

Episode 5: Cold Truths. SAS Explorer Paul Vicary on Life Lessons from the Poles VICTVS On-Air Transcript

Carly Culver 00:00:06

Picture the scene. It's a few days before Christmas. Sub-zero temperatures, harsh winds. You hungry? You're tired. You drag your belongings behind you. I'm not talking about the latest train cancellation at Leeds Station, but of course, the epic adventure undertaken by our guest today when he followed in the footsteps of Scott and Admundsen and trekked on foot unaided to the geographic South Pole with follow up expeditions to both the geographic North Pole and Everest base camp and as well as a published book.

We are very, very excited to welcome Paul Vicary to join us today to discuss how preparation, resilience and learning through setbacks helped him achieve some incredible feats, both on and off the ice.

So welcome. Thank you so much for joining us at VICTVS on air.

Paul Vicary 00:00:49

Great to be here. Thank you. Thank you.

Carly Culver 00:00:52

So, let's start today by telling us a bit about yourself. Tell us about your background?

Paul Vicary 00:00:56

Okay. I was kind of born into the military at the age of 16, did 35 years. Well, after 22 years with a Special forces, been to all the nice places such as can't name them. And yeah, I'll look them in the eye. Being faced with the environments, I had some great opportunities, got some great transferable skills, which I'm now using out in Civilian street. I would say in my second career, that's where I am now. So I'm delivering and trying to help people reach their goals as well. So that's me.

Carly Culver 00:01:32

And obviously, in between your military career and what you're doing right now, you did some epic adventures. I hinted today, no introduction. So you want to tell me more about that?

Paul Vicary 00:01:40

Yeah. So, you know, I trekked unsupported led by Henry Worsley, two teams, as you mentioned, in the footsteps of Captain Scott, quite literally, which is an amazing experience. You know, like I said, I've I've spent some time in the military, done some pretty gnarly things, hardcore things as such, and but nothing quite prepared me for the Antarctica. You know, it's the harshest environment in the world. Coldest, windiest, driest believe are not. And it was pretty ninja, so is arguably one of the hardest things I've done in my life is the South Pole. And then on the back of that creates an opportunity for myself and the team to go in to the North Pole to get to the geographic North Pole. And that was another story in itself, which didn't quite go to plan. yeah,

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Ben Clayson 00:02:27

well, looking at the speaking about the North Pole adventure, can you tell us what you mean when you say it didn't go to plan?

Paul Vicary 00:02:36

It's good to have a plan, isn't it? You know, coming from the military, you know, you should always have some form of plan. Whether it works, when you're faced with the enemy, you've got to work around it. And unlike the South Pole, which was a great success, but that was that was hard to get there in time. And we achieve that, you know? But the North Pole didn't go to plan because of the climate. This is back in 2016 and it's quite scary when we were there and it's even scarier now, I would say, the whole climate side of things.

But and then we were working with the Russians with our they were a logistics company and stuff like that and what to kind of believe and go with and understand and make things work. And things didn't work because of the environment and because what we've been told and things. So we had to work around things from Plan A flew to Plan D in the end, and it all came down with the mission statement.

Our mission statement was to document what we saw on ice, and we managed to do that, although not quite as planned. And I think it's important to always have a plan.

Ben Clayson 00:03:39

So you mean documenting the environments and you know, kind of things that you experienced and witnessed?

Paul Vicary 00:03:46

Yeah. I mean, coming in using military analogy, you know, we were kind of three guys kind of parachuted in, but we went in by helicopter to do a battle damage assessment really of the environment. And we went in and we witnessed it was pretty scary. You know, it's something like an Indiana Jones Temple of Doom cover kind of scene with whizzing ice blocks and jumping on and off and it's all melting. And it was pretty, pretty scary, really. So and we just came back to record that, you know, through documents and through my book. And also, you know, we've got some film footage as well, which we're trying to pull together to to tell the world this is this is what's happening. But it's it's a bit late now. You know, what we've been faced with, but it's still important to get the message across. I mean, I'm not climate activist as such, but I'm very passionate about what we've seen and witness. And it scared us, all three of us, I would say.

Ben Clayson 00:04:38

you described a 35 year career in the military, including these adventures in probably 30 seconds, which is probably sort of brushing over the sheer volume of content and kind of, you know, commitments and experience that you've had. I'm interested in your take on what is the kind of or what are the key ingredients that have allowed you to achieve so much in that space of time? And yeah, kind of how you managed to get the best out of your career.

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Paul Vicary 00:05:19

It's hard work, you know, and it's it's hard for everyone trying to juggle a busy life, you know, work life balance. And sometimes you're going to make commitments and you've got to be determined and step forward and put yourself in the arena. I could have been quite comfortable remaining in my career in the infantry, but I put myself in the arena as a volunteer to go for special forces, and I was with hard work and determination and everything else that is inside me. It drove me and luckily I was, you know, there's luck as well. I was successful, you know, And I think that drive and determination and self-motivation as well as everything, don't let things put you off. And I'm being buffeted by so much stuff at the moment, and it's quite easy to sit back and stay in a comfort zone.

But sometimes you can push yourself further, a lot further than what you, you know, realize, to be honest. And I think I've built these layers up through my childhood. I call them kind of layers of Kevlar over such know body armor to build and protect me for what I'm faced with. So even though I don't maybe look like this big physical Arnold Schwarzenegger, but it's what's below the iceberg, the determination, the psychological pace is probably one of the most powerful weapons we can have to get through the stresses of life. And that's what driven me to step forward. Yeah.

Carly Culver 00:06:51

What kind of internal and external motivations do you have for kind of putting yourself forward for these challenges? Is that your family? Is that your background? Is it things you faced in your career that you know kind of is forcing you forward to doing these new things?

Paul Vicary 00:07:03

It's a really good question. To be honest. I think I've you know, I've always wanted to join the military from somewhere as a little child, to be honest. It was always inside me. So that drive, I think it's my bloodline as a family and it's driven me. I've got, you know, relations and grandfathers and stuff, and that's part of it that's driven me and always wanted, always knew my direction. So I was lucky in that aspect and that's always motivated me and kept me in the right direction where I want to go. motivating.. I mean, I don't think my family, I've been a bit selfish and sometimes you have to be selfish and cruel to be kind, but you know, I'm paying back now and it's a bit of a mutual thing, you know, between me and my partner and children. And it's sometimes it's a bit of a balance, you know, and juggle and talking about it and getting an understanding from both sides. The family is a difficult one, you know, to juggle in between going on these crazy expedition is juggling time and, you know, the special forces. It's not easy to, to juggle work life, but motivating, I think it comes from inside, you know,

And the fear of failure is a big one for me, using it in a positive way where people are feared to step forward. I use it as a more of a motivator to not let people or let things, you know, put me down and just drive myself forward. So there's a whole reasons why I don't let the family down, don't let the charities down. If I'm doing expeditions, don't let the patron down, don't let the regiment down or whoever, you know. So these things, motivators and on the self-motivation, and then you've got the challenge piece I suppose on top of that, which is, you know, so you don't let yourself down. So there's a whole host of that with having your own values and ethos as well as maybe the organization, values and ethos should drive you forward.

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Ben Clayson 00:08:57

Do you find either of those two things kind of more important than the other? You know, the kind of personal sorts of reasons for doing these things and then those external reasons when things are difficult and you're kind of looking for something to call on to motivate yourself, do you find the personal all those like I say, external motivators more motivating?

Paul Vicary 00:09:22

I think that both work together, but if you're working as a team, you know, as an organization, you've got strong values and ethos, which you have from, for example, you know, the regiment, you know, the unrelenting pursuit of excellence, high standards of discipline, humility, humor and those things bond us then, then that keeps us together and drivers. And if you've got mottos, mantras, things like that, you know, and you don't let the side down, you know? So there's peer pressure that can drive you to do some amazing, great things. If you've got strong ethos and values as well as then having your own values and ethos. And through some of my coaching, what I do is I ask people, what are your values? You know, which I think we should all have values and we should all have our own motto. My motto is to do the best I can and everything I can do with what resources I've got available to me in brackets. But I try and do the best I can, you know, and with what time I've got to the best of my ability. And I think we should all have a motto, all our values and ethos, to drive us to do things. Yeah, You know.

Ben Clayson 00:10:30

so the team aspect is clearly really important to you, and it's kind of, from what you're saying, it doesn't sound like the focus is just, you know, you or you know, me within a particular context, having those shared values and yeah, working together towards collective aims is kind of really beneficial and makes these experiences really positive.

Paul Vicary 00:10:52

It's a strong bond. Yeah. I mean, it's like I said, it's what's below the iceberg that drives you. And if you've got strong values and ethos and your belief as a, as a team, this cohesion, it can really you don't have to wear fancy mottos or cap badges or anything. You don't have to have any of that. It's what's below what's being invested inside you and what you strongly believe in can drive you. And I think that's powerful stuff. If organizations can capture that, it's a huge success, I think. Can you all believe in it? Yeah, it's powerful.

Carly Culver 00:11:26

You got any examples from any of your expeditions where that kind of teamwork aspect of not wanting to let your colleagues down is really pushed you through a hard time?

Paul Vicary 00:11:33

Yeah, I've got numerous examples. But for example, on the South Pole, I mean, we were on our last legs, you know, on a daily absolutely exhausted, physically, mentally sapped, pulling a pulk our sledges, 160 KG. And at the end of the day, when we've come to the end, we would look at each other and we'd say, Let's do. When we tap our ski poles together and say, Let's do one for the Queen. And we do an extra kilometre for the queen, you know, And that's just a bond to say, come on, we can you can still even though we're absolutely exhausted, we can still do an extra kilometre, at least for the queen. I'm not motivated just to do an extra kilometre.

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At the end of the day, we knew it was coming and we only do it. And then we'd use mottos and mantras, you know, let's go always a little further. And that just pushes you, you know, using some mantras and mottos to keep us going, you know? And we'd have a laugh. Humility and humor is a key thing to get, especially in those dark times when we were in pretty horrible weather, stuck in a tent, three guys in the middle of nowhere, you know, twice the size of Australia as such in Antarctica, it's not easy, you know, and you've got to keep your morale going and you have moments of yeah. Some down days and blue days and you've got to keep each other going.

Ben Clayson 00:12:52

Can you describe the your experience of kind of landing in Antarctica and you know, kind of you first sort of the interaction with the place because it's of clearly a very unique.

Paul Vicary 00:13:06

it's amazing. I mean, we landed to get there. You know, the whole journey to get to the start line is can be an epic sometimes in particular for the North Pole, you know. But once we got we knew as a team, once we landed and we started at Captain Scott's Hutt. And that for me was the best campsite in the whole world ever to be beside such a remarkable, you know, impressive hut, and we camped there ready to start. It was amazing. It was like Christmas. I wrote in my diary actually, this is like Christmas Day for me. yeah, it was just in the footsteps of Captain Scott. And, yeah, it was all very spiritual as well, as well as hugely physical and mental. I mean, once we landed, it was quite flat, but once we got around the corner, it changed into an undulating nightmare and mess with crevasses, rifts and climb and 10,000 feet and we didn't know what to expect. And coming from our backgrounds, I think we all thought that we could set a compass on South on the way We'll be there. But it wasn't. It didn't end up like that. It was. It was pretty. Pretty. Ninja. Yeah.

Ben Clayson 00:14:14

How do you or how did you approach your sort of the interaction with the environment in terms of the physical and mental challenge? Did you regard this as a battle with the place or did you try to find a different way?

Paul Vicary 00:14:33

It's really interesting because I've trained in every single environment, you know, from deserts to jungles to the Arctic, kind of for some reason seemed to be steered towards the cold. and, you know, the enemy is the environment and it is actually quite now, you know, there's a climate crisis happening and we're quite fragile and you've got to be prepared and been prepared for those environments. Yeah. Especially in Antarctica where it's the coldest place. And when this place on earth you've got to be prepared and nothing quite prepares you when you step off that plane in Antarctica. Those have been the know what I'm talking about. You have Antarctic shock and on the cold of -40 hits you. And it's a blast of, whoa, this is cold. This is serious. And you need to be, you know, covered up gloves, boots or protected fully. You know, for that environments. However you kind of you know you become acclimatized you adjust your clothing and we went when we started on the Weddell Sea when our start point where Scott's hut was it was quite hot believe it or not.

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Carly Culver 00:15:38

What's quite hot Antarctica?

Paul Vicary 00:15:40

But I got to my I mean -1 third to -20 or -30 on average. Yeah. And then you know on the plateau went to like -40 with wind chill, -50 maybe. I mean so but you've got to really cover yourself up. I mean little any little bit of wind that gets through, you've got problems, you know, and it can create obviously frostbite, frost nip. And I had problems on my hands. I was lucky. It got a little bit my face, a little bit of a scar from what I think cover up, you know, And it's not clever to go out. It's just bad admin really. People come back losing fingers and thumbs and to be honest, it's there's reasons sometimes behind it, but it's not good admin and your admin up there has to be the best it can be because all it takes is you take your clothes off and it blows away. You've got the toilet, your toilet paper blows away and you pick up on these things and you've got to be so you know, and anyone like from the military Marines working in, they know what I'm talking about here is looking after your kit and admin is it's got to be really, really good. Yeah.

Ben Clayson 00:16:47

Did you ever have all of these expeditions? Kind of bad days, you know, from mentally speaking and in terms of kind of do you have doubts creeping in and, you mentioned, being able to refer to those sorts of motivators, but is there anything that you do that you think helps you realize when you're in that kind of bad space and you then able to say, okay, right, I need to pick myself up and, you know, get myself into a better frame of mind?

Paul Vicary 00:17:14

Yeah, I mean, regardless of who we are, you know, I'm just a normal person and we all have our bad days and sad days. And, you know, especially on expeditions, it's it can be exhausting. Being exhausted physically can affect you mentally, you know, and a month in, stuck in a tent with two other guys. You know we had a satellite phone but we be quite restricted on when we call for example because you know that if you call your loved ones, it could affect you emotionally. So but I think I have one instance where I spoke to my loved one and it created quite a lot of emotions, a blue time and an attempt with two of the guys. And you try not to show any sign of weakness, you know, But yeah, we all affected and the other guys at moments as well. It's normal, but I think working as a team and understanding that and picking each other up and we had moments where we wouldn't admit it was tough. You know, And I think sometimes to admit it's tough is takes courage, especially with a with an organization like that.

We were in a tent I remember was a really, really tough day. I wrote my diary. This is a tough day. And the next day this is even tougher day. And then you get the idea. Yeah. And we sat in the tent and the guy looked at me and he said, Vic, Did you find that tough?

That's how I yeah, that was a hard one. And he just needed to hear that, you know? And I think that sometimes and he just went, I'm glad, because that was a hard one, you know, And sometimes just realizing your strengths and weaknesses and getting each other over the start line, over the finish line as a team is so important using motivators. You know, it's a bit below the iceberg, like I said, that that is hidden to get us through things ways of coping with things such as, you know, I had music and when one iPod in the South Pole, I soon realized I wanted more when I had three in the North Pole.

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Carly Culver 00:19:13

What where you listening to?

Paul Vicary 00:19:16

yeah, I that were an eclectic mix, actually, in the whole mix of different music. Some old stuff, the new stuff and stuff, which I realize in the North Pole, that's what I wanted, you know, And I missed. I'd found the three or four songs funny. I don't know that in the South Pole. And I knew every single kind of one of those songs when it came on. It kind of all fast forward, but I only have so much limited battery life and I was so gutted at the end. I mean, because it would tell you half an hour that it's running out of power. And I thought, now I've got half an hour left and but certain songs on there kind of motivate me or not, you know, I had a bit of a mix really from the Eagles believe it or not, yellow to Johnny Cash. and then War of the Worlds, these other things, just a whole variety of different things, you know, just to keep me going some eighties, you know,

Carly Culver 00:20:14

not just exclusively songs about warm things?

Paul Vicary 00:20:16

No, no. And that's the good thing. So that music has really helped me. But also, it's funny to say that because I used when I was in a very cold place, I would take my mind set warmer places like So I got married in Saint Lucia and I go to nice warmer climes, a bit like Captain Scott writes in his diary, actually, about when his mind was in a very dark place. You think of pleasanter times, and that's kind of so there's not a black art. This isn't a black, but it's a very powerful way of switching from a cold place to warm place in your mind.

And also, as I'm walking, I've got my dog beside me, obviously not in real life, but my vizsla, Bentley he was a dog and he'd be beside me and keep me company, you know? And I kind of look at him in a in a way that sounds weird, doesn't it? But he was there beside me and supporting me, so. And then my family and in a spiritual way, we thought, you know, Scott and his team were there. We'd go through blankets of fog. I mean, it's really weird weather conditions out there. And we're talking like it looks like a wall of fog out there and proper wall. And as he walked through, I remember one time where we were walking through and it felt like Scott and his team was coming back the other way. And we, like really high fived them. You know, it's really weird. Maybe that's my mind's you know, you have because you're absolutely exhausted. You've got to realize at the end of day, in your in your sleeping bag and there was a time this is going to sound a bit weird as well. well, I looked in the creases of the of the tents and I saw Captain Scott in the creases of the tent, you know, I mean, that's probably psychosis. I'm fully exhausted. I'm seeing things. But I had that moment and thereafter, every day I looked at attempt to try and find him again to it didn't turn out it it was just at once. But I think maybe I was just exhausted. Or was it that was spooky. Yeah.

Carly Culver 00:22:03

Well, obviously, obviously, his initial trip was your inspiration behind doing the doing the expedition in the first place. Yeah, I'm interested to hear you refer to it. Diaries, actually, the fact that you kept a diary throughout the course of things, have you sort of gone back to that in after? And does it surprise you what you wrote at the time compared to sort of in hindsight, what it looks like to you?

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Paul Vicary 00:22:20

Yeah, I mean, I should have bought it today. I meant to bring it along with me, but I haven't opened that diary for quite a few years, to be honest. I wrote it. I mean, journaling is a very powerful thing to do, and I promote anyone to journal, you know, because you find, you know, ways that you eating, sleeping triggers, things like that. How you feeling? So journal in general is really good on expeditions. It's amazing because we are Captain Scott's diary and his diary was amazing word for word. And then the next day funny thing when this is literally is footsteps what he's written the night before we would read and then I'd keep my diary and he kind of the way he wrote it kind of influenced me I think, to the way I wrote as well. And but I opened up on a Christmas, I think two Christmases after we come back, and he was quite upset. And to be honest, I was I got quite emotional to close it and go, This is a bit much so, but I only open up at certain times. Yeah. And it's, it's a powerful thing because when I came back, my father passed away and stuff like that. So it's a very emotional journey.

Ben Clayson 00:23:30

You mentioned fear of failure as a kind of motivator early on. I'm intrigued by that because I think there's a danger with fear of failure specifically that it turns from being just fear, which is just a kind of a very acute response to something into anxiety about failure, a feeling and I'm interested in kind of your take on that sort of idea, because I think it's really important to approach failure as a very positive force and fearing it is probably not the right sort of or not helpful if it turns into that anxiety.

Paul Vicary 00:24:15

Yeah, fear concern. You know, it's a stress. So it's a targeted threat, isn't it? You know, fear and it creates this I call it the shaky person initiate flight fight response in your body. And we fear we don't want to do it. We don't want to step into these places that you know, but sometimes it's worth taking that step, you know, and obviously risk versus gain and just being aware of fears there. But break the cycle of of fear, I think sometimes and you'd be quite amazed, but it takes quite a lot for that step. But it is a huge motivator and to in a positive way, people fear it because and then it creates negative thoughts, it creates anxiety. All these effects on you worry when actually sometimes you just got to take the, you know, bite the bullet and go for it.

Ben Clayson 00:25:05

And then we know that there's the you know, from that sort of background, people say it's better to try and fail and to not try at all. Yeah, but that seems to be missing a lot in a lot of kind of popular media where people are just told this idea of kind of, you know, it's all or nothing. Yeah, you know, you're a winner or a loser and everything's really binary. And it's not like that because I would imagine that some along the way you've experienced kind of moments where you have to effectively fail and test and adjust and try something new.

Paul Vicary 00:25:39

Yeah, I agree. I mean, I think you've got to be uncomfortable to be comfortable as in training for that eventuality, that stress moments. And yeah, I think failure can really push you to the limits and drive you to do these things.

Ben Clayson 00:25:59

Failure is experience and that's, you know, what you learn from then that's what helps you succeed. I think somebody told me that the concept of kind of surviving in the mountains to be a series of very

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close almost failures and yeah, you know, over the course of years you develop skills by not quite failing so badly that you don't.

Paul Vicary 00:26:22

Yeah. And you know, I come from an organization where not always successful. We learn from our lessons and I think sometimes by failing, you actually learn a lot of lessons and pick yourself the ability to pick yourself back up, shake yourself off, learn from those experiences, then drive yourself forward, and then hopefully you're successful or you try again and then try again. You know? And I think that that takes a lot of courage, a lot of strength to do that. But you learn a lot of things, you know, from our childhood, from our failures in our childhood, from those exams to drive in, test riding a bike and picking yourself back up. You know, we've done it. It just so happens I think as we grow older, we become a bit more fearful of the risks and the worry and we've been buffeted and hang on, why can't we?

You know, so I think driving itself through that, learning from your failures, your mistakes, and then picking yourself back up, I think Confucius says something like, you know, it's better to get back up if you put back down, you know, So there's lessons to be learned there. Yeah, Yeah. Fear is a very big motivation. We shouldn't be fearful of fear.

Ben Clayson 00:27:26

No. Yeah. No, I think fear is good. But when it turns into dread and anxiety, then it becomes a really negative thing. And that's something to watch out for.

Carly Culver 00:27:35

I think it's when it turns into an action. And that's what we're really saying isn't it? it stops you from doing something that is not useful at all, whereas when it's a motivator, then it forces you to try new things or try things in a different way or something like that that actually is useful for pushing yourself forward, whereas it does often convert to inaction, which I'm not going to bother trying at all because it might not turn out the way I expect it to, which isn't very useful.

Paul Vicary 00:27:58

You know, the old adage you never know unless you give it a go and don't let fear stop you. But it's easier said than done. You know, probably the listeners out there thinking, yeah, that's easy to say. You know, I'm scared of heights and things like that. And but actually that creates anxiety and, and things. It's not that easy. Or they might be fearful of snakes or whatever, but I use a, take for anxiety, for example. You know, there's a bit of a model I use. So you've got the bottom line is really, you've got an inability to cope and then above that you've got a fear of danger. If you got those two together, it creates anxiety, you know? So the whole idea is if you can build on the bottom part, as in your ability to cope, it's going to override the danger.

Anxiety will still be there, it is normal to have anxiety, and that's going to help you hopefully override the anxiety and push yourself forward, you know, to, you know, to stand on the stage and talk. It's normal to be nervous, to have that shaky person inside you. But if you can build on, you know, your ways to cope, it's going to help you. You know, I didn't know we're talking about first of all, that might help, you know, I mean, and, you know, control your nerves and have ways and breathing techniques and all this type of stuff. You know, that's just an example, really. So we've gone from fear to anxiety. I thought you understand that it's kind of similar. You know, negative thoughts as well can prevent preventers and they can spiral out of control and really prevent us from doing what we want to do,

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you know? So how do you get yourself from these negative thoughts and other negative thoughts you mentioned earlier?

You know, on my expeditions, you've just got to reverse your mindset. You know, now that some acronyms slide in door moments in my life where it's been so tough and difficult and you've just got to kind of try and overcome them, you know, and really bad times, really the negative times and try and turn it into a positive or learn from that and then move on.

Carly Culver 00:30:02

Let's talk more about your let's talk about more your expedition to the North Pole then. So kind of how did that come about? What was the purpose?

Paul Vicary 00:30:08

Yeah, I came back from the South Pole quite exhausted. One thing we haven't spoken about is really our partners, you know, the support. And, you know, I had the support of my partner and having that support is very powerful and off work and friends and family who motivate you and help you. You know, I use an analogy called, well, an acronym called Pesto. It's in my book having the perseverance, the effort to support the time and opportunity. That's the recipe to success.

And one of those is support. You know, So I came back, I had to pay my wife was heavily pregnant, and then three weeks after I think I came back, we had the birth of our child. But her, her journey was totally different to my journey, you know, and the struggle that she had back in the real world, I would say was very difficult. You know, she kept her diary. I read it. It was totally different to mine. And then I came back, but I still had I was exhausted to miss six months to recover from that. I had no strength and I had to build myself back up. And people thought, I've been on holiday. You know where you've been on holiday? You know, the banter zone and all that business. I just got back into it.

But I still have this doubt of I still want to go back and do something again because, you know, the great white silence kind of lures you back. And, although I loved Antarctica, I thought, let's, let's look, you know, maybe let's go north. And I spoke to one of the guys and he was interested and came on board. So we hatched this kind of plan. I didn't tell my wife at this stage, you know, for obvious reasons. That came later and I kept it. She kind of knew they pick up on these things, you know, and they worked out. She worked it out. But we then saw another guy once up and visited him who had been to the North Pole. Because I think the key thing is and all of this is understanding, understanding the environment is reading about it. and this guy had been there, so we went and gate-crashed his little party. He was having, and we got an understanding from him. And actually, you know, he gave us a bit of an ultimatum as well and said, look, can I come on your, your expedition? So we said, well I like working in threes. We why not. Is a bit longer story than that. But anyway he came on board and we had the Three Amigos as such and we started planning and hatching a plan towards the North Pole.

But it wasn't easy because you've got to raise money for these expeditions. It takes time. It takes person of pesto, perseverance, and we had some moments of real letdowns. We had, we had we had a patron who sadly passed away, a guy called Henry Worsley. we had huge setbacks that sent ripple effects, you know, a loss of anyone. And he, you know, Henry led the expedition to the South Pole, and then he was a patron for the North Pole. And then we lost him. It was it was devastating, you know? So we had these moments trying to get the money. We couldn't get the money because people, you know, I'm not going to pay for my holiday. But to go to sponsors and say, look, we can do this, and trying to say, look, this is our background. Well, we can say backgrounds and stuff, but and try and, you know, influence to part from their money and support us is really, really difficult. And we're talking, you know,

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hundreds of thousands of pounds a year to go and do these crazy expeditions and we were mad enough to go and do these things and we weren't getting much money.

So the money and everything else around us creates anxiety, loss of motivation as well as, you know, juggling work life. It just kind of fall by the wayside. And suddenly one of the guys fell by the wayside. He said, Now this isn't going. And he went off and did his own little expedition, actually. So and there was just left with the two amigos, so had to get someone else. And we had another manager of someone from the South Pole came on board and we had three. So it is this whole journey. It took some years. I mean, I'm saying we come back in 2012 and we didn't actually depart on the North Pole expedition until 2016. So it took four years of planning setbacks. It's not easy. So anyone thinking of planning a major expedition to the North Pole, it's it takes a bit of work.

Carly Culver 00:34:21

that's your advice. Then start. Start at least four years.

Paul Vicary 00:34:24

But it's not impossible. You know, there's some great places to visit out there in the whole world that haven't been visited. It just takes planning and preparation and you will get setbacks. Having a plan, you know, is key, and I've set that at the very start.

Carly Culver 00:34:38

As you've mentioned, a few setbacks there, but what didn't you plan for? What was a surprise? What can you possibly have planned for?

Paul Vicary 00:34:45

Basically, first of all, we were set back in the first year. We were going to go from Canada to the geographic North Pole, by the way, was about five North Poles. Okay. And Geographic North Pole was is the main one, which, you know, expeditions and polar explorers want to go towards from the coast to be unsupported as best as possible or support. Question mark. So we went to Canadian Logistics Company and they said yes initially, and then suddenly they pulled out in the first year because it was the ice was cracking there, you know, it's getting risky. They're not getting the money from people going there. So that was cancelled. So that was a setback. And then we turned to the Russians and it was all looking quite good to by the Russians. But then our visas got refused in 2016, just before we were going, our group Visa and these UK political, you know, ties weren't, you know, going very well at this stage.

So they refused our visas and that was a huge setback. And then we had the death of of having another setback. It was just all getting on top of us. And we were, you know, mourning as well in a very sad place. We had the money at this stage, it took four years to get this money, but we didn't have the green light to get out there.

So that was that was a huge we didn't tell our sponsors that. But actually there was a turning point at Henry's funeral where we met a guy and he was instrumental in linking up with a logistics company and helping us get to the North Pole. So, you know, there's sometimes there's glimmers of hope, blessings in disguise. However, you know, don't just give up.

Ben Clayson 00:36:25

How did you find the movements across the ice in the North Pole or in the Arctic? Compared to Antarctica?

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Paul Vicary 00:36:33

It's hugely challenging. You know, it's the Arctic Ocean and it's moving around. It's only, you know, a couple of meters thick and then you're in deep, deep ocean and it's spinning around as such.

It's, you know, it's not static. So your compass kind of goes a bit crazy. So when you stop, you know, you've got negative drift, a positive drift. And, you know, if you go in backwards or forwards, you know, well, luckily we were in positive drift, so we'd wake up in the morning, I'll check the GPS. And actually we've traveled an extra mile, which is a bonus. Yeah. And that's just sitting in a tent. So you can imagine it's moving all the time. And to get to the geographic North Pole, there's nothing there, you know, So. And everyone's geography in North Pole is different, you know, because of the Arctic Ocean. So where I planted my flag 5 minutes later, if someone came, it would be different, you know, not many people know that.

So when we got there, eventually we put the flag in and celebrated up our tent. The Russians were coming to pick us up and we had drifted, you know, over two miles in that period of time from 2:00 to 7:00 in the evening, two miles. And they had to go and find us because we drifted that far away. So it's totally different to the Antarctic, where it's an island, you know, and it's ice fake miles thick, you know, and you've got polar bears up in the north as well, where penguins down south.

if you know that and it's a bit warmer up in the north and scarily warm, to be honest. We woke up one time in the tent and that's why we were going there and it was dripping, you know, in our tent. It was melting. Yeah. You know, and that's not normal. And we were faced with water, which we had to kind of get over and cross, and you could see the steam rising. You know, these are melting there. So it's a very challenging environment and you get it wet where ice floes crash together and build these big ice walls and you've got to get over them. And that that you see them about every 100, 200 meters. So it's like a battlement of defences you've got to get through to keep battling your way through. And it's exhausting. It saps your energy. The sun is our friend, but when the sun goes and it went quite often we were left in darkness, you know, and to navigate and get your way through, you can't see the depth and you're falling over and it can be quite challenge even more challenging then. So yeah, it's a really tough I mean really, really tough environment out there.

Ben Clayson 00:39:00

So how would you describe sleeping in Antarctica effectively on a snow bridge from the sound of things surrounded by holes that disappear into nothingness? So in comparison, would you which one would you say is a more sort of frightening environment? And, you know, how would you deal with the fear that must the company being in a place that has so many kind of intrinsic threats to your safety,

Paul Vicary 00:39:29

they've all got risks in one way or another. You know, down south, it's crevasses. Up north, it's the fragile Arctic Ocean. You can hear it cracking, you know, So when you set your tent up, you do lie there and you think, hang on, it could crack and we could fall through the air, you know, and it has happened to some explorers. So you've always got that in your mind. My biggest worry, I think, was putting more to north. I couldn't wait to leave the North, actually, because I felt it was just hugely risky. And this was in two than 16. Yeah. Alone. You know, how many years have passed now to how dodgy is up there now? I would say it's melting, so there's more of a risk up north. The logistics company is very you know, while we were in the hands of the Russians, there was a logistics company. God knows what's happening now. But I don't think there's been any expeditions up around that area for the past while since we've been there. So, you know, I'm not saying we're going we were the last human beings to

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walk. Maybe we might be you know, it might be just they are talking. It could just be boats traveling there because it can be water in the next ten years. It's scary. It really is scary. And we should open our eyes up to what's happening around us in the climate.

Carly Culver 00:40:39

So I quite like the metaphor of the shifting ice in the north obviously that relates just to everyday life. Nothing ever stay still. So how have you applied the lessons that you learned there to kind of coming back to the real world, as she said, civvy street? How does that how does that play?

Paul Vicary 00:40:54

Yeah, I mean, coming back from these expeditions, you know, I write my diary, what I'm going to do and the motivation when I come back, you know, and sort this out and sort that out because, you know, making a cup of tea in the Arctic isn't that easy. You've got to get the you've got to get the ice in the Arctic. You've got to get the top, you know, the bottom layer, because the top layer is for the salt. So you've got to get that. Then get a boiler up or you've got to put your tent up, boiler up, you know, and it's not that easy.

Whereas here in the, in you know, in our worlds is just a flick of a switch, you know, in the kettles boiled, you know. So I think coming back to that and realizing how lucky we are with what we've got and being grateful for what we have, I think that was a key. That's a key thing. But sadly, when I do come back and I adjust, you know, I then adjust back into the culture and what's being created, you know, and it's a bit doom and gloom really, you know, you put the TV on, there's, you know, what was being faced with what we've been told and stuff and what we've seen in the world can really put us down. Can't it, you know, in effect, our mental health.

And so adjusting back and then, you know, we're approaching Christmas now and the chaos of Christmas here and people buying and it's not all about, is it? You know, So I think there's we've got to come to reality and just manage our own stresses and sometimes just be grateful and wake up to what we've got around us.

And to do that sometimes that's why I go out on these expeditions is to wake me up, you know, and be uncomfortable, to be comfortable again, you know, And it only takes six months and I'm back into, you know, the Netflix binge or whatever. And I do, too, you know, once in a while. I don't mind that. But we've got to be careful. We can quite easily sit comfortably in our armchair, not go out the door, you know, when actually training, for example, for selection, you know, I had to go out and all those weathers to be uncomfortable for what I was going to face, you know, So sometimes we can have a motivated to get out and get out and about and enjoy the world and have the wind in you and face the cold and go, Wow, okay, this is real. And joy, you know, we learned a lot of lessons, I think, during COVID. But sadly, I don't think we have a lot of people have just carried on. Let us learn from those lessons about nature, about looking after ourselves, you know, looking after our health and things like that. But we soon accelerate on in our and our journey. And I think we miss some of the valuable things in life and ways to cope and deal with things.

Carly Culver 00:43:35

tell us more about what you're doing now.

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Paul Vicary 00:43:39

Since leaving the military, I mean, I was set myself up for leaving. I think that's a key thing with the, you know, if you leave an organization like that from a long time, I mean, that's 35 years. You need to be prepared for when you leave, you know? So I was lucky that I was I was starting to get my ducks in a row. I had some great transferable skills, paramedic skills, physical paramedics skills. And I was already doing a bit of work kind of outside setting my little business up. And it was working, you know, and, and people are enjoying what I was delivering training consultancy. And it took a step out. I realized this is why I want to go with these great skills. It's time to leave, which is difficult to do sometimes, to leave an organization and move on. You know, 10% of veterans do struggle on and I kind of knew my direction and want to do is not easy. Don't get me wrong. You know running your own business in the current climate is not easy, but I'm enjoying it. It's rewarding, but I'm in now, in the world of I deliver medical skills, but I deliver most importantly as mental health training consultancy. And that's an area which I'm really passionate about. It's an area maybe we don't talk that much about it and coming from our sector, we don't talk about it that much.

I've seen colleagues sadly pass away and in their lives, you know. And so I want to, you know, ready with saving lives as a business. Business is called Excalibur Mental Health. And so we're doing some great things there. And then I've stepped out with what I'm doing kind of now under paulvicary.com and trying to help people reach their goals with resiliency coaching. I'm a mental fitness coach, performance coach, however you want to word it to try and help people, you know, on a 1 to 1 or group to get them to try and achieve their goals. You know, I'm fully qualified, experienced, as you've just heard that, and just to help people in their daily lives, just to do something and get out and break the mold and have a problem.

So with my transferable skills of the mental health and coaching and it all works quite well together, you know, and I really enjoy it. And is challenging, but it's also rewarding. Yeah.

Ben Clayson 00:45:52

having completed all of these challenges and having done everything that you've done and now running your own businesses and working, you know, as a civilian, when is a good time to give up. Not necessarily for you, but when is giving up a good thing.

Paul Vicary 00:46:14

I think there comes a time when you do have to put your hands up, you know, like for me we live in the military, you know it was, I decided, you know, there comes a point, you know, maybe you become ill or, or sick or too old or you can't do this anymore, you know? And there comes a decision, a difficult decision maybe to decide why it's time to do something else. You know, maybe hopefully you've been planning a bit before that. But illness and sickness happens sometimes, doesn't it? And it strikes us down to change our direction. So there is times, you know, we've been talking about values and ethos driving us to do some great stuff, which is which is. But it can also leaders in a negative way, you know, to drive us too far over the edge to burnout, you know, So we have to be careful and aware of that. So now, since me leaving my own business now I have I try and have work life balance. I spend time with my family as best as possible and I'm juggling everything, but I'm in control of it. You know, I plan my you know, my breaks, my holidays, you know, and I know what I'm doing. I look after my health probably a lot more. You know, I go to the gym, I've got a routine in the morning. I've got it now in the military. I but I'm doing it my own life and I'm more in control of it and it's rewarding.

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So I think work life balance is so, so difficult. But we can we win control of it. You know, it's not easy. Having a blend is even better. You know, work life blend, if you can do that. I mean, wow. Yeah, it's amazing.

Ben Clayson 00:47:48

Yeah. I think it ties in with the what we were talking about with kind of the fear of failure and so on, which is that kind of giving up is perpetually presented as a very negative thing. When in fact it shouldn't really be seen as that because giving up on something which is detrimental to you or that has a higher costs to benefits ratio. Yeah, that's a good thing. Giving up on something that's bad is a good thing. So yeah, making it into a positive again is kind of, you know, really key. I think

Paul Vicary 00:48:17

it can be a very difficult decision, you know, but giving up can be for the benefit the family, benefit Your own health, you know, and saying, look, you know, and you hear of cases in the media where, you know, politicians or people like that have to step down for their own mental health, you know, And, you know, suddenly we are seeing, you know, organizations like poor working conditions where people are going off sick because of stress and burnout. They've been pushed too far. That person goes, and then it's left to the rest of the group, the team to pick that person's gone. Yeah. And then they start to burn out, you know, And we've seen all these people go from go sick from work, you know, due to depression or stress. And it's a whole problem. And we've seen all these strikes and because of poor working conditions and it's around us. So we go it takes even more now, I think, to look after our team, look after it. You know, look, if you can look after yourself, you can look after your team. But sadly, I think some organizations out there aren't look, they're more worried about keeping the lights on than maybe looking after their staff, you know, And it's the staff that's the key thing to keeping the organization going, though.

Ben Clayson 00:49:26

What you just said a minutes ago, it's really interesting because you if you take that negative label of giving up and you say, right, okay, we don't want to be negative, so let's make it positive, which is you're in control, which is a much better and productive way of approaching a decision, for example. Yeah. And yet that then carries with it a degree of personal responsibility. And I think it's quite important that people who are kind of potentially finding things difficult, for example, understand that there's responsibility, that it's a kind of address it, and that might not be easy. I'm not saying that it's, you know, something that's very simple for everyone, but I think it's something that's perhaps under-discussed that sort of taking responsibility for yourself is a key ingredients, in my opinion. And what do you think?

Paul Vicary 00:50:20

No, I agree. I mean, I come from, you know, the special forces background is you empowered within, but you have set boundaries to work within. You know, you're empowered to go off and create things with what resources you've got available. You have bosses, you know, but you can work within these boundaries. And having the ability to do that, I think, is powerful. You know, having autonomy and the ability, but also having bosses who have empathy, but also compassion, you know, I mean, and you'll get more than others rather than telling someone you will do this, do that to that, you know, but you can do it in a different way, you know.

And sometimes, you know, it's not about team medals. It's about just saying thank you and having, you know, being a good boss and saying thank you. You done a really good job there. I'm rewarding

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them in another way. You know that that gets so much out. The staff, you know, and we're not seeing that, you know, and I haven't seen that sometimes in my career, which is quite, quite sad, really. You know, from the background I came from that we should have more empathy. And you'll get a lot of your team.

Ben Clayson 00:51:23

You've mentioned the kind of absence of feedback as a really interesting characteristic of your former career, and I think that's very interesting because it's something that I think most people would find really weird. The idea of not having feedback to respond to, And so you're left with the assumption that what you're doing must therefore be okay, but no one's telling you everything's fine and well done. And so on. Do you think that creates and encourages resilience and sort of independence? So do you find that it can be damaging.

Paul Vicary 00:51:59

feedback is a gift. Yeah, I mean, and having feedback I like any type of feedback is great. Positive or negative.

Carly Culver 00:52:06

You're doing great Paul.

Paul Vicary 00:52:08

And learning from that, you know. So I, you know, do my training always from a feedback forms and I always read them and I always act on them, you know, but coming from an organization where you don't get, you know, much feedback, sometimes it's good, but sometimes just be aware. I think it's nice to have some feedback, sometimes because feedback can actually play. If you don't get it, you can play on your mind, Am I doing this right? Is this okay or what? And I just need a little bit of a nudge or influence in the right direction and say you're doing a good job. Well done. You know, I mean, a little sit down that 1 to 1 monthly, 1 to 1 can help and you can check on the person as well. How is their mental health and steer them in the right direction. A little bit of feedback. Yeah, we do have to give, you know, loads of glorious, you know, blowing smoke up there. Obvious. Yeah, but just enough I think. But feedback is key is a gift but at the right time is important having no feedback. And that's why I've come from a bit of an organization where you don't get much you can play in your mind sometimes, sometimes a negative way.

Carly Culver 00:53:15

It doesn't give you an opportunity to learn and grow and change, does it? If you get nothing back at all, you've got no motivation then to make a change to the work that you're doing. So yeah, any feedback, positive or negative, is even going to push you more towards the right direction or away from something you shouldn't be doing.

Paul Vicary 00:53:29

Or it might be that you're doing a very good job to keep it going, you know? But it's nice to hear that, you know, nothing is like, that's a bit weird. Yeah,

Carly Culver 00:53:39

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Have you got any practical tips then for organizations about sort of supporting staff I've talked to you mentioned some practical examples, but you've had top three things. If you were advising us as to how we can support people.

Paul Vicary 00:53:51

Well, I think, you know, promoting a positive mental health culture for an organization, it's vital. Having a mental health policy and action plan is key and a lot of organizations haven't. It's not legislated at the moment to have, for example, mental health first aid in the workplace. But having someone you can turn to who's experience qualified. where do you turn? Where do people turn to if they're sick and not well, as in a mental health space and having that support and action plan? Because I think what we see is a lot of people go off sick and we never see them again, you know, because they're not flooded together or looked after.

You know, we're quite happy to say, yeah, I'll see you later and is quite happy to boot people out of organizations. For example, you know, they've been taking drugs or alcohol, you know, but we've never sat them down and actually got to the root cause of why you feel unless you know, why are you taking alcohol? I'm here to help you. We can get help for you, you know, rather than like zero tolerance. We go, you know, we might we might actually retain people more if we actually, you know, do that, for example. So I think looking after your staff more, get an understanding of why, you know, people might not be feeling well, you know, and we can do that through focus groups surveys, you know, and then the benefits of of promoting a positive mental health culture which use sickness, absence, you know, I mean, attracting talent for that organization.

You have organizations out there who are doing this totally wrong. You know, I mean, and people aren't going to go won't want to work for that organization. So they go to places where they are looking after their staff, you know, So the whole benefits of promoting is vital. That's my top tips is don't keep the lights on. Well, keep the lights on. Keep your bottom line going. But look after your staff. You know, and I mentioned that before.

Ben Clayson 00:55:43

Yeah. So just on that, you said setting people down and, you know, finding out how things are and so on, which kind of brings me back to my earlier question, really. But it's just about the kind of do you agree that people need to sort of engage with those processes because if I think about it from a kind of physical health and fitness perspective, you have to start by doing the basics well, which means kind of turning up and being consistent and so on. But I do understand that if people are kind of, you know, struggling and particularly internally, then if someone says to them, are you okay, it can be really difficult for people to say, not really because something's bugging me, but it can also be even if they do kind of, you know, engage with that process, it can be really difficult them to then subsequently engage with anything that, you know, you kind of might try to do. And I'm interested, you know, kind of if you've got ideas about, you know, how you can break through that kind of ice cold, it's kind of like funk. We were chatting last night and I this telling, it was like you kind of if you know, you're in a bad space. Yeah. If you have that kind of self-awareness. And I think it's a huge advantage because I know if I'm in a bad mood and then I kind of go, right, I'll just have to wait for it to go away. But some people don't. So, you know,

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Paul Vicary 00:57:02

it's it works both ways. You know, from employer to employee, employee is going to invest in, you know, working within the boundaries and all that, but looking after themselves, this is the key thing is being able to look after themselves. Sadly, a lot of people don't know how to eat properly or exercise and they need education. So the first thing is education and education is key. You know, education in mental health, education, look after themselves having programs like that, you know, because they can look after themselves, they can look after that team, you know, And that's something I promote and keeping everyone, you know, and then working within boundaries. And then the bosses, given the opportunities, the training, the education, you know, and allowing them. And if they are struggling, well, we need to sit down and maybe be able to help them and steer them in the right place and give them some benefits in kind and helping them. Yeah. So I think there's two sides to this as an employee is looking after themselves and working for the boss as such, working for those bosses within those guidelines, you know, attending the training and vice versa. Again, two way street. Two way street. Yeah. And if you have that engagement, that good rapport and they've influence and engaged and you know you want a winner.

Ben Clayson 00:58:24

Yeah. Because it all comes back to the team. Yeah. The team working effectively together and then everybody's you know Yeah. Play into their strengths and addressing weaknesses and that's really, really ideal.

Paul Vicary 00:58:36

Yeah. I mean you can have social events. I mean Christmas is coming up. That's a good thing, you know I mean for so should get to know your team and stuff like that.

Ben Clayson 00:58:46

you mentioned taking a lead approach to how you deal with stress. Could you elaborate more on that for us.

Paul Vicary 00:58:56

Yeah. So, so stress is, well, extreme pressures dealing with extreme pressures to be honest. And I think stress has got bad press. You know, stress is there is an emergency response is to respond to a threat. You know, it creates that fight or flight freeze and it's they since cave man cave women days you know that sabretooth tiger wives and you've got to react you know and that's what it's there for. And sadly, what I think is happening is because of bad press, poor press, you know, we're putting people into stress straight away. We're being stressed out quite literally. Where we should really train.

People are under pressure. Progressive pressure is the key. I think answer to dealing with, you know, and for me, for example, in my military career, you know, for facing the battlefield, which is a huge life stress, you know, incident, shooting, shooting back at you, you know, you've got to train on the Rangers, shooting, you then maybe go into a building, you might turn out the lights, it might get filled with smoke. You know, you might have some good guys and bad guys and you get the idea. But it's all progressive stresses, you know, and time on the range time preparing your core drills and skills and then eventually, boom. I mean, the battlefield, we call it your work battlefield, you know, and you get faced with a phone call or I'm faced with the enemy, that threat, and you can deal with it, you know, and then it's switched off. So it's there for an emergency response to react to. And then you carry on.

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But if you're feeling stressed, you know, continuously, that's obviously not a good sign. And, you know, I'm in that world now of talking about this and it can lead to physical or mental health problems, you know, and that's certainly what we're seeing is people are under stress, constant stress, you know, in the workplace. You hit stress, burnout, you know, and those feelings of fight or flight freeze are happening all the time, you know, on the body. Just know how to switch yourself off.

Ben Clayson 01:00:49

So you mentioned switching. It's all 4 minutes ago and you kind of that's what allows you to add a layer is the experience followed by switching that experience off.

Paul Vicary 01:00:59

Yeah, it's good. So it's a really good point actually to reduce stress, you know that all the obvious things, you know, exercise wise is having that time out. Get away from the noise. You know, it could be. You never know. Let's see, give it a go. I'm doing yoga now. You know, breathwork exercises. You can have meditation. You know, exercise is the biggest one. It's proven to work, you know, and other ways of coping, reading, even apps. You know, I use an app called Lumosity, for example. It just shopping you mind it takes you away just from that space for like temporary time, you know, and then you back into it. But if you're not taking those times, are those little breathers, you know, or having your holidays is going to just build up and build up.

Ben Clayson 01:01:40

And I imagine that part of the trick there for people is to try different things to figure out what works for them. Because you just mentioned, you know, it's easy to reel off. There's so many kind of options, but that doesn't mean they'll all work for you because people are different.

Paul Vicary 01:01:53

Yeah, exactly. And with so much training, we do some of these exercises, we call it Hot Hand, and we've had some people that make dollhouses for charities. And it's so rewarding that giving something and then making something that, you know, people vegetables, you know, in their allotments and then they make you know, they grow them and then they give them out to their family. You know, that's another way of rewarding gardening. I've heard people saying cleaning is therapeutic. It's helping them, you know, in the house, walking the dog, for example. So it's all these different ways, you know, think outside the box. Maybe you never know. You might have a talent, learn a new skill, learn to play the banjo or the trumpet or whatever, you know, learn a new language, unlock part of your brain because it's not being used. So it just helps you. And it might deal with stress as well and you might enjoy it.

Ben Clayson 01:02:44

Yeah. And I think these thing that that message of kind of Yeah. The you know expose yourself to pressure stress is good. You know it's a positive thing as long as you can switch it off so that you can recover. You can see this now kind of becoming more widely accepted in things like physical performance areas. So I was reading the other day about sprint training and the new key to effective sprint training is very short bursts of sprinting, followed by what they describe as luxurious rest, which is completely contradictory to everything that I ever experienced in the military, which is just thrash yourself until you can't move anymore. Yeah, and then you kind of, you know, hear people saying stress plus rest is best and so on. And it's kind of just understanding that you can't have the kind of grind-set approach that is promoted in an awful lot of kind of social media content that's out there where people

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are telling you or giving you the impression that unless you're up at 3:30 in the morning listening to audiobooks at five times normal speed, then you're not going to win. You know, you're not going to have a successful life. It's simply not true.

Paul Vicary 01:03:57

No, I agree. You know, you just got to be aware of your own stress levels like I said, just be careful using the word stress. Yeah, I would like to use more pressure is put yourself or your team under pressure. But be careful about when you put them under stress. You know, and I don't think that saying good stress about stress, there's an argument there. That's another debate. But I it's that for an emergency reason. So stress is good for an emergency. But other than that, you know, it's kind of bad, you know, because it initiates this whole response, you know, But those times you need it, you know, on the sports field and work on the battlefield and then it's get switched off. So, yeah, it's certainly why I mean, in a roundabout way, but just, I think pressure. Pressure. Yeah, that's my view.

Carly Culver 01:04:51

So Paul, I'd love you to tell me more about the book that's recently been published.

Paul Vicary 01:04:55

Yes. Can I mention the book? Yeah. Yeah. So the book is planned. It came out in April of 22. As soon as I left, officially left. You know, I had my book in the waiting. You know, I couldn't wait. One, you know, took five years to write, actually, it was a tough call, you know, juggling anyone to write a book. We've all got a book Inside is, by the way, and I'd encourage anyone to write it. It's very therapeutic and I find it therapeutic. But I'm not sure my publisher was too, too impressed and the amount of times it went to and forwards and stuff, you know.

But the book is about all sorts of things, you know, helping people reach their own goal. It's mainly about it's called Plan D, where things don't go to plan for the North Pole. There's a bit in there about climate change, but it's also a bit to know about mental resilience. If anyone wants to go on expedition, there's some top tips in the mental health is in there, you know, all sorts of things, you know and also it starts with a bit of the military, not too much for obvious reasons, but then it blends into going to the South Pole, the successes from there, it's extracts of my wife's diary and then having the other sides of things. There's extracts from my diary, which I mention was quite powerful and quotes and things, you know it's been supported by vinyl finds love some woods put a nice little pretty face on there. There's nice pictures, there's loads of information there, so highly recommended and a donation goes to charity from the book as well. And so and to be honest, I don't get very little from these books, but it might just help someone. And it's a nice Christmas present, you know? Yeah.

Carly Culver 01:06:32

what's next on the horizon for you?

Paul Vicary 01:06:35

So I'm now, you know, for my own little adrenaline kind of things as well as running the business and stuff. So I do some guiding. So I'm guiding. I've got the plan for 2020 for guiding people to Annapurna and Everest base camp Himalayan Expeditions. So anyone's interested. Give me a shout. And I mean, that's the ultimate walk and talk, that is, to be honest, if you've been up, that is amazing.

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So that's in October-November next year in March, I'm doing some guiding for the Polar Academy, which is a great organization. I'm supporting them going out there so into Greenland and you never know what's in their eyes and as well juggling a few other bits. And that's maybe if I've got a few expeditions left in me. So watch this space. I'm not going to give too much away. But yeah, yeah, keep an eye out.

Carly Culver 01:07:26

I expect we should look forward to following your progress. Right. Perfect. Well, thank you once again to our wonderful guest today, Paul Vicary. Paul, where can we find you online?

Paul Vicary 01:07:35

So, yeah, I've got a www.x-calibremh.co.uk. That's my mental health. So that's my mental health company And then www.paulvicary.com that's my Paul Vicary side of things So like I said the resiliency piece of Yeah. So I'm there on linked in with both companies x-calibre mental health and Paul Vicary so please follow me I appreciate all followers are great. You might just learn something. I might just help yourself will help your team. So I'm here to help and support everyone out there. So give us a shout. Look is up. Thank you.

Carly Culver 01:08:06

So whilst we spent today talking about epic Arctic adventures, In VICTVS, we believe that preparation and learning from all experiences is a key part of development and growth, both professionally and personally. Whether you're scaling the world's highest mountain or working towards a new professional milestone, both can seem equally intimidating. And we hope we've inspired you today with a little planning and some courage Anything is achievable if you enjoy today's episode, why not subscribe rates or review wherever you're listening today.