



JIM HARSHAW JR.

Revealing Failure as the Path to Success

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #228 A

Jim Harshaw Jr Solo - Jerry Miller Show/I Love Cville

It's not often that I have a conversation with an interviewer who gets me to bare all. Jerry Miller was able to do just that. In this interview we talk deeply about the challenges, pitfalls, and ultimate fulfillment in living a life of purpose and passion. I share things in this conversation that I've never before shared on the Success Through Failure podcast. I broke it into two parts. Part 1 (#228A) we cover my personal story-- from losing 22 lbs in two and a half days to shaman medicine men. In part 2 (#228B), we get into failure, adversity, and how to reach your fullest potential. You can capture lessons from a dozen episodes of STF in just this one interview. Give it a listen!

Quotes

"The basis of sport psychology is to focus on the process, not the outcome."

"If you're willing to go through enough pain and suffering, you can be good at anything." - Mike Fisher, NCAA soccer player

"I really encourage people to not think of their failure as a reason why they can't succeed."

"Everybody is struggling with something."

About Jim's Journey To Being An All-American 07:40 - 10:39 (from start of interview)

"I had set my goals, which is if I'm a starter, I want to be an All-American wrestler, which is the top eight in America. But first, you have to qualify for the National Championships, so I qualified for that as a freshman which is pretty exciting. But I got there and just bombed out. Junior year, I had the same goal, but I bombed out again. [inaudible 08:00], pretty much a repeat of the prior two years. This goal of being an All-American seems so unattainable to me. End of my junior year, I remember sitting

in my locker room with my face buried in a towel, in tears, thinking, 'Why can't I do this? What's wrong with me? Am I not good enough or smart enough or capable enough?' To me, it's just not in the cards, like maybe Jim just doesn't have what it takes. That whole off-season Jerry, I traveled to summer wrestling camps, high-school camps. I was a camp counselor and I just found as many people to train with. So you go to all these different universities and naval academy, George Mason, Virginia's camp and on and on and on. I went to the Olympics training center and trained out there. I was asking these Olympians and these elite wrestlers, 'What am I missing? Do I have to get stronger or flexible? What do I have to work on?' That was my mission. In my senior year, I had a shot at being an All-American and I never found the answer. I remember, it was the night before the West Virginia open and I'm in the hotel room and I'm like, 'Well crap.' I never figured out what's missing for me to reach my full potential. I literally gave up on the outcome that night. 'I'm going to compete as hard as I possibly can. If I get there, great. If I don't, I'm going to sleep at night knowing that I've given my best.' I woke up the next morning, I lit the competition up. I went 5-0 [inaudible 09:39]. I had this great day and I thought, 'Man, that was fun.' I continued to wrestle with no pressure for the rest of the season. I focused on the process, not the outcome. I focused on my diet, what time I went to bed, if I had watch [inaudible 10:03], weight- training, rehabbing injuries, etc. I just focused on the process because I can control them, not the outcome. Lo and behold, I get to the National Championships and I beat the 4th rank wrestler in the country and being on the number 1 team in the country and I'm an All-American."

About What Jim Learned Backpacking At A Young Age 22:14 - 23:25 (from start of interview)

"Wrestling didn't define me. Nobody cared if I was an All-American wrestler. It had defined me for the last 17 years. But on this trip, no one cares who you are and what you did. You're just on this adventure. When you're backpacking like that, there's a whole culture of these people that are out there, right now. While we sit here in Charlottesville doing this interview, there is this whole world, this whole culture of backpackers out there. You're never alone. I was rarely alone. Even though I'm on a chicken bus, you stop in this little village and a couple of gringos jump on the bus and you're like, 'Man, where are they from?' And they're from America or Canada or South Africa or Europe or wherever. There are people all over the world doing this and nobody cares about your background. You're just there, you're in the moment, just soaking up life as deeply and richly as you possibly can. That's what I learned from that."

About Single-Minded Focus 29:18 - 30:18 (from start of interview)

“When you’re an elite athlete, you can have that single-minded focus. Entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs had that single-minded focus. He mowed down his relationships. He denied a child that was his just because it was inconvenient. He wore the same clothes every day. But that single-minded focus doesn’t work in the real world. Now, you’ve got kids, a family, a business, you want to be healthy and fit. You’ve got a million things pulling at you and you’ve got to choose which are the right things to focus on. You can’t just choose one because then you end up with broken relationships or your health goes to the dumps. Everything falls apart. That’s what I’ve done, I’ve created this framework of living that’s the base of my coaching. It’s living this balanced life with clarity, consistency and doing the things we know we need to do, not just in one area. Not just in business or our health or our relationships, but in all of them.”

About Failure Being An Option 35:20 - 36:54 (from start of interview)

I’m going to share a quote that pops into my head from one of my interviews, World Champion wrestler, J’Den Cox. He said, ‘Once I realize that failure was an option, it took this huge weight off my back and I can compete at my highest level.’ He came to this realization that we always say, ‘Failure is not an option.’ But it is. When you become okay with that and understand that failure is an option doesn’t mean, ‘I’m a bad person. I have to lose my identity,’ it just means that it’s a real possibility here. I’m not planning on it, of course. But once you kind of embrace that and go, ‘Oh, what if failure did happen? Well, I guess I would be okay.’ Tim Ferris has this fear-setting experiment he talks about. When you do that fear-setting and you evaluate what is the worst-case scenario, like, ‘If I fail at this, am I going to lose my home and my family and my job and no one is going to love me anymore. I’m going to die homeless, penniless and 20 pounds overweight,’ as Stuart Smalley from Saturday Night Live used to say. But usually, the worst-case scenario is something far, far less than that. So once you come to that realization that failure is an option, it allows you to take this pressure off and put it aside and go, ‘I still have my clear goal and I’m going to work towards it knowing that failure could happen. I’m going to put everything I have into it.’”

About Passion 37:32 - 38:47 (from start of interview)

“Everybody thinks that passion is just like, you have a passion and there’s only one course for you in your life. It’s your passion and you have to follow it. If you don’t follow it, you’re not living a great life. That’s not true. You can create your passions. I

have a friend who's passionate about playing the game of bridge. He's, if not world-class, is one of the better players in the United States. He discovered that passion in college. But what if he didn't discover that? Is that his only path in life? No, it's not. Passion has a role. We all have passions but give yourself the chance to try new things, to experiment. 'I'm passionate about the line of work that I do but I'm not fulfilled.' Try a different line of work, a different company, try coming at it from a different angle."

Episodes Referred

Bill Burnett: <https://jimharshawjr.com/124/>

J'Den Cox: <https://jimharshawjr.com/176/>