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JIM: Welcome to this week’s show. I’ve been so looking forward to this. Today we have a very special guest, Mark Pruss. Mark’s claim to fame is he has been helping thousands of athletes through his career reach peak performance. He’s worked with such teams like the Boston Red Sox’s, Green Bay Packers, my own favorite team, Chicago Cubs, and many more. He has worked with many Division I athletes, business executives, entertainers, and one thing that’s near and dear to my heart is he works with two veterans every month pro bono for post-traumatic stress disorder. He also speaks to tens of thousands of middle school, high school, and college athletes through the years, teaching them how to become an intentional athlete. I’m looking forward to what he can share with us on being in control of our lives and living with intention. Welcome Mark.

00:53

MARK: Thank you, I’m happy too. Thanks for the opportunity.

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JIM: It’s kind of an interesting walk of life that you’re in, especially when you’re working with a lot of people that most of would probably recognize. You really help them perform at their best, but how did you get started in this? It’s got to be a tough thing to always try to help other people get at the top of their game, that means you’ve got to be at the top of your game.

1:13

MARK: It started really back in the late 70s, early 80s. I was a competitive power lifter. A friend of mine and I decided to drive back across country after an event, and we stopped at Arizona State University with the hopes of finding a friend of mine that was going to school there. Summer football was just starting up and we snuck into the gym and began working out, and some of the ball players were there and I decided to help some of the ball players train. A new strength coach named Bill Allerheiligen, who was just put in place from the University of Nebraska, which back in those days was the powerhouse. He said you ought to get a job here if you know what you’re doing. I said coach, I don’t even go to school here, I snuck in here. He goes well we could take care of that, and long story short he offered me a position and I got my books taken care of, my room taken care of, and I decided to stay at Arizona State University, and I could never understand with all these great phenomenal athletes, why one athlete would stay in the gym a little longer, work a little harder, the other one would just seem to blow it off, just keep his natural skills. I’ve always been driven that way about sports performance, and the other is personal performance. I’ve battled bipolar disorder my entire life and spent my life with some of the best in studying bipolar disorder, from John’s Hopkins to University of Chicago to Northwestern in Chicago, and it’s a passion of mine to really reach people and to know that living in pain and living in fear is an option, it’s a choice, and you have the opportunity to end both.

2:45

JIM: It’s just kind of interesting sometimes how people get involved. I know we interviewed Bo Eason a while ago. He was cut from the team but he didn’t let that stop him from going to practice and everything, and then it allowed him to become one of the best NFL players is that perseverance. Now you’ve had a lot of accomplishments through the years because you’re no spring chicken at this stuff, you’ve been doing it for a long time, but you also suffered a real setback in 1984 with a car accident. Talk about what some of those accomplishments were and with that setback how did you overcome and even thrive beyond that.

3:18

MARK: 1984 was one of my ah-ha moment years. This was before NFCA or any of these big organizations that produced certified strength coaches and great personal trainers and PTs. I was working as a student/coach and then coaching with people in Arizona. I was also working in a facility in Scottsdale, Arizona. It was a partnership with a gentleman named John Cole, who was the first man in the world to squat 900, he’s a national champion discus thrower. You may remember a name from way back, Joe Garagiola, who was a sports announcer, was his business partner.

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JIM: He was on the Today Show, right?

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MARK: Yes.

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JIM: Yup, I remember him.

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MARK: I worked at his facility in Scottsdale, and I was driving home to Tempe, Arizona, where I was living at the time, and a 75-year-old woman came out of a grocery store and decided to hit me head on, and it was one of those things where I wasn’t cut up but I was beat up pretty badly, bounced off the windshield and the dashboard and was all bruised. This is going to sound strange now, but think about this thirty some years ago, I was actually, had a very progressive chiropractor, Dennis Goldberg, who said Mark you know how your crystal in your watch, the energy of that crystal runs your watch, and I go well I guess so, and he goes well I’d like to lay you down and place different gemstones that produce different energies and lay them on y our body, it will help promote healing, and I’m like, this sounds strange now, think about this 30 years ago. I said okay, so whether it was the placebo effect or not I did heal. He said you know what I can’t go next week, but if you’ll go hear this gentleman speak I think it will really help where you go in your life and what you want to do. I said okay. He goes have you ever been to Sedona, Arizona? I said nope. He said you’ve never been to Sedona. I said no I’ve never been. I’m working as a student, I had no reason to go to Sedona. He said here take this invitation. I went up, drove to Sedona, knew immediately when I made that turn on 89A entering the city, I had to find some way to live there, which is where I live now, and I also got to hear a gentleman speak that not only changed my life, but I was fortunate enough to communicate with and work with for years name Dr. Sir David Hawkins, but Dr. David Hawkins at the time. He did a lot of k-testing, he was a renowned therapist and healer in Manhattan. He had closed his practice and was just now getting in a position where he was living and residing in Sedona. Those were my ah-ha’s, one, I knew where I wanted to live the rest of my life, and I also knew what I wanted to pursue and it was just a phenomenal relationship. I used the techniques I’ve learned since and have applied it in sports. I do a lot of hands-on, what’s known as applied kinesiology using EFT, thought field therapy, what’s known as the Hawkin’s Method, Durlacher, TATS process, EMDR, and there are all these different energy processes that allow people to eliminate fear, eliminate self-sabotage almost immediately so we can go ahead and really do the work, which is allowing that performance, or allowing that which we desire to manifest in our lives. That’s the key, most of us do self-sabotage, and my job is to show you how quickly you really can rid yourself of it and give you tools to do so. I’m not here to build a long relationship. I love you, I’m here to serve you, but how fast can I get rid of you and teach you the tools. That’s one of the things ball players like. Ball players are physical, they like the physical application, and if we could all think our way to success, we’d all have 22 inch waists, seven figures in the bank, and you’d be living somewhere that you’d always desired to live. It’s not about thinking, it’s about managing and understanding your emotions. The emotions are the critical component in your life, it’s always emotion.

6:54

JIM: Let’s talk about that sabotage thinking.

6:57

MARK: Sure.

6:58

JIM: Because I think everybody has this happen to them, and I think most people don’t even realize it’s happening, because this affects you in your job whether it’s promotions, whether it’s success in school, whether it’s getting off your feet if you’ve been downsized to get back on your feet and maybe have a better opportunity going forward. Talk about what some of those things might be that our listeners could recognize.

7:20

MARK: Certainly. Along with one of those things identifying those, I’ll also identify something we could do each day that will help change lives, usually within a couple of weeks, it’s amazing, okay. Every single time we found out at Cybernaut Institute and again at Stanford, if I hooked an athlete up with a helmet with a bunch of sensors up and down his body, his arms, his legs, his head, at the most violet aspect of their biomechanics, those are big words, but in essence every time they performed their physical component of their sport, i.e., say releasing, throwing a baseball, striking a baseball, striking a golf ball, shooting a basket, every time they performed that, the higher up the athletic food chain, or the better the athlete, every time they performed that the left side of their brain explodes with what are known as alpha waves. Now why is that important to the listeners, because every single person listening, when you first arise in the morning and right before we fall asleep, hit REM sleep, we’re at alpha, and we never learn how to use it. What do we do, we wake up in the morning, we either hit the snooze alarm or we’re up, we’re out. We’re hitting Starbucks, we’re getting the kids ready, we’re thinking about our day, we’re already out of alpha and we’re reacting to life which is known as beta. Your brain activity is completely changed. You work your day, you go through the struggle, hopefully thriving day, go back in the evening, watch a little TV, maybe have a little wine a little dinner, check emails and fall asleep. We never use alpha. The reason that’s important is it’s like never using third gear in your car. We lose our creativity, we lose our ability to process stress, so what can you do. We do certain things called ideal sceneing, it’s one of the processes you can learn. It takes minutes to do, but if someone would just wake up, and if you have to go to the bathroom when you first wake up do so, but you know what, give yourself two to four minutes extra a day, okay, an ideal senior day. Go through your day as though it’s already complete the exact way you want it. Every athlete of mine does it, just do it. Go through your day, picture it, make it brighter, make it louder, make if fun, understand your subconscious doesn’t understand the difference between a real event and an imagined event. You do, the volitional mind listening to me does, but your subconscious doesn’t. That’s how you talk to your subconscious mind, through feelings, senses, and emotions, and the more you make that connection emotionally, your brain every time you have a feeling, your brain instantly will fire chemicals within one ten thousandth of a second to equilibrate your body. Let’s say you’re out in public and you see someone really attractive walk by, oh wow he’s beautiful, he’s attractive, or she’s gorgeous, that’s a chemical dump, your mind responds and dumps chemicals. You’re happy, you’re laughing, that’s a chemical equation to your brain, your brain is going to dump chemicals. Let’s say you got off the phone, you get off this meeting today and you hop in your car and you’re driving to lunch, and while you’re talking on the phone all of a sudden you see two police lights pop up behind you in your rearview mirror, oh no I got to call you back. We’re ten and two on the steering wheel, for some reason we turn the stereo down and we’re driving. Oh man not a ticket, not a ticket please. I’m driving on two already, whatever it is. If it’s really stressful to you you’re probably going to get hijacked by what’s known as the amygdala, but even then, in a fraction of a second what’s happened is all of a sudden the policeman goes whoop whoop right by you. You go oh good and you call your friend back. Here’s what really happened. Those two cameras, those eyes of yours, at 120 times a second back and forth, back and forth, back and forth saw that image in that rearview mirror. In a fraction of a second it created a holographic image in your visual cortex. In a nanosecond your mind scanned your mental walls to see how much of a problem that policeman behind you is going to be. It constricted your digestion, that’s why you got that little feeling in your stomach as soon as you saw the police light. It flooded your body full of adrenalin, manual adrenalin, and said oh by the way guys here you go take this cortisol with you, stress hormone, all in a fraction of a second. Policeman shoots right by you, stomach came right back, digestion came right back, you’re fighting adrenalin for about 40 minutes. You’re fighting that cortisol for four to five hours. You take that one event with job stress, relationship stress, bill stress, you name it stress, this is why we are the way we are, we’re constantly bombarded in fighting stress hormone, which is why we gain weight. It’s not what happens to you in your life, it’s how you respond to what happens to you in your life, okay. When we teach the intentional athlete, my athlete lives intentionally, they perform and so what do they do, I teach and they learn mastered processes. If you repeat processes the situation doesn’t matter, okay, and that’s what they do. So, what do we do, I uses processes to clear whatever it is that’s negative in their life, that they’re emotional about, and I teach them processes to thrive, and if you do it more now at an emotional level you can perform later at what we call no mind, it’s just automatic, it’s automatic.

12:13

JIM: Mark, let’s take a short break, and when we come back let’s talk about some of those techniques that you have. For the listeners that are out there, the thing is most of us have these negative thoughts. I know you talked about the amygdala, you know when I first heard that I’ve got a coach that I’ve worked with, and I wasn’t going to use a coach, I always felt like man I read all these books, I go to all these conferences, I know all the ideas, I don’t think there’s much that they could teach me, and I was amazed he talked about that and I thought it was some spiritual mumbo jumbo, but that really is a part of the brain, and going through a process with him helped me discover some things that were holding me back and keeping me from being in complete control of everything I was doing, and I actually was in a situation where I tried to handle way too much. Having me understand that allowed me to clear and focus on what’s most important. I know if it can help me it can help athletes. I know every one of our listeners out there, there’s dome dramatic improvement you can make just by understanding what’s happening and knowing what tools to use to have better control of your attitude, your emotions, and things like that. When we come back we’ll talk about some of those techniques. Please stay tuned.

13:23

[BREAK]

12:25

JIM: Welcome back as we continue to visit with Mark Pruss. Mark, you know you were sharing your story, it’s amazing that someone who suffered from bipolar, I see a lot of people they have some crutch that’s out there that gives them the excuse for everything that’s going wrong in their life, and I know with folks that have bipolar it’s one of the bigger crutches that you could use as an excuse, but I am just very moved how you have not only gotten beyond that, but you’re helping thousands of people live life to the fullest. Before the break we were talking about that negative energy, and it certainly isn’t helped by the news media or the TV or whatever, everything you put on is all garbage, it’s all negative, it’s all ridiculous, what can people do and what are some of the techniques they can do to have better control. First they got to recognize that they’re just going through their day and allowing the negative to take over. How do they reverse that.

15:17

MARK: Okay, first let’s just touch base on that word crutch. I could take four to five individuals in a given day, one come to me for multiple rape trauma, one comes to me who has just lost three buddies in the war, another one can no longer spot his curve ball, and someone just lost a lifelong family pet. I can ask each one of these individuals go ahead and share a little bit about yourself. Without question sooner or later, it won’t take long, often times it could be within seconds, they’re going to go right to that painful event and they’re going to start to tears. It could be 30 seconds in I’ll immediately stop them, and I’ll say you know what unless you’ve got more to tell me I’ve pretty much heard it all, and they look at me dumbfounded. No, this really happened to me, this really did, I’ve got so much stress, I know you do, but that’s not the essence of who you are, it’s your story. You’ve got a choice, I’m giving you the opportunity to share your story with me, but I want you to know that’s just your story. The truth lies in this though, you have your choice. You can continue living that story, which all of us in our audience today can do, you can continue living that story, oftentimes of which someone wrote that story for us, okay and it’s painful, and what happens is we unknowingly carry it with us because it becomes us, it becomes safer for us to carry that story with us than it is to face what’s out there, okay, or you can start writing a new one. One of the things I suggest people do, and I tell my athletes, I’m direct with my athletes. When I meet with a ballplayer it’s usually because they were injured or they were sent down to the minor leagues to reorganize because they are a company. They come back up, they’re expected to produce, if they don’t produce they’re going to be traded, they’re going to be divested of by either trading or being released, and I’ll ask them how bad do you want to get back to the big leagues, and I’ll let them tell me. At least one-third will have a tear in their eye because this is all they’ve known and they love that game so much they want to get back. Don’t waste my 86,400 seconds a day and save the day rate I’m going to charge you, okay. Because I don’t need another client and I have to be better at what I do than what you do for a 38,000 on a Sunday, okay. This is it, tell the same people in the audience the same things. This isn’t something you just try. Your life is your life, it’s your story. Number one, whose story are you living. Now what can we do each day. Are you owning your day or are you just getting through your day. How do you own your day? First and foremost some simple little tools, wake up each morning when you’re at alpha. Don’t waste this, try this for a couple of weeks, it will change your life, I promise you. Wake up each morning, visualize your day as though it’s already here, as though it’s already happened. Make it brighter, make it louder, make it fun. I wish I could do a guided process for 10 minutes with you right now just to give you an idea of the flavor of it, okay. We’ll talk later, you can reach out, I’ll be glad to show you how to do this, okay. Make it brighter, make it louder, fill it with as many senses as you can. What can you touch, smell, see, notice differently. What can you hear someone saying great about your day that jut occurred throughout your day. Whether it’s going to be a successful meeting. Then stand up, do eight Dr. Amy Cuddy’s work. If you’re not familiar with her work look her up. She went to Princeton, she’s at Harvard now, she’s a phenomenal social psychologist. Do a power stance. Stand with your legs slightly spread apart, put your hands on your hips and just stand there in that power mode, and again, think of your day. Then do something as simple, clinically proven to change hormone levels, stand in a victory pose, chest up, arms up in the air like you’re receiving, hands extended, almost like you’re crossing a finish line, and hold that pose for a minute and a half to two minutes. Clinically proven to change your hormone levels.

18:52

JIM: When I see Aaron Rogers do the victory belt thing, that came from you?

18:57

MARK: No. Laughing

18:48

JIM: Laughing, as you were talking about that that’s all I could think about.

19:02

MARK: That came from . . . So what do you do first and foremost? Do your visualization each morning, feel it, feel it. You don’t get what you think about all day long, you get what you feel that you think about all day long. It’s all feelings. Every single person in this audience right now could tell me who their favorite teacher was in a heartbeat and who their least favorite teacher was, or favorite coach. Biggest compliment I get is boy where were you when I was playing. It’s a success on purpose, you have a choice. Own each day. Something simple as visualizing each, don’t just visualize, feel it, have fun with it. You’re better off doing it for 30 seconds with feeling than five minutes of just going through the process. Without question, power stance, victory pose. Now what can do throughout the day. All my athletes will take in a little acronym and the most popular 20 people that text them the most they don’t just text back and forth, they’ll put an acronym like QBQH, something as simple as quick back quick hands, or wait and be quick, or always attack, something that means something to them that they’ve been visualizing that bigger, stronger, better version of themselves throwing that ball, what do they do. They’ll put that acronym right next to that person’s name. Could be their wife, could be another teammate. Whenever they get that text they’ll see that acronym. What will they do, they just won’t text back, they’ll look at that acronym, they’ll repeat it themselves, and they’ll flash right to that feeling they have each morning and again each evening when they do this process. It’s a success on purpose making each waking moment a conscious one. The more you do it, the more the brain goes ah I got it. Because you have to understand, we’re hardwired for negativity. Everyone listening to this right now, three out of five thoughts are negative. We’ve mapped the brain. If you’re bipolar like me five out of seven thoughts are negative. Why do you think negative campaign ads as obnoxious as they are work. They know this, we have to know this. What do we do, we do everything in our power to be conscious throughout the day, to live our day. In the evening, evening is a little bit more challenging, why, because we have the momentum of our day to slow down, but the same thing, give yourself a few minutes in the evening, think of three things every evening that you’re thankful for and really feel why you’re thankful, and then go right back to that ideal image or that ideal scene of what you were visualizing this morning and make it brighter. My ball players do what are known as rewinds. Each night after a game they’ll do rewinds. They’ll go back to part of the game they could have done better and they’ll rewind it with emotions, senses, feelings, and they’ll correct it. If a guy hit a homerun he’ll go back and hit a pitch that he made a perfect pitch, just to get that rewind, and understand, every single time you use that emotion your mind is dumping chemicals, and every cell of your body through your synovial fluid to support it is what really happened, that’s the amazing thing, you get to use this. I’m always science based. I’m not big on belief based, that’s why a lot of my coaches that I have we’ll bump heads. I believe in science. Your body has a science, use it. If you don’t you’re not living your story you’re probably living someone else’s.

22:04

JIM: Mark, this is awesome stuff. I got one more question. I know we’ve gone long, I could listen to you all day. This is just awesome stuff.

22:10

MARK: Forgive me, I’m sorry.

22:11

JIM: No forgiveness needed this is excellent, and people listening out there, their eyes might have rolled to the back of their head because they’ve never tried this stuff, it kind of sounds like oh my God that can’t work, and that’s that mind telling you stay away from these techniques, stay away from the stuff, that will never work, these are crazy thoughts or ideas or whatever, but this stuff does work, there is a lot of science behind it. I was really struggling to hire a coach, and after hiring a coach and understanding, man it just makes a huge difference, just a little adjustment here, a little adjustment there in your attitude could just make a huge difference in how your days go day after day, it’s fantastic. I got one other question I want to ask because you do work with a lot of professional athletes, and I know I’ve had some on as guests in the past and we see all the horror stories of these people they make a ton of money and they get wrapped into the fame and the fortune and everything else, and two years after they retire from that sport that they love, they’re broke and penniless and they’re in the dumps. That’s not happening to everybody, I know some of the athletes that I’ve had the privilege of interviewing, there’s one common theme with all of them that have retired successfully, they always had something to retire to. They had a vision of where they were going, which kind of goes along with what you’re talking about. You should have some good people around you that help guide you, whether it’s the coach on the mental aspect, whether it’s the trainer on the physical aspect, or whether it’s someone helping them have that vision of what the future is, it goes right back to what you started with, the intentional athlete, the intentional person. Everything that you do you got to visualize it, you got to set your goals to where you want to be, where you want to end up. I mean too many people just go through life and wait for what happens. I think it was before we started our interview you mentioned you have basically a three-day program that you put people through, and you’ve got a lot of tools, where can people go, if they’re interested in tapping into some of these tools, because obviously in a program like today we don’t even have time to scrap the tip of the tip of the iceberg much less get into any real detail, but I know you’ve had a lot of years of dealing successfully with professional athletes, business people, college students, high school students, veterans where you’ve been able to make such a positive difference, where can people go to get some of that?

24:32

MARK: They can reach out to me personally, I have a website its sedonabody.org. I apologize in advance at age 60 you’re going to see that I am not up-to-date with my social media. If you reach out to me there, or even my personal email, please. My mission is to change and help as many people as I can, serve as many as I can, and my personal email is getmark@me.com. Please understand my processes are intended to be tearless and painless. I am amazed, amazed at the 30 years of involvement of how long people are willing to endure pain and fear, and I can tell you you don’t need to. It is truly a choice. Can I make one statement, please, it’s important for the opening statement.

25:22

JIM: Absolutely, yes.

25:23

MARK: One of the things I wanted to say is my mission, it’s my mission to change youth sports. What if the sport outgrew your son or daughter in high school, much less college, but what if they had learned processes where they had no test anxiety, no ACT anxiety, no public speaking anxiety, no going away to college anxiety. I think then we’ve all won. The one thing I do know that unless parents pay attention to the emotional component, the nutrition component, all these aspects and be an intentional athlete, they’re leaving the success of all their money they’re spending in travel sports to two things, they pray their son or daughter never gets hurt, and they hope they swam in the right end of the gene pool. I’m going to tell you right now it’s not enough and you’re already spending the college education trying to get them someplace just on hope. Now I’ll be quiet.

26:14

JIM: That’s awesome. I love teaching and helping people have a better life, and you are right in the forefront Mark, and I’m so appreciative of you taking some time to share with us today.

26:26

MARK: Thank you, I’m happy to.

26:27

JIM: Thanks for joining us this week. Tune in again next week as we explore another phase of the Real Wealth process. Remember, if anything you heard in today’s show you’d like to get more information about, contact your Real Wealth advisor. Also, if you feel that any of this information would be helpful to a friend or family member, just click the forward to a friend button.