



The Remarkable People Podcast Season 1 Episode 14 The Danny Covey Story with your host David Pasqualone

[00:00:00] **David Pasqualone, Host:** [00:00:00] Hello friends. This is Dave Pasqualone with The Remarkable People Podcast. Season one episode 14. The Danny Covey story!

Show Intro/Outro Reel: [00:00:09] the remarkable people podcast. Check it out.

the remarkable people podcast. Listen, do repeat for life.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:00:32] Hey Danny, what's going on, buddy?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:00:34] Not too much. Dave, how have you been doing,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:00:36] man, I've been doing great and I am so happy to be here with you today. It's been too long.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:00:43] You wee. I had hair the last time we were together. Yeah.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:00:49] Yeah. And just so listeners know, Danny and I went to college together down in Pensacola, and Danny is a remarkable guy.

He is someone that everybody loves. You can't not love Danny. And he is Uber talented. I remember sitting, you remember sitting in the commons that

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:01:07] day? I sure do.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:01:08] I was telling you about one of my business ideas and you sat there and sketched it out real quick. And do you know I still have this right here in my office to this day.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:01:19] Wow. So you didn't, you didn't get the tattoo? Nope.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:01:22] Nope. Did not get the tattoo. Did

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:01:23] not get the tattoo, but check it out.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:01:25] I still have it. So that is your art.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:01:27] Wow.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:01:28] And the reason why I keep it is because it inspires me. That was a great idea that I never acted on. And I had somebody as talented as Danny helping me out with the graphics and getting the logo ready.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

And you know what a good idea you don't act

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:01:41] on is about it. Yeah. Toilet paper, man.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:01:46] But you, you delivered. So I keep that on my wall to remind me that, Hey buddy, you got the best idea in the world. It doesn't count unless you use it.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:01:52] Wow. That's awesome.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:01:55] Oh man. But so the listener, so you guys know who Danny is.

He's a design and marketing and video guru, and this guy has creativity just oozing out of him. when it comes to anything creative, digital, especially if you're looking for that fun aspect. Talk to Danny. Danny. I will put a link in the show notes. He's up in Canada. Don't hold that against them, but Hey,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:02:21] no, not so bad.

Hey,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:02:23] I know you guys are awesome and hockey number one sport, right?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:02:27] Yes, sir.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:02:28] That's right. Got the Bruins. Who was your team?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:02:31] the sends, but they're not doing so well this year.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:02:34] That's all right. You can still love them,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:02:35] man. They try, but

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:02:37] it just makes the Bruins life better.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:02:39] yeah. For now. For now.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:02:41] For now.

All right, man. But anyways, so Danny's up in Canada and he's working for a company doing the graphic design and video full time. And he has a remarkable story. And we talked about this in college. And it was remarkable back then, but now it's continued, you know, fast forward 25 30 years later, and we are now grown men with children graduating, and it's just crazy.

so Danny, if you won't mind, let's just share your story with the world.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:03:15] All right. Yeah, this goes back quite a ways. I was born with a congenital heart defect, and so, at the time my parents didn't know and I was about, I don't know, two years old.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

And I started passing out and my parents took me to a doctor and, you know, the doctor checked me over and didn't think there was anything too serious.

My parents though, were not satisfied. You know, the answers were found. So they actually took me to 11 different doctors and the 11th doctor, put a stethoscope on my chest. He listened, and then he said, get him to sick kids hospital in Toronto. SickKids hospital is a world renowned hospital for children.

And so it turned out I had major problems with my aortic valve and my mitral valve. And the problems were serious enough that, the surgery at the time was very experimental and, I was given about a 20% chance to live. So, obviously I don't remember that, but I really look at that time as being. A huge trial, a huge ordeal for my parents.

they flew across the country. we did the surgery and my parents prayed, and it was truly a miracle. obviously I survived. Spoiler alert, but they do. Right. Yeah. But, I mean, even that was amazing. And I remember going up saying, you know, I had these scars in different places and I'm like, what are these?

And so I, [00:05:00] I didn't even know, but I learned. And so I had a period of time for several years where, my health was good, but, I could never, really Excel in sports or do sports seriously. Dave, the last time I did gym class was. Third grade. Oh wow. I've never done gym since third grade,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:05:23] so was like seven years ago.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:05:25] Yeah. Like, well, eight ish. It's leaf years coming up. Alright.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:05:30] But I'm being sarcastic,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:05:33] so, but yeah, I, when I got to be around, eight, again, I started getting dizzy. I was passing out. I started to go into congestive heart failure. I started putting on weight and it was all fluids building around my heart, and I needed a surgery again on my aortic valve.

so this surgery, I remember as a eight year old kid being faced with, you know, really the reality of this is a major surgery and it's a, it's going to be a big ordeal. And just, I don't want to say mentally, but praying, but just realize, you know, you could potentially die from this and I think

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:06:17] you are eight years old,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:06:18] eight years old now.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:06:19] What was your worldview at this point? Did you, were you a Christian? Was your family a Christian?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:06:23] Yeah, I should back up. My dad's a retired Baptist pastor now. So I drove. I grew up in a Christian home. my parents were extremely supportive. they were with me in every surgery. And, Very, very supportive, very encouraging.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

And so, they were, they were with me through this and we went through it. And so in the fall of 1985, I had surgery and it was to fix my aortic valve. And it's still, the surgery. It was successful at the time. basically my aorta was, missing a leaflet and it was small. And so every surgery they would try and enlarge the size of it, and then it would shrink back down.

So I had surgery at eight and it was successful, and I really felt like, okay, this is done. And then fast forward to 14, start running into trouble again, and it's the same valve. And, I start to experience some of the same symptoms of passing out and congestive heart failure. So this time, the, the doctors, the cardiologist want to put in an artificial valve.

And you may remember this from college, Dave,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:07:48] I remember teasing you all the time. No. And mean, but we'd all tease you. You tease yourself.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:07:52] Yeah. Yeah. This is my party trick. So they've put in, they put in an artificial valve that was plastic and it would tick like a watch. Yep. It's still ticks. It's a, as long as it doesn't stop, I'm good.

But that surgery again, I remember I'm in the, the, the operating room. And I'm waiting to be, you know, for them to start, you know, put me to sleep. And I remember I'm reading, you remember WWF? I'm really at WWF magazine,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:08:25] wildlife foundation. No, just kidding.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:08:27] The other WWF

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:08:28] world wrestling Federation back there.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:08:30] So I remember I'm reading a WWF wrestling magazine, and it hit me. This could be the last thing I ever read. And then I'm thinking, do I. Do I know where I'm going, if I'm dead in a few minutes. If I were to pass away, like am I positive? I know where I'm going and I, it sounds morbid, but I think it's good in a way, just to be confronted with the reality of that, to have that certainty.

And I remember thinking at the time, you know what I do. I have peace. I am comfortable. I know my sins are forgiven. I know I'm going to heaven. And so they did the surgery and that surgery, was a major, major surgery that almost I almost died from. Okay. So. I had severe bleeding that wouldn't stop.

The valve was put in. it worked, but there was excessive bleeding. And so I feel like that surgery, especially, we had a prayer chains going at my church. and really I'm alive because people prayed. Amen. So it was touch or go for a few days, and then I, the bleeding stopped and I started to recover.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

And then, I don't know if I should say naively, but I thought that was the end of it. So I've had up to that [00:10:00] point, that was my third open heart surgery and the valve is working. My health is good and it's good.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:10:09] And let, let's pause here quickly if you

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:10:10] don't mind.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:10:13] A lot of our listeners have gone through similar.

Tragedy or challenges or hardships or, or they've watched. And there really is two sides to this cause I can't imagine. I mean that's a whole other interview with your parents, what they're going through watching this. And then there's the part of what you're going through and being on the table and watching some of the table.

It's two different experiences, but. When you said that you had that assurance and you could go into surgery at 13 I want you to talk about that a little bit because I know when I was, I think we talked in college when I was 18 I was sick for years and they found a tumor in my head the size of an orange.

Right. Oh, wow. And even though obviously we were both scared going into surgery, if you're out there listening, you know the Bible, when you hear people talk about a peace that passes all understanding. It's not that we weren't a little like, wow, we're going to do surgery. We may die, but it really was, and I don't want to speak for you, Dean, but it sounds like it.

If I died, I was okay. I really had a peace and I was ready for it, and it was actually a little excited. Well, I go through all these years of trash and crap and struggle right when he was going to go be with God. But it talk about that a little bit because there is a hope, like you're 13 years old and you're maybe facing death, but you're okay with it.

How did you get to that point? So anyone else listening. Who may be there right now and going into surgery this week? How can they handle that?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:11:40] I've got, I, I'd say a couple of ways. I feel like sometimes things come across your path and. We feel like we can handle them. So if I got a bill for, I don't know, \$5,000 I would say, ah, how am I gonna?

How am I going to come up with the money for this? Or what am I going to have to move around? And so I'm looking at me trying to handle this problem. If I got a bill for \$500,000 I'm not losing any sleep over it because it's so far beyond me. That I can't even wrap my head around it. That's what surgery was for me.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

It was this huge thing that if I knew, I took that mantle of worrying about it, of stressing about it, something that is completely out of my control. I think I would, I don't know if I'd go insane, but it would have been a massive, massive, massive stress. So I kind of felt like this was such a huge thing to find out.

Oh, by the way, you're having a surgery, it's extremely serious. We hope you'll come through. Okay. And how do you process that? I had to give that to God. I had to take whatever worry I would have. And give it to him because it was just too far beyond me.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:13:01] So you compartmentalize, this is what I can control.

This is what I can't control. You gave all that to God. And I mean, for you, me, anybody in the hospital bed, what can we control?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:13:13] Your attitude

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:13:15] or, Oh, go ahead.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:13:16] Yeah, I was just gonna say like that's what it's really shown me. The, the illusion of control. Like we think we're moving chess pieces around on the board, but,

I mean, we're doing such modest things, but God is doing so much more, and I may think I have control over things, but do I? I don't. The other thing, the other thing I was going to mention with that too is it really forced a reality in my Christian walk because we can say we trust God. We can say. I have faith, but it's another thing to act it out through your actions.

And so I would say definitely, when you're eight, when I was eight, I understood that, certainly, but when I'm 14, now having surgery, it's okay. What do I really believe? Not what, what's taught at my parents' church? What does my family believe? What do I believe? Because this will directly impact me. So I, for me, it really personalize my actions.

And I, I had to say, look, God, you're not my parents. God, you're my God and I'm gonna trust you to get me through this.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:14:27] And then, okay, thank you Danny. So now you're 13 you're going into this surgery. You have tons. Not only did you wake up from the surgery, but you got tons of bleeding, but after a few days, man, praise God, it's stabilized.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:14:43] Yes. Up there. So. it was, it was an adjustment. And I say it was an adjustment because, my aortic valve was removed and they put an artificial valve in and the doctors actually put an adult sized valve into my heart [00:15:00] anticipating that I would grow into it so that I wouldn't need future surgeries.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

And at the time. the longest they'd had a valve last was 12 years. So the message that came to me was, yeah, it, everything went great so far, they've lasted 12 years. We expect that they'll last much longer. And so it tipped loud. And so if I'm walking or if I'm running, it's like I hear it. I don't even need to feel for my pulse.

I can just count and listen. And I would say that that chapter is closed. And I almost felt like in a way, that book, that that surgery book closed. and I remember telling my parents, you know what? I feel like this cloud is lifted. And I kinda, you know, 14 turned into 15. Then I'm looking at college and then, I'm starting to realize, Hey, I can actually do things now.

Like it's always been a dream of mine to get into martial arts. And my cardiologist, every doctor I've ever stood in front of us said, there's no way. And I said, but what if, but what if. So in, in high school I did get into a karate a bit, but I could never do tournaments. I couldn't take direct impacts to the chest, that kind of thing, but it really seemed like, Hey, that that chapter, that era of my life was over.

I'm going into college. That's where I meet. This guy named Dave. I don't actually remember meeting you. I just remember you were just kind of there. I can't, I think back to a day like, hi, I'm Dave. I'm Danny. No,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:16:43] w we in the same collegian may

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:16:45] think I sure was.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:16:48] Yeah. Yeah. I think that's how we met. And then I hire me and you, I was engineering the first year, so I didn't know anybody except my little crew in engineering.

I still talk to some of that. Yeah. but. I think you and I met through the collegian. I just remember hanging out with you in the commons and you were like one of my favorite people in the world to hang out with. Cause it was just relaxing and fun and we didn't have to worry about calculations and different statics and dynamics.

It was just like, let's laugh together and have fun.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:17:17] Yeah. Yeah. So

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:17:18] nothing ever bad. Good stuff.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:17:20] I'll do memories. I remember as a seeing a lot less of you when Sarah came along, but Hey,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:17:24] you too. With Carly. It's a natural progression of life. My friend, just, you know, those are our wives. So Carly and I actually, you know what?

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

That's actually true. Carly and I hung out, I think at one point more than you and I did. Yeah. Because we all had a mutual friend group. And your classes and our classes kept us separate. So while Carly was waiting for you and I, and I was waiting for Sarah, we'd hang out a lot actually for

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:17:48] a while. Yeah.

Cause she was like, how do you know Dave? I'm like, Oh, I know Dave.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:17:53] So that's awesome. So let's get back to your story. Everybody's like, I want to hear about Danny.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:17:58] Well, no, it was weird. It was, it really felt like that era of my life was over with as the surgeries. And so we're college, we're getting our master's degree in art.

Carly and I get married, we moved back to Ottawa. You know, we're establishing a family here and it's done like that. Time has done. And I remember walking with Carly, I don't know, maybe three or four, well, about four years ago. And we were just kinda talking and rope walking. And I said, you know what? I look at, my parents.

And my dad, my mom, they've been through so many different things in life, and I was just kinda reminiscing a bit. And I remember saying to her, you know what? I think we're kind of naive if we think we're just going to eke out the next 20 years of our life and nothing's going to happen. And so she's like, yeah, you know, I, I agree.

So, I notice, Probably about six months after that conversation, this was back in 2016 I started to get some bruising and I didn't think anything of it. I started jujitsu a few years ago at my man. My doctor, yeah, my doctors weren't too happy, but I said, look, no tournament's but everything else. And they're like, okay.

So I started getting some bruising and I thought, Oh, that's kinda odd. Must be training too hard. Well then I started to get a lot of bruising. And then I'm counting like 17 bruises everywhere and I'm like, something's going on. So I'm noticing all these bruises and because I'm taking, because I, I have an artificial valve, I have to take blood thinners and I'm taking my blood thinners one day and I'm pouring out the pills and I look at the dosage.

I'm like, that doesn't look right. And the pharmacy had made a mistake on my prescription. And [00:20:00] so van for about a month, I had been taking a double dose of blood thinners. And so it's very serious because I'm thinking, man, if I cut myself, I'm in a car accident, I'm going to bleed to death in like two minutes.

Oh yeah. So I stopped training. I saw my doctor, he got that under control, but that kinda kick started a chain of events. He said, look. Let's get a CT scan done of your heart, just to make sure everything's

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

good. And you know, we look at things as accidents, but I had the CT scan done, and I mean, I go every year for a checkup and they're always checking my, my heart to make sure everything looks good.

Well, one angle has always been kind of fuzzy. And solar, checking it again and they say, you know what, it's fuzzy. We're going to, we're going to really investigate to see what's going on here. Because of that, they look at my aortic arch is enlarged, like massively enlarged. Oh wow. And they didn't pick up on it.

They don't know how long it was like that. And so at the time, I'm training for a black belt and jujitsu and. It's really hitting me. You know, if this had not happened, if the pharmacy had not made this mistake, I would have been training, my aorta would have burst and I would have dropped dead. Yup. And it wasn't the events at the time.

It's when you reflect back on them and you, and I said, wow, like I came really close to dying here. So, and what a great

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:21:44] perspective you have to, because some people who said, man, that guy messed up, now I'm sick and blah, blah, blah, blah, and now I'm going to Sue them when really. Look over the blessing and turn to,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:21:55] well, it's funny you say that because the pharmacy was terrified that I was going to Sue them.

And, I talked to my doctor and he says, look, you haven't been hospitalized. You haven't, you haven't missed any work. So he says, I wouldn't pursue it, but I did go to them after all this. And I, I found the lady in charge of the pharmacy and I said, look, I want you to know because of this error my doctors did testing that found my aorta arches and larged and I'm going to have surgery to fix it.

If this had not happened, I would be dead. And I want you to know God used this mistake. He used you to help keep me alive. And she was almost in tears. Yeah. She was over. Not what she was expecting. She's expecting, you know, something far different. But I do look at it, you know, we would look at that and say, how dare they, but I'm looking at saying, God, thank you.

Thank you. And so my aorta was very enlarged. I had to stop anything that would, aggravate it. And so, again, this. Time in my life. This book is reopening another chapter of another surgery, and I'd been without surgeries for man, almost 20 years. It was 1880 17 years without surgery or no. How old are you at this point?

27 years. So

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:23:22] you're 35 at this point. How old are you?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:23:24] No.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:23:25] well at the time of the surgery, not right

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:23:26] now. At the time of the surgery, I was 41

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:23:30] 41

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:23:30] okay. So I'm 43 now. but I remember going back into surgery and it's so same things again. Hey, I could be dead in a few minutes. How do I feel about this? And you talk about a piece, and that's one thing, Carla and I, and this is different because it's not just me going through this with my parents now it's my family.

You know, my wife, my kids, my kids are, you know, young teens now.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:23:58] Yeah.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:23:59] And. It was a trial for our family for sure. And so I had actually, in the months leading up to the surgery, I had written each of them a note saying, you know, just kind of pouring out my heart. Like, if anything ever happens to me, I want you to read this note.

And I did that for each of the kids. And he did that with Carly. I got all of our financial information ready. The will already all of that ready. So that. If something happened, you know what they were, they were taken care of.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:24:30] And isn't that, talk about that for a second because that's hard, man. I've had to do that and talk about just, it's one of those things that you're being responsible and you know, it's the right thing to do and there's a comfort in it.

But there's also this like E how did you get through just that, cause you know, I look at statistics, you want me to, people all die and they push it off, push it off, and then it's a nightmare for the family afterwards cause everything's . Core and probate and argument, it's really important to have your affairs in order.

So [00:25:00] talking about that a little bit to the listener, and maybe even how to get through that, like mentally, I don't want to, but how did you make it happen?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:25:06] So, at the time, this was 2017, my surgery was scheduled for March. And so the December before that, December, 2016, we had a family friend who had a stroke.

And he's in the hospital trying to give her all the banking passwords, give his wife all the banking passwords. He's trying to, you know, Oh, this is there and this account is here. And I remember hearing that thinking, I am not doing that. I'm going to have all this ready. So in a way, it felt like there's homework I gotta do before I'm ready for this big test.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

But, My, I will say at that time, it really made my emotions raw. Like I cried, I don't know how many times in the months leading up, and it wasn't fear. It was, I don't know if it was just emotion, but I remember like, okay, I want to, what do I say to my kids? You, you, I mean, you have kids. What would you say to them?

What would you. Want to say to them that you would want them to know 10 years from now, like if this is your final message. And so man, I struggled with, what do I say to my kids? What message do I want them do I want to leave them with?

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:26:28] Yeah, it's such a fine line too. So hard.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:26:31] And I found those notes really difficult.

And the one for Carly was actually the easiest because. You know, we've, we've kept a close relationship. I didn't really feel like, well, this stuff I gotta tell you that you don't know. There was none of that. It was, you know, you know where we stand. And so I actually found her note to be the easiest. So I feel like I am trusting God and praying that, you know, the surgery will go well, but I'm also making plans so that in the off chance something didn't.

They will not be left hanging. So I felt home. It was a responsibility. I felt that I needed to do this and just for her peace of mind, for my peace of mind. And once I did that, I finished that, I don't know, a couple months before my surgery in January and I had peace. I'm like, okay, I'm done. It's like you're studying for a test.

You know, you do what you need to do. That's done. And then I can go through this. And it was again, this was different because for me, it was something very familiar. I've had multiple surgeries, but for my wife, Carly and my kids, this is brand new.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:27:53] Yeah. Yup. And there's nothing you can do and you're just watching them. No wonder and fear and suffer.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:27:59] Yeah. So in some ways it's like, you know, I told Carl, I said, okay, this is going to happen then this, then this and this, and the doctors are going to do this.

Like I, I'm seeing it all. Boom, boom, boom, boom. Here's what's going to happen. But to her, it's all a new experience. Yeah. And that's when it's really hit me as a dad. Now. I understand way better what my parents went through where, you know, when I was younger I thought, well, I just had the surgery and you know, I got through it.

Now can I imagine my kids going through that? No way. Like I would go through surgery a hundred times before. I'd want to see them go through that. So my perspective as a father was very different going through it this time.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:28:46] How old were your kids at that point?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:28:49] They would have been roughly 15 no, I'm sorry.

They would have been 1311 and nine so

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:29:03] they were aware and they know, they knew what was going on. It wasn't like. Dad's having surgery and he's coming back with ice cream. You know, everything, everything's be fine. They know the severity of it.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:29:13] No. And even even how we handled it, when I found out I was gonna need surgery, I, we talked and do we handle this privately?

Do we go make it more public? And I really felt, you know what? I want to go as public with this as I, as I, as I reasonably can, because people are watching. And I firmly believe, I still believe this, that there is purpose in suffering. There was a reason why we go through things and maybe what I go through will help somebody else and what they're going through.

So the months leading up to the surgery, I would say I was very emotional, but I was calm. [00:30:00] and I was confident about where I was going, and it was the same time. I'm being wheeled into the operating room. I'm joking with the doctors. you know, I'm asking them, can you do a hair transplant, make, you know, give me some hair while you're at it.

But what the surgery was to do, they were going to replace my aortic arch and they were gonna replace my aortic valve and give me one like brand new plastic piece. And I'm like, this sounds cool. but what happened when they opened me up is they actually found it ended up being an emergency surgery.

Okay. And so what they found,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:30:36] it wasn't complicated enough, right?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:30:38] Yeah, it was, it was, it

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:30:40] wasn't complicated enough. Let's just throw another variable in there.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:30:43] Yeah. So they, they had their plan. but what had happened is my Arabic arch had burst. And so when they've opened me up, it's burst and it's bleeding.

And it turned into like, okay, this is an emergency. We're just going to try and salvage what we can do. And you hear about it in the news from time to time. People with aortic aneurysms, I mean, it bursts and you've got a few minutes and you're dead.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:31:10] Yeah. I think, didn't John right or die that way?

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:31:12] John Ritter?

Alan Thicke was another one that passed away.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:31:15] Oh yeah. I forgot about him. Yeah.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:31:17] So. It was an emergency surgery and it was extremely touch or go for several days. I was kept, asleep for several days after the surgery, just for additional time to recover. But when I woke up, I had no idea any of this had happened.

But, this surgery more than. Any of the others has really, impacted me because you realize, man, it's not just, you came close to dying once or twice, but this is the third time. And this was really serious. And this really shook us as a family because this is a really hard thing to go through. And, but we got, but God brought us through it.

And so. I recovered. We actually had a few other things, as I'm recovering, that happened, you know, heart surgery is one thing, but, I had some, other issues that went on my, my car died. I wasn't even allowed to drive for 10 weeks, but my car died. Well, it's sitting in the driveway. So that happened.

there is a mix up with our employment insurance. So I went about 15 weeks with no income. one of my, part, one of my part time jobs that I was working, they, they had to let me go. So it was all these things. It wasn't just the heart surgery, it was multiple things hitting us as a family. But I will say what that time really taught me is you can trust God when you go through very difficult things, and I really feel like, you know, God took the safety net away and can you trust him when there's no safety net?

Yes,

man.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:33:12] Okay. You and I know and have experienced and probably will continue to experience the threshold of us being stretched to the point where we're terrified and like, God, how's this gonna work? And then he comes through. But for our listeners, we always talk about what are the problems and then what are the practical steps, how you solve that problem.

So on your side as on our side, what are the things you did. You're physically recovering a major recovery. This isn't even like you broke your arm and this is serious.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:33:47] Yeah.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:33:48] You're worried about income. You worry about providing for your family. You're worried still, you know, am I going to make it or not?

Am I going to walk my daughter down the aisle? You know, lot of stuff going through your head. So how do you go from being in bed watching all these financial burdens? Your car is dead year. Jobs are being

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

lost. No income, 1515 weeks. How do you go from there where you're getting through each day in peace to recover?

Talk about that to the listener.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:34:16] One word. And that is walk,

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:34:20] walk, and my leg not stop.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:34:22] Yeah. Go. And what I mean by that is, everything that I did came to a grinding halt. Everything. And so. I had to learn to walk and walking as something you do slowly. It's something that's measured. It's not a run, it's not a sprint, it's just a walk.

So what that meant was as part of my recovery, if the doctors say, do this, guess what? I do exactly what they say. If, if they say walk 10 minutes today, then I'm going to walk 10 minutes that day. If the problem that we're [00:35:00] facing is not directly related to that day, it's not today's problem. I can focus on this, not things way off in the distance.

and so that's what we learned to do. And

we were surrounded by people that were extremely supportive and. It's, it sounds, I don't know if it sounds silly, but it was hard to be on the receiving end of people's generosity where people would come in and do things. People would come in and bring meals or some people, you know, gave us money or some people just did things around mine.

Someone came by my house and mowed the lawn because I couldn't do it. My son was at school. People did things and it's, I found that really hard to accept that generosity from others. Because, no, I don't, I don't need your help. I can, you know, I'll be okay. But no, letting people come into your life and do things to be a blessing.

That was huge. And it was a, I look back on and I'm thinking that's, that's all humility. That's just having a humble attitude. Letting people help you, admitting you need, you have needs, and letting people help you. But

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:36:15] really it was zeros. Great joy. I'm sure they were getting, Oh, helping you. It wasn't a burden to them.

They were thankful. Everybody loves you, man. And they want to help. And that's what we're here for. Right. Help each other. Love each other.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:36:25] Yeah. And that's why, like if I knew somebody had a need, I wouldn't think twice, but if they said, no, I don't want your help, they're robbing me of a blessing that I can show to them.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

So it was, it was, it was very different being on the receiving end of that. But, I dunno. When you're sick like that, your world gets very small. And what I mean by that is your world becomes about you and what time you have to take your pain medication, what time you have to walk, what time you have to sleep your world is you and am I thinking about what I have to do at work?

No. Am I thinking about all these other things? No. But, so my world got very small and it forced me just to really focus on what's important, you know? And at that time with my kids, that time with my, my wife Carly, that's important. Being with them is important. And it's, I'm going to say something. It sounds incredibly morbid, but it's not.

It's something that's really stuck with me. What makes our time special with the people that we have in our life is that it's limited. I have, I'm not guaranteed I'm going to live another 2030 40 years. What makes my time special with my kids right now. Well, I better spend time with them because we don't know.

Nothing's guaranteed. So how you spend your time, what you do, it matters because you're not guaranteed.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:38:06] Yeah. And even if someone is perfect health, they've never had an issue. They get going in a car accident today, they can go and have something completely September 11th I don't want to forgive a bad date.

You know how many people die? They just went to work like everything was normal. So yeah, what you're saying is 100% biblical. 100% true, man. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah, because what really does matter, you know, God and other people,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:38:34] you know, so that, that's really hit home for me. But where the walking comes in, it's, it's I, for me personally, of I've just had to slow life down.

I was very, busy doing a lot of different things that I've just had to cut out. And I don't even like the word busy, Dave. I like the word full, full. So I hate saying, Oh sure, we can always busy. Well, it was full. I was doing things, but they were intentional things that I wanted to do. And so. since since I've had surgery, I've really slowed down what I do and I've learned to walk physically.

I still walk every single day that the hospital, as part of my recovery told me, you got to walk every day. And I'm doing that every day. If I'm not doing jujitsu. Or if I'm not, running or swimming or something else, I am walking every day and that's something that I've kept. And that time to walk is just a time to reflect.

It's a time to pray. It's a time to listen to music. It's a time to listen to your podcast. It's a, it's just a time just to really slow things down.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:39:54] Talk about that more. Because when we were kids, and you know when we're young, we're like, why aren't people [00:40:00] walking on? What the heck you're going to get exercise walking around and breaking a sweat.

But the truth is, man, I feel the same way you do when I walk. It's not like marathon Olympic speed walking. No, it's not breaking a sweat a lot of times. But what is what, describe the magic of walking cause it really is.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:40:18] Oh, aye. Aye. Aye. Aye. I say it it walking is not from my body. It's for my brain. Yeah.

And the beauty of it is, self care is an idea that's become very popular in the past few years. It's a form of self care. It's a time to say, look, yeah, life is extremely busy. I need time to reflect. I need time to just think through things. Or it's my time to talk with God. It's just kind of. It's recess break, you know?

Yeah. But the value I've found for me is, I've been able to invite a lot of people to walk with me, and that's a great time just to share your faith, just to catch up to people, to show them you care. There's times now when if I have a meeting, I'll say, Hey, let's walk. And we do a walk through the same thing.

I love it.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:41:10] I do too. And you get more accomplished.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:41:12] Yes.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:41:13] I really believe there's an association between physically moving and how your brain flows.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:41:17] Yeah. So that that walking has become huge. I've started a walking group in my area and I'll have people join me. I've started a walking group at work and so 10 o'clock every morning they go out and

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:41:31] you're like the forest Gump without the hair.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:41:33] Yeah.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:41:35] They go cross country. We'll make you a tee shirt that says walk and we'll go across country. The Andy Kovi not Covey.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:41:41] Not covered. Yeah. So, but the walking, yeah, that's, that's something, it's like, I really treasure that time and it's a time just to focus on other people if they're with me and just listen, like I don't need to talk, just talk to me.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

And it's been incredible. There's people that have walked with me that I wouldn't normally spend time with or interact with in my normal life, but we're together and I'm listening and we're doing that and it's amazing. And I, I love it. Absolutely love it. Oh, that's

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:42:15] great man. And that's what I was going to ask, cause a lot of people were ill right now, some people have never been athletic.

Some people who aren't were super athletic and they're like, why? And I can't do that. So they just sit there and kind of waste away. But man, I don't want to speak for you, but if you agree with this, if you don't just say it, but I think if you can get up and literally walked down the hall and that's all you can do, do it.

Yeah. And then keep doing that until you can walk up and down the hall twice. If you can go and do a quarter mile in your neighborhood, do a quarter mile in your neighborhood and then build it up. I'm a firm believer and just do what you can and push yourself just a little bit. I'm not saying harm yourself, but always push yourself cause you have some growth.

Would you agree with that?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:42:56] Absolutely. my first walk was two minutes, two minutes. I basically, I was, I was, I could hardly move. Carly's holding my arm. We're walking down the road, the street, and she's like, there's your two minutes. We turn around and we come back. And I was so wiped out from that. I took like a two hour nap, but the next day it was six minutes.

And to where now, like I was doing like an hour and a half of walking a day, I've had to cut back a little bit. I do an hour just because of time. But I still need that time. And absolutely, if you, if you can only do two minutes, do two minutes make it a habit. And then once you do two minutes, guess what you're going to say, I can do four, I can do 10 I can do 20 it's gonna it's gonna compound over time.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:43:53] Yeah. And the other thing too, if you're listening, when you're walking, you have that time to think. You have that time to pray, to meditate, however you, whatever your worldview is. But I'll listen to content like I'll listen to, sometimes I'll listen to the Bible on audio. Sometimes I'll listen to a motivational message.

Sometimes I've listened to books on, you know, through audible or a service like that. podcasts, huge podcast, man. I'm not saying that, Hey wa the remarkable people podcasts, but you know, podcasts, whatever. I was going to help you grow. but that. Takes my mind off it where I'm not even thinking about it and I tend to go further without even trying.

Is that how you are?

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:44:35] Absolutely. Like if I'm listening to a two hour podcast on something, I don't care what my distance is. I'm walking until I finish this podcast, so that might turn into a two hour walk, but Hey, I just filled my mind with these things. That's, that's the other part I should, I should talk about is.

One of the walks I was doing, like it starts to rain. [00:45:00] I'm feeling sorry for myself. I can barely walk and I'm thinking like I want to get back into jujitsu someday, but I can barely lift my arms. So I'm kind of feeling sorry for myself, but that time that I walk is changing my focus. It's not on me. If I'm at home in a bed, my focus is entirely on me.

If I'm out. It's changing what I'm looking at. Literally like I'm looking at trees, I'm looking at squirrels, I'm looking at a path. I'm listening to something that literally changes my focus. So especially during that time, I really tried to fill my mind with things that would encourage me and things that would help me

And, even even getting back into. Jujitsu again, I just had the surgery and I had to wait about six to eight months to actually, I took almost a year off before I went back into it. Am I again, my cardiologist is like, you can't do this, so I'm literally showing him clips on YouTube. This is what we do.

He thinking, he thinks it's MMA, right? He thinks it's UFC. And I said, no, no, no. It's, it's in a controlled environment. So I'm showing him these videos and he's like, well, just be careful. Not happy, but you know, what's he gonna do?

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:46:19] You know what? Let's talk. Describe some people who are listening. We've, we must've dropped jujitsu's name 12 times and you know, even in college I was arrested uracil and I love wrestling and I didn't do, not in any way, I want to shame the wrestling community, but the best jujitsu people typically have a wrestling background.

But if I had to say to any listener, male, female, old, young, healthy, sick, jujitsu to me is the number one sport. It's so amazing in balance. Describe for the audience what you do too is and why for you it's the right sport and why it's benefits your life. Cause I know. Tons of people do jujitsu and the mat is the least amount of benefit in their life.

It bleeds over into every aspect of life. So talk to us about jujitsu. Forbid,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:47:15] jujitsu is the gentle art of putting people to sleep. No, that's not Khalid. But no, a jujitsu is really for me, it's drilling moose. Working through thinking through moves for a situation that probably will never happen, but it is training my mind to face life and what I'm going

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:47:49] to be kind of like trips.

You're thinking ahead, not just in the moment.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:47:52] So are the other way I've, I've talked about, it's like chess with your body. If they do this, I'm going to do this. If they try this move, then I'm going to. You know, do this and check me. You know, so

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:48:06] I, and you're 300 pounds sweaty guy on you.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:48:08] Yeah. Well, yeah.

Cheer Joe.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:48:12] No, no. That's one of the benefits that you do too. If you're listening, you can be 105 pounds wet and learn to properly defend yourself versus seriously six foot eight monster, and you can be confident doing so. It's, I mean, weight helps, size helps, strength helps. But I think the original, like practitioners in the Gracie family,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:48:31] yes.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:48:32] I don't think the gentleman could ever even do a pull up in his whole life and he'd have contest fighting every martial art in the world and he'd dominate every time.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:48:42] Jujitsu is actually a big part of my recovery, even when I couldn't do it, because what I would do, I would walk to the dojo and I would just sit and watch.

And even the strain of moving my arms of stretching hurts so bad that I would just in my mind, watch them, watch the moves and try and understand it in my mind because it's not just, somebody throws a punch and you react and do it. You're flowing through a series of moves in your mind and you want it to be so drilled that you just do it without thinking.

So I find there's a massive. Mental component to it. There's a physical component and I don't, I don't know if I would say there's a spiritual component, but there's a component where you feel beaten down. Like there's days you train and you're getting submitted and tapped and choked and you're like, what am I doing here?

but you come back and maybe the next day it happens a little bit less, or maybe in two days your. Submitting somebody once. So it's a constant mirror in a way of what's my resolve? Am I just going to quit when things get [00:50:00] difficult or am I gonna work through it? Be patient and continue to train. And so a lot of times, even when I couldn't train, I would just watch and as I'm recovering.

I'm thinking, okay, maybe I can go back in the dojo. So I, one of my training partners, I'm like, okay, rubber hits the road, throw me. I got to see how it feels. I got to make sure nothing's going to break. Just throw me and I land. I'm like, okay, that's okay. Nothing hurts. Okay, I'm going to throw you can I do it?

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

And that's kind of how I eased back into, it's just kind of testing the waters a little bit, getting the green light from my doctors, of course. But then. Walking through it. And it's funny, even my parents, you know, after I'd had surgery, they said, well, you're, you're a Brown belt. That's good enough. Good job.

You know, nobody could do what you've done. And I said, well, you don't, you don't dry three quarters of the way to your destination, then turn back and you're proud of how far you went. Nice. But about 20 months after I had my open heart surgery. I received my black belt.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:51:12] Congratulations buddy,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:51:14] and I'll never forget my, my dad wrote me and he says.

We're not happy about it, but your mother and I are very proud of you. So

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:51:25] I want to point out, Danny, congratulations. That's a huge accomplishment in a legit jujitsu environment. A black belt is not something that's handed out. It's not like, I don't want to bash any disciplines, but it's not like a lot of other disciplines where you just show up, you pay your monthly dues, and after a certain amount of time you get it or pass this test and do this form.

A jujitsu is pretty intense. If you're a Brown belt, that's a real deal. That's not somebody you want to get in a conflict with, but to go to that black belt, black belt level, you're ugly, man, but you're dangerous.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:51:58] It was

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:51:59] correct.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:51:59] It was. Honestly, it was something that I prayed a lot about and. I honestly didn't know if I could do because of what it takes.

And I'm, you know, if you work hard to grapple, I'm working twice as hard because I got a bad heart. And so the year leading up to getting my black belt, I'm thinking, can I actually do this? Do I have it within me? You know, my heart can only go so far. You know, I've been told like, you push your heart, but there's a certain point you don't push past.

So can I do it? And so, yeah, it was, it was a, it was a personal challenge and it was exciting to see it, you know, just to get through it and just be like, wow, look what liquid God helped me do. It's amazing.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:52:49] And jujitsu is one of those sports you can continue to do til you're 80 Oh yeah. I ever have to stop.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:52:53] Yeah. I'm training for my second degree now. It's a, so it's exciting, but again, it's, it's new. You're constant learning. It's, it's frustrating at times. It's discouraging at times, but

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

then when you get it, it's so exciting. When you finally get something that you've been working on. And I like what my, he's our Sheehan.

I like what he said. He said, you don't earn a black belt. You don't become a black belt. He said, you are a black belt. He says it's something that you, it's a mantle. You become. And, and it's, it's true because there's a whole mindset that goes into it. There's a whole physical training and mental train that goes into it.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:53:32] And how long total from the first day of jujitsu till today, how long have you been practicing?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:53:38] Oh, probably, let's say close to seven, seven years. Almost eight years.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:53:45] Wow. So for any human, that's a fast transition. Seven years in jujitsu is quick to get a black belt. So Danny, you're a stud man. Well, you're doing it with.

With twice, three times the challenge, and you're making it happen. I'm proud of you.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:53:59] Yeah. And it's, it's, it's been very, it's been a very good thing to do. I haven't really talked much about this, but with this surgery, because it was an emergency surgery, and I was without blood or oxygen for about nine minutes during surgery.

it's left me with a few. Challenges. I will say that there was a bit of brain trauma that I had, so I've noticed things like, you know, I'm forgetting more, or I get lost when I go to work. That kind of thing, where now I've had to really back up and say, Whoa, this, this is something I know it's new. I never dreamed, you know, I'd be having a cognitive challenges like this.

And you know, people kind of joke and say, well, you're just part of age, but it's, it's a direct result of my surgery. But I find even the jujitsu training where it's demanding you mentally and then it's demanding physically, it's such a help.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:54:59] Yeah. [00:55:00] Keep doing it, man. Keep doing it. Any human, if we're not constantly growing and learning, our mind will deteriorate just like our body will.

And you're a smart man, dude. Speaking of smart. Let's talk about our sponsor today. Squad cast. If you are in the podcasting world, chances are you've heard of squad cast, but you may not know exactly what they do differently than other solutions out there. Well, I'm going to tell you why I love squad cast.

Actually, I'm only going to give you two reasons today why I love squad cast, but they're big ones. The number one reason why I love squad cast is this, as I'm recording myself in Pensacola, Florida, and my guests anywhere around the world. It is taking the information straight to my hard drive, and when the

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

internet is strong, it sends up packets every nine seconds on my side and my guests side to make sure the quality is there and safe in the cloud.

However, if the bandwidth fails or there's some kind of interruption in the force. Then what happens is squad cast continues. Unlike other solutions out there, squad cast continues to record to your hard drive until it can safely and with high quality, bring it back to the cloud. So if you're interviewing a guest or you're being interviewed, there is never a loss in the conversation.

You just keep going and that the end boom. Magically, it appears two channels of audio with all of your information perfectly intact. So that's the number one reason why I love squad cast and close behind, and actually maybe even ahead, is number two, the customer service. I'm serious. Probably some of the best customer service I've received from any type of company in years at squad cast.

These guys are there. They're always trying to grow and improve, but they have a youth centered philosophy where they look at you as the podcast or in what you need to grow, and they're. Working tirelessly to help you succeed. So check out squad cast. You can look in the show notes, get a special discount link from my site, or you can go to squad cast FM.

But either way, checkout squad casts if you're into podcasting or if you need to have conversations for legal reasons that are recorded, you will not be disappointed. This is Dave Pasch will alone with the remarkable people podcast. Now let's get back to Danny in this episode. Wow. Okay, so let's talk about one more thing too.

I mean, I don't want to, some people have no interest in martial arts,

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:57:43] but

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:57:45] man, for self defense, for every aspect, I'm a big, big fan of jujitsu and just, you know, there's no striking. You're not punching people in the face. You're not elbowing them. You're not kicking. Me and Danny are joking around, you know, you give each other hugs and jujitsu choke each other out, but there's no damage.

It's, it's awesome. I mean, you might sprain a couple of fingers, but you won't care. Cares a heel. that's what tapes for, right?

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:58:07] That's right.

David Pasqualone, Host: [00:58:09] But no, let's go back to this. Throughout everything that you've gone through, you're 43 now. There's been that constant foundation of hope in Christ. And on your side, there's been a constant, and I'm sure you've had ups and downs, but the thing that got you through is that positive mental attitude.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

You've always been a fun guy in a funny guy in the Bible says, straight up a Merry heart, do with good like a medicine. And you know, it talks about how if we're sad, it's like rottenness to the bones. So I know I'm not, I don't even have to ask you the question. I know that humor had a huge part in your recovery and existence and being here today.

So talk about humor. Talk about foreign, talk about how you see the world and how you use humor to heal.

Danny Covey, Guest: [00:59:01] Well, if you don't laugh, you cry like you. There's, there's situations where you could ball your eyes out. It's horrible. It's not pleasant or. You can, I don't want to say make light of it, but you can find a unique perspective on it.

And it's not that you're dismissing the situation, but, there were lots of times in the hospital where you're just suffering and you, it's not that you try and find humor in it, but you try to find something that can make you smile. I'll give you a good example. There was one night I was in the hospital.

In a lot of pain, couldn't sleep, and I'm laying in bed and I thought, I need to get up. I can't even get up by myself. So I had to call the nurse. She's like helping me up and she says, what do you want? I said, I need to just kind of walk around, and so I'm shuffling around, I'm hurting, [01:00:00] and I'm kind of walking down the hallway and as I pass by each room, I hear other people and they're in pain as well.

And I'm walking by and I hear these groans from different people, and it's . and I'm walking and I start laughing and I'm laughing because this sounds like an episode of the walking dead. I'm walking, I just hear all these, these, these poor people suffering like me, and we all sound like a bunch of zombies.

Like, And that was just that little moment took me from feeling sorry for myself, focusing on pain. I was into, Hey, this struck me as funny. Yup. and I find there's a lot of times that you do that. You can, you're at a point in a situation, you could be arguing with a spouse. You could be. About to get angry, you could be doing something or you make a joke, you make light of it, and it can flip a situation so quickly just by choosing something light rather than just giving into negative emotion.

So with, with, with all my surgeries, I wouldn't say I've tried to make light of them or joke about them. But I've tried to find humor in them. So when I was younger, I would actually cartoon my, my cardiologist. I drew pictures of him, or I'd be doodling pictures for the nurses, or, you know, my last surgery.

I would just try and find something light to say to get, it's almost to get your mind off of, you know what, I could go very dark here and life is not always pleasant. But what you choose to focus on and think about is where you're headed. So if you can focus on, you know what, yes, this is a horrible situation, but it's not permanent.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

It will get better. And if I can focus on that or find something humorous about the situation to help point me in a better direction, then I'll do that.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:02:19] So if I'm hearing you correctly. Steps to one of us, or you know, look ahead. Set those goals, find the humor and the good and the situation. If you have that negative thought, don't let it stick and just dwell on it.

Just keep looking at that positive.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:02:33] Is that correct? That's correct. And, and really too, it's, it's part of your expectation. Oh,

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:02:40] that's good. Yeah. Go there. That's very important.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:02:43] And what I mean by that is. I do think in a large part, there's a lot of life that's hard and it's difficult. And if I spend my time focusing on, you know, I've had it this bad and this happened to me, a lot of people have had things, horribly bad things that have happened to them, but what's your expectation as you, are you going to stay here or what am I focusing on?

My parents used to tell me like they, when they were discouraged, they'd walk around the hospital and they'd see some of the other families and what they were going through. And you realize, hold on, mine's not the worst situation out there. this, this surgery, you know, again, I had a day where I'm, I'm kinda discouraged and not feeling well, and I bumped into another guy at the hospital.

And Dave, I noticed his hands are covered and his nose is black. And so we're asking him, well, what happened to you? He had a heart attack. He was in his truck, he was going to bed. He'd run out to his truck in the middle of winter, had a heart attack outside and was outside all night in the freezing cold before his wife noticed.

And because he was outside in the cold, it's slowed his heart enough that he didn't die. But as a consequence, he got frostbite on his fingers, his nose, and his toes. So I'm looking at him like, man, that's horrible. Like not only is he have heart surgery and a bad heart, but he's got to have cosmetic surgery for all these other things.

Dave, he was the happiest guy. He was so grateful to be alive that he was still here. That when I see that and I look at me, I'm thinking, I don't have it that bad. and you know what? This is my fourth surgery. This is something I'm very familiar with. I know what to expect. This could have been totally new, but yet it's something very familiar and something [01:05:00] that I know what to expect.

I've gotten, I can't complain. I mean, there's so many people that have it worse. Yeah. And this part's hard for me. Mmm. I'd say more than any of the surgery, it's that there's been, I don't want to say

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

survivor's guilt, but this is my third time where I've almost died and it was really close. And I'm just left with

God, why? Why me? And there's people that we've prayed for, my family's prayed for for going through cancer. They're going through other things and they don't make it. And then I'm left saying, well, why am I still here? Why? Why did I make it. And not them. Like could I switch places with them? And I've really wrestled with that.

why, why me? And the thing that I've had to come back to is God's not done yet. He's not done with me yet. And there is a purpose to it. And more and more I'm looking at it too. You know, my, my trial today, my struggle today is somebody else's survival guide. Tomorrow, people need to hear what you go through.

You go through a hard time. People need to hear about it because that may be what gets them through their hard time. And so having this opportunity to talk to you on this podcast, That's why I survived. Because somebody, one of your listeners needs to hear this. If they can make sense of it, you know, they need to hear the message behind it.

That there is reason, there is purpose, there is. It's not all just random that God has a specific design and use for them.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:07:00] Yes. And thank you for sharing today, Danny, cause you, I couldn't agree more with you. If God was done with us, we'd be gone. Yeah, we have. There are no accidents. There are no coincidences, and you definitely have a purpose and plan.

God has a purpose and plan for you. so I mean, as your buddy loves you and don't feel guilty, feel excited. Dude, you're here for a reason. I'm thankful you're here. I'm sure your wife and kids are thankful you're here and all our listeners are thankful you're here. Yeah. So just keep telling your story, bro, and I'll help you if you, when you get ready to start your own

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:07:29] podcast.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:07:31] The nanny, the Danny, not Covey story.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:07:34] There we go. This kid,

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:07:36] Danny Couvee. I don't know why I keep thinking about this, but in my mind you keep, we're, we're talking about perspective and expectations, waking up out of those heart surgeries and, I, I'm going to talk about it cause I feel like it's, it's on my mind.

God's put it there for a reason. Dude. I just remember. Waking up. I had two major surgeries a year apart. Yeah, nine months apart, whatever. But I remember waking up, and as odd as this sounds, I had

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

to lay in bed flat for a couple of days, and that was the most agonizing, painful thing I've ever experienced.

But dude, I remember just the joy of taking a shower for the first time. Oh dude, I didn't care about eating. I didn't care what anything. The only thing I want to do is take a shower to get all that. I just, and I don't want to be gross, but I just felt dirty and I just had surgery and they cut me open in their hands on me.

I'm like, I just want to take a shower at the bar. So, okay. But to me that was a huge moment. And, and, and accomplishment and joy. What were moments like that for you? Cause I'm sure we all have them, but what was something that we, we take for granted every day, but after we get through this fricking literal war in our bodies, in our minds and our lives, well, what was one of those years.

Moments you're like, yeah, man, I did it. This is this. This is a blessing of privilege. I can't prove I took for granted a hot shower for all these years.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:09:01] Again, your world gets small, like, yeah. For you it was like, I just want to shower, and that's a huge deal for me. I think even in the hospital, being able to dress myself.

You know, that's progress when you, when you can't move or you're sedated for several days and then suddenly you can sit up by herself. That's huge. Yup. I remember they, they said you can't leave until you can walk two flights of stairs. so I'm out there. Like big, dragging myself up these stairs and down the stairs.

I'm like, I can't breathe. Half of my lungs are, you know, they feel like they're collapsed. I can't, you know, it's extremely difficult, but I'm like, I just walked on a set of stairs. That's huge. Or today I stepped outside. And that's huge. [01:10:00] And again, I think it just comes back to your focus. I'm walking on the path.

There's a path near my house that I, I walk on almost every day, not, not quite, and I'm on that path and I'm just listening. I'm just thinking about that Superman theme and I'm thinking about getting back into jujitsu, but yet I'm just shuffling one foot in front of another. And I was so happy because it's a modest step in the right direction.

And that's the big thing too, is I, whether it's, I'm not going to bring it back to jujitsu, but if you're a white belt and all you care about is that black belt every day is going to be work. You have to love the process. If I am sick and I want to break through. I just have to look at what's better today that I couldn't do yesterday.

You know? Maybe today I can walk up and down the stairs, or maybe today I can walk a mile where yesterday I couldn't, and it's just, it's just celebrating those little things along the way, not focusing on, I'm so far away from where I want to be. It's look where I was yesterday.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:11:20] Yeah. And let's, let's clarify something you just said.

You said you have to love the process. Yes, I know what you mean by that, but you didn't love, and our listeners aren't going to love the agony of going through, forcing yourself to take a step. The agony of sitting up in bed when your chest feels like it's going to explode. They're not going to like the agony of being in a class and doing the same move 500 times until you get it right.

So talk about what you mean by that, because I understand it, but we're loving the journey and we're loving the progress cause we're going for the goal where there's no vision that people perish. But talk about how you motivate yourself, because don't tell me you didn't want to quit. Of course. Don't tell me in your mind you're not thinking, damn, this hurts so bad.

I just want to lay down. But what kept Danny Kovi up moving forward? How did you walk. Like that word you used the walk that do what keeps you going when the temptation that evil says

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:12:23] quit,

because if you don't, you stay. If I do nothing, I don't get better. If I take a step forward when it hurts, when I'm in pain, when I'm crying because I'm miserable. Every step I take is getting me closer to getting better. So I may hate it. It may hurt me. It may be painful, but if I don't do it, I stay still.

If I do those steps, if I, if I walk, if I'm stretching, even though it hurts every time I do that, I'm getting better. It's getting me closer to that end goal. And so that's what you love. That's, that's what I, that's what I love. and I'm gonna, I wanna I wanna this is kind of a little aside, but I want to spend a minute on this.

Dave. I hate needles like I have, I have an acute fear and phobia of needles. Like they terrify me after I had surgery when I was 14. I was put on blood thinners. I have to get my blood checked once a month for the rest of my life. So every month I go for blood work and I hated it in the beginning. I was going every two days then it was every week than it was once a month.

Cause they are, they're trying to regulate your blood and you know, a day ahead. I'm like panicky. And I'm like, Oh, I've got to get a needle and I hated it. And then this surgery. the week before surgery, I have to give myself needles. And as soon as they told me, look, you have to give yourself needles a week before I started laughing because I hate them so much.

And yet here I am not only getting them, and now I've got to give them to myself and I started lasting mentally

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:14:28] an adjustment. I mean, how would you

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:14:29] do that? Well, here's what I did. And, and, and I'm, and I've, I've tried every mental game there is, I really have. But this is, this is what I've come around to and this is what has helped me.

I hate them, but if I didn't get them, I would not have the health that I have. If I didn't get my blood work checked my I could have a blood clot and die. [01:15:00] So instead of looking at them as something that I hate, they are a necessary evil to continue to have excellent health. And that's what I've had to do is they are a means to good health.

And I'm, and I mentally made that switch so. Even now when I go for blood work, I never look at it. I just talked to the nurse. I look away and I asked them about their day. I try and get my mind off of it, but I'm telling myself, this is what good health looks like. It means you go through this so that you can enjoy good things,

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:15:35] smart man, and keeping your head on the V ahead, your vision

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:15:39] ahead.

And that's, that's, that's kind of what I mean by the process too. I could look at it as this thing that I hate. I can look at surgery. As, you know, this has been a massive disruption to my, to my life. It's taken me a year or more to recover from it, and it's just put everything on hold. Or I can say, no, no, the obstacles aren't blocking the path.

The obstacles are the path. Like this is directly been put in front of me. This is my path. That's good. So, it's been, it's been difficult, but at the same time, I don't think I would change it. Dave, if I could go back and have no scars, I could have a great heart. Would I do it? I don't. I don't know that I would simply because there's so much that I've learned from it.

I don't know. I think I'd look like a very different person. And probably not. Not better either.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:16:41] That's so good, man, that you're really, you've seen where you're at today and how, even though it was this very difficult journey, and it may continue, you have more challenges because of this, but you understand that it's building you as a man in the character and man, it all has a purpose.

I'm so happy. I'm so proud to be your friend, man.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:17:02] That's, that's partly why I still walk is. You know, now they're seeing the valve that I have can last indefinitely. Really? Yeah. They said they've, they've tracked them long enough over time that they could last indefinitely, but they don't know. And my attitude is, you know what, there may be a day, 30 years from now, I might need another one if I continue to do jujitsu, to walk, to swim, to run, to keep my body as healthy as I can.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

In preparation for that one day, then I'll be as ready for that as I can be, because the idea is not okay. I'm done with that now and just go back to life. No, no. This is my life. The, the question I, I struggled with being asked most is people will say, so is everything back to normal now?

And I have a really hard time answering that because there is no normal now it's a new normal. You don't go back to who you were or what things were like before you go through any kind of a traumatic event. You've picked up some good things from it. Maybe you've picked up some challenges from it, but there's a new normal that's established and that's where you move forward from.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:18:22] When you think about the future. . And you think of what might happen, but you know that through your life, God's always been there and seen you through. You've got through all of this by doing what you can so you can walk, you can do sound stupid, drink water, you can exercise. You can be the best that you can be.

And that's what you focus on and you're not focusing on what God controls or what the outside world controls. You're just controlling what you're doing for yourself that you can. And then tomorrow, the what ifs. Talk about that. Do you just, how do you push them out of your head? How do you ignore them and focus on today cause you said throughout the interview a great truth.

Focus on today, you know, plan ahead. Yeah. But at the same time, live in today. So talk about that. How do you, when those ideas come in your head or those worries or those cares, how do you get rid of them? What's your literal physical mental process that Danny Kovi goes through to get back on track with the positive vision

and you got to slow it down. It goes so fast in your head.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:19:46] It's

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:19:47] kind of reverse engineering.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:19:49] I think.

Every day is a gift, and it [01:20:00] sounds cheesy, but I don't mean it to, but it's going to, I hear my valves tick every day. Some days I'm so used to it, I tune it out. Every time I hear it tick, it's a reminder to me it's a gift. It's a gift. It's a gift. And there's a measure where you feel like you're living on borrowed time.

Like I've gotten more time now since I've had surgery. I've had almost 30 years since my surgery when I was 14 it's been almost two and a half years since my last surgery. Every day has been a gift and yes, you have challenges. I still have days where. Maybe cognitively, I'm not thinking so well, or you know, my heart's working well, but there's still limits.

There's still limits to what I can do. And yeah, I get down and it's, it's, it's discouraging,

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

but I honestly feel, why am I here? You know, I'm here. I've survived. It's not about me. It's about sharing something with someone else who's struggling. It's about doing things like this podcast. It's about sharing my story in some way that somebody else can get benefit from it. That doesn't mean everything's hunky Dory and perfect, but I've just tried to focus on God.

You knew this. You knew this was going to happen. You know, this was the path and what do you do with it? I think it's like being handed a cactus. You can fight against it or you can, you know, this is, this is my plan. I got to care for her. The more you kick against it, it's going to hurt you. And as difficult as this is, there's been peace and accepting.

And just saying, okay, this is my lot in life. Will I ever be, you know, a gym rat and huge muscles and able to train and run long marathons? No, this is, this is what I am able to do, and if this is what I can do, then I want to do as much of that. I want to push as much as I can safely to my limits. So I don't, I don't mean to sound like I have the monopoly on the answer.

I don't. It's just realizing like things, things are bad, but they will be better and maybe not better as in, you know, 180 degree transformation, but you are on a path. That path has roadblocks and obstacles and there are no surprise to God. And I find too, the people that I've been able to talk to. The people that have come into my life that have enriched my life, I wouldn't have half of them if I had not gone through what I've gone through.

My, my dad, when he preached, he used to talk. Yeah. He preached a message called, some of life's greatest blessings come in black envelopes. And I think the idea behind it is something that's presented to you looks horrible. It looks awful and it, and it is. But what you find is a byproduct of that can be one of the greatest blessings that you ever have.

You know, I look at my relationship with my kids. We've walked through some really hard times, like writing and pouring my heart out to them, knowing I may never see them again or hugging them. Realizing it could be for the last time we're saying goodbye to your wife. It cuts a lot of the superficial out of it.

It really forces you, Hey, you know what, grant or Layla or Carter or Carly, we're going to have as meaningful a relationship as we have as we can because we're not guaranteed tomorrow. And so I think that's the value of going through hard things. It really helps you focus on what's important and it brings people into your life.

It brings circumstances into your life that you would have never dreamed of. And there's a lot of good that comes from horrible situations,

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:24:53] 100% and agree. Now, let me ask you a question. Now, once you got [01:25:00] through that difficulty in that part of your life, what did you do with the letters?

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:25:07] It's this funny.

I looked at them and I thought, what should I do with these? I mean, I really put a lot of thought and time. And a lot of tears into them, and I thought, you know what? It's not really my decision. So I, I gave them to each of my kids and I gave them to Carly and I said, this was intended for you if I had not lived.

I said, what you do with it is entirely up to you. If you want to never open it, if you want to throw it away, if you want to burn it. Whatever you want to do, it's up to you. And I left it at that, and I do know they, each of them read, read, read the letters I wrote, and I think it really had a profound influence on them.

I know a couple of my kids were crying. But there's a measure to where, you know, if I'm, if I'm leaving for work for the day and I give him a hug and I say, I love you Dave. They know what I think. I almost feel like there's a measure where there's nothing left unsaid. And so if something tragic were to happen, they know where they stand with me.

I know where they stand with a, I know where things are at with them. And for me that was just a huge, huge thing is just pouring my heart out to them and knowing they've read that and it's had a profound influence on them.

That's huge, man.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:26:57] Yeah. Well, thank you. Thank you so much, Danny, for sharing your story today. so you've shared a lot of your heart and your life, and I know it's not easy with the listeners, and I'm sure it's helping people right now. let's transition into where you are today and we've, we've talked a lot about that, but where you are today and where you're going, how can we help you?

So talk about Danny's life today and how are we can help you.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:27:20] So, it's a new normal, it hasn't gone back to normal. I. I'm creatively able to do a lot of the things that I love doing in my job. I'm very satisfied. I'm very happy with what I'm doing. I'm keenly aware though, that what I went through in all this was not just for me.

It wasn't just that I go through this and I'm done. I do feel a responsibility to use this time I'm given. And share, share my story, share what's happened. And so something I've even talked about with you, is there a podcast that I can do in the future? What would that look like? Is there a way that I can use that to encourage others to help others?

And so that's, that's really where I, I'd like to go is just do things where I'm. Helping an encouraging other people and using the tools that I'm good at. So whether it's making videos for causes that I think are worthy or pouring my design and marketing skills into people that need it, that that I can be a blessing to.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

That's what I want to do. It's in a measure. It's not really, you know, I've got this agenda that I want to do. I've got time that I wasn't promised. How can I use that to be a blessing to others? And it's, I don't mean that to sound cheesy, but I do. I do mean that, like how can what I've gone through help as many people as it can.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:29:02] Yes,

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:29:03] absolutely. And that's, that's kind of where I'd like to go is just how, how can this message of what God has done in my life? How can that help others who are going through anything close to similar.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:29:15] All right, man. Well, if we can help you, we'll put links to you. If people want to contact you and whether they're asking questions or want to shoot you out, some encouragement.

They have projects they want. I strongly, strongly support. Danny, I'd love for you to be able to hire you to get a season two of our podcast short made man the new logo with your creative skills. They can, I can't even imagine what you'd come up with. Right.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:29:37] Well, hopefully it's better than what I did in college for you, dude.

I

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:29:41] kept it 30 years or 30 years. Wait, 25 years and I'm old. I can't do math anymore.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:29:46] No, just kidding. It's close to 30 years, Dave. Yeah, 25 yeah.

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:29:50] Yeah. 25 years. 25 years, man, I was on the long program. I switched majors. I did the five year plan.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:29:57] I did the masters, so I was on the six year program.

[01:30:00] **David Pasqualone, Host:** [01:30:01] Man, we love you.

Thank you Danny, for being here today. As our listeners, if this episode helped you or you think it's going to help someone you love or a friend, please share it. Please in your podcast directories like Apple and Google rate and review the podcast like it. Put some comments in the notes. Cause for Danny and myself, it encourages us when we read the feedback.

one thing too, this came up recently, and Denny, I were talking before the show, he's in Canada, we're in the United States. If you're putting show notes, they will not show up because it's by country. So you can rate and review it. And as weird as it is, it only shows up in the country or in from what I've learned the hard way.

REMARKABLE PEOPLE PODCAST

Listen. Do. Repeat... for Life.

Right. we have listeners all over the world that are listening and calm to me, and then they're not seeing the different notes. So that's something I learned, right? So if you want to put comments for Danny that he can for sure. See, no matter if you're in Australia or India or Costa Rica, go ahead and go to our website, David paswan.com, forward slash RPP remarkable pupil podcast.

You can find the Annie's episode and say, Danny, I love you, man. Thanks for sharing. I'm going through this now. You really encouraged me. Danny, we talked about a lot, but is there anything we missed? Is there anything that's on your heart that you'd like to share with the audience? A final thought or even a big section in your life we skipped over.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:31:23] no, I want to thank you for having me on the show, and it means a lot that you've taken this time to talk with me. I would just want to encourage people that. Whatever you're going through, do not quit. Don't give up. Don't give in. some of life's greatest blessings come in adversity. They're wrapped up in adversity and they look horrible, but some of the greatest blessings you will have will come from them.

So that's my message. Whatever you're going through, don't give up. Don't quit. We

David Pasqualone, Host: [01:31:58] can't end on a better note than that. Buddy. Thank you so much, Danny. You truly are a remarkable man. I am proud to be your friend and you as a listener, listen, we love you. And like our slogan says, listen, do repeat for life.

Don't just listen to this, apply it and live in this life. And the next. Dan, thanks again for being here. We love you. Give Carly our best and we'll do and until the next episode, and we'll talk to you soon and see you soon. Listeners.

Danny Covey, Guest: [01:32:26] Thanks Dave.

Show Intro/Outro Reel: [00:00:09] the remarkable people podcast. Check it out.

the remarkable people podcast. Listen. Do. Repeat. For Life.

end