Seeking the Extraordinary - Dan Egan

**Intro:** Seeking the Extraordinary is sponsored by The Colony Group, a national wealth and business management company, that seeks the extraordinary by pursuing an unrelenting mission of providing clients with peace of mind and empowering their visions of tomorrow. To learn more about how The Colony Group manages beyond money, visit thecolonygroup.com

**Michael Nathanson:** Welcome fellow seekers of the extraordinary. Welcome to our shared quest. A quest, not for a thing but for an idea. A quest, not for a place, but into deep inner unexplored regions of ourselves. A quest to understand how we can achieve our fullest potential. By learning from others who have done or doing exactly that. Extraordinary stories of overcoming anguish.

**Intro:** Every single one of them had lost somebody from their family. I will never give up on trying to lessen that conflict.

**Michael Nathanson:** People who have stood up to challenges with true courage.

**Intro:** Do something in life that you have a passion for, something that you enjoy and you find fulfilling, that's where you'll have your greatest successes.

**Michael Nathanson:** Stories that will enlighten and inspire.

**Intro:** What I said to him is absolutely a cliche, but the journey is more important than the end result.

**Michael Nathanson:** May we always have the courage and wisdom to learn from those who have something to teach. Join me now in seeking the extraordinary. I'm Michael Nathanson, your chief seeker of the extraordinary

We are joined today in studio by a man who Powder Magazine named one of the most influential skiers of our time. He was instrumental in making extreme skiing what it is today, and is known for skiing the most remote, inhospitable regions of the world. He's seen death and despair. But also great triumph and new heights.

He is appeared in multiple Warren Miller ski films as well as on the discovery channel, ESPN Fox Sports and in countless magazines, books and videos. Along with his equally famous brother he has skied around the world, recorded more than 51st descents, jumped off cliffs, the heights of 12 story buildings and defied death multiple times, sometimes barely.

He's also a businessman, motivational speaker, consultant, media expert, writer, journalist and producer. As a writer he wrote or co-wrote three books. All Terrain Skiing: Body Mechanics and Balance From Powder to Ice. Courage to Persevere: The Triumph Over Tragedy of Bill Fallon, and 30 Years in a White Haze.

As a journalist, he covered three Olympics and is a three time NESJA Harold Hirsch award winner for excellence in journalism. As a producer, he was awarded a Telly award in 1991 and is a three time new England Emmy award nominee for his TV series, Wild World of Winter.

An avid sailor as well, our guest has also produced video for the US Sailing Team at two sailing World Championships and his media company represented Sperry shoes during the 35th America's cup in Bermuda.

He's also worked with other well-known companies on marketing and branding, including North Face, Suzuki, Sprint and Coors. He is a member of the Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. Please welcome the extraordinary Dan Egan. Welcome Dan.

**Dan Egan:** Nice, Michael, how are you?

**Michael Nathanson:** Ah, it's great to have you here in studio and I've become such a fan of yours. I met you in Big Sky and learned more about you and thought you had a story that just had to be told.

**Dan Egan:** I appreciate that.

**Michael Nathanson:** So Dan, just to jump into it, let's start with the basics. You're best known as an icon, really a pioneer of extreme skiing. Let's start with you telling us just what extreme skiing is. Is there really a good way to define it? I don't want to steal your thunder, but I read your book and in your book, you say it's defined is if you fall, you die.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah, that's a, that was the terminology and sort of the language we used back in the eighties and the nineties, and really that, theory came from the Europeans and how they skied the Matterhorn and the, you know, the big peaks and the untamed corners of the Alps where truly, if they fell, they died. Here in the states. we explore this theory and the book is really, you know, the extreme skiing in the eighties and the nineties here in the states, we were a form of entertainment based around the VHS tape and I believe we were born out of the freedom and the passion of the freestyle movement, the hotdoggers of the seventies.

And we definitely did some crazy stuff. We jumped a lot of cliffs and my brother John and I were known for skiing the really remote regions of the world. We went to the Arctic twice. John started heli skiing up in Greenland. He was in Chikaka. We went to Russia. We ran all over the Alps, into Eastern Europe as well. So we liked to combine, the skiing with world events in remote areas.

**Michael Nathanson:** Well, we're going to get to some of those stories that you have and some of the places that you've skied, which are just truly incredible. But let's just, let's keep moving through just your book a little bit. So I read your book, 30 Years in a White Haze and I just loved it. It was a fantastic read. It's a long book, although it comes with pictures and yeah, it's just very detailed. And one observation I would offer to you and I'd just like to get your response. It's not really all about skiing, is it?

**Dan Egan:** Yeah. I mean, it's true. It's about family. It's about Boston. It's about adventure. And it's about, you know, sort of the history of, you know, sometimes things in life happen for unexplained reasons. It doesn't make sense that two kids from West Roxbury would go on to ski the remote regions of the world. And yet it did. And so the book is about people because none of us do it alone. Right. The support network that comes up particularly here in the Northeast. The Ski Market and the rich history of that retail chain being the biggest ski store, 21 locations in the country. And how that family and that knowledge kind of gave birth to our ski career.

**Michael Nathanson:** Hmm. Yeah. We'll talk a little bit more about that but have you ever read the book On The Road, by Jack Kerouac?

**Dan Egan:** Yes.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. I haven't read it in years, but I think I read it in school and you know, it's all about the beat generation and it's really a book about counter-cultural wanderers. And you know, you talk a lot about, this is your term, not mine, you talk a lot about the life of quote, ski bums. And the way you talk about that and just reading your experiences, it was like right out of that book.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah. I mean, you know, the ski bum you know, kinda that term people think about it in a lot of different ways, you know, for us, it was an achievement to sort of talk about how we flowed through life. The different opportunities we would take not being deterred by, you know, hardship or things that didn't work out. And yet pursue our passion, which was to ski and pretty much at any and all costs. If it ended up in a ski situation, we would do it. And of course the father of that is, or the grandfather is Warren Miller and his movies always portrayed you know, the adventure, they always portrayed sort of like, Hey, if you don't do it this year, you'll be one year older when you do. And, why haven't you done it already? And one thing that I, you know, Warren said to me, years, decades ago there's no book that says you have to work here and live there. You can work and live wherever you want. Dan, just keep creating it.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah, I love the stories you tell about wandering around and sometimes not knowing where you're going to sleep or where you're going to eat. And one story that that just stays in my mind is I think you were, you were somewhere in Maine and you were staying with your brother and some of his friends. And I guess there was a clogged drain in the shower. And some guy basically just like put a hole in the floor to drain into your bathroom below.

**Dan Egan:** And he was in charge of maintenance. He was, it was quite a solution. Yes.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. It seems like you come from a large family. You know, you come from Boston. And it seems like your family. It doesn't just seem it like, I know for a fact, your family was a big part of your life. Still is a big part of your life. You're commonly tied to your brother, John and he's the other member of the, the brand that's now known as the Egan Brothers. But it's really broader than that. Isn't it? I mean, tell us about your family and your, your family influence.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah, I think, you know, family was such an important piece growing up and the connection to Boston was an important piece growing up. My grandfather was a great educator. He was a superintendent of Boston schools. He was the registrar at Boston College. He was really highly educated guy and he you know, sort of instilled that in all of us. And he met us where we were, you know, he taught us hard work. We worked at his house every, every week and sometimes literally grandpa would, you know, you'd moved the woodpile just to move it. and then you'd move it back. But he lived on the highest hill in Boston.

And on Bellevue Hill and my mom in the forties learned to ski down the medium strip of the Parkway. And that's how she learned to ski with her brothers. And then her and my dad went on high school dates to Blue Hills. So the tie to winter. And the tie to family was big. And you know, at the same time, of course, those were different days, but you know, my mom, I always joke about her solution was to tip the house upside down to get eight kids out of the house, you know, just get them out of the house. And once we were out, the rule was be home for dinner. And away we went. And my thing, you know, in the summers was the sale. I would walk you know, to the trolley, take the trolley to the train, the train, to the bus, and then walk the last half mile to the South Boston Yacht Club. And that's not a blue blazer yacht club you know, that's a rough, tough place. And, kind of learned a lot of street stuff there.

**Michael Nathanson:** So, let's talk a little bit about your brother John, and you've said that, and this is a quote, while John was able to open up a lot of doors, you had the savvy to hold them open for the opportunities that awaited. Yeah, he's your big brother and you do seem to be very much tied together. Tell us about that relationship.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah with John, I have two older brothers. My brother Bobby's eight years older.

**Michael Nathanson:** Does he ski too?,

**Dan Egan:** Yeah he ran one of the Ski Markets for 10 years over in Braintree, five corners. And John is six years older than me. So to have those two influencers, you know, that's quite an age difference too, you know? And they were great about bringing me everywhere and they brought me everywhere and I, I saw them as teenagers, as a young kid and all the craziness that went along with that and into their, you know, Bobby's college years and John was a little bit of a, you know an outlier in our family. He, did his own thing. You know, he liked fast cars. He had Mustangs, he drag raced cars up at New England Dragway.

He had two 1969 Mustang Mark Ones. One was street legal, one wasn't. We had go-karts and, you know that whole thing. And then in 1976, John left home and he moved to Sugarbush Vermont. And, you know, we had all skied as kids, but the idea that he was going to live at a ski area was really quite foreign to us.

My mom forbid me to visit him. She said it was not age appropriate for me to hang out with those ski bums. And years later I told her she, she was right. But you know, there was a, there was a connection with John and I, and he, him breaking out that way showed me a whole nother way of life.

The ski bums in the seventies at Sugarbush, all his friends, they were fiercely independent people. They were going to mold their own lives, their own ways. They were very passionate. They skied every day and didn't matter if it was snowing, rainy, what the condition was. They loved it. They held their skiing to a very high standard. You had to be good at it and get, be willing to get better at it.

So it was very high bar for me. And at the same time they showed me what hard work was. They would work at night, they would work all, you know, all different types of jobs to ski. They weren't lazy. And today, you know, all those, all those people have become independent businessman and gone on to do great things. So being six years younger that had a big effect on me and when John turned pro. That blew our minds because when he left as a teenager, to move to Sugarbush, he was not at that caliber. And to make his way to 9th in the world in moguls, top 20 in the world and racing, that blew our minds. And the pro tour came to Nashoba Valley and John stayed at the family house.

I was going to school that morning and he was going off to race. And he had his race gear on. He had his Paddy pants and his sweater and he said, Dan, I'm going to work today. And, you know, as a 14 year old boy, that comment never left me. That wow, there's another way. And he's doing it.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah, I loved reading about your relationship and we'll, we'll speak more about that. One of the things that, one of the images that again stood out for me was the, your description of how every fall, you all went up to the attic and got a bunch of skis and ski equipment and just sort of like decided what fit, what didn't fit. And as you said, you turned your living room into a ski shop. It really was a family affair.

**Dan Egan:** It really was. The blizzard ski club used to pick up along 128, at all of the Howard Johnson's and it would take us up to Mount Sunapee and we would ski. And of course the older siblings, my sisters and my brothers, they had all the cool gear. And I wanted to fit into that gear. I wanted to get into those boots. I wanted my own pair of jet sticks. I wanted a wind shirt, you know, with the snaps and the plaid and all those sorts of things. So when you grew into those items, you kind of felt like you, you were arriving.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. so just to now move more into your career. What I realized as I learned more and more about you and also just did a number of searches for you on the internet is, you are to some extent a movie star. Now you're a ski movie star, but there've been a lot of movies that you've been in. And you mentioned Warren Miller, talk a little bit about the impact of video. You mentioned VHS earlier, like talk a little bit about that and how you were able to achieve what you achieved on film.

**Dan Egan:** Well, you know, I wanted to be a soccer player.

**Michael Nathanson:** And then you were at Babson.

**Dan Egan:** I was, yeah. I went and played at Babson, but it took me two years to get into Babson. And it was a hard fought to get into Babson.

**Michael Nathanson:** And you said, no matter what, you're going to do it and you're going to graduate.

**Dan Egan:** I did and, but of course I wanted to ski. So when I dropped out to ski for my first winter. It was my brother, John that made me promise to go back to school. So I went to through Babson and taking summer school classes, playing soccer in the fall, and skiing all winter. And every year John would say, you're going back. So, you know, I think that, that one, the dedication to achieving a goal was big and two, recognize where the opportunities were.

And the VHS tape in the VCR was the technological revolution of the day. And what it did was I believe it's the beginning of social media. It invited niche sports into our homes. Skateboarding, snowboarding, skiing, and extreme skiing. We were in the front of that. We were pre skateboard, pre snowboard. We were putting out the films in a format that now it seems normal. You know, when we first released a film of just skiing and rock music. That hadn't been done in that genre. It seems simple and normal today. And so, you know, my thought was if we could produce the films and control the distribution of the films.

We could then control, better control of our sponsorship to delivering on the promise and package that altogether. And of course, with the Egan brothers, you were getting two. You know, we were, you know, I think our first slogan was Skiing to double your exposure. And that idea that, you know, we, and then we could deliver on the promise that yet people are going to see this.

The most amazing thing about VHS tapes was it sat on people's shelves for really 10 years, sometimes longer. I still have people come up to me and hum a song that's in one of the videos or quote, you know, something from a video. And when I talk to kids today, you know, the problem they're having with social media is that happens too fast. So the legacy is gone, the memory is gone because it's onto the next one. So, you know, seeing that path that wow, we could, we could package this up. Now you know, going back to SquallyWood California. You know, being from the east and going to ski in California without a wool hat was like, wow, it's sunny out here the weather's nice. The snow is amazing. And you could work and shoot photos and videos a lot of days, way more than you could in the west, or even here in the east. So that really became a thing, on a typical day, January, February, March day in Squaw valley. You would have Powder magazine, Ski magazine, Snow Country magazine, Skiing magazine. You know, all these magazines, looking for models and people to jump off cliffs and ski things, then you would have the film producers you'd have Warren Miller, Eric Perlman from the North Face, Greg Stump, you know, Blizzard of Oz, all these things were happening. So, and then there was like a hierarchy of ski talent. And what would happen as you climb that hierarchy? You would get asked to go ski in Europe. And that created a vacuum for the next wave. So when Scott Schmidt starts skiing in Europe, John and I are sitting there and in Tahoe getting all the work. And it really became how we just funneled our way into it.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. Was your most famous ski Grand Targhee?

**Dan Egan:** Well, I think, you know, the most viewed Warren Miller shot of all time is the Egan Brother Cornice Break at Grand Targhee, Wyoming. 1990. And If you Google Egan Cornice you know, or just go to my YouTube channel, this will come right up and you know, this shot of us skiing along the Ridge on Mary's, one, it was so unpredictable. But when you Google it and watch it, think about the camera man.

**Michael Nathanson:** So, so all of our listeners have to view this. What's a cornice?

**Dan Egan:** Well, that's great. A cornice is an overhanging piece of snow with nothing underneath it. So the wind builds up a cornice and imagine we were, we had hiked up to ski Mary's, the camera man was on a different peak. And where was ski patrol? They went to help the cameramen. So nobody would've gotten to us over there. If we had fallen off the backside, that's a 500 foot cliff. So I was on the piece of snow that broke and skied off of it onto the mountain. And John was skiing at the piece of snow that broke. So, it really was spontaneous and couldn't have been planned. And I think you see the athleticism of my brother in that move, you know?

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. It would have been certain death falling over.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah.

**Michael Nathanson:** What'd he say to you when you got to the bottom?

**Dan Egan:** Well, of course, as you know, John, he started yelling and of course nothing new there, you know, brothers were always yelling at each other.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yelling at you?.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah like, hey, whoa stop. I kept skiing. I didn't realize what was happening. And when you have a trauma event like that, a near death piece. Everybody reacts different. When I look back at the mountain and I saw the tracks disappear and then come back to the mountain. I sat down. I was like, wow. My brother he got fired up. There's a couple shots in the film where you watch him jump and basically ski through a tree and just blow up the branches. That was all pent up energy of surviving that.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. Wow, just amazing. So, I'm going to Just to move away from skiing for just a few minutes and I want to note that not all of your adventures during the winter, we're exclusively about skiing. And you talk about some, what I would describe is absolutely terrifying situations in Northern Quebec and especially in Russia. And my sense is that your climb of Mount Elbrus in Russia was a defining point in your life. Will you tell us that story?

**Dan Egan:** Well, in 1990, we were part of an international expedition to climb and ski one of the seven summits of the world, Mount Elbrus. And it's a little known fact that Elbrus kills more people annually on average than Everest.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah, I read that. That was surprising.

**Dan Egan:** Most people think of, of course a lot of people unfortunately have perished on Everest, but because of Elbrus in Russia's pretty accessible. And it's on the black sea. And so the wind and the storms that come off the ocean there just crash into the peak. And on May 2nd, 1990. I was lost on the summit with 50 climbers, and 15 perished. Now the real number we'll never know. The 15 is we're sure, 15 perished. But really, I believe it's more, the Russians never came clean with the numbers. So I was lost in that storm for 34 hours. It's snowed five feet. During that time, the winds were blowing over a hundred miles an hour. I was lost with three members of my expedition, but they would come to abandon me in a snow cave that I had dug. And I don't know of all the situations of why this Russian Sasha went out in the storm but he found me in my cave and saved my life and I had left my crampons and my ice ax outside of my entrance to the cave, but it had snowed so much. I got snowed in.

I believe when he found me I was dead. I was having a white light experience. I was meeting my guardian angel and was having hallucinations. I was vomiting blood. But he, he brought me back, slept with me and warmed me up that night. And the next day he and I rescued 14 people.

We did three crevasse rescues together. And it's a pretty epic journey and it really took me 30 years to process that. You know, it took a long time after that to really come to terms with my career choice. The impact it was having on me and others. And really the trauma of that event. And you know, I open up the book 30 Years in a White Haze with a story about being up in Quebec, lost in a windstorm which is a familiar experience for me even today. You know, if I'm in a cloud or fog on a boat. Or on a ridge of a mountain. I get those feelings again. And as a mountain guide, you know, my job is to think of the worst case scenario for the clients so I can get them home safely. Their job is to think about what a great day they're going to have. But I have to think about all the possibilities.

So I've been living and managing that trauma for a long time, and haven't really spoken about it even, even now my brother John and I have never really sat down over a cup of coffee to talk about that trip.

**Michael Nathanson:** Which trip?

**Dan Egan:** The Elbrus.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah I listened to a podcast that you and your brother did. And it was with a young lady and I'm trying to remember what her name was, but I listened to it as I was doing my research on you. And you both did it together. And the host asked each of you, what your best and worst experiences were. And he actually mentioned Elbrus as one of the worst experiences, because he got separated from you. And didn't know if you had survived.

**Dan Egan:** Sure. Yeah we had got separated that morning. John didn't want to summit you know, for a lot of different reasons. And of course, I always say my 24 year old self would always want to summit. I was there to summit. I had laser focused on it. And so way I went and I wasn't going to have any sort of like, not getting, getting to the top.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. I mean, that's what I took away from the story that you just have an indomitable spirit. And you said you were going to get to the summit. And then a storm basically just approached and hit you at the worst possible time. You were separated. And you got saved by some guy who probably worked for the Russian government.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah, right. And that's what we believe. Yeah. That he did. And his job was to keep an eye on the foreigners.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. So as we're talking about Russia, I have to observe that there is, in my opinion, clearly a geopolitical dimension to your skiing. That is you are not just some fantastic extreme skier. You skied off the Berlin wall which is to say you jumped off of it. I want to hear more about that, but you skied with the Kurds in 1991, you went to Yugoslavia right before the war. You skied in Lebanon where, the way I read it, you basically had to sneak into the country. The list goes on. So what's going on with all of that?

**Dan Egan:** Well, when we, we jumped off the Berlin wall. I don't think we realized that we were standing at the cross section of world events and extreme sports and what that would mean to our career. You know, the photos of us coming off the wall in ski gear is the ultimate shot of freedom. Skiing is a sport associated with freedom. And here we were at a place where we never, if you're a kid in the 70s and 80s, the wall coming down was unimaginable. And the idea of skiing the wall was just so contradicting that those shots really captured people's imagination. And Warren Miller and Eric Perlman and the filmmakers loved it. And what happened of course. We thought, well, where would you go next? And that was Russia during those times. And then it was well they're fighting in Turkey and you know, the Kurds love to ski they're mountain people. So that started this journey and you know, to be at that cross section was fascinating. I remember having a conversation with MTV. Telling them, hey we're going to all these places. It's really cool.

And the producer at MTV said, Dan the M is for mindless. And, you know, in other words, this is way beyond our scope. This is too impactful for what we're doing here. You need another outlet and that's where Discovery and all these other outlets came calling because there they could grasp it. And the, you know what we found in the study of mountain cultures, people want to get along. People like mountains, there's the friendly place. So having conflict in mountains was really something that they hadn't welcomed.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. Well, Warren Miller apparently told you that your skis were like a jet engine that they could take you around the world. And I would say you certainly did that.

I'd like to share an observation with you and then get your insights. And so here's the observation. I have interviewed some, well, extraordinary people on this show. I've interviewed professional hall of fame athletes, and I know you're one too, we'll get to that. Olympic gold medalists. Business titans. People who have changed the world through business.

Politicians, advisors to Presidents, bestselling authors. People who are changing the world on a daily basis. And when I researched them for the show, I usually find some good background information. But I actually think, and this is not an exaggeration, that there is more about you. Then any of these people. Why is that? Why?

**Dan Egan:** That's interesting. That's an interesting observation You know, I think one, aspiration. One day I might do this. You know, people want aspiration in their lives. They work for it. When I think of my dad loading up the family truckster in the morning at 5:00 AM to get all of us kids to go skiing, in the back of his mind, he had to have been thinking, he was going to have a good day, too. And that, planting that seed in people's lives is powerful. And I think that's one of the reasons, you know, the things that we did, I don't know that they changed the world, but I do think they changed the way people, people's perspective of the world. They got to know a culture. And of course, you know, you have to look at the time. In the eighties and the nineties, the world was a hopeful place. We saw change that we had never imagined. And it's so unfortunate that the world did not become more safer. I'm blown away today, sitting here in 2022, that you wouldn't go to most of the places I've been to.

**Michael Nathanson:** I had that thought.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah. And that was not what was happening at the time. So I think the story's coming around again through the book and through the different articles. I think they've always resonated with people. And that could be one of the reasons.

**Michael Nathanson:** Do you think that any person who at a young age, falls in love with skiing and adventure could do what you did? You are, I mean let's put it all out there. You have shown yourself to be an excellent athlete. You are a fantastic soccer player. You're a gifted sailor. Obviously you're a top skier, is it about natural ability or is it just a desire to do something extraordinary?

**Dan Egan:** I think you need to always put in the, in the mix, perspective. and your place in the world and how it impacts that. It takes more than just talent. There's plenty of skiers that were much better skiers than me, for sure.

But I don't know that they had the same vision for distributing the media, delivering on the media packaging the media. I credit a lot of that one with my family. And of course, Babson College, you know, and how they taught all of us there to, to package it and to see the root and the end goal.

I think. You know, having an end goal is important and a lot of people don't have an end goal, per se. So when I talked to a lot of young athletes in a lot of different sports today, and I'll listen to them and in the end, I'll say, look, you dress the same, you act the same. You're on the same social media platform. How are you going to break out of this?

What are you doing that I care about? What are you doing that others care about? And there's a few that are doing it. So it's a new world with how you come up with the mix. But for me, I had an idea of what the mix would be. I mean, I've got it wrong a few times, too.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. Although I do. I mean, I'm glad you, you brought up your, frankly your ability, and I do think that this was more you than John. I think I read that John was in it for the ski. You were in it for something you know, a little bit more than that, including the business angle of it. And I'm glad you brought that up because you do seem to have a gift around marketing. And around bringing the message together, clarifying that message and putting it out there. You know, I wonder if there were other skiers out doing extraordinary things that we've just never heard of.

**Dan Egan:** I mean for sure. You know, have you seen the movie uh, In Search of Sugarman?

**Michael Nathanson:** I have not.

**Dan Egan:** Where the singer from Detroit is really popular in South Africa and he never knew it. And he was more popular than Elvis. And yet he was a laborer. So yeah, there's plenty of people that are undiscovered. My brother, John is a, is a really solid businessman. He, he's a great manager. And, you know, John has provided a lot of insight to me over my life and my career. We go about things differently. And our perspectives on life is different. But, you know, he really, without his business knowledge, the Egans wouldn't have got launched.

And the fact that he got us launched allowed me to do what I did. So it's pretty amazing to me. A lot of fun, but yeah, I think, you know, if you look at you know, Slater and Tony Hawk and all these other athletes and other niches. There's really at the, at the end of the day, there's only a few that can enjoy their career late into their lives.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. And getting back to, you just mentioned John again, so you and John were inducted into the Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame, and that's a pretty special honor. Was that the ultimate honor and validation for you?

**Dan Egan:** It's really quite something. You know, there's about 440 people in the US Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. Of which 130 are alive today. So that blows me away always. And for me, I have found a lot of validation in that achievement. One for the two of us. And to be recognized what we did as a pair. And not individually is really important to me. And two, you know, I think it, it was a mind shift. It happened you know, at a time where I was just turning 50. And coming to a place in my life where I had nothing left to prove. And I think that really helped me put, go over the top of that thought.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah, word is that the the Hall liked you so much in fact, think they loved you, that you were actually invited back multiple times to be the emcee for future induction exercises and I found this quote from one of your speeches that I really loved. "Our job as skiers and snowboarders is to compliment the hill. To leave our tracks, to leave our little piece of art behind. We interact with nature. I mean, who among us in this room is not cruised down an alley, driven through the mountains, looked up and thought, Hey, I'd like to make tracks there? Or what if I jumped off that cliff?" This quote makes me wonder, not only about what motivates you but also just about how you interact with fear. What are your thoughts in that? You must think about that. You must think from time to time. Maybe I'm a little bit different in terms of how I think about that.

**Dan Egan:** Well, I, I think the relationship with fear is crucial in all of our lives. John and I have always spoken about fear. When you're nervous, scared. It's an ancient feeling that should trigger doing things perfect, for survival. Fear is rational and the rational answer to rational fear, is to get it right. And so many times people come to my camps and clinics all over the world. And they get scared. And the first thing they do is the wrong thing. That's an irrational response to rational fear. And that that's a mind shift. So my relationship with fear is one, it's a warning. It's like get on top of your game, stay on top of your game. And if you can't do it, maybe you shouldn't.

So, you know, those sort of things we explored and we explored on the edge. We explored on the edge of cliffs we explored on, in big, steep, remote areas in the Arctic where nobody was coming to get us. And you know, maybe, you know, we had broken down snowmobiles and like you're out here on your own. So when you are your own resource, when you are living life without a net, you need to pay attention to fear to get back home.

**Michael Nathanson:** As I mentioned in the introduction to the show, you've got your hands in many things beyond skiing. And in my opinion, you probably could have done in sailing what you did in skiing. And you seem to be a heck of an entrepreneur. Did everything turn out the way you wanted it to turn out?

**Dan Egan:** You know, I think that's a great question. Everything has turned out the way it should. Regardless of what I think about it, I think that's sort of the ultimate goal. And of course there were things that I wish had turned out differently. Whether it be business ventures, relationships different things, but it's true you know, you get better and bigger and stronger with getting through the hard times. So. I can't wave a wand and redo the mistakes I made and the mistakes others have made around me. But it is what it is. And it has brought me to today. And where I am today is in a place of acceptance. You know what I live by as I want to help others do what I've already done.

That's my mission statement. And that's where my focus goes. Almost all of my projects today are helping others do what I've already done.

**Michael Nathanson:** And what are you working on today?

**Dan Egan:** I'm working on a really interesting movie about racism in soccer, football. Clyde Best is the Jackie Robinson of English soccer. And he's a Bermudian and I'm doing the, the Clyde Best story.

**Michael Nathanson:** So is this a, so like what. tell us a little more about that.

**Dan Egan:** Be a Netflix documentary on Clyde and his impact. And how we overcame the racism in England. As a, as a teenager they would throw monk, they would chant monkey throw bananas on the field, threatened to throw acid on him.

And he just was a gentle giant. His mission statement was if you can't win, don't lose. He played with perseverance. He scored 58 goals for Westham. He won a championship here in the states with beating Pele for the Tampa Bay Rowdies. So he's a real trailblazer, not a lot of people know his story.

And yeah, he's a Bermudian. And while I was working on America's cup during, in Bermuda. Clyde's book had just come out. And I was connected with the Best family, because I had played soccer with Claude's nephew at Bridgestone academy, a very small school in Maine. And Clyde and I would sit around at night in Bermuda and talk about his career and his story. And his book Acid Test had just come out. So he eventually asked me if I would do his film. It's been a while. That was 2017, things take time. But now we've got funding, most of the funding and we're moving forward with the movie.

**Michael Nathanson:** So when can we expect to be able to see that.

**Dan Egan:** We'd like to be in the film festivals and, you know, on a streaming platform by 2024.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. Great, great. so Dan, we're now going to move into our extraordinary teaching segment. And this is where I'm going to ask you questions that I ask all of our extraordinary guests and I warn you sometimes I do some analysis. I compare answers and try to find commonalities among extraordinary people, such as yourself. And sometimes I put those in articles and I'm just fascinated at how you all answer these questions. My first question is what has been your most satisfying accomplishment so far?

**Dan Egan:** Well, it's a big question. But I've had many, I'm blessed to have had many. You know, when I was the general manager at Tenney Mountain, we had, we had snow making technology nobody had. And we made snow all summer. And we had 4,000 people tubing in New Hampshire. That was pretty extraordinary accomplishment. The America's cup relationship with Sperry and, and that whole deal. Extremely proud of that, orchestrating that, and working with that. And of course you mentioned it earlier, the Hall of Fame, I think to me, for myself and for my brother, it was nice to be recognized in that way. And it was also nice for me to interact with John again, as an, as the Egan brothers on that night, that was really special.

**Michael Nathanson:** I'm sure.

**Dan Egan:** And then of course, you know, personally, For me just really how I've chosen to live my life. And my choices around, around that, you know, I'm sober 32 years and I'm extremely proud of that.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. You spoke a little bit about that in your book. You want to say a little bit more about that topic?

**Dan Egan:** Well, you know, you mentioned a movie star, you know, we lived a rock and roll lifestyle and a, I think as a you know, young guy, I just made a lot of choices that were, to live that lifestyle. And I could see, and others could see that it was not going to get me where I wanted to go. So I had to make some tough decisions. To change that and persevere in that direction. And I'm forever grateful for the people that helped me out there.

**Michael Nathanson:** Do you have any regrets?

**Dan Egan:** You know, of course, you know, I think it would be, to live in denial a life to say no regrets. But those regrets and the resolving of those regrets have made me I think, better. And to live with those acceptance, you know, life throws curve balls at you all the time.

And if you can't hit him, You know, I remember as a, as a little leaguer ducking on a curve ball, strike three. And coach saying, you got to hang in there with that one. You know, regrets are a really fascinating thing and I think it's, it would be very egotistical of me to say I have no regrets.

But at the same time, those regrets and you know how I've changed and how I've held on to them and the ones that took a while to get over. It's all part of the process. It's all part of the process.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah my sense is that you extraordinary people seem to embrace these, these regrets and learn from your past experiences and just move on.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah. I mean, I think the moving on is hard. And like I said, the moving on from Elbrus took a long time. You know, I was married and had anticipated being married my whole life. So, being divorced. It's taken years to get over. It was not something I, of course I regret the failing of a marriage.

**Michael Nathanson:** And you were open about that in the book as well.

**Dan Egan:** Yeah. Yeah. You know, I just, that's how I was raised and that's was my plan. And so, you know, plan B and, and, to have to take a look at yourself and say, I'm a single man and what's my place in the community, as a single man. That has brought me into places that I'm so glad, you know, Being a middle school soccer coach for seven years, doing faith based work, community work. A lot of kids need mentors. And, you know, going to explore that with something I've never regretted.

**Michael Nathanson:** Dan, what single tip would you offer that has helped you be your most extraordinary self?

**Dan Egan:** Well, I, A friend of mine said this, this spring he goes there is no plan B. There's no plan B. So life without a net, when I walk out of the door of my house in the morning, I tell myself life without a net. I'm my own rescue. Of course I need others and help others and rely on that. But there's no plan B. The projects I'm working on that's the plan. And not to be distracted.

**Michael Nathanson:** Love that I may use that myself going forward. What's the best advice you've ever either given to someone else or received from someone else?

**Dan Egan:** Listening. You know, learn to listen and listen to learn. There's so much wisdom in that. And in the listening, there is wisdom and in the wisdom there's knowledge, and, and then there becomes understanding, and then you can make a wise choice. Be compassionate. Have empathy. You know, enough of the judging. We don't understand the background of why people are doing what they're doing. So maybe figure that out before you judge.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah. I like that. That's, that's a philosophy I certainly share. What have been your biggest mistakes are learning opportunities.

**Dan Egan:** Well, thinking I knew it all.

**Michael Nathanson:** That's one we all suffer from, I think.

**Dan Egan:** You know, and I think not listening has been that So I think that's, that's part of the process and you know, also not adapting. There were times where I adapted and acted really nimble. And there were times where I held on.

**Michael Nathanson:** Who are key role models or mentors or both.

**Dan Egan:** Well, of course my, my grandfather and my dad. You know, I think of my dad every day. Miss him. And his example, his perseverance, his faith, his loyalty. And, you know, my dad went blind and had Alzheimer's. And he never complained.

I remember watching my dad trying to put a key into a keyhole. And he had developed a way with his hands to guide it. And he wasn't frustrated. And I was like, wow. That's amazing. So to watch that of course Warren Miller taught me so much about life and pursuing business and how to do it and he spent a lot of time with me helping me figure that out. And then just, you know, so many others, all my siblings have taught me so much.

**Michael Nathanson:** I appreciate how you answered that question so broadly that I think you have the sense that there are many people that can teach you and, and have taught you when you are the product of all of that.

**Dan Egan:** You know. Yeah. I think when you go back to your teachers and your coaches, I have one coach every time I see him, he goes, why are you so nice to me? Do I owe you money? And you know, but I've made it a practice to go back and appreciate the people that helped me and I seek them out and I have coffee with them and I say, thank you. And I write them notes and I haven't forgotten. Maybe some I have, of course. But they've made a difference. You know, you asked me what are my accomplishments I think being an author really is of all the things I've done, you know, because my eighth grade teacher was not very encouraging. And the fact that, you know, if I could do one thing over again, I'd learn how to spell, like, but I've persevered with that.

And of all my movies and all the things I've done, the books are the most personal.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah, well for a ski bum that, that does crazy things like, like, you know, jump off cliffs and jump out of helicopters, you are a great writer and you're very articulate as well. You're clearly polished at this.

**Dan Egan:** Well, it's, it's something that I've. I've listened to and, and strive to do. And of course my coauthor with 30 Years in a White Haze, Eric Wilbur, Boston Globe, boston.com. Big sports writer here in the city. He's phenomenal. And the two of us really I think hit it off on this book.

**Michael Nathanson:** Yeah, well I really, I can't recommend it enough. I really enjoyed reading it and yeah, I wasn't sure. I never read a book, I don't think about skiing specifically. And as I said, it's about much more than skiing and it's just so well written in lots of adventure and interesting stories. And you're very honest and I appreciate that. I think your readers probably appreciate that as well.

**Dan Egan:** You know, really a week doesn't go by that I hear from somebody and the connections in the book go way beyond skiing.

**Michael Nathanson:** So you mentioned it earlier and I acknowledge your answer, but I want to give you another chance to answer it again. So a question that I ask everyone is, do you have a personal mission? You did give that earlier, but could you give us that again?

**Dan Egan:** Yeah, my personal mission is to help others do what I've already done. And that's a pretty broad statement. And it happens in a lot of different ways. But I do. I do like that, you know, I have a lot of knowledge and I want to give it all away. I'm not holding anything in to take with me. I want to share it all. And whether that's, you know, on a sailboat, on a soccer field. You know, what I say is that I make my living doing everything my parents taught me to do before the age of 10. And that's really quite beautiful.

And, with the film, the Clyde Best story, what I always say about Clyde is he went into the hardest situation possible. The only black player in the top division of English soccer into every locker room, he was alone. And he did it with the character of doing what his parents told him to do. Be nice to others. It's not that complicated. So I, yeah, that's, that's the goal.

**Michael Nathanson:** I'm really looking forward to seeing that. What do you hope your legacy will be?

**Dan Egan:** To the wake up every day swinging. To be in the game. I don't know what people take away. For me, it has to be more than wasting perfectly productive days skiing, but if that's what people remember. Those are great days for me.

**Michael Nathanson:** I think your legacy will be pretty big and will be pretty lasting as well. And that is the extraordinary Dan Egan. Dan, anything else?

**Dan Egan:** This has been a lot of fun. I really appreciate it. Michael. Thanks

**Michael Nathanson:** Well thank you so much for being on the show. You can learn more about and reach dan@dan-egan.com. That's EGAN, or by reading one of his books, including 30 Years in a White Haze. You can also join me in following Dan on LinkedIn and on Twitter @skiclinics. And thank you to our sponsor The Colony Group. The Colony Group is a national wealth and business management company with offices across the country. That itself seeks the extraordinary as it pursues its unrelenting mission or providing clients with peace of mind. And empowering their visions of tomorrow. To learn more about the colony group and how it manages beyond money visit thecolonygroup.com. You can also follow The Colony Group on LinkedIn and on Twitter @colonygroup.

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