the doctor telling me I needed surgery. Those, for. Oh, the the the girl that, tore her Achilles on vault.

JVN That was probably Harry carry stride.

ROBERT ANDREWS No, it was just the recent Olympic trials. I'll think of her name.

JVN Oh, Jocelyn. Robert. Oh, no. Oh, no. Jesus Christ, no! Liz Jones.

ROBERT ANDREWS That was one of them. Okay, that's a good example.

JVN Calculated. Kayla.

ROBERT ANDREWS There you go. Thank you for this. Yes. We got any one of those three? You asked them, I guarantee you. Oh, yeah. I remember the feel. The feeling of that pop in my Achilles or. Or the pop in my knee or whatever it is. And how I bet athletes tell me how bright the lights were, how cold it was, their teammates faces. I had an athlete that was a world championships, and he got too close to the high bar. On his release skills, he remembers. Know how bright the lights were, but the name of the mat company coming up at him on the mats. Very, very.

JVN That's a no no. We can't no I can't. Yeah. Yeah. Because I just was literally watching that in the 2011 World Championships. I literally just like came on mate. That literally just came on my algorithm like two days ago.

ROBERT ANDREWS Yeah. It's a, it's a, it's a very, very vivid specific memory. So the brain takes that image. It loads them up with pain, emotion sensation, light pressure, sound, color temperature. And then it just holds on to it. So they go through surgery, they go through rehab and they go out and try to do that vault where they tore their Achilles. And guess what that brain's got. And that can lead to other injuries. That's why you see athletes tear the other ACL sometimes because they're favoring the one that they tore or tear the other Achilles or suffer another injury.

JVN Tom Daley was telling us about that because he had like, he had to like, redo a dive at the Olympics because there was like flash photography in the middle of it. So it caused like a bulk. And he, I think he like, got a little bit hurt. And then he had like redo the dive, like they let him redo it because it was like such an interference. But after that time he's like never done it again because it's like to like his body just like will not let him do.

ROBERT ANDREWS That kind to be that way. His brain won't let him do it that way. His body wants to, but his brain won't let him.

JVN Have you ever had to work with a ten meter diver? I bet that's like, fucked up. Tell me. Like I'm scared. That's.

ROBERT ANDREWS That's another world, man. I did a lot of 1 in 3 meter, some ten meter. But it's. I've jumped off a ten meter when I was a kid. I can't imagine trying to do this and this and land in the water the right way. You know, they're prone to a lot of get concussions for landing in the water the wrong way. And but but the wonderful thing about eidetic imagery and EMDR work is it teaches that part of the brain how to process all that traumatic information to where when we're through, I go back and I say, how's that image? And I see I'm actually go, well, I can't even hardly see it anymore. Well, how upsetting is it to you? It doesn't bother me at all. When you see yourself into the future. What do you see now? I'm going to be okay. I'm safe. I'm going to get better. My sport. I can come back stronger. So it

teaches the brain how to process the trauma. And then we light up the free frontal cortex again, which is about confidence and belief in yourself. We see how it works.

JVN Yes. I, my therapist does EMDR, and I recently just realized that I haven't been working my EMDR work as much as I need to, and I just I've just been having, like, a lot of, like, anxiety, depression, like, just not feeling great. And it is so much of my trauma. And I just wasn't like working on the trauma that bubbled up over like the stress that I've had in my life in this last year and a half. And so it's just like good information for my therapist. I like, oh, we need to be doing this work. So I've actually like, reprioritize my EMDR work and I'm going to L.A. like once a month to like, do it in person with her so I can really I mean, hopefully I won't have to do that forever, but I just think I need to do a little bit more so I can, like, feel better and get those.

ROBERT ANDREWS But that sometimes stuff just comes up. I remember I've done a lot of my own internal work over the years, and I felt like when I first started, I grew up in a pretty dysfunctional family, and I felt like when I started, I had a miner's light and a pickax, and I was in the cave, man. I was just digging stuff up. And then I got to a point where I sat on the side of the cave with a lawn chair, and I go, oh, stuff's coming up. You know, I need to deal with that. And it's still that way today. I don't need to be knock on wood. I don't need to be in the cave digging out all the old, resolving all the old crap. But sometimes stuff comes up and I need to work on it, and I need to work through it and process it and and let it integrate into my system, so to speak.

JVN If you're someone who is just wants to be a better them, just wants to be a better person. What advice would you have after working with all of these world class athletes and these just people that are performing at the top of their game, what advice would you give to someone to be their best selves?

ROBERT ANDREWS You know, that's that might be the best question you've asked if you've asked a lot of great questions. So I'm going to go back to the 2012 London Olympics. Okay. International gymnastics magazine, I think it was interviewed the and they asked me a bunch of questions. One of the questions is how do you ask an athlete prepare for a big event like the Olympic Games? And I said, well, we can work with managing stress and reaching your peak performance zone. And, and, and managing distractions and visualization. We can do all that. But the real essence of the work is figuring out who you are authentically absent of your family, your society, your church, your school, your coach, your teachers absence of their wishes upon who they think you should be, who are you authentically? And that's the essence of my work with athletes and my teams. Work with athletes is who are you authentically? Because we see a lot of perfectionistic athletes terrified of making mistakes, terrified of getting embarrassed on social media or whatever it is. And that robs so much energy and passion, and it's impossible to show up authentically. If you're so worried about what people think and you're so worried about making mistakes, so, so do some work. Read. Dig. I use awareness profiles to help people look at how conditioning is moving them away from their authentic self and and reinforcing their conditioned self. There's there's resources out there for you to help you figure out who you are at your absolute best. And when we do that, we have more passion. We're happier. We have more energy.

JVN God damn, that was like the truth bomb right at the end of the pod. That was a major. So I just have one more follow up because that really was major. So is your condition to self like who you show up as, like just, you know, in your job and your family. Like it's just like who we're kind of like operating us. Is that what condition?

ROBERT ANDREWS Well, in our society, it's largely unconscious. And I can tell you, if I was it okay, my share a little bit about myself.

JVN Yes.

ROBERT ANDREWS One of my dear friends, Mark, he is it's called the core multi core multidimensional Awareness profile core map. I've used it for about 18 years. My friend Mark says, hey, I got training in this profile. You know, you want to take it to help me get proficient. And I said sure. So I took it and we're going through it and it's about oral health. I'm sitting on the bed reading through it with him, looking out our sliding glass door to the backyard. It hit me that I was using my least effective approach to life to manage everything in my life. But I learned to do that in the family that I grew up in. Because if things weren't right and things were in their place, bad things happened. And so. Reading this information and going over it with him and, crying and it's like, this is who I am. But I've been living this way since I was a kid. And so I started pushing myself out there with this more authentic personality style. I'm up in Dallas doing an advanced training on the Corvette because I got trained in it because I think it's so wonderful. And I'm sitting next to Gina. Her and her mother, Sherri created this process. So we're eating lunch on one of our breaks and she goes, I know you think you're a commander entertainer. That's part of the core core languaging. She goes, but I think you're more of an entertainer. Commander leading with the entertainer, which is about connection, passion, motivating, inspiring. And I started crying again. I had another one of those truth responses. So I went from a true organizer to a commander entertainer to an entertainer commander. And I couldn't be happier.

JVN Wait, so how do we take the format test?

ROBERT ANDREWS I'll get with you on that. It's it's remarkable. It's absolutely remarkable. And I had a college program contact me about doing the core map, and I sent him a quote in a bid on this. This was what it was going to take. And they came back and said, well, we're going to do this, this free quiz that takes five minutes to take. So I went online, I found it, I took it. All it does is it reinforces conditioning. It's all it does. It just reinforces conditioning. It doesn't show you who you are authentically. I've taken other, other personality profiles. This is an awareness profile. It makes you aware about how stress and pressure changes who we are and how we react to stress and pressure in ways that move us away from our authentic self and reinforce our conditioning self. And I do it with athletes and peak performers all the time, and they just some of them cry like I did because there's oh my gosh, my parents, my coaching, whatever it is, has molded me into this little shell of who I am. And they break out of that and their sports gets better, their life gets better, their relationships gets better. It's a phenomenal process. I wish everybody could do it because it just our society encourages conditioning.

JVN I need to do it, honey. I feel like I've been through the wringer. I want it because I think that just because, like other people's feedback, it's like it really has like, we're in I'm working

it through it on this podcast a lot. But I do wonder, like just the amount of feedback that I've had over the last six years, like it's just made me like my internal compass feels confused. It's like, why am I doing this? How am I doing this? It just that just resonates so much. So we can actually we got to talk more about your you so you. So basically over the course of your professional life you've had these like really beautiful like breakthrough moments and kind of finding out who you are, what you want to do, what what is your favorite part of what you do?

ROBERT ANDREWS There's a lot of favorite flowers. I love it when someone who's tore their ACL comes into my office and they're flat and their eyes are dull and or depressed and or withdrawn, and they're terrified of getting hurt again, and they're depleted and or missing their life and their sport and their connection. And in a few sessions, they walk out on, their eyes are bright, like, I have a cool story. If I can elaborate on this a little bit. It was a high school volleyball player, tore his ACL, wore a brace, which is fine. She needs to. That's fine. But she was terrified of landing on one leg, so she had to land on two legs. And all this. Her doctor referred her to me, but her mother said, she used to have this. The most beautiful singing voice. She was always in the kitchen singing upstairs in her room, bathroom, singing, coming down the stairs, singing in the car. She's singing and she says, since she tore his ACL, she quit singing. So I work through the treatment protocol with her. I call her mom to check in on her mom. How's she doing? She goes. It's amazing. She's landing on both legs. She's not using the brace anymore. She's so confident. But it's funny you called today because just this morning she came down the stairs and she was singing again.

JVN That's sweet he was, like, so stressed. She didn't feel like doing the things that she was depressed.

ROBERT ANDREWS Yeah. That wonderful part of her was so suppressed because of the traumatic nature of her injury and the loss and the fear. And so we clear that out. And guess what comes to the surface? That beautiful singing voice part of her. She got her voice back, metaphorically speaking, here. So that and then the work around authenticity. That's what it is. Peak performance is great. You know, seeing athletes thrive is a beautiful experience. You know, I love excellence and beauty. You know, that's the essence of who I am. And and my one of my hobbies is going to the beach and taking pictures of sunsets and sunrises. You know, that's that just lights me up. But but when I, when I can help an athlete. Show up authentically. Yeah. Jumping higher, running faster, swimming faster is great. So injury recovery and authenticity, that's what does it for me.

JVN So someone's listening to this and they're like, God, everything he's saying is just resonating with me. So much is in and they're feeling stuck or like they want to have better performance or connect with their authentic self better. Is there a place where they can do that core map work or like they can sign up for it? Or is that is that like a link? Is that like a person to follow?

ROBERT ANDREWS Just go to go to core map.com, CRM, AP core map.com. And they can hook you up with someone that's trained like I am or my friend Mark Swartz, who thank you, Mark, for getting me involved in this. I know that during these storms at all that they had some issues with the the server that handles that, but I think that's been repaired now because, I've got some people I need to do it with, but it, it was a life change reframe. That was a life changing moment. Doing that with Mark sitting next to Gina and her telling me, you're an entertainer, commander, that that lunch with my wife where I had the vision to work

with injured athletes. You know, these were powerful moments of grace in my life that have. And I listen to them when they happen. I listen to the truth response. You know that emotions telling me to move that direction and I do, and the journey has been remarkable.

JVN This has been so amazing. I do have just two really quick Olympic related follow ups. So does that mean that you saw the opening ceremonies in person in 2008? Like, did you see that block those blocks?

ROBERT ANDREWS No, we were we stayed with a host family that, my daughter used to be a gymnast, and her coach says, are you going to the you're going to the Olympics? And I said, no, I don't think so. Well, we have a place to stay if you want to go. We booked airfare, went, and the neighbors across the street were guest at a house, and her husband was on the USA team shooting team, and they had this giant, huge entertainment room. And so I had a great meal with these people, these other people from the United States, and watched the opening ceremonies at the.

JVN The best opening ceremonies of my lifetime. Like, I think you're right, that opening ceremony was like, boom, boom. Yes. Now, like, you know. Whether everyone got paid and there was human rights abuses remains to be seen. It still was like the best fucking opening ceremonies ever. I'm sorry. Like, I know there were some.

ROBERT ANDREWS Pretty, pretty amazing.

JVN Fucking major. And then my other thing was, okay, so 2008 12 okay, I think I got that. Oh 2024. Is there any like obviously we're all going to be like watching gymnastics like nobody's business, but is there anything that you're particularly excited about for 2024? I hope not everyone gets dysentery if they swim in the same.

ROBERT ANDREWS Oh, isn't that the truth? Yes.

JVN I don't know how rituals for success is going to help you if you get shit fever from, you know, the fucking thing.

ROBERT ANDREWS Yeah, and they said it's clean, but I heard it's not, so I don't know, we'll see soon enough. Yes. But. So. And this she's gone public with my work with her. But some of the man who was a swimmer that I worked with since she was 18, and she won two goals and two silvers in Rio, and she's.

JVN Like, no, but she didn't. She or she had, like, overtraining syndrome. I read about.

ROBERT ANDREWS Her. Yeah, yeah, but she's back now. She made the team on her as a relay in the 53 route for her. She is a wonderful, wonderful woman person, filled with passion. She's a visionary for the sport, for women. So root for her.

JVN That's crazy. Got you some Owens.

ROBERT ANDREWS I have an article out here that the Houston Chronicle did. The name of the article is The Two Samoans, and their stories are side by side. And, I cut that out and have it. Yeah.

JVN This has been the most fun. Robert, did we miss anything? I had so much fun.

ROBERT ANDREWS Let's do it again sometime. I've. I've really enjoyed this. I hope we get to do this again sometime. This is me, too.

JVN We gotta. We're gonna have to have a follow up for, like, every big sporting event, and we'll just talk about what? What the t is. I think you should become the team USA like mental health coordinator. My lips to God's ears. I think that'd be really good.

ROBERT ANDREWS Friends, let's manifest now. Come on, let's do.

JVN It. I think it's a really good idea, so we'll pick it up from there. I think it's a really good idea. Robert, thank you so much for making time, I hope thank you.

ROBERT ANDREWS For having me. This has been wonderful.

JVN Thank you. Just the best. I hope everyone down in Houston gets fixed up lickety split from, barrel. And just thank you again for making your time for us. We appreciate it so much.

ROBERT ANDREWS Thank you. This has been wonderful. I really appreciate it. It's been great. Thank you.

JVN I think we learned about, like, how a lot of Olympians use sports psychology. But what I also learned is that, like, there is absolutely something from Robert's work for all of us and for sports psychology that we can all use because we all are performing something, whether that's in school and our jobs and our families. And so I think understanding where our energy gets zapped from us and what that impacts in our overall performance, I think is really important for all of us. I was obsessed with, the energy pipeline analogy that Robert used. I also thought that the, the dialysis stress model was really interesting, especially because it reminds me a lot of like the window of tolerance situation. Also back to if we learned the thing, I loved how sports psychology is now really about encompassing the whole person. And obviously, you know, what is the wholeness of a person? Can we really get there in, you know, an hour and a half? I'm not sure. But I think that the way that authenticity and, you know, the humanity coming into how someone performs is so important and in great work that Robert is doing. I just thought that. So it's just a holistic approach and knowing that we can't just like, chop off parts of our personality because we have to go perform something or it's like, you can, but it comes at a cost. And at some point that cost might be too great. And I just love the way that it really prioritizes mental health. Some of the more interesting things that I took from the conversation, I can't help but having this conversation and think more about like and no means in no means. So I think that Robert's being able. But when Robert was talking about like the the NCAA pitcher about like, you know, let's get your tickets paid, let's get your, you know, let's call your parents, let's go to your girlfriend. If you have like bone crushing depression and you're not an athlete, like let's say you got some sort of really bad injury and you just got really bad, you know, depression or if it's addiction, whatever it is,

I just can't help but wonder about, like for the people who sacrifice their whole lives and don't even make alternate just don't make the team. It doesn't work out like what happens to them. And it just makes you wonder about trauma and depression. It makes me curious about that. And and as someone who does EMDR, how does EMDR work? Like how does trauma therapy like, actually like help our brains heal? I'm really curious about that now. Like, like, how does EMDR really work and like, and the core map, like, I want to do core map. I also really need to watch pole vaulting and get more into pole vaulting like track and field honey, I just saw that in the 2028 Olympics. I don't know if you guys are Olympian queens like me, but like it's typically that like the swimming is week one and track and field is like. Or it's like swimming the first half and track and field the second half, Leah is going to reverse that. And it's track and field is going to be the first half. And swimming is going to be the second half. what. So just all curious for like all of the, all of the LA 2028 Olympics, curious about pole vaulting, curious out core map and what kind of person I am. Like, I want to do my awareness profile. So. Oh, so that's what I'm curious about. Oh. Also, the treating injuries like other trauma, like your brain remembers the moment of the injury like that is giving so much PTSD. And, oh, I'm also curious how PTSD, and like, discovering like the authentic the authentic me versus like the condition me you got was that episode not so much fun. I feel so, like alive after I learn things. We just love that Robert Andrews and we love you. Thanks for supporting our work on getting curious. If you're liking our work, tell a friend. Let the people know we love to hear it. And just. But thank you for you. You don't even have to advertise for us. So thank you for you and thanks for supporting our work. And we love you. And we'll see you next time. I'm getting curious.

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