

EPISODE 25

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04] LG: I was just on the freeway and I got a call and I answered it. It was the manager saying, “We got to let you go. Padres no longer need your services.” Then it was pretty transactional and that was it. I hung up and then I just kept driving and it was surreal. In my heart, I knew that I was done.

I remember telling my parents, it was the morning of Thanksgiving. I just remember telling them that that would be it. I cried. I’ll never forget it. It was really hard to tell them that.

[00:00:47] LW: Hi, friends. Welcome back to At The End Of The Tunnel. Today’s guest is a former pro athlete and author and a functional movement trainer. His name is Logan Gelbrich. He is the co-founder of the uber-popular functional movement gym in Venice, California called DEUCE. Logan is widely considered to be a coach's coach. He's been traveling the world conducting what's called the ‘Hold the Standard’ Summit, and his mission is to use his platforms and his uncompromising approach to coaching to inspire us to go after our dreams.

I met Logan a few years ago when I was a Venice resident. After having been in gyms for years, I never experienced anything like DEUCE. There are no mirrors. There's no hiding behind your headphones. It's a bit like working out outside in that bar from Cheers, the sitcom from the 1980s where everybody knows your name.

Well as a kid, Logan had aspirations of becoming a professional baseball player, but unlike millions of other kids, he actually achieved it. He played ball in high school, college, then he was drafted by the San Diego Padres. His career ended after only two seasons. That's when Logan realized that his true calling was less about baseball and more about pushing himself to give 100% to whatever he was doing, and it just happened to be baseball.

After baseball, Logan began to offer fitness training for regular people, but his approach was different. He treated his clients like athletes. His philosophy was to create a space where both coaches and clients were inspired to hold a standard of excellence. After many years of training

in parks, Logan invested his entire life savings into what became DEUCE gym. Through a lot of sweat and tears, Logan succeeded in creating an oasis in the fitness world.

He began teaching his philosophy of establishing and holding the highest possible standard around the globe. More recently, he wrote a book about his philosophy called *Going Right: A Logical Justification for Pursuing Your Dreams*. It was a pleasure having this conversation with my friend and learning more about his adventures in establishing DEUCE. I'm excited for you to hear more of Logan's story as well.

Without further ado, I present to you my dear listeners, Mr. Logan Gelbrich.

[EPISODE]

[00:03:04] LW: Logan, welcome to At The End Of The Tunnel. I always like to start these conversations talking about childhood. I normally ask the question, what was your favorite toy, or activity as a kid? I suspect I know the answer to that question. For those listeners who don't know you as well as I do, can you just tell us what your favorite toy or activity was?

[00:03:31] LG: Yeah. I think the truest answer, the one that you're alluding to is my fascination with baseball. As a young kid, I really gravitated towards baseball and more specifically than maybe most American young boys, I decided at a really, really young age, maybe inappropriately young age that I wanted to see that through. What I mean by that is I wanted to play professional baseball. Ages four, five, six, I was spending a lot of time doing that. I did have an incredible fire truck pedal car that was maybe a strong second, Light.

[00:04:14] LW: What was it about baseball that attracted you out of all of the available sports?

[00:04:19] LG: You know what? I don't know. I think, if I'm going to tell this part of my life with true accuracy, I think we want to romanticize that someone is destined for something. I think if I'm being honest about it, it looked like genuine curiosity. That grew over time. I mean, I can't look anyone in the face and say, at age five, I just knew that the essence of baseball was in my DNA. I mean, that couldn't have been true.

However, as you nurture this curiosity and go down the path with a little bit of passion and rigor, then you get to meet different interesting parts of certain passions, or commitments earlier than most. Definitely years later, I'm learning that there are these beautiful metaphors for life in baseball. There's this blue-collar work ethic there and there's this introduction to failure that is so woven into the sport. Baseball is in many ways, opposite of some other popular American sports. It's not Friday night lights. It's every day. No one aces baseball. It's impossible. A part of that process is embarrassing failure. Later, I really connected to those aspects of the sport.

[00:05:48] LW: Right. I'm curious though about five or six-year-old Logan. Did you try other sports? That's the first question. Second question, was your dad into baseball? Did you see a movie, or a show that glorified pro baseball? What were some of the other influences around baseball? Who even took you to your first baseball match?

[00:06:08] LG: Yeah. I mean, of course my dad was a fan of baseball. He played it as a high schooler. My grandfather, my mom's dad played professional baseball. I think a lot of these things are just, they begin with access. I had access to a little toy bat and a ball. A friend, a neighbor friend who lived right behind me, it was like a little three-foot wall that I could hop over and jump down to his backyard. It was on.

That access, I think created a place for fun. When you start having fun doing something, there's the hook. There was absolutely access. My dad had an interest in nurturing that. Also, it's worth mentioning that unlike other folks who end up playing a sport at a high-level, I feel very fortunate that – that didn't come with pressure, or some expectation, or overbearing parents in that way. I think I was just having fun and it looked a lot of Wiffle ball in the yard. That's how it started.

[00:07:12] LW: Do you remember what you liked about baseball as a kid?

[00:07:16] LG: I liked hitting. Everyone likes hitting. There's something about accomplishing that. I mean, even 20 years later, age what? 24, 25 playing at a completely different level, I was still mesmerized by the miraculous nature of hitting a baseball. It seemed impossible at age four and it seemed impossible – maybe more impossible at age 24. There's just something about trying and trying to make that miracle happen was really exciting to me as a little kid.

[00:07:51] LW: What team did your granddad play for?

[00:07:53] LG: He was in the Giants organization. I mean, his career probably – I don't know a lot about it, but probably looked a lot like mine; a pretty brief farm system level career. It is a romantic story, seeing your granddad in black and white, holding an old-timey glove and a bat, getting on a train to go to camp is, I don't know, it became something endearing that I connected to. Yeah, I fell in love with that idea.

[00:08:21] LW: Did you have a relationship with your granddad, where he talked about the good old days of playing football?

[00:08:27] LG: No. He died when I was pretty young. I do remember times with him, but I wasn't old enough to connect with him about baseball. It was mostly, later stories about how he was, who he was, the type of player he was.

[00:08:46] LW: You grew up where?

[00:08:47] LG: I was born in Santa Monica. I grew up in Playa Del Rey, Westchester area, just south of where I met you. Yeah, right by the airport. My mom is actually retiring right now after 49 years of flying as a flight attendant with United. We were right by the airport there.

[00:09:07] LW: Wow. Your dad took you on a very special trip when you were a kid.

[00:09:13] LG: That's right.

[00:09:14] LW: Related to baseball. Can you talk a little bit about that?

[00:09:17] LG: Yeah. That was the pilgrimage to a place called Cooperstown, New York, which is home of the baseball hall of fame. I'm sure my mom is rolling her eyes about all the other beautiful places in the world, but she went along with us. Yeah. I mean, it was just this epic adventure to see in the flesh a lot of the things that you start to idolize as a young kid. I'll never forget the moment I actually I mentioned it in the book to my dad at a really young age, he called me over to one of the displays. In the display was an award called the triple crown, which

is it's rarely, rarely awarded, because you need to lead the league and average RBIs and homeruns. It's not something that's awarded every year. It's only awarded when that happens.

There was only a handful of names on the award, and so I egotistically slid my finger a couple of spaces down and said, "This is where my name's going to go." That was a moment that – I think I remember it quite specifically, because I think it was the first moment that both my dad and I knew what I wanted to do and also, had a mutual understanding that both of us were aware of the significance of saying something like that.

[00:10:46] LW: What was his response?

[00:10:48] LG: His response was more of a look. I don't know if he said this out loud, but this is what I heard, which was that, "You know what that means, right?" Again, I don't know if he explicitly said that, but I was clear and he was clear. To answer that rhetorical question, is that the only way that something like that would be possible is if I began a journey that allowed me to realize as much, or all of my potential possible. I would have to work harder than I could even imagine at that age for decades, just to have the chance for something like that to happen. Even still, that it wouldn't be guaranteed.

I signify that moment in time as a key moment in my life, because I'm the type of individual that really respects the goals and the desires of other people, especially audacious ones. You hear all these stories about people in their youth sharing their goals with other people, specifically elders, people who are more senior to them and being unsupported, or shamed in mild ways, or major ways. That breaks my heart. I can't really imagine telling someone that they can't, or that they shouldn't do something that they really want to do.

However, asking, or wishing or dreaming to do something like that is the easiest moment of that process. That is the simplest part of accomplishing something great. I think there's a call to action there for some accountability. If you want something like that, you should have enough awareness, or be open to learning what that would require of you. That holds the speaker in a little bit more tension and accountability. Look, lots of 10-year-olds want to play major league baseball, but almost none of them really know what that means to engage in that type of work. I

can't say I had a perfect picture, but I could say that I had a pretty clear picture, especially relative to my peers as to what that would look like.

[00:13:10] LW: Speaking of that and since you mentioned work ethic and all of that, I'm just curious about your family dynamics. It seems like you and your dad had this inside secret about your ambition in life. How did you view your dad's work ethic and his trajectory through your 10-year-old eyes in relation to that, to what he was suggesting to you in that moment, or your mother's? It doesn't have to be exclusive to your dad.

[00:13:40] LG: I had, still have the best parents. I think many folks will say that. Of course, I'm biased. There was a great dynamic between my mom and my dad. In those 10-year-old eyes, my dad was more of the principled authoritarian feeling figure who reflected this blue-collar mentality. He was from Oregon, a real logging, hard-working family, came from poverty, who worked his way to what most Americans would call the dream.

My mom had a similar drive. Both of them were the siblings who moved away to California. My mom brought in these elements of creativity, art, travel. There's this cool blend. I think that there was this thank goodness, this foundation in my household that I can't remember a day in my life where I didn't believe wholeheartedly that there was something that I couldn't do and that belief was tethered directly to your effort and your attitude and your character.

It just set the stage for these rules, or understanding of life that had me believing that I could do anything. I would be supported in doing anything and that with enough hard work, I could accomplish it. I think a lot of people can hear those sentiments and nod in agreement, but it's one thing to agree with it and it's another thing to actually believe it. I knew that I would be loved unconditionally, regardless of the results, regardless of what I wanted to be when I grew up, etc. I did feel a great deal of agency in that and responsibility in that to make my reality. That came directly from my parents.

[00:16:04] LW: At that time in your life, had you already mapped out your future, your career in baseball? "I'm going to finish school, go to college for a few years and then get drafted and work my way up," and all of that?

[00:16:15] LG: Yeah. It was clear as day. Again, I use that word in jest, but at an inappropriately young age, I had it all mapped out, including, and this isn't like a backup plan, but including the vision beyond baseball. I decided that it – I don't know if it was that exact age, but shortly thereafter that I wanted to be an entrepreneur after baseball, I assumed I'd be in my late 40s or something like that. That too was modeled to me. The most successful people that I observed growing up weren't doctors, or lawyers. They were high school dropouts who created something from nothing. It just reinforced this vision after a sport was over.

[00:17:06] LW: What was your main motivation? Was it winning? Was it money? Was it being a champion at that point?

[00:17:11] LG: You know what? I'm a competitor. However, I can't say that the prime focus was chasing the feeling of winning. I think a younger version of me was attracted to – absolutely attracted to the superficial parts of what it would mean to be a major league baseball player. I really was fascinated with the process of getting better. I think that really served me, because I've stood literally side by side with players, a handful specifically, who played – we played together at the high school level, at the college level and the professional level, who I – Not to be disparaging, but I will say unequivocally, had a different experience of that progression than they did.

Meaning, coming out on the other end of it with a lot more tools and insights as to what it is that we went through. I think that's because the whole time, starting at age whatever, 8, 9, 10, the process of getting better was my obsession, beyond just the result of being a better baseball player, but how that worked. How do these systems of development work? One as an individual and then two, as a team, or an organization. I think I was like, I know that I was displacing my awareness at a really young age.

Meaning, I was in the room as a player trying to get better, but I was also often placing my mind in the perspective of the coach as to how it is you could affect change on this group? How could you orient the norms and the rules of this group to get more positive outcomes, or win more baseball games? The real attraction to me wasn't beating other people in a game, or making a bunch of money. It quickly became – the baseball was the context, or the container to learn about development. It's such a skill-based sport that it's a great place to do that.

Again, there are such rich skill development opportunities in all sports, but I was not athletic. I mean, I'm not athletic by nature and slow. I'm tall, but I played a position where that didn't really serve me. Wasn't naturally strong. The specifics of baseball are such that you don't need to be an athlete necessarily to be great at the sport. The scales of talent, versus skill development are pretty heavily weighted, at least in baseball more than other sports towards skill development. That's what really fascinated me.

[00:20:05] LW: Speaking of which, you had a pretty monumental run-in with an LA Dodger, Mike Davis. That's where you acquired a mantra that you used throughout the rest of your baseball career. Can you talk a little bit about that experience and the mantra that you learned from him?

[00:20:24] LG: Yeah. My little league field, which is still there over in Playa Del Rey, down by the lagoon, my dad and some of the other parents organized the little clinic. In the clinic, the coaches were current and former major league players and coaches; people with real experience. I remember at that age, up until that point, the major leagues felt very far away and unrelatable. There is a significant power more than I expected in seeing a major league type individual up close and personal, in uniform.

There was a moment where Mike Davis, he's walking out in his Dodger uniform to address the group of kids. We're sitting around in a half circle and he shares this quote. It's not his quote, but it's misattributed a bunch, but it goes this. He says, "Good, better, best. Never let it rest, until the good becomes the better and the better becomes the best." That landed on my ears at an age where I was already aware that I was going to accomplish what I wanted to accomplish by practicing more and practicing better than my peers.

To see the guy in the uniform reconfirm that, at the time, it felt like all I needed. What you're making reference to is that mantra stayed with me, because I wrote it in every hat that I wore. Then later, when you get the fancy professional leather belt, I was writing them inside my belt. I still have stuff here with that written everywhere. That just really solidified this idea of process.

[00:22:15] LW: You play catcher?

[00:22:16] LG: Yeah, catcher.

[00:22:18] LW: Why catcher? Can you talk a little bit about the dynamics of how people choose a position and why you played the position you played in baseball?

[00:22:24] LG: Yeah, of course. I mean, early on there are some premium positions. At a younger age, shortstop and pitcher are where the best players go. I played some shortstop and I played some pitcher, but actually that same exact age, age 10, I was at just a little league practice and I learned the first unique value of the catcher's position, which is the coach was asking if anyone had interest in trying the position. Because there's all this equipment involved and your normal, ready state position is crouched in the bottom of this squat, almost none of the kids want to do it.

I opted to do it. I immediately fell in love with the engagement in the game. It's a natural position of leadership. You're the only player facing the defense, and so you're – Later in my career, you'd end up dealing with the pitching staff. There's a lot of communication that happens there and then communication with the defense. I think there was a reinforced loop there that at a young age, I was one of the better players that was choosing a position that was more rare for a better player, at least at the little league level.

That really served me later. It's a highly technical position and I really embraced that leadership side. You're working hard all day. It's this non-glamorous thing, and to be super meta to my personality. There's a thing that they say about catchers that is something we can also say about referees and umpires, is that to be a great catcher is to go unnoticed. When you notice the catcher, the ball's getting by, something wrong is happening. When you notice the referees, it's not good. I liked having this role of leadership and working hard and being highly technical and also, not needing to be the center of attention.

[00:24:32] LW: Is there anything mechanically about playing the position of catcher that would give you an unfair advantage that people wouldn't necessarily think about?

[00:24:42] LG: Well, I am tall. Almost tall in a prohibitive way for the position. I'm 6'3" and it pays to be a little bit shorter. There is a very specific skill with catching. Scouts would call it catch and throw ability. One is receiving; basically, making pitches look good. That's the silent part of the job. I became quite good at that.

Then there's this number. It's one of the only numbers in baseball, specifically on the defensive level that is like your passport to the highest levels of the sport. In the NFL for example, most folks who are a fan of any level recognize the 40-yard dash. If you go to the combine and if you run a 4-3, or a 4-4 40, you're going to get a job. That's guaranteed.

Similarly, in baseball, at least at the younger ages, if you can throw north of 90 miles an hour, you're going to get a look as a pitcher. As the catcher, there is a very specific number called your pop time. That's the time on a stopwatch between when the ball touches your glove and the ball touches the glove of whoever is covering second base in a stolen base scenario. That pop time is the catcher's 40-yard dash.

I reverse engineered that. I think, this is maybe helpful in general in life, but when there are certain metrics like that that would indicate a bigger story, or value, you can reverse engineer how to accomplish it. Major league average is 1.95 seconds, from the moment the ball touches the catcher's glove to the glove of the person covering second base.

A lot of the scouting of catchers comes down to checking and recording this time. I knew that if I could get a remarkable pop time and that I could show up to showcases and between innings and when people tried to steal a base, if I could demonstrate for whomever is watching, that I could have a pop time better than major league average, then I have given myself a job. I made that a quest. I worked at that, so specifically to achieve that time that it gave me a very specific goal to zone in on.

I live here just a few doors down from the gym here in Venice. At the end of my street is coincidentally, the park that my high school baseball team played at. I remember going there after – must have been my sophomore year of high school, after training this for maybe a year and a half without really testing it under a stopwatch. Today was going to be the first day of trying it. I remember in my first attempts to record this time, I recorded a 1.88 second top time.

It was in that moment – I mean, no other major league teams were there. It was just the high school team. It was in that moment that I really felt that this was real and that I was going to be a professional baseball player. It would it would take, what is that? Seven more years until I was drafted. I knew that this was happening. That's a very specific skill that I think most people wouldn't know about.

[00:28:31] LW: I love that. Who was the Michael Jordan of catchers at the time?

[00:28:37] LG: Pudge Rodriguez. Ivan Rodriguez was the player. There was also another player –

[00:28:43] LW: Is Pudge a nickname, or is that his actual –

[00:28:45] LG: Pudge is a nickname. Yeah, Pudge is a nickname. Ivan Rodriguez is his name. He was probably the best player at the time. Just before him, maybe the first contemporary – I'll say, contemporary catcher to really glamorize the defensive position was a guy called Benito Santiago. His manager was my first manager in the Padre system, a guy called Greg Riddoch. He would tell me stories years later about him. He was the guy that was able to make that throw I just described, but from his knees and do amazing things defensively.

I didn't really have a favorite player, but I did respect and I wanted to glamorize the defensive part of the position. I think a lot of that was my distaste, because right around the same time, Los Angeles had a hall of fame catcher named Mike Piazza. He was a hall of famer, because he could hit better than any catcher, maybe ever, but didn't really exceed average behind the plate. I wanted to really honor this position and do the defensive part well.

[00:29:58] LW: Right. Okay, so you're at Santa Monica Catholic High School. You're playing ball for those guys. What was your mindset, your mentality at the time, just in life in general? Did you feel optimistic? Do you have any mental health stuff happening? What was happening inside at the mind?

[00:30:16] LG: For me, nothing negative, or mental health-wise came up until years later, maybe three, four years ago for me. At the time, I felt like I was on this straight path to my wildest dreams, basically. I mean, I can vividly remember, I just got back from a trip playing internationally. I was on this national team that played in Australia, New Zealand doing this tour.

One of the local papers interviewed me about it. I said in the paper that – they asked me about my goals. Meanwhile, I'm a freshman, going into my freshman year in high school. I told this reporter that I was going to play at Stanford University, but that was if I didn't get drafted right out of high school, which is maybe an audacious thing to say, but I genuinely believed that. Then one of the deans of my high school found the article, or read the article and posted it up in the bulletin board of my high school lobby, which is embarrassing. I didn't like that attention. I remember literally being in that hallway as a freshman and I only mildly knew some of the varsity players, meeting them the previous summer. One of the seniors ran past my locker, made it known that he was going to like, check out this article, because folks had been talking about it.

I watched him from down the hall read the article and he's got his hands on his head and he was just blown away. Yeah, he was trying to make fun of me, that I would say something like that. I remember the next year. I made varsity my freshman year. I just remembered the next year that there was a moment that one of the better players in the team upperclassmen validated that moment. It was like, "Remember when y'all laughed at him about this thing?" They felt it was going to be real. I didn't really feel any doubt, or negativity, or I guess I was just – I think if I spoke what I believed about myself, that I would be viewed as arrogant and I think, people would be surprised. It was just positivity and confidence, I think.

[00:32:35] LW: Tell us, what was the next phase like? You obviously went to college down in San Diego.

[00:32:40] LG: Yeah, I went to college. The recruiting process was interesting. I think I liked the idea of being drafted out of high school for I don't know, teenage bravado reasons. I was a student. I had a GPA well over 4.0 in high school. Unless, the money was crazy, I was going to go to college. I liked the idea of talking to scouts as a senior, while I'm doing my homework and that felt sexy and cool. It felt cool to talk with an agent and those things.

It's worth mentioning the other side of the story a bit is I say this half-jokingly, but it's like, I've never accomplished any of my goals. I mentioned that I was going to play at Stanford. I went on a recruiting trip up to Stanford with my one of my best friends at the time, Randy Molina. I was on crutches, because I tore my ankle ligaments in my ankle. One of us came back from that trip with a scholarship offer and it wasn't me.

Then I changed my mind. I saw that this guy called Mike Nickeas, who I bumped into the other day. He's an agent for CAA. Was a local catcher who was the starting catcher at Georgia Tech. Georgia Tech was playing in the College World Series every year. I was watching him catch on ESPN. I said, there's a California kid catching there. That's what I'll do. I'm going to I'm going to play at Georgia Tech. Then I went on a recruiting trip my junior year there and met with the recruiting coordinator. Then I got home and in a follow-up e-mail to him, I said, "Hey, so what do you think? How's it look for me coming to Georgia Tech?" He said, I'll never forget, he goes, "Logan, you're absolutely a division one catcher, but we're going to sign this kid here in Georgia."

I was so arrogant at the time that I was like, "Who is in Georgia? I mean, I'm the best catcher available," all these things that I thought in my head. He was referencing a future major league all-star, Matt Wieters. Maybe one of the best two-way players in college history. Constantly, I just shot for the stars and got cut down a bit was my interpretation of it in a lot of ways. I'm super blessed though that I chose to go to the University of San Diego. It was the smallest scholarship offer I received.

I fear who I would have become if I went to any other program. The group that we had there, the culture that we had there, what we were able to accomplish there is such a strong part of my life, my development that I wouldn't wish it any other way.

[00:35:30] LW: In these stories, I talk a lot about breadcrumbs leading you to your path and also, some of the angels. Meaning, just the people, the Obi-Wan Kenobis, the people who step in and mentor you. Sounds like you've had a few of those at this point in your life. I'm sure some of your coaches and managers in high school and college can qualify in that role. You also met a woman named Cara Miller in college.

[00:35:54] LG: Yeah, that's right. I knew I wanted to study in the business school there at the University of San Diego. However, I had a little buffer, some extra credits from the honors courses I was taking in high school. The amount of buffer that I had, or room in my schedule was exactly equal to the units required to graduate with a minor from the leadership school.

They built this leadership school at the University of San Diego, which at the time was pretty edgy, so I opted to do that, instead of fill my time with electives that wouldn't necessarily serve a bigger purpose. As fate would have it, the capstone course, it's called leadership seminar, you had to take last in order to graduate from the program. The spring of my senior year coincided with the first time in NCAA history, that the NCAA started with a uniform start date. Meaning that the NCAA baseball season would start on the same weekend for all universities. The effort there was to take away an advantage that fair weather schools, like San Diego had. I mean, historically, we would play the first weekend of college – the college season at the end of January. Meanwhile, much of the country is under snow and all that.

We condensed the same 52-game schedule in much less time. It just meant that attending class, specifically this class was going to be prohibitive. I tried to go to the school and asked for some exceptions and maybe an independent study, or another way to do it, but they were unwilling to make amends. It just seemed silly to come back to university for a fifth year. I was going to be playing professional baseball. It was a bummer that I was going to not be able to finish this course, because of something that was school related.

I failed and failed and failed trying to get this exception. One of the days, I went in to speak with the management. I passed by Dr. Miller's desk and I knew that she was the professor and she happened to be there. I sat down and asked if I could share this story with her. She said, "Yeah, let me look into it." All I got was an e-mail from her a few days later saying that she would do an independent study with me.

Eight or 10 years later, she told me the full story, which is that she went back to the dean and really went to bat for me. She's like, "If we didn't build this building for this type of individual, then I don't know who we built it for." She stuck her neck out there and she made a deal with me that she would teach me the course one-on-one, if I brought her a California burrito to each

meeting. We had a deal. That was insanely impactful, not just because the material was super timely and relevant to my interests and what I was doing on the field, but a high-level college course is pretty intense when you're sitting at a desk and there's no place to hide. It was very powerful.

[00:39:12] LW: I wonder what she saw on you that compelled her to go to bat for you and to do a one on one training. I'm sure she wasn't sitting around twiddling her thumbs waiting for that thing to happen. What do you suppose that was?

[00:39:25] LG: Well, if I put myself in her position, I think one could understand being unmotivated by folks who are just marking time. This isn't just a school thing. I mean, lots of people are just moving through life and they're getting credit for being in the room. I was asking them to make this as hard as they wanted, but I wanted to finish this course and I wanted to do it well. I think that hearing someone with desire to learn and a willingness is unfortunately rare sometimes.

I mean, I don't want to project this on other kids and make myself sound great and others, maybe not or whatever. If you're teaching to a classroom of 20 or 30 students who are on the apathy scale trending a little bit too hard towards apathy. Then you have someone who is more or less beating down your door to engage with the material, I think it lights you up. I feel that today as a coach, someone who really wants – it's very difficult to say no to people who are genuinely willing in that way.

[00:40:46] LW: Well, adding to that, I think a lot of times when you hear about college athletes, you envision them as people who don't go to class, who mail it in, they get people to do their assignments for them and all of that. Here you are, this athlete at the college who's actually wanting to show up and – I imagine, that must have been very unique for her to encounter someone like you.

[00:41:09] LG: Yeah, a 100%. I think, again, to speak very specifically to that school, yeah, I think you can imagine that it attracted a lot of athletes. It attracted a lot of athletes that thought they were getting into something a little bit more relaxed than it was. I think there was some contrast there.

[00:41:27] LW: What did you learn from that that you didn't know before?

[00:41:31] LG: That course was my first obviously, introduction to Dr. Miller, who is a pretty profound teacher, consultant, thinker in in the space of leadership and group dynamics. That was the first course where it wasn't about playing the game of school. I'll be honest with you, I was and am down to play the game. I wasn't one of the kids that was in high school saying like, "When am I ever going to use algebra?" Use that as a reason to protest doing my algebra homework.

I viewed it as like, someone has decided that this is the course we're all going to take. If you tell me how to win the game, I'm going to win the game. To do anything other than that seems like I'm only hurting myself. A lot of students play the game, not for the sake of getting something out of it, but just to play the game. That was the first course that it wasn't about the game. Sure, at the end, she had to award me a grade or something like that. To this day, Cara is a notorious challenger of assumptions. She is a mirror to her students and the people that she works with it.

It was a really introspective, challenging course, because it was breaking a lot of frames and assumptions that I had about school and the norms around what that ought to look like. I had to show up with my A game. I mean, quite honestly, it was the first time that I had to do – I had to read the books. I could win school without doing the extra stuff. When I'm going to sit down with a college professor face-to-face and there's no other person in the room to discuss the implications of a text, you got to show up for it, not to get the homework grade, or to pass the quiz, but to have a conversation with someone who's sitting in front of you, expecting you to engage with the material.

[00:43:35] LW: We'll look back around to Dr. Miller later, but talk a little bit about the draft process and moving into the pros.

[00:43:44] LG: It feels to me almost semi-tragic. I was in high school – The eligibility goes like this. You're eligible for the major league baseball first year player draft at the end of your high school year. Then if you enroll at a four-year school, you're eligible again after your junior year and then of course, after your senior year. In high school, I'm on the phone talking to the Tampa

Bay Rays about how much money it would take for me to skip college and all these exciting things. Then my junior year, I went undrafted. I had a okay year. Then my senior year, I hit a bunch of homeruns, but I didn't do better. The team accomplished remarkable things and it felt great to be a part of that. I didn't make myself a household name in the draft process. I got drafted really late. I remember on draft days, sitting at home, hearing all the names go by and wondering if I was even going to get selected.

I was selected by the San Diego Padres, a team that I had zero conversations with. I just felt grateful at that time, because I had this moment where I was like, "Maybe this isn't going to happen." Then the transition into professional baseball is it's hard to devote that much of your life to something and for it to be anything other than a dream. No one wants to hear this, but it's not. It's just not what people would want you to describe it as.

Now I can say fully that I loved the memories that I made and I'm so grateful to have that chance and many people don't have a chance to experience any of it. To integrate the whole story on it is professional baseball is a pretty brutal lifestyle that is generally unhealthy and difficult and not nearly as glamorous as you would hope it to be. I just remember towards the end of my first season, I was in Eugene, Oregon playing for a team called the Emeralds. I was warming up on the side of the outfield foul line. I looked across the field at the opponents and I had this reflective moment. I thought, "My goodness. I wanted to be here after high school and I would have been here this whole time and I would have missed that whole college experience that I had."

I felt afraid of again, who I would have been if I took that that opportunity. Thank goodness, that I went to college not just for the education's sake. Almost zero percent of me is talking about having a diploma, but it's more of where are you going to spend your 18, 19, 20, 21st and 22nd-year-old years and on those buses, in those hotels seems maybe not the best place.

[00:46:46] LW: Right. You mentioned something in your book. You said something. I can't remember the full quote, but you said in the pros, all they want is for you to be grateful, or something along those lines.

[00:46:57] LG: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I'm making reference to what it's like to come home. It's difficult to come home and be the one who is "living the dream." Just mathematically, you're mostly engaging with people who aren't. It's just not really the time, or the place to share with those people that you experience some struggle, or that you maybe – you don't like parts of it, or that you have anything negative to say.

Yeah, it just felt that type of thinking and communication was unwelcome. That's a lot of what is behind the impetus of the book, which is a little bit of this idea that I believe we all want to realize our potential and see what's behind our best efforts. Most people are not engaging in that behavior. When they see someone doing it, there's an attraction there and they want to live through that, or be tangent to that. I could definitely feel a palpable thing amongst my peers and the parents of my peers when I came home that first season of like, see. He's doing it. They didn't want me to taint that for them maybe.

[00:48:24] LW: You got that phone call from the organization. Can you talk about that experience?

[00:48:32] LG: Yeah, I got let go, released at the very end of my second year. At the time, I was in the California league playing in high A with a team called the Lake Elsinore Storm. It was an off-day, which is you get an off-day every 40 days or something like that. I was driving with a teammate from Lake Elsinore to Cal State Fullerton to do a Nike photo shoot, of all things.

I was just on the freeway and I got a call and I answered it and. It was the manager saying, "We got to let you go. Padres no longer need your services." It was pretty transactional and that was it and I hung up and then I just kept driving. It was surreal. I mean, I didn't have any emotions that that were like, this was an injustice, or I was being mistreated. I agreed with their decision. Yeah, it felt very surreal.

I wasn't emotional yet. I packed up my stuff and I went home and I reflected. I think the thing that was emotional for me was I entertained some conversations from other teams about signing another deal, a minor league deal. Remember, from the original story about being a catcher, the position is a premium position, because it's very highly skilled and very few people are willing to do it.

Quite frankly, it's much easier to have a job if you're a catcher than other positions for that reason. I just knew that signing another deal was not – It wasn't the organization's interest to make me their next major league catcher. I think in my heart of hearts, I knew that whole off-season that I was done.

[00:50:22] LW: Before the call.

[00:50:24] LG: No, after the call. I mean, not going to resign done. But how I was living my life, I was still working out and training and I think all the people around me were either too afraid to ask, or assumed that I would resign and continue with my career. In my heart, I knew that I was done. I remember telling my parents, it was the morning of Thanksgiving. I just remember telling them that that would be it. I cried. I'll never forget it. It was really hard to tell them that.

[00:51:01] LW: How did they respond?

[00:51:02] LG: They unconditionally loved and supported me and I felt that immediately. I think they were mostly concerned with me and what I needed and what I felt. I think that it felt heavy to them, because they observed someone, their son engage with a certain level of desire and attention to detail and making sacrifices and just living your life in a very specific type of way for so long. I think they were in observation of me. It's like when the baby trips and falls and everybody's waiting to see if the baby's going to cry or not. Is he hurt? It just felt very supportive.

[00:51:49] LW: Did you have any idea what you would do if the baseball thing didn't work out, prior to you being let go? Do you ever have that conversation with yourself?

[00:52:00] LG: Zero. Not one concept. I knew generally, however, that I wanted to be an entrepreneur. I knew specifically that I set a goal. It was an anti-goal, to never make a resume. I just wanted to make a company from nothing and do that. The details of the company almost didn't matter. I mean, that brainstorming process began with a former teammate of mine, one of my best friends in the world. He's a scout with the Los Angeles Angels, where our first idea was to do this fire protection company. We're going to offer all these different fire protection services for buildings and homeowners associations and things like that. So random. It was his idea.

I didn't care. I was attracted to the development entrepreneurially more than anything else. It wasn't until later that the strength and conditioning conversation came up. No, I had no idea. I felt oddly okay with that.

[00:53:07] LW: Right. How much money did you have at the time? Did you have anything saved up, or what was your financial situation?

[00:53:12] LG: No money. No money for sure. My parents had a few thousand dollars in a college fund. I don't know if it was \$8,000 or \$10,000 or something like that that we didn't use. I had that and I didn't really tap into that until later, 2013, when the gym moved from the park to the gym facility. No, I was living on credit cards and no money. I mean, yeah.

[00:53:43] LW: Okay. You get the call, you tell your parents. Now what?

[00:53:46] LG: I had this period in my life that I don't know why it happened. It wasn't very calculated, but I went so inward. I was staying at my parents' house at the time. That's when I first started drinking coffee. I read three books at a time for months. I was painting. I was going by canvases and paint. I was writing. It was this creative introspective time. What it felt like was having just ultimate freedom, after living a pretty structured disciplined life.

I remember splitting my life into three categories. This is really at the heart of what I observed and would later be the reason for writing the book was on paper, I should have been I think fearful about the uncertainty. I was technically completely unprepared for whatever was coming next, because whatever was coming next had nothing to do with pop times and hitting a baseball, but I knew so clearly in my mind that if I put the energy that I put into that sport, specifically into three categories, generally, that it wouldn't matter.

I don't even need to know the details, but that the person that I would be would be so undeniable, is what I believed. Those three categories was my physical competency, my intellectual competency and my spiritual competency. I just went for it in a very general way without knowing any specifics. It was such an important time to figure out like, who I was and what are some of the things that I believe in and can I articulate those? How can I manifest

something valuable in the world? It ended up looking like opening gyms. At the time, I didn't have any specifics and I also didn't care, or worry that I didn't have specifics.

[00:55:50] LW: Now leading up to this, you had a whole series of coaches and managers and Dr. Miller and all these people, now that that phase of your life was over with, or transitioned, who did you see as your mentor into entrepreneurship? Or maybe was it a book, or some video that you had seen?

[00:56:10] LG: Well, in the very back of my mind, the models I had growing up were two people, a guy called Jim Argyropoulos, who started what later became Cherokee Shoes, which later became the licensed clothing company, Cherokee. He was a high school dropout that my dad was his first hire and he built a couple hundred-million-dollar company out of his garage. And a guy called Greg Games, who was my dad's best friend who also high school dropout, who had a multi-million-dollar tile company.

In the back of my mind, I had this view of entrepreneurship that was of responsibility, opportunity, upside, it was very expansive and egalitarian. I really appreciated all the things that I saw modeled there. Specifically, when I was getting this business plan in my mind together about a fitness school for general people and treating them like athletes, I went to my college strength coach while I was living down in San Diego and I asked him who could I learn from when I moved back to Los Angeles? I wanted to live in Los Angeles where I was from.

He sent me to this guy called Andy Petranek. Andy Petranek was a successful coach and then gym owner in Santa Monica, who coincidentally opened what was the ninth ever CrossFit affiliate. It just so happened that he was the perfect model to learn from. I interned with him, because he had a view of fitness, or strength and conditioning that was absolutely rigorous in its being technically sound training, but transcended that and it was a real business. I mean, most folks at that time in the micro-gym space were running a passion project, and this guy had a real vision for a real business. Thankfully, I landed on that doorstep, rather than someone's side-hustle's doorstep.

[00:58:20] LW: What did you learn? What was the main thing you learned from working with Andy?

[00:58:24] LG: I mean, so much, The main thing worth mentioning was he was the first person that was doing what I think is critically important to what we do now, which was he understood that fitness is free. If it's not free, it's mostly free. That if you're trying to sell that, it's going to be really difficult to win and it's going to be nearly impossible to create a lot of value.

He was clearly articulating to the market that he was selling coaching. Coaching is of a different value. It is maybe more important and definitely has the opportunity to accomplish more good in the fitness industry, in my opinion. He was making that explicitly clear; changing the minds of the consumer who inquired about his business said, "Oh, the thing that you want, absolutely. We have that." Also, that's not why you pay us money. You pay us money for this other thing. That changed the world view of the folks that he worked with. That was critical. Still is critically important to what I do today.

[00:59:43] LW: Is that when you got involved in strongman competitions and stuff like that, at Andy's gym?

[00:59:49] LG: That was slightly before. I got involved with strongman a few years after, because I was gifted the strongman trainer course. I thought it was just going to be a fun Saturday, doing what my biased view of training looked like, which is just the shorter, heavier bouts. I couldn't unlearn what it is that I saw there, which is that surprisingly, the implements and movement patterns inside of this obscure strength sport of strongman, if you understand it well, are potentially as good, or better in many cases for developing general physical preparedness in a broad population of people, than a lot of the tools that were being accepted there.

Higher skill gymnastics and weightlifting were blessed as being deemed worthy to teach a general population of people, functional movement. There was still a stigma with regards to loading atlas stones and carrying kegs and flipping tires. I felt that I too could communicate that message quite effectively to the general population. I ended up teaching that seminar all around the world. Been to 10 or 11 countries teaching strongman to folks who have almost no interest in competing in the sport. That became integrated into my worldview of movement.

[01:01:27] LW: Had you already started training at the park at that point?

[01:01:30] LG: Yeah, that was right about the same time. This was 2011. April 12th, 2011 was the first day in the park, pretending to create a gym.

[01:01:44] LW: Who did you train in the park and how did you get these clients? How did they find out about you?

[01:01:50] LG: I met a guy called Danny Leslie, while I was interning with Andy. I think that the way I remember it is that I think he just had a tougher day. He was personal training, mostly through a corporate gym locally. I think he had a tougher day. It's that day that every trainer realizes that, "All right. Wait a second. I charge this much an hour and there's only this many hours in the day. Okay, this is not scalable."

I think he was like, "Hey, man. I got to do something different. I want to create a space, an open gym and all that." I said, "Man, that's what I'm here to do as well. What do you think?" He's like, "Well, I was thinking about taking some of my personal training clients up to the park and training them in a group, like a small class." That's what we did. There were a little boom box and some beach towels and a mismatch of equipment. Yeah, we showed up and tried to convince anybody who would listen that we had a legitimate training facility.

[01:02:58] LW: What kind of car do you have at the time?

[01:03:00] LG: I had a Chevy Colorado. It was a pickup truck. He had a big old, I think a Ford F-150, or something like that. Over the years, we ended up having just hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pounds of plates and barbells and kettlebells in the back of our trucks. I think we ruined our brakes and our shocks were all shot.

[01:03:25] LW: Did you have permit issues that the cops ever come up to you guys and say, "Hey, you can't be out here training people"?

[01:03:31] LG: We were permitted the whole time. That part was fine. Any of the cops that would come up were mostly friends, or things like that. I find that fitness is quite emotionally

charged, and so there's absolutely a small population of very passionate Santa Monica residents that didn't like the idea that we were training in the park. Just as we transitioned to a brick and mortar location in Venice, the first location for DEUCE, Santa Monica outlawed fitness in that park and legislated some aggressive anti-fitness policy.

[01:04:10] LW: Was that because of you guys?

[01:04:12] LG: We definitely didn't help. I'll say that. We were definitely not the only people out there. I mean, the park was in use. I'll say that. There are lots of trainers and different classes and things happening out there. Yeah, we definitely didn't help.

[01:04:27] LW: When you were training in the park, I'm assuming that that's the time you were developing what would become the hold the standard DEUCE philosophy. Can you talk a little bit about the genesis of that?

[01:04:41] LG: Yeah. The motto, hold the standard is very simply, is this notion that we wanted the gym DEUCE to represent idealism, like the place where you went. Just being inside of it made you feel like, "Ah, I need to transcend myself. I need to play up. I need to be on my best A game." The more nuanced explanation and this leads into what I teach now in my seminar with adaptive leadership and organizational culture is that hold the standard is often misunderstood.

I think if you look at that, you're thinking, "Okay. This is this thing that looks cool on a t-shirt, that represents we're the best, or something like that." When in reality, inside of those three words is a endless developmental process. It's based on what we observe in human behavior and also, what we see in the literature, which is that the standard is the vision. It's idealism. It's perfection. It's the target. How any process of development works is that is the image we have in our mind that we are trying to mimic.

Like Light, if you give a talk, before you give that talk, you have an image in your head that is how you would like it to go, how you'd like it to feel. Then what happens is you give the talk, or you give your effort. Then you start to notice the differences between the perfect thing you were trying to mimic and what it is that actually happened. That space is the space that we say leaders occupy. They take responsibility for that space. They hold that space. They hold the

standard and engaging in that gap and being curious about how to shorten the space between reality, where we are and idealism, where we're trying to go is the process that never ends. In many ways, we're trying to build this perpetual motion machine of development that we are always getting better until forever. I think hold the standard really embodies that.

[01:07:08] LW: Did you trademark that, or how did you come up with that?

[01:07:15] LG: I'll tell you a funny story about that is yes, I did trademark that. In the trademark process, I don't know if you've ever done it.

[01:07:23] LW: I have. Yeah.

[01:07:25] LG: Yeah. It takes a little second. I was listening to a Tim Ferriss podcast one day, while this thing was pending and he had a chef on. I don't remember the chef's name, but it's back there in the log or something, years ago now. The chef answered a question from Tim Ferriss that was something like, "How do you discipline your sous chefs? Are you hard on them? Are you nice? What's your style?" The chef said something more or less like, "I'm not too much of an authoritarian, but there's this feeling that there's a certain standard in my kitchen and that you must hold the standard."

I'm freaking out, because I'm hearing this thing. Then Tim Ferriss goes, "That sounds good. You should put that on a shirt. Hold the standard." I immediately go to my phone and I e-mailed the lawyer and I go, "Any updates?"

[01:08:25] LW: You got it registered.

[01:08:26] LG: Yes, sir. Yeah.

[01:08:27] LW: Oh, congratulations. That's pretty huge.

[01:08:30] LG: Yeah, thank you.

[01:08:31] LW: Had the name DEUCE already been chosen at that point?

[01:08:34] LG: DEUCE. Yeah, that was chosen just before the hold the standard motto came about.

[01:08:40] LW: While you were in the park.

[01:08:41] LG: No, no. That came later. The building that we leased came first. I researched the building and long, long, long story made shorter, it's an old garage and that garage has been there for over a 100 years. There was a grand prix race that was supposed to be held in Santa Monica in the year 1915, believe it or not, and Santa Monica canceled the event a few months before the event and the complaints of the residents sounded a lot like the complaints of people working out in the park. This is unsafe. This is a bad look for the neighborhood. We don't want this here. Same thing happened with the race.

Then the founder of Venice, a guy called Abbott Kinney, offered to host the race in Venice and the racetrack went right in front of our gym on Lincoln. We have a photo of the guy who won the race. DEUCE is the number on the side of the race car and we wanted to embody that vintage racing theme with a subtle jab towards our new home in Venice. The event was very impactful for the community and a positive event that was supposed to be in Santa Monica, just like we were.

[01:09:52] LW: You also mentioned before in another interview that you purposely wanted a name that didn't have anything to do with working out.

[01:10:00] LG: Yeah. The name DEUCE, the brainstorming process was actually, Lindsay and I in Austin in a bar. We're trying to think of names. The brainstorm process began with some criteria, that the name would not describe what it is and that it would be a one-syllable word. DEUCE was it. We figured that there was this number associated with it, one syllable word, had a bit of – you could hold up a peace sign and claim it. These are the thoughts.

The reason for that is that fitness is such a charged environment, that everyone has strong opinions. If I say something to you like, Pilates, or if I say CrossFit, or if I say yoga, any listener starts filling in the story there. Because fitness is so charged, it's often a very opinionated story. I

wanted an opportunity for us to educate the consumer as to what it is that we were. If you drove by a sign that said Venice CrossFit, or Venice Pilates, a lot of the drivers, or the passersby would maybe not give us a chance to educate them as to what it is that we did inside of those walls.

I think what I've been doing for the past eight years or so is trying to educate the world what DEUCE means. I think for the folks that are semi-aware of it, it means something quite remarkable.

[01:11:34] LW: You guys were in the park for a few years training. I'm assuming that you and Danny got to a point where you realized, "Hey, we have enough people. If we wanted to open up a brick and mortar, we could." Then it sounds like the whole park city council thing that happened forced your hand. Was that a tough leap to make, or was that more of an organic like, "Okay. We're going to do it anyway, so now is the time. Let's go ahead and try to find a space and etc."

[01:12:04] LG: It wasn't tough out of sheer ignorance.

[01:12:09] LW: Naivety.

[01:12:10] LG: Yeah, which I mentioned in the book, the hiding hand principle. It's like, this is to our advantage. I think there's a false notion, Gladwell talks about it in I think, Blink or whatever. The false notion that more information is always better. It's like, if we really went to the white board and broke out the pie charts and dialed in all the predictive metrics and consulted with a bunch of other people's opinions, we would have found a lot of great reasons not to make that leap.

The hiding hand principle is the classic example is folks digging a mine shaft. It's like, there's a certain amount of planning, what's the budget, how many man hours, how difficult is this going to be to bore this hole 2 miles into the side of this mountain. Then you start. Then two months in, six months in, you have more information than when you started. You're a little bit dirtier than when you started and you're more tired and you have less money, but you've started. You can't

go back now, so you keep digging further. It takes longer than you thought, cost more money than you thought, etc., etc.

If you would have had that information to begin with, you would have maybe not done it in the first place. Not having all that information allows us to I think, engage in things that maybe we'd otherwise prevent ourselves from. I do the mental experiment all the time. It's like, I get the benefit of sitting right now with you in this conversation. I can say that at this moment, the story ends well. It's successful. We can say that objectively. If I were to put myself knowing what I know now, back at the beginning, mind you, I didn't have the opportunity to know that it would work out. It feels hard to go back out to the park for day one. It makes me want to – it makes me want to puke to think about it. I know that it ends up well. I didn't then.

[01:14:21] LW: I've used that analogy of the staircase before. You can't see the end of the staircase. All you can see is the first 100 steps, so you think it's a 100-step process. Once you get it to the 100 steps, you see it's actually a 1,000-step process. If you saw the 1,000 steps, you probably wouldn't have even attempted to go the first 100 steps, so it's by design.

[01:14:41] LG: That's exactly it.

[01:14:42] LW: You talked in the book, go right about how when you first found the spot, the garage, the classic just garage, you guys – you and Danny built it out yourself. Then it was a four-month delay that you had not budgeted for. Talk a little bit about how you dug yourself out of that hole with the watch.

[01:15:04] LG: Oh, man. Yeah. Here's what I say, knowing doesn't help. Knowing that adversity is coming and that you got to just get through it and bear down and this is what makes the story great in the end, knowing doesn't change the fact that it is actually difficult and it actually hurts and it's actually challenging you.

I knew all the lessons about adversity and the willingness to work hard and whatever, but it was so difficult. It felt like sheer injustice. I realized that that's relative. We're all having our own different experiences. When you're betting your whole life, all your money, all your time on this thing and you're being denied your ability to engage in business, because whatever, the city

planning department isn't open, or that they're going to get to your permit when they want to, or they're going to deny you for this thing or that thing, it feels like you are experiencing injustice and you don't have control.

We were just kids with not a bunch of money. I mean, we had support, but extending out. It's funny, you say four months we've been in this COVID thing for four months, it gets very real. Two things happen. One is I'm out of money. I'm doing the thing at the grocery store, where I pull out my wallet and I'm shuffling through my credit cards. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for an overdraft protection notice, rather than just a denied credit card. That's the state of my life where I'm like, "Okay. I want this to get approved. I'll probably get overdraft, but at least, I can check out here and I won't be sent home with no groceries."

The most valuable thing that I owned at the time was a watch that my ex-girlfriend's mother bought me for graduation. It's this TAG Heuer watch. I watched her pay 3,000 bucks cash for it. I didn't really feel like I needed a watch that in my life to begin with. I'm just driving around town to pawn shops, which I hear are places where you take stuff that are semi-valuable and you get cash for them. No one wanted to buy this watch for anything respectable cash-wise. A couple people offered me a couple hundred bucks for it. I ended up holding onto the watch, but that was the level of desperation.

Then I got what I thought was a break. I went to my parents and I said, "You know that woman that lived next to us growing up, Linda?" This old woman who I would just climb her wall and get my baseball out of the backyard every now and then, sit with her. She bought me some bonds as a kid. I didn't know how many, or of what value, but I knew that I had these bonds that I was supposed to use for college. I said, "Mom, can you send me those?" She sent out the envelope and I took it right over to Wells Fargo over there in Santa Monica. I plopped it on the counter and I said, "Hey, I want to cash these bonds." They said, "Great. Take a seat over there. We'll come out with the information in a second."

I'm sitting in the chair and this woman comes out and she's holding a receipt with a number underlined on it. It said \$7,723. I was blown away. I was like, "We're in business. We are golden." We were dead. Now we're alive. This is amazing. I go, "Are you serious?" She's like, "Yeah, I'm serious. We double checked. We'll have the cash in your account by the end of the

day." I'm like, "Oh, my God." I get in my car. I could have drove home a 100 miles an hour. I was so happy. I immediately go in and spend \$7,725 or \$23 at roguefitness.com to get the equipment that we needed to finish opening the gym.

Two days later, I get a call from Wells Fargo about a clerical error that the number was in fact \$772.30. The decimal place got moved over. I said, "Oh, my God." "I'm so sorry that that happened. I can get you the money back. I just need some time. I have spent it." They said, "Oh, we're not really interested in what you did with the money. We need the money back in your account." They were brutal to me, calling me from different branches, whatever, threatening to cancel all my accounts and all these things and they needed the money in there yesterday. It was so par for the course in that moment. I was like, "This thing is going to make me bleed." Now I get to joke about it, but –

[01:19:52] LW: How did you get that money to them?

[01:19:54] LG: I had to take out a loan from a friend. Thank goodness for those folks.

[01:20:00] LW: Awesome. What was the first day like when you guys opened?

[01:20:05] LG: First day was incredible. I think, that the thing worth mentioning here is what we talked about earlier, there is a natural human attraction to people who are vulnerably going for it. This may be the most simple way to say it. People observed us in the park for literally two and a half years. The arc of that experience if I'm to personify the perception of it was like, "Oh, my God. That's cute. They're doing a thing in the park." Then it was like, "Oh, yeah. They're still doing that thing in the park." That thing in the park looks pretty cool.

Then man, they got a lot of people out there in the park. Then dude, they're killing it. We should go out to the park. Then the gym space opened and it was like, "You won't believe it. They did it. They're opening this place. It's right over there. You can see it with your own two eyes. I cannot believe it. They did it." It was this communal celebration of a vulnerable effort. We started with a critical mass of students and that really helped us.

I'll never forget. I mean, that was really helpful and I wish more gyms started that way these days. I'll never forget our first non-park members, this guy called Monty Freeman. Him and Brett, they drove up together. They were going to the store and they pull up and they said, "Hey, so what do you all do here? How do you join the gym?" I was running around like a chicken with its head cut off. I was realizing in that moment that this was allegedly a real business and that I have something to say to this guy.

My words were like, "Well, normally what we do in situations this is – normally, I'll have you come inside," and this is me just making this up as I go. We signed up our first member and people kept coming. Thank God for just figuring it out as you go.

[01:22:16] LW: They came on the first day, Monty and Brett?

[01:22:18] LG: Maybe even before we opened. We're out there working on the building and they saw the door open. Yeah, came in.

[01:22:27] LW: Well, I just want to share a little bit of my experience, because that's how we met. I was living in the neighborhood. I was passing by DEUCE. This is in Venice, California. I was passing by DEUCE on Lincoln Boulevard several times a day. It's one of those things where you see something, but you don't really know what it is, but you figure it's probably just you just categorize it in your mind. It's just, "Oh, that's a CrossFit gym, or that's a whatever." People are working out outside, because it's all outside. Then I had been working out at equinox gym, which is this really high-end gym, tile service, the whole bit. I decided that I was tired of just staring at myself in the mirror listening to Jay-Z music while I was working out by myself and I wanted a little bit more of a community and I wanted some place that I could walk to and that ended up being DEUCE. I went to your website. I saw a tutorial from one of the coaches. I think you had a little video in there as well.

I felt like I got to meet the people. It felt very community-oriented, very homey. Then I called and I think I got Juan on the phone and I made an appointment right away and I came over. This is actually, literally right after January 1st, so of whatever year that was a few years ago. Came in and did the little practice thing, so he could measure, I guess, if I was going to be safe working out there. It was outside and it was just – I just remember having – it was one of the first times

ever. I had been working out for 20 years, probably more, it's one of the first times ever that I felt a sense of community going to work out.

Then very quickly, I would come to the yard and people would know me by name and we'd be encouraging each other, hitting personal records. It wasn't that sense of danger that you hear about with CrossFit. It was actually, it was more of a sense of leadership. I know you guys have in the ethos of DEUCE, you have this working definition for leadership. Can you talk a little bit about that?

[01:24:35] LG: Yeah. I think anytime you're going to try to develop something, there needs to be an agreement as to what it would mean to do it, or to execute it. How is it that you define it? Leadership is one of those words that we just gloss over. Sounds good. I'd like more of that. If I ask you what it is, you'd probably fumble on your words. For us, we need to have a clear definition. Being in leadership is essentially being accountable to the results, period. That sounds simple, but it's a very helpful definition, because based on that definition, you get an understanding as to what the gig is all about, which means that when things go well, you can point to yourself for that. When things go poorly, you also can only point to yourself for that.

It's about taking up responsibility. That definition is also characteristically open. Anyone can engage in leadership. It doesn't matter how old you are, what your position is, how much you're paid, etc. That definition also allows for teams to have all participants on the team to be in leadership. It's a really critically important capacity to have. I really view it as a capacity. Everyone can be a follower. That takes no extra work. You have to opt into leadership. You have to choose that. We are highly interested in people choosing leadership. It's quite unremarkable for us to have folks, even talented folks to come along and work for us who are just going to really follow directions well, really listen well. It's not really compelling to me or this organization. We're highly interested in developing and filtering for leaders, leadership.

[01:26:27] LW: Well, I just want to share one more personal experience. I remember, I would get a little anxious walking to DEUCE every day, because the program would push me to my edge. It wasn't necessarily the coaches pushing you, it was you pushing you. That's the vibe that you got when you went there. No one's sitting there counting down the reps that you're doing, or no one's checking to make sure you do the whole thing, but you feel a sense of

responsibility. It's almost like self-leadership, where you want to push yourself to whatever your edge is. I think you guys did a really great job of doing that.

I would even say you changed my life. You specifically changed my life. I remember coming to one class. I don't know if you remember this or not, but that day's workout was a 100 burpees. It was me and maybe five other people. There was this overweight guy. Really sweet guy. There was an older gentleman. There was a woman who was pregnant and a few other people. I hated burpees up until that moment. I hated burpees. Most people say, "I hate burpees."

I saw this great t-shirt once says, "Burpees, we hate you too." Anyways, so we're laboring through these 100 burpees. I think there was only 12 minutes to go in the class. It was my first time doing that many burpees in a row. It got to the point where the class had ended and I still probably had 20 burpees to go and everybody had finished. The pregnant lady finished, the overweight guy finished, everyone had finished and I just felt like, I knew I had to do it and at the same time, I wanted to quit.

There was no pressure coming from you as a group fitness instructor, but I remember you getting down and doing the last burpees with me. I just I really thought that was cool that you did that. When I left there that day, I swore to myself I would never do burpees again in my entire life. Then I think two days later, I decided, you know what? I can't let that thing have rein over me. I remember doing them in my apartment, a 100 burpees on my own, and it became a thing that I did. I put myself on a 30-day challenge of doing a 100 burpees every day. Anyway, I felt like that was a breakthrough moment for me, under the guise of working out. Really, it was it was really the mentality that I think you guys were teaching at DEUCE. That's one of the things that compelled me to want to have this conversation with you, because it's so much more than just conditioning and strength training.

[01:29:03] LG: Absolutely.

[01:29:04] LW: The hold the standard is something that I see hashtag all over social media, with people who are doing all kinds of stuff. I've seen that in all of the coaches that you've employed, you guys have employed at DEUCE and DEUCE then went on to spread. I was going there on a regular basis, until I moved out of Venice and started living this nomadic life. If I was still there,

I'd definitely be still working out at DEUCE. I've gone over the time that I allotted for this for you and I apologize about that, but I'd have a couple more questions if you have a little bit more time to wrap the conversation up.

[01:29:40] LG: Of course. Yeah, I'm here for it.

[01:29:51] LW: I'm curious, how are you defining success these days?

[01:29:56] LG: Oh, man. I think success for me hasn't – the definition hasn't changed that much. I think I really attribute success in my mind to this idea of forward progress. I'm really interested in development and evolution. If I'm able to choose environments and engage in the type of behavior that'll drive that progress, then I've interpret that as being successful. It's this exact same thing that I was attracted to as a young baseball player that just now involves less of a sport context and more in an entrepreneurial sense.

[01:30:40] LW: Beautiful. The next question is I always ask if somebody came to you and said, "I wanted to start what you did," and what advice would you give them. I'm really curious about this experience that you had, where you got a chance to coach, or mentor these younger kids who wanted to play baseball. I heard this in another conversation you had, but you mentioned to them that none of this matters at this point. Do you remember that conversation and can you talk a little bit about that? Because I feel like that can apply to the advice for people who want to basically do what you did.

[01:31:14] LG: Yeah. I think this is an observation that's nearly universal. It's like, why is it that the greatest, or the masters of their craft end up moving through their craft and on the other end, they say it's not about the music, or it's not about hockey, it's not about the X's and O's. The only way they arrived there was moving through with this attention to detail and mastering those X's and O's of this thing.

That was my experiences as well, is the best way to misunderstand the total value of something like playing baseball would be to think that it's about winning the tournament this weekend, or doing whatever it takes to I don't know, beat the crosstown rival. These are the parameters. These are the environments that teach us lessons of transcendence. Thank goodness, that we

can create meaning and associate meaning with things, like the score of a baseball game, or whether you get a hit or not as a feedback loop to learn these lessons.

I finished baseball feeling so fit, so prepared for anything, because of how I went about it. That I felt this opportunity to share with these young folks and specifically, their parents, that to miss the point would be such a tragedy. I felt that because I was five minutes out of professional baseball that I had the most – the iron was hottest to deliver that message. Part of me, several times I've thought about going back into my e-mail group. I would send them a weekly e-mail update. Just to send them today in 2020 and e-mail all the parents and say, so was I right about that, or are we still upset that Timmy isn't batting third? I think, making that experience objective now from this perspective that they would agree. When you're caught up in it, you might get – you might miss the forest for the trees a bit.

[01:33:42] LW: If you're standing in Cooperstown with your son at the hall of fame and you see your son, that you don't have a kid right now, but just projecting this into the future, your son sees that triple crown winners and puts his finger where you put your finger, what would you say to him?

[01:33:59] LG: If he said what I said, I would – if I was halfway intelligent, I would do exactly what my dad did, which is support me in that desire. I think what I'm calling for is not exclusion, but inclusion. Like include those goals, include the frameworks, include the rules, the desire to win, all of that. Transcend it a bit. To understand that on the other side of that pursuit are things that maybe matter more, or at least just as much. Because I think people misunderstand what I'm saying.

This is not a nihilistic view that says, nothing matters. Therefore, we should not pursue anything. I think, you only really have the authority to say that if you've pursued something with this fervor. No one wants to listen to someone on the corner saying that nothing matters who has not engaged in anything. I will listen to Wayne Gretzky tell me that it's not about the hockey. It's through these experiences that we are, I think, granted the authority to speak to what really matters. Apathy is not sexy. It also doesn't teach us much. I think what we're all – what we would all really benefit from is choosing an environment that we could give our best effort in. That environment will likely come with some reflective feedback teaching moments.

It could be ceramics. It could be making music. It could be trying to hit homeruns. If you do it to the maximum level, you will be reflected back universal lessons that are true across all three of those disciplines, but on paper don't seem to be related at all.

[01:35:56] LW: I love that, man. That leads me to the last bit here. I just want to offer my own reflection. Just off the cuff from what I've heard, I've never heard your full story like that as told directly by you. When I think back to your childhood and you getting into baseball and hearing more about the why and this idea of hitting and the sense of the miraculous, trying to make the miracle happen through the mechanics of hitting a ball, it reminds me of this idea that the miracle is the process.

When you crack that code, no matter who you are, no matter what you've accomplished in your life, you've at some level experienced that the miracle was not in the outcome, but it was in the process. It was in never letting it rest until the good became the better and the better became the best. It seems like you've exemplified that in every area of your life. Even if it wasn't baseball, if it was fly fishing, if it was bowling, if it was anything, we could be having this very same conversation about those learnings from all of those experiences.

You've certainly had your fair share of angels along the way who've coached you and guided you literally throughout that process. It shows up in everything that I've personally gotten a chance to experience working with you and your team today. Hopefully, other people listening to this will be get a chance to cross paths with you. I know you do your leadership workshops all around the world. That's not just open to gym owners. It's really anybody who's interested in stepping up and becoming more accountable to those results that you're teaching and holding that standard.

You have your book, *Go Right*, which is your first published book that just came out. There's an audio version, that's also available along with an e-version. If you ever find yourself in Venice, California and you already have a exercise – I wouldn't recommend someone who's never exercised before going to DEUCE. No, they can do it if they're going to commit to going for a period of time. If you're just visiting, is it possible to drop in and do a little workout?

[01:38:13] LG: Absolutely. Yeah. Absolutely.

[01:38:16] LW: Do you want to add anything else to those reflections, or to any of the ways of contacting you?

[01:38:21] LG: Light, that was beautiful. I appreciate you so much. I enjoy being around you. It's funny, coming on to the call, I just noticed some feelings coming up and I think you might get a laugh out of this. People often are projecting on other people, right? When I'm walking around the local grocery store and I bump into students, or former students, they see me as maybe the health authority in their life. They start stressing and divulging about the dessert they had last night, or that they're sorry their elbow is a little sore, they'll be in the gym soon. All these things that I'm not thinking about.

As a coach, that's the funny experience we have. I'm sure you deal with your own version of it and this is what I was experiencing coming onto the call with you is like, "Man, anytime I'm going to talk to Light, I got to be on my P's and Q's between the ears." It's all my own projection, so I'm sure everywhere you go people are – I've heard you talk about it on interviews too. People are assuming that you're this sage mind who experiences no negative emotion. It's a funny thing to come on to this. It's like, "Man. All right, I got to get up. I got to get ready to talk with my man here." It always feels good to be to be around you and I appreciate the human in you, as much as I appreciate the wisdom and the lessons and who you are as a professional as well.

[01:39:54] LW: Beautiful, man. Thank you so much for that and I look forward to getting a chance to cross paths very soon. Again, I just want to reiterate, you guys, definitely read the book. There's so much more in there to the philosophy and the backstory. You tell so many other great stories of examples of people who have transcended the orientation to results and who become fully immersed in the process. As a result, they become the masters of their field. I love the story about the barista. I started following him on Instagram. Alberto, the hat maker. I've seen his work. So many great stories. Thanks so much for being so generous with that and for sharing and we'll see each other soon.

[01:40:41] LG: Yeah, Light. Thank you. I appreciate you.

[END OF EPISODE]

[01:40:43] LW: Thank you for listening to my interview with Logan Gelbrich. Currently, DEUCE is one of the only training facilities in Los Angeles that has thrived during quarantine, mainly because it's outside. It reminds you of a prison yard. Well, a really nice prison yard, a really inspiring prison yard. Anyway, I encourage you to drop by if you're ever in Venice and definitely pick up a copy of *Going Right*, which is also available on audio.

If you want to hear more stories like Logan's, please subscribe to the podcast and check out the archive. I've got so many other interviews with amazing people who've overcome all kinds of challenges and obstacles in order to start their movement. What I find more often than not is that the obstacle itself plays a big role in defining your movement. By listening to these episodes, you may even find yourself moving closer in the direction of your calling, or doubling down on your commitment to pursuing your purpose.

If you like what you hear, please, please, please rate this podcast. It really helps other listeners discover these inspirational stories. As always, you can find everything that Logan and I discussed in the show notes, as well as a transcript of our entire interview on my website, which is lightwatkins.com/tunnel. While you're there, please make sure to sign up for my daily dose of inspiration e-mail, which is short and sweet daily inspirational messages that you'll get directly from me each morning. If you have any feedback or suggestions, feel free to text to me directly at 323-405-9166.

Awesome. Thanks again for listening and I'll see you next week with a new conversation from the end of the tunnel.

[END]