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0:00:01.0 Nicole Antoinette: I'm Nicole Antoinette, and this is Real Talk Radio, a podcast filled with honest conversations about everything. As I shared earlier this month, we are now in the wrap-up phase of this podcast, which will be ending on July 21st. There will be a wonderful new episode every other week until then, which includes today's episode with my friend, Kate Grace.

0:00:24.0 Kate Grace: Even in running, you literally could poop your pants, that's actually something that happens to people on big stages, that's a pretty... Not fun thing to happen, and so you kind of just... I do think that one way to... That success happens because, you get out there, you put it all out there, everyone's watching, they're all excited, you think you're all ready, you kind of suck, or just doesn't go well, and then you wake up the next day, and you're like, "Okay, well, I'm still here, that sucks, my ego is bruised, but I'm gonna go for a run today or not, and my life will go on." And I think that the more you do that, the more you realize that it doesn't in the end, it just gives you this amazing freedom, you're like, "In the end nothing can hurt me, that I can..." It gives you this courage that, "You know what? I can go out and lay it down on the line, and there's nothing that I'm afraid of that I won't survive."

[music]

0:01:27.5 NA: Kate is a professional track athlete, an Olympian who believes in the power of chasing big goals and in sharing that journey authentically, most often on Instagram, you can find her @fastkate. This is Kate's third time on Real Talk Radio, I think. Heck yes, for repeatedly interviewing your most beloved friends. And in this conversation, she shares such honest stories, we talk about failure, motivation, favorite inspirational quotes, courage, how to be brave when you're afraid, what it takes to get the best out of yourself, and more. I really hope that you love it and her as much as I do, that's gonna start for you in just a moment, but not before I take another opportunity, I will take all the opportunities that I can to thank the Patreon community, the 400-plus people who have made this listener-funded show possible for the past six years.

0:02:21.8 NA: I was super unsure back in 2015 of whether or not a listener-funded show was even possible, especially one that could eventually grow to pay everyone involved, the guests, the sound engineer, the host, the transcriptionist, that was my vision, but I had no idea if that was possible. And creating this podcast with sort of an un-traditional model, funding model, felt like a wild leap of faith, like a big leap into the unknown. And the people in my Patreon community who took that leap with me or maybe who created the net that made the leap possible... I don't know where this analogy is going, but those folks, I will be forever, forever, forever grateful for them. And even though this podcast is ending, our Patreon community is not, it's changing, of course, and those folks and I are currently in the fun process of co-creating the next phase of the work together.

0:03:13.7 NA: I'm actually really curious and excited to see what comes next, and it would be a delight to have you join us if you feel drawn to a space that really prioritizes honesty, honest conversations, intimacy, digital togetherness, lots of possibility, cheering each other on. Monthly essays, live gatherings, audio content, we do lots of fun stuff that's Patreon only, Patreon exclusive,

and then that community is also gonna be where I decide what my next project is gonna be, my next audio project maybe, maybe something different. We'll see. We operate on a sliding scale with all tears getting access to everything, and you can find us at patreon.com/nicoleantoinette. That's patreon.com/nicoleantoinette. And alright, let's get into today's episode.

[music]

0:04:02.4 NA: Awesome, we are good to go. Kate, welcome back to the show.

0:04:06.4 KG: Thank you for having me, I'm so happy to be here.

0:04:09.1 NA: It's always really funny to record a podcast episode with a really good friend, where you push the recording button and it's like you're almost pretending that you weren't just talking beforehand. [laughter] Also, I was trying to think this morning how long it's been since we've seen each other in person, like pandemic-wise, it's been a really long time, but because we did weekly co-working dates on Zoom for mostly this whole pandemic, I'm so used to seeing you in this little box on my screen.

0:04:34.6 KG: It's so true. Those were such a lifeblood, especially early on in the pandemic, something to look forward to. But yeah, do you know when we last saw each other in person?

0:04:44.7 NA: No, it was sometime probably like late 2019. It's been a while, so I'm very excited to see you later this month.

0:04:52.4 KG: Same, same.

0:04:54.3 NA: Yeah, those hour-long co-working sessions, it was really wild how, I feel like for most of pandemic time, there was so much stuff that I couldn't get done without the container of co-working, I had writing dates set up with multiple people, I was hosting a co-working group called the "get shit done club", which you know about. And then our dates, I'm like, "What is wrong with me that I need to be surrounded virtually by other people in order to get anything done?" But I'm like, "Nothing's wrong with me. Just give yourself what you need, I guess."

0:05:19.4 KG: No, exactly, I think it was so smart of you. Again, time... Literally even thinking about how long it's been since we've seen each other, it's like was last year, a year, or was it five years? Was it a month? I don't even know. Time just doesn't exist anymore. So in a way, it was really nice to have those containers.

0:05:33.9 NA: Yeah, I know something that made every day not feel exactly the same, completely agree. So set the scene for us, where in the world are you? Where are you sitting right now? What can you see?

0:05:42.9 KG: I am currently in Boulder, Colorado. I'm actually not in my house, I don't even have a house here, but I am in Aisha Praught and Will Leer's house in Boulder, Colorado, who Aisha is

one of my training partners, teammates here. So I'm looking at beautiful pictures of their wedding on Will's desk, but I am... Basically, right now, it's beginning of June. But we're three weeks exactly from the Olympic trials, a final. So I'm training for the Olympic track and field trials, which is where we pick the team to go to the Olympics. And we're in our little final session here. And the reason I'm in the house is here is because I recently moved to Boulder... Well, joined the training group here in January. But just because the nature of our lives and the fact that we are pretty nomadic during this time of year, I didn't think it would make sense to actually rent a place here, because I'm not even... I'm in different training camps, most of the time. So I am just living at friends places and rentals until... I'll probably move end of this year. But right now it feels very much like my whole life is just circling in on the upcoming competitions.

0:07:00.6 NA: Yeah, I think it's interesting. Obviously, our lives and jobs are quite different from each other. However, something interesting that I think that we have in common is the... Obviously, I know you do have a permanent place in Portland where you live, but you're frequently not there. Living out of hotel rooms or like you said friends places or rentals or Airbnbs or altitude training camps, and I move around a lot also. And I'm always interested to hear from other people how they create a sense of home, or if that's even something that's important to you. How have you thought about that over the last however many years of moving so much for your job, for running?

0:07:39.9 KG: I agree with you that I feel like in many ways, our lives will sometimes mirror each other. Even with this podcast, I feel like the span of this podcast has been, I don't know, a funny mirror to my track world. I just think 'cause when I first met you, in Bend, it was like you were talking about doing this and then you've created so much out of it. But in terms of creating a sense of home, for me, it's small. It's funny 'cause I don't take lots of things, but I have the smallest little bag of trinkets that I'll take with me anywhere I go. It still accumulates over the years, but there's five things in there. Well, it's my... It also doubles as my overnight kit. So I have my eye mask and my ear plugs, and emergency NyQuil pill and Iron pill, and a lint roller. And then some internal things, I have a rosary that my mom gave me, even though she's not a practicing Catholic, but she bought it when we worked together when she visited me once in Hungary.

0:08:36.4 KG: A lucky Silver Dollar that Bob Lesko gave me, who is a mentor of mine throughout my track career. This little... Just two stones, two... One crystal and one... What's it called? Fool's Gold stone. And then an elephant god. Aaron Taylor, who was a yoga instructor that I knew for a while, she gave me this... Is it Gilgamesh? No not Gilgamesh. Ganesh. Oh gosh, I need to look it up. It's some like... Oh man, it some kind of trinket for travelers or... And she gave that to me once when I saw her in London. So just basically things that I've accumulated over the years. And for a bit, I also had these fake tattoos of a little monster that you had given me at one point in time, 'cause that was our little emoji. But I think for some reason I used them once, so I don't have them right now. But anyway, those... It's just those things. Those are my things that I take with me, and I don't know.

0:09:36.8 NA: So you get to a new place, do you take these things out and put them on a bed side table at a hotel? I'm trying to imagine you like you get... Also, I would like to know what is the situation that qualifies as needing an emergency NyQuil, when you're like, "I have one emergency

NyQuil."

[laughter]

0:09:52.6 KG: No. Actually, the emergency NyQuil is the most important, because you can never sleep after races. So it's... I've since changed it to now I just carry straight Benadryl, which is basically... Can be a sleep aid. Emergency NyQuil was like either on a plane, an overnight plane, and you can't fall asleep. That's an emergency, and it's like you have to sleep for eight hours in my mind. We know. You know how important sleep is. Or number two, is after a race, you're taking caffeine at 6:00 PM, and it's like 3:00 in the morning and you can't sleep. That's also an emergency.

0:10:26.0 NA: Great, got it. I could just picture you with your eye mask on and your ear plugs and it's not working, you're just like, "Fuck it, I need the emergency NyQuil."

[laughter]

0:10:34.5 KG: Yeah. Pop that guy open. It's gold.

0:10:36.8 NA: That's fantastic. So you mentioned being about three weeks out from Olympic trials. We're obviously gonna talk about all that, but I wanna go back in time first. This is something that I don't ever think that we've talked about, but that I think about more often than you know. So in 2017, I went with you to London when you were racing in the track and field World Championships. And so it was held in I think what was the Olympic stadium, right? From 2012. So it's this huge stadium. It was like 80,000 people, and my... Because I know your family was there too, but I had bought my tickets on my own. So I was sitting essentially not by myself, just surrounded by strangers in this huge stadium. And my experience of being there, the energy, not just for your race, but for all the races, more than any big rock concert, it was... I've never experienced anything like that in my life.

0:11:27.7 NA: The cheering, the screaming, what it sounds like to have 80,000 people stomping their feet in the stands and cheering, and I feel like I walked away from that experience just being like, "How? How do you..." And I don't even know if this is a question you can answer, but what does it feel like to... I don't know, to perform in that kind of energy, to lay everything on the line in front of literally thousands and thousands of screaming people. It's an experience that I would assume most folks listening, whatever their career is, they're not gonna do their marketing presentation with thousands of people screaming in the background. It's such an interesting job that you have. And again, I know that we haven't really talked about this, but I'm curious if you could talk a little bit about what that feels like.

0:12:16.2 KG: It's fun having you just bring me back there, 'cause that... Definitely, of any of the stadiums in the world, just the Championships in the UK are just amazing, and the fans there are great, it feels like a... Yeah, like any major sports championship that you can imagine, World Cup, whatever. And we don't necessarily... It don't get like that in different places, but it's just really special there, especially when the British athletes are running, or any of the races that they're

running. In terms of performing in stressful situations, I do think the classic advice just is very true, that it just... No matter what you're doing, if you're doing a presentation or whatever, it just... If you've become very good at what you do, and you just do it day in and day out, in boring settings, in semi-nerve-wracking settings, or medium level people in the stands, you just get good at that thing, and so you... I am practicing. At every practice I go to... If I go to some random small meet in Portland, maybe there's 100 people in the stands.

0:13:19.3 KG: But when you first do that, it's terrifying. Or if your parents are gonna be there, or your friends, and people who care about you. That's very scary. So you just get lots... Again, lots of different practice at being... Kind of what we talked about before, being in stressful situations, at being able to have stress not throw you off your game, not have stress be an emergency signal. You can still be nervous and continue to perform, and it's like... Finally, the culmination of that is, you get in front of 80,000 fans, you're like, "Okay, this is technically the same as me alone on the high school track, that I just did my workout, and as much as possible have to kind of, yeah, zone it out and not... And just not overthink it." So that's the one side. I think the other side, which I'm also trying to do is... But there's a positive aspect of that energy, right? And so at one point... I think, for so long, I got so good at calming myself, and this is a big thing this year, I've gotten so good at calming myself where, no matter what I do, I have this 20-minute meditation I'll do before my races, even in...

0:14:24.4 KG: It started in Rio, honestly, in the Rio Olympics, where I'd listen to this guided meditation, and I would just get so zenned out, it was kind of the idea that the lion sleeps before they hunt, right? You have to be completely calm, and then in order to totally click in. So I would do that, I would be very good at getting calm, but this year's been the opposite, where I'm like, "Wait, I'm super calm at this point, but I kinda need to get fired up. At one point, you also need to amp yourself." And that's what's the last few races have been, is like how do you get that perfect balance of "ready to do your thing", and on... But not over the edge, so the optimal arousal for that performance. So in a weird way, it's funny, thinking back to the 80,000 screaming fans, I'm like, "Shoot, that would help her at this moment." [chuckle] I need to pretend that they're there. [laughter] Yeah.

0:15:21.4 NA: Okay, a couple of followup questions. Do you... This meditation that you're talking about, Is it in-app? Is it a specific thing you could reference or tell people about?

0:15:27.6 KG: It is. It's so wacky, but it's Porter... What's his name? PorterVision. PorterVision is the app, and literally it's Patrick Porter, my mom and I will sometimes joke, she like, "Are you listening to Patrick?" Also, Patrick is my partner, so it's a separate... Different Patrick in my life that I listen to once a week, is this guy that does... But again, I don't... It was through her... My mom is in the fitness industry, and so she... I don't exactly know if you have to pay for the app, or how it works. Technically, it actually comes with this headset that you can put on, and there's flashes of lights in front of your face, but I don't do any of that. I just listen to him. And it's... Yeah, it's... For me, it's become very like a priming mechanism that I've loved, and I assume... I mean, it's still in my phone, so I assume it's still an app that you could probably download.

0:16:20.4 NA: Okay. Yeah, and the priming makes sense. I think about... There's certain songs... I tend not to listen to anything when I'm writing. I like a lot of silence, but if it is... If I'm in a louder environment, there's one or two songs that I don't even know the names of, but they don't have lyrics, and I'll put them on a two-song playlist on repeat, just in my headphones. And so if I were to ever hear that in another context, I'm like, "Oh, it's time to write." It's almost like a chicken or an egg thing sometimes, is it the thing that you're listening to that makes a difference, or is it the habit of listening to the thing in a similar situation?

0:16:50.7 KG: Exactly.

0:16:53.5 NA: But you mentioned that you used to do that to be really calm, and now you're sort of looking to have that perfect balance of the calm plus the excitement arousal. What have you changed in your pre-race routine, if anything, to get more into that state?

0:17:07.3 KG: One of the things is visualizing the race itself. So before, it would just be kind of a body scan, I would visualize myself. I would visualize a blue liquid breathing... Breathing in a blue liquid and having it kind of cleanse me, and then breathing out anything. I would see it kinda getting dirty, and then breathing out any of that, so this idea that I'm cleansing myself and I'm activating all my different muscles. But now I'll finish it off where I'll actually time my race, and I'll visualize myself going through my race, and that helps prime me. I also have started to do a little bit more aggressive... Being open to more aggressive visuals, so... Think... Honestly, after seeing Michael Jordan's Last Dance, or any of the stuff about Kobe, like The Mamba Mentality... Yeah, Last Dance is amazing. But basically...

0:17:56.0 NA: My partner and I are rewatching it. We watched it last summer, and we're watching it... Obviously, my CMA partner Jen. You know Jen?

0:18:01.1 KG: Yeah.

0:18:01.8 NA: Jen and I are rewatching it right now, and we'll watch an episode in advance, and then the next day we'll go on a three-hour hike, and we'll just talk about it the whole time. I feel like you and I can have an entire podcast just talking about what that mentality is, to have that kind of assassin's mindset. Anyway, sorry. Yes.

0:18:16.5 KG: 100%. 100%. And it's a little psycho, so that's the thing, is like getting okay with being a little psycho. And I have a little psycho bitch in me, kind of, but honestly, I feel like it doesn't come out that much, and so yeah, literally visualizing... As you said, being an assassin. As soon as I'm... Right now, I'm into this idea of being a wolf and literally grabbing... Seeing myself biting at people, which, again, is not something that I would ever do in real life. [laughter]

0:18:47.9 NA: Oh my God. I feel like I need to put a disclaimer in this like, "Don't worry, Kate Grace won't actually bite you." [laughter]

0:18:53.6 KG: Yeah. So that. That's the kind of stuff.

0:18:56.6 NA: That's great. That makes me think. So the other day I sent you the video clip of... It's funny, I could put links to any of these things in the show notes. But there's... I think it's from like 2011, it's really old. It's an interview... Will Smith was being interviewed about kind of like his success and performance, and I will send you this little video clip, and it's, he's talking about... I have the quote somewhere, but yeah, he says, "The only thing that I see that's distinctly different about me, is that I'm not afraid to die on a treadmill. I will not be out worked period. You might have more talent than me, you might be smarter than me, you might be sexier than me, you might be all of those things, and you got it on me in nine categories, but if we get on a treadmill together, there's two things, either you're getting off first, or I'm gonna die." And there's like something in that, I mean obviously that's... He's sort of like making the analogy about being... Like not wanting to be out worked, but like... I don't know, I'd love to dig into this a little bit more, because it sounds like this is something that you're intentionally cultivating, you're obviously... You have to be competitive enough to do what you're doing, but do you not feel like you have sort of that killer instinct naturally?

0:20:01.9 KG: Yeah, it's interesting that I love, and it's... When you sent me that quote, I loved that quote, and that was one of the ones, I think, when I first started running competitively or running professionally, so back probably around when it was... When it came out around 2012, 2013, is when I found that. And it was one of my kind of key quotes for a bit. The... I mean... I think we've talked about this, this idea of really high-performing people, if, that there's something a little... Sometimes there's something a little off, right? Like your life isn't necessarily balanced. My life right now is not necessarily balanced, maybe my life as a whole, if you take the next 30 years, or like yeah, or the last little bit, would be... Have a balance, but that you become very one... Single-minded. And then also it's this idea that as much as I try to be a good person and try to be... I think humility, for example, is one of my core values that... I don't know, it's sometimes a question like, "Do you need to be a little bit crazier in order to really be the one that's at the top?"

0:20:58.8 KG: In order to really like want at all costs. And the way it came about actually is I took a personality test the other week, that the USA track and field was putting on... Or, and usually track and field will do, right now is kind of working more about... With some sports psychologists about different ways that you could use mental training, and how athletes could be using mental training to improve their performance. And so, and one of the things I think that right now they're doing some kind of study, so they had us do this personality test. It's with the... It's the five, with the one it's like the five different things. Like neuroticism, extraversion, there's five different ones, it's one of the famous ones, where they rank you on these different five characteristics. Anyway, I was... All my rankings, the one that was strangely out of character with other elite athletes was, I think it was the conscientiousness one, where basically I was ranking myself as like relatively low performing, I had a low self-image as if I...

0:21:57.9 KG: So I didn't think that I was disciplined or as disciplined, so when I was answering these questions like, yeah, "Do you have discipline? Or do you have grit? Do you want to win at all costs?" Those kind of... Or no. And the big one was, "Do you think that you're better than other people?" And whenever they asked, "Do you think you're better than other people?" I would say,

"No." Because in my world-view, I think that that is something that, that everyone should... Is that no one is innately better than anyone else. But I ranked so low in compared to everyone, all the other... So they compared you to everyone else, and then to other elite athletes, and compared to all the other elite athletes that they've been doing it with, I was like way at the bottom, Kate thinks horribly of herself, like they all think she's so much... And it was funny in a weird way, it clicked something in me, I was like, "Who? Who the fuck thinks that they're better than me? Who are these people thinking that they're better than me?"

[laughter]

0:22:50.0 KG: So and that's kinda been my way to twist it in my mind where it's not necessarily that I still believe in a general world-view, that no one is innately better than anyone else. But I guess, when you step on the track, you have to kinda go out there and be like, "No, I'm the best." Like, "I'm the best out here."

0:23:05.9 NA: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, no, I think this is so fascinating, because like, I look at my life, and you know, I used to run recreationally and I don't anymore. And that was such a singular experience for me, of the only thing that I've ever done where competitiveness was allowed. But not really allowed, I mean, I guess, a little bit in school of the like, getting good grades, type of thing, but I wonder how much of this is a socialized as women thing. Like is, like sport being the one place where women are sort of given permission to be like really competitive and fierce. And I think you know, I think it definitely is gendered. There's something... Yeah, there's something interesting of how do you... If you believe that people are, you know, fundamentally equal and all of the politics and values that go along with that. And then to kind of shift into the mindset of like, like, Now, I'm gonna kill you all, I'm the best.

[laughter]

0:24:00.6 NA: There's... But. That... That is interesting, it's almost... I almost envision like you have to become, like an alter ego version of yourself. Cause if you thought that way about yourself all of the time, I mean, then you get into things like, Michael Jordan, Right?

0:24:12.0 KG: Right.

0:24:12.7 NA: Is that who you want to be all across the board? Probably not, but like how do you... Did you ever think about that? Kind of like, this is who I am on the track and not necessarily who I am like, you know, with my friends?

0:24:26.4 KG: Yes, and I think more with, yes, exactly, that's exactly it. But I think, yeah, in many ways, when you see these people who have hit such amazing pinnacles, that a lot of the rest of their life, there can be major holes in the rest of their life. A little bit recently, I think is part of it, is one of the reasons why I really do withdraw from friends leading into races, because it's almost like, I can't be both those people at the same time.

0:24:51.8 NA: Yeah.

0:24:52.4 KG: And a little bit also is... I do try to think of it in terms of like, I am fighting for a smaller circle of friends and family. So that, so that's, and that's the way it's still communal, even if it's an individual sport. For my friends who have supported me for so long, like thinking of you, of for my family and for my coaches, people who have dedicated time and energy into me. And then, in that way sometimes I can get out of this mindset, it's still not fully individual, but it's like I can still get into this thing where I can reap you apart for this other greater cause. Like I used to, for example, I used to think about my sister being in a fire and I had to run as fast as I could to get her or something. It'll be interesting looking, going into the Olympics, 'cause also that was another thing that I was very surprised in Rio. Kinda feelings of doing it for your country, honestly, it's...

0:25:55.6 KG: Patriotism is such a weird thing, and I think especially I did not grow up necessarily, I don't know, I just, with a healthy skepticism I think of things that can go wrong with patriotism right. But it was... So it was a surprising how... Oh not, this is what's weird to say, 'cause obviously it's special to represent your country. But honestly, it was a but surprising at how unique and special it was to do that. And I think sometimes when I, sometimes when I get into this idea of, okay, we're gonna put on this uniform, and I believe that I... In the end, this is a group effort, and we're trying to do this as a group, and I can be the... I'm the best person for the job. And so I will show you that and it's not that, and in the end it'll raise all of us because, I know I can do it, I know I can do it for all of us. I hope that I make sense?

0:26:47.3 NA: Yeah. No, it totally makes sense. I wanna go back to something that you said before. That leading up to races, competition, that you'll withdraw right, from social circles and stuff. Which is something that I have always admired about you, that you have really... I don't know if strong boundaries is the right word, but I hadn't seen, until we became friends, I hadn't seen a lot of examples of, this is what I need in this particular period of time, and that being communicated. And I don't know if it's maybe easier because it's more... It's seemingly more understandable to people like, I have this race, I have to prep for this race, there's something kind of like very binary about that, that I think most folks would understand. Which again, extrapolating that out into other careers or parenthood or... Okay, well, my kid has this coming up, so I can't... There isn't necessarily the same kind of clear lines around it, and I don't... I'm searching for what my actual question is within this, but do you feel like that sense of being boundaried in running... Did that come naturally to you? Does it extend well into other areas of your life? What does it take in order for you to be able to advocate for your own needs like that?

0:28:01.4 KG: I Have a very specific memory of in 2012 making the trials and being horrible with the boundary thing. So I can say no, it was not always natural, I think I was very much... I was very young, I was young, first, barely out of college, first time ever making the Olympic trials, scared to death. And maybe we've already talked about this, but basically, my sponsor at the time, I was gonna meet the founder for the first time ever, the day of my race. For some reason, I let this happen where I didn't think it was an issue where I literally walked to lunch in the rain, to meet her for the first time ever, this is the person that's now gonna be my boss. So many different things associated with this of just nerves. Also, I ended up getting freezing cold and shivering my bed, and

the... And the lunch in itself was nerve-racking and I had to be on edge or whatever, not on edge, but just you're performing for someone a little bit. And that's a very clear example of some time when I did not do a good boundary setting and ended up not running well. I also just in general, I think was, was totally out of my element and not mentally prepared for those races, just very... Not feeling strong, I guess, in myself.

0:29:16.5 KG: And so I... And I know in a way, I think it's like trial by error, you learn that that does not work and that you need to get better at it. So I think also just growing older and feeling more confident in what I do, also feeling more confident that my friends, won't leave me or they won't hate it. I do agree with you though, that it is... I do think it comes a little bit more natural with racing. People tend to understand that there's a need for one day or one week of real solitary time, or, and they tend to give that. It's still gonna be a little hard though, 'cause honestly, even now, like I have a friend who reached out to me, not a friend, acquaintance. Who reached out to me who lives in Boulder. And this is someone that I meet at a, on a summer camp, literally 15 years ago. And in most times in my life, I'd be like, "Yeah, it'd be so fun to catch up and meet with you," but honestly I, at this point don't want to, I wanna be at home most of the time and just conserving energy. And it's... That still feels unnatural, in a way, I'm talking about this now, I was thinking of just like... Well now I'm talking about it so I probably should actually be honest in my response. I was thinking of just making up an excuse honestly, but I guess cause I've just verbalized it, I probably should just be honest and say, I need a few weeks.

0:30:44.1 NA: No but I think the breaking people-pleasing tendencies that kind of ingrained patterning can go really deep. And I think it's actually really generous when you're willing... I mean not just you, but all of us, when we're willing to be honest about what our needs are and how we wanna be supported or what we do and do not have capacity for. It can feel gut wrenching and so scary to verbalize that. And then on the receiving end of it, I always feel really grateful, it's nice not to have to guess. Right, like I... And obviously, we're talking in the context of our friendship, but there's never a time where I'm like, "Does Kate really wanna hang out? Does she actually have the energy for this?" I trust that if whatever the thing is, if you don't have capacity or desire for it, that you'll just say no.

0:31:25.1 KG: Yeah.

0:31:25.2 NA: And that will be fine, and there's something... It's really stressful for me to not know where I stand with people sometimes, or to try to read between the lines, or do they really wanna do this? And so then I try to put that back on me I'm like, "Okay, I need to be that clear communicator in my relationships as well." I think it's a gift to be like, "I need X, Y, Z," right, "can you do that?"

0:31:43.2 KG: Oh, it's so true. Honestly, it's... The place I would say that not the hardest, but one of the places I've seen it, but I'm still working on it, is with Patrick, who's my partner now of...

0:31:52.6 NA: Not meditation Patrick.

0:31:54.0 KG: Not meditation Patrick. Patrick O'Neal. Who... And I'm just thinking about this right

now, because we, a lot of times during my intense training, we're not together. So I will go to these training camps that maybe for example, the last one was in Crested Butte. Which is at high elevation, we're at 9000 feet, so we're there for about eight weeks just to get really in shape. And when I'm there, I'm living with training partners, it's all about getting prepared and you're just... That's all you're living and breathing and eating, just like running, resting, eating, that's just, that's what it is. And then I come back here and Patrick is here now, and so I'll be with him for the next three weeks. And it can be an interesting thing where it's not that he's asking anything different of me, but just in our interaction, I sometimes will feel like, oh, maybe I'm staying up a little bit later, or I'm just like... Things that you're doing that I might... And usually in a relationship, you are compromising on certain thing, aspects, right. And it's me learning how to ask for what I need and also kind of identify what I need. And in many ways, having him is so wonderful and it's very calming and helpful for me in the final stages. But it's been a growing experience yeah in terms of, again, setting boundaries within that relationship.

0:33:08.8 NA: Okay, I'm gonna ask a question you can feel free to not answer because I'm projecting and making some assumptions, so if those are incorrect, please feel free to shoot this down. In my romantic partnership, I am the needier person. I'm... Struggle with anxiety have, I have some food intolerance, I don't sleep well, there's just, I'm more of a delicate flower. I feel like Jen is just... He rolls with it, he's really whatever, and that's so great and he's so supportive and... It's... And what you just described, whether because of your career or because of personality differences, it sounds like potentially that you are like a needier or need things to be more specific in the relationship than he does. And I'm wondering how that feels for you, and I ask because sometimes... This is, maybe I should go back to therapy, sometimes I feel quite guilty about that. That because I often am the one that has stronger preferences, we usually default to my preferences. And that's fine, but also, I don't know there's something in there that's interesting to me, so if this is at all resonant, I would love to hear your thoughts.

0:34:18.4 KG: Yes. It's funny when you say... I do think that we're needy in different ways. I think that around racing, yes, most of our life will start to revolve around what, my timeline... My timing, my eating... Yeah, whether or not I wanna socialize, lots of that stuff. That so that, I think sometimes on the opposite side of that is like I can get kind of isolated and he might want more relationship time together. Whereas sometimes I get into my, too much of, as we're talking about this race mode, where I shut down, including people that I love most... And so maybe I don't feel, get that guilt 'cause I feel like in a way, he has that side of him that he needs or wants my attention a little bit or just cuddle time, I don't know. But I think the issue for me with it is like, yeah, when... We get, we kinda default into this thing where around race season, which honestly is half, quarter of the year, more than that.

0:35:30.3 NA: Well that's what I'm saying, it's not like it's a couple of times.

0:35:32.0 KG: It's like... No.

0:35:32.2 NA: It's a big chunk of the year...

0:35:33.5 KG: Yeah, exactly, it's like most of the time... And also, 'cause we're not together all the time in my training, it literally is probably at least half the time that we're together, it's all on me. Then in the fall we... Yes, we'll still default to my needs, where, and I kind of start to resent it almost 'cause I'm like, "Wait, no, you just say what you want. Just tell me where you wanna go, dinner, or tell me or do this thing." And it's taken us a little bit to get through that, 'cause I realized that actually. Most of the time when I'm with him, I actually want him to do exactly what I wanna do, like don't tell me what you wanna do. I know know, so I'm giving him two very opposing or signals.

0:36:09.9 NA: That's fascinating. It's almost like the parallel between what you were describing before, of sort of who you are in general versus almost the alter ego you who steps on to the track. Then it's like you're also these two different girlfriends, almost. And obviously you're the common denominator in all of these things, so of course it's you. But it is interesting how we adopt different roles and how the rules change during different times. And what that looks like in the relationship to be like, "No, what I want is for you to tell me what you want." And then another time, "I don't care what you want, we're gonna do what I want." So it's so real.

0:36:40.8 KG: Exactly.

0:36:41.5 NA: Its so real.

0:36:41.8 KG: Honestly, honestly, I feel like COVID was good for us on that. 'Cause in a way, at least we broke through realizing that we can, that we need to have discussions about that underlying component. Not just kind of yeah, like the argument about whether or not we're going to dinner or whether or not he is telling... Is coming to the table with an idea of where to go to dinner. It doesn't actually, I don't actually care if he's suggesting pizza or not, but the underlying of that is maybe I'm annoyed that he hasn't, or I don't know. Basically that our conversations need to include some of this underlying component, and then I think we've gotten much better at communicating about that.

0:37:17.6 NA: One more relationship question, you mentioned that a large portion of your relationship with him for the entire time you guys have been together has been long distance. Do you have any, maybe one or two practical things that you could share, it's a question that I get a lot because Jen and I have been long distance quite a few times, and people are always curious about what it takes to make that work. Is there anything tangible that you feel helps you when you're long distance?

0:37:42.0 KG: I do think it's different for what you... For the kind of person you are, I guess can be like, your love language. I know that so, I think first of all communicating about that for him, having a FaceTime every day or as much as possible, even if it's literally two minutes. We'll get on, just say hi and see each others faces, that is huge for him. And so we've gotten much better at... I used to not like the idea FaceTiming, 'cause I thought, "Oh, it's gonna have to be a 30-minute ordeal." But we've gotten much better, it literally can be a minute of just... The time it takes for you to send the I love you text or whatever.

0:38:15.5 NA: Right.

0:38:15.7 KG: It's gonna be a FaceTime. So that is, I think just... And recognize it. Yeah, and I guess for me, recognizing, if I don't love FaceTime, that is actually, zero part of my day and I mean. It's an important part, but like, I don't need to fight this you know.

0:38:32.2 NA: The FaceTimes is not the hell that you're gonna die on.

0:38:34.2 KG: Right. And honestly, I think... Covid has gotten me over... As we're talking about, like I'm now, so used to seeing everyone, online that... I'm much more comfortable with FaceTime. The... For me personally, I like having plans to each other basically, so whenever... There's never a point in which we don't know when the next time is that we're seeing each other. And so yeah, like. And usually we try to have it like relatively frequently, but again, I've had to do... I got really into like, the Miles, like credit card hacking for Miles in order to like basically give flights, because obviously there's expense component to that. That is like you can not take into account, but we do try to see each other frequently or at least have a plan for when that next time is gonna be.

0:39:24.0 KG: Those are two things, I mean honestly, the other thing that people... For a while, it would be kind of hard for me first come back to, like would get back together after being a part. And this is something that people don't really necessarily talk about. Although in a weird way, be in my little circle of athletes who travel around for training camps. I've been able to talk to other people... Other athletes about it, and so I know it's... I didn't ever feel uncomfortable with it, because I knew it was normal, but just literally feeling like you're with a stranger, like not feel, like it takes a few days to get back in the vibe of being together and that like maybe a little annoyed or just like even being like physical and just like your... My kissing. I don't know. Just something or things like that. That used to freak me out. And now don't anymore.

0:40:08.0 NA: Yeah, that's... I don't know that I really hear people talk about that that much, the adjustment period, but it's so true. The other thing that, I found challenging was, you settle into a rhythm of what it is to be long distance, and then when we would see each other, that obviously it's all your real life, but it didn't feel like doing real life together. 'Cause it's like, okay, you're together for this weekend, or this week? Or whatever. So you're together basically 24/7, maybe you're doing only special things, fancy things like having so much sex or whatever the situation is that, it's a real life, 'cause it's your life, but it's not average life, and so, you know. It was a deep into our relationship where he and I realized we haven't lived average life together, we're basically on long hikes where that's it's whole own weird thing, or we're separate, and so during... Most of Covid, when I lived with him and his Dad in Massachusetts and obviously, that was also strange because we are in a pandemic, I'm not going anywhere. I don't know anyone except for him and his dad.

0:41:03.0 NA: So that... You know what I mean? It's not like I have friends and other things, but it was the first time that we had both been working at the same time, in the same place, and so there's something to that too, like what you're describing is, if you're only together for a week or so. How much of your other stuff do you put on hold to then be together. It's almost like these oscillating states of obsession where it's like all in on their relationship and then all in on training and an all in

on this, which it's not good or bad. It's just interesting.

0:41:28.0 KG: Yeah, I was like nodding feverishly while you were saying all of that [laughter] 100%, and I don't know if I have... Necessarily have any tricks for that, I honestly feel like kind of similar to you all, we're still getting better at it, and Covid was also good for us. And then it forced us to yeah to live together and just figure that out, but I yes, like for example, even just a small thing, I read a lot when I'm alone and I loved reading, and then we get together and it's... I don't read very much. And so I've tried again then, that's probably just a boundary thing. Like, okay, which again, he would care zero, like he's on his phone, he wouldn't care at all if instead of watching this TV show I read and he was also reading around his phone or watching a TV show, but for some reason I get nervous about it.

0:42:12.6 NA: Yeah.

0:42:12.6 KG: I don't know.

0:42:13.2 NA: It's. So funny. Oh my God, look at us. We're just cute little humans [laughter] I wanna go back quickly to the 2017 World Championships. Something else that I wanted to dig into, so that meet, I know didn't end the way that you wanted it to right, like your performance in the final was not what you had hoped it was gonna be, and we had a conversation afterwards where you said that's something that helped you is realizing that your career was essentially, like success requires continually failing on larger and larger stages, and I would love for you to talk about that a little bit because I think, I just think, I think it's really fascinating, and I'm curious to hear more.

0:42:54.6 KG: I love when you find things that I've said and I'm like that, that was just great thing I said [laughter] [0:42:58.0] .

0:42:58.7 NA: And it's so wise. I will be the note taker of your wisdom in our friendship don't worry [laughter]

0:43:07.3 KG: Yeah, I mean, again, it get kind of back to it almost circles back to the initial question about how to not be nervous? And I honestly think the like unfortunate truth about not being nervous, is you can actually put yourself out there, and if your worst fears do come true sometimes not your worst fears of like you're gonna be naked, but I don't know, even in running, you literally could pop in your pants, that's actually something that happens to people on big stages, right that's a pretty, like not a fun thing to happen, right and so you can... I do think that one way to that stare of success happens because you get out there, you put it a lot, there everyone's watching, they're all excited. You think you're already. You kind of suck or like, just doesn't go well, and then you wake up the next day, you're like, "Okay, well, I'm still here, that sucks, my ego is bruised, but I'm gonna go for a run today or not, and my life will go on."

0:44:05.6 KG: And I think that the more you do that, the more you realize that it doesn't in the end, it just gives you this amazing freedom, you're like, "In the end nothing can hurt me, that I can... " It gives you this courage that, "You know what? I can go out and lay it down on the line, and there's

nothing that I'm afraid of that I won't survive." I mean, obviously in bigger life, yes, but I think generally in any work scenario, right any kind of embarrassment that's gonna happen or failure you will wake up the next day, it's just the question of, yeah, having to come to terms with fact that maybe you didn't do it right, maybe I have to go back to the drawing board. My training that I thought was good wasn't. And you have to like re-think maybe some assumptions, but that's all okay. You know.

0:44:52.0 KG: Interesting this year... The 2017 one was big for me, also the 2019 was even a little bit, not worse, 'cause it's always sucks to not do well, but not as fun because that was at the Trial. In 2019, it's not an Olympic team, but it's a world team, so it's basically Olympics, not in the Olympic year, we have World Championships, and so there's a Trials for that, the US Trials you need to get top three in the US in order to make it. And I have been going back and forth before that race about whether to run the 1500 or the 800, and those are two events that I do and I'm good at both of them, and honestly, the decision that year, that we made that year, I was good at the 15, but it was slightly out of fear or trying to decide, trying to base it based on the fact that we thought it would be easier to make the team... It's gonna be easier to get through the US Trials.

0:45:53.0 KG: I can get through the US Trials because the 800 runners were just so amazing, and then we'll figure out Worlds ' when we get there. And in my mind, I was like, "I know I probably am better at Worlds I'm better at the World stage at the 800", but it kind of just like took the easy answer, and the big kicker there was like I went in the 15 against kind of my gut judgment, went in the 15 and ended up finishing fifth, super close race, like the fastest race ever in the 15, so it ended up being that both teams were very hard to make and I ran really well, but I was just clipped to the line, and so I didn't make the team, so I didn't even go to Worlds that year. And that for me was just a big one 'cause it was like, "Fuck, you can do the safe... The called 'safe strategy'", and it still doesn't work out.

0:46:43.0 KG: And then you're pissed the whole summer because you regret that you didn't do what you wanted to do. You have to go through "failure things", maybe I would still have felt those things in the 800, but I'm also like, "Yeah, I'm mad cause I thought I was a little bit cowardly," I guess, and so that, I think has definitely impacted the way that I've gone about this last year, just the different decisions I've made and going into the eight at the trials, it's just like, "Okay, it's very hard to make this team", it's not easy, it's by no means guaranteed, maybe it's slightly easier in the 15 just because... But again, it's like, "Why... " It's never guaranteed. So why not just do the thing that you wanna do?

0:47:35.4 NA: Yeah, there's so much in that kind of what you were talking about being willing to fail. And then having the experience of... I'm using the word "failure" as people have different relationships to that word, but I actually don't think that it needs to be such a negative thing. I think we do so much mental gymnastics to try to convince ourselves that it wasn't a failure. If you don't do well in a race, you are not a failure as a person, but you might have failed to reach your goal. This is how I felt when I quit the PCT, that is like, I set out to hike the whole trail and I decided to quit, so that was a failed goal, doesn't mean I'm a failure as a person, but I think there is something really powerful in normalizing failure, and then also what you said that it's almost like, not

inoculate you against disappointment, but there's something really empowering about realizing that you can be completely disappointed and you can be so crushed or so embarrassed and still be okay.

0:48:28.3 NA: I used to think that it was like, "I'm gonna be disappointed and everything's gonna be over". It's a both and it can go so badly, and also you can be fine, I think about this with heartbreak or losing a friend break up or something, where it's like, "Yeah, it's so awful", and eventually you'll be fine, and there's just something in the moment is sometimes harder to grasp, but I'm interested in like, How do you... Whether you wanna use the 2019 example, How do you talk to yourself during times of perceived failure? Is there a larger story that you're telling yourself about like the failure at the journey?

0:49:12.3 KG: I'm just trying to think in some ways, "Am I telling myself a narrative yet..." I definitely will tell a narrative in terms of like, "This is a journey and I will turn around from this or whatever, but in the immediate aftermath, I feel like I do go through different stages, it's usually this thing where I'm actually a little bit dazed right after the fact, and everyone else is embarrassed for me, and I'm not there yet, and so I'm kinda like, "I just tried really hard and I'm here and I can't even think straight, I'm blacked out." And so usually I say that I have a bad race hangover. Everyone else around me feels really bad for me, but I don't really care, the next day is when it sinks into me, and usually I have that next day hangover where I'm reading everyone's text, I'm like, "Shit. They all think I sucked. [laughter] That sucked. Oh, man". This even happened this year after I ran a race in Eugene 10 weeks ago, and I finished pretty far in the back and I made a stupid mistake, and my time was really bad.

0:50:16.5 KG: And so I was getting all these texts and everyone's trying to console me, and the next day I'm embarrassed, I wanna just crawl into a hole. Honestly, I think the biggest thing I do is just let myself feel it, I think it's like the class of thing is I try as much to be in the moment, and I do think that sport has helped me because you need to do that a lot of different ways in sport, right now, for example, I'm really freaking nervous about the Trials, but I have to as much as possible be in the moment and in the whole zen mind of let the thought come in and not judge it, and I'm not gonna be great at it 100% of the time, but I do think that just knowing it's gonna pass is helpful and not moralizing, not making any rash decisions. Just letting myself have that day. That's the thing. And also kind of some dark humor, honestly, I feel like humor is such a saving grace in many different ways, and especially around friends, friends that you're very close with, just like your very, very inner circle that you can go be upset, but still be like, "Okay, shit, that sucked. Let's go get some food or something". Those are all kind of things. There's not anything necessarily magical, but I do think in a way it's giving yourself that one. For me, it's like, give myself that and one hangover a day, and I guess I call that race hangover, but just 'cause it hits me later. And but then kind of just like forcing myself back into my routine, you know?

0:51:44.5 NA: Yeah.

0:51:44.6 KG: And so basically not, not letting myself mope. I don't mope about it, after just like literally a day, I'll just force myself back out of it. Usually I'll avoid social media as much as possible, like seeing other people celebrate their successes, as much as I want to celebrate them, like

trying to just, you kinda just try to eliminate that noise. Yeah, and then I'm like, skip to next morning and...

0:52:07.4 NA: Yeah.

0:52:07.7 KG: Just do whatever your routine is.

0:52:09.1 NA: Just like, "Get back to work." Yeah, it's...

0:52:12.6 KG: Yeah!

0:52:12.6 NA: Well it's almost like, it's an interesting both and of letting yourself feel the feelings, it's not like you're pushing them down and not letting yourself be disappointed or you know whatever, because that like the truth comes out somewhere right, if you don't let yourself feel the feelings, it will come back up in another way, it's like allow yourself to feel it. But not making it mean too much, but that seems to be true both for success and failure, right? It's sort of, it's whatever that kind of classic advice is like, "Don't believe the best or the worst things that people say about you," right? That for someone you're on a pedestal that's not realistic, and for someone, they hate you, that's not realistic either, and I don't know like, not making any one thing mean too much.

0:52:49.2 KG: So true, exactly. And I think if anything, that's even more so right now, people get into the habit of, "You have a good work out or you have some kind of good... You get some good feedback and it puts you over the moon," and that can be almost as damaging 'cause that kinda throws you off your path, you don't, you don't do whatever the small things are that you wanna be doing, or you kinda get cocky. The one thing that I do take, I guess the one narrative I tell myself is that the emotions, the anger or frustration emotions can be very motivating, and so I guess the one thing that I will tell myself is just because this is bad, like that this can motivate me for future successes, I guess.

0:53:33.0 KG: Not that I'm necessarily gonna be successful in the future, but it can be the motivator, and obviously I feel like you are someone I've learned that from just like the power of that fed up. That like fed up mentality. I'm fed up with this at this point, like the power to change, and I know for you with drinking or different things, for me, it's like, "If I'm just... If I've lost a few times and this freaking sucks," and that kind of feeling, even after the Eugene race a few weeks ago, I was like, "What! No! I'm not this person anymore." So yeah, I was pissed the next day, but I knew that anger was gonna be a good motivator for my next block of training.

0:54:09.6 NA: One more question on this, because you were talking before about sort of, what your pre-race boundaries are, right? Like with maybe stepping back from friends a little bit and creating that, and you mentioned sort of the post-race text messages and stuff, and this can be as it relates to racing or just like larger in life, how do you like to be supported during times of failure or during hard times? What makes you feel supported?

0:54:39.4 KG: That's an interesting question. I... Part of me thinks I mean, there's never a perfect answer, right, 'cause I always think about this in terms of what I should tell other people, and even though I go through this all the time, I like never know what to tell people.

0:54:51.5 NA: Nobody does, nobody, that's why I'm asking, right? That's why I think it's worth talking about.

0:54:55.7 KG: Yeah, honestly, I appreciate hearing from people. I appreciate not feeling ignored, even, but it's a weird thing where I'm like, "I don't really wanna talk to you that much," but feeling that you like still love me is nice, being like kind of someone, honestly being like, "Oh man, that was a tough one," like, I don't even know what the exact wording would be, but you can acknowledge something was bad and not trying to make it into thing better, but just say, sometimes it's like, sometimes I like questions, like asking like, "How do you feel?" or "What are your thoughts?" Although I do sometimes... Yeah, I would say that, I'm trying to think. Obviously, in different points, I've had different perspectives, but I do usually like if someone gives me the chance to get my thoughts out, because versus someone just to make trying me feel better, or assuming something about the race that maybe, maybe wasn't true, someone who's asked not a leading question, about the experience, and then I can like give them my perspective and usually perspective isn't as bad as what it looks like on screen or whatever, or there was some positive that I would take away.

0:56:08.6 NA: Well, it's like, it's the double edge sword for what you do, that it's so binary, like you either win or you don't.

0:56:14.5 KG: Right.

0:56:14.6 NA: Do you know what I mean? And that's not the case in so many other, I feel like in so many other areas of life, we allow more nuanced feelings and we don't necessarily assume how someone's gonna feel at like a loss or a certain rejection or something, and it's like I think that it would be very easy for someone to watch you not win a race and make all kinds of assumptions about what that means when like maybe it was actually a great race for you and it was just a better race for somebody else, right?

0:56:40.0 KG: Right.

0:56:40.1 NA: And so you're, I think, and again, we're talking about this through the lens of running, but I do think that this has larger implications of like, not assuming how somebody feels about what you think might be a bad experience, giving them the space to be like... It's... The take aways that I'm pulling from this, the two things are like one, acknowledge it, reach out to the person, name what's happening, acknowledge it, but like give them the space to contextualize what it means. Yeah, that's good advice.

0:57:05.4 KG: I love that, and you put it beautifully.

0:57:08.7 NA: Together, we have made good advice. So I wanna ask you, I know we were talking about the Will Smith quote, but I know you have... I think it's like a notes app in your phone, or is it a journal where you keep like a running...

0:57:19.9 KG: Yeah.

0:57:19.9 NA: List of what motivational...

0:57:21.5 KG: Yeah!

0:57:21.6 NA: Quotes? Tell me about this thing. Maybe if you have it on hand, like read a couple that are really like fueling you right now. I am very interested.

0:57:29.1 KG: Yeah! I mean, I honestly have this, I've had this note app for, or have had this list of quotes on my computer now for, I don't even know, probably four years on. I have ones from the 2016 Olympics. And yeah, just like throughout my daily life, things I'm reading, I will put things in here, and usually each year I start up a new one 'cause it just becomes so long that it would be too much for me to look into, but it's been kind of fun. The last thing is, for the last 16 weeks leading into the trials, I made this little kind of journal, or it was more so just like a page for each week, that it was kind of just, like a bullet thing where I was checking off what I was gonna do each today like, "Make sure I do a moment of mindfulness or take my collagen," I don't know, things that ranged from, but mostly just a very menial task, but just this idea, "How will I know that I've gone into the trials doing everything?" you know.

0:58:29.3 KG: Anyway, so I went through my 2021 quotes, and I put one on each week, and I've tried as much as possible not to look ahead, so it's kind of like this fun surprise after the fact [laughter], and yeah, they range from different things. The ones that I've liked recently, there's all these ones about fire. Victor Frankl quote, "In order to give light, one must endure burning." And this idea that a fire burned itself out completely, and I think that's for me, this thought of how in a race are you going to give... How do you end a race just on your last drop, and I think recently in races, I have been... I don't know, standing up when I'm done and I'm like, "Wait, why am I still on my feet shouldn't I have fallen over by now?"

0:59:22.8 KG: And so this idea of how... Well coming back to this. How do you get in that mindset? How do you literally give every last inch of what you had. The one that I think I posted on Instagram about this that I totally loved. It's kind of longer though, but it's, okay I'll read it for you. "Sometimes we forget how far we have traveled while we are looking ahead to the next steps, it's good to lie down and remember what it took to get this, for all those karmic hoops we had to jump through and all those over-comings. It's good to stroke our face with love and to remind ourselves how much courage it took and who we would have become if we hadn't braved the journey. It's good to say thank you to the inner spirit that walks within and beside us whispering sweet somethings in our inner ear, reminding us that we are simply and utterly worth fighting for. We are simply and utterly worth fighting for."

1:00:24.3 NA: I love that.

1:00:27.0 KG: Yeah.

1:00:28.3 NA: Yeah, especially the part right at the beginning of... If we're always looking ahead to the next thing, we're not, this all sounds very cliché, but you're not appreciating what it is that you have already done. If the only thing that matters is the next thing... I don't know, I feel like that would be a sad way to exist.

1:00:47.2 KG: Yeah, exactly, and I think also just being proud of ourselves for what we have accomplished, I think even for you with the podcast, looking for me, sometimes I get in the thing, I'm like, "Oh man, have I wasted the last few years in terms of not having the best results," blah, blah, blah. But it's like, I don't know, just looking and being okay with, yeah, seeing that we have come this far, we can be proud of that and continue to fight. The one this week is, "A man has two lives and the second one starts when he realizes he only has one."

1:01:24.2 NA: Ooh.

1:01:25.7 KG: Which I feel like I saw on some Instagram thing, but I thought it was deep.
[laughter]

1:01:28.9 NA: Oh my God. I feel like it would be a real joy for me to put together various 16-week journals where I get to choose the quotes [laughter] or I also had a very long notes up in my phone of just different quotes and stuff I'm like, [laughter] "Oh, I don't know in what situation [laughter] I would do that, but if I would ever make a journal or something," I feel like... Yeah. It is interesting what... The words are that stick with you, and the thing that's just the right thing at the right time. That that's... Yeah, I remember, it's funny I feel like we're having an entire conversation about 2017, but 2017 is the year that I hiked the Arizona Trail, which obviously you came out and met me on, and there were just a couple, yeah, I feel like I had a few quotes that I would keep front and center in my phone, it's the things that you just think about over and over and over again, and... Yeah, being able to collect whatever it is that feels like wisdom for you at that point, yeah.

1:02:27.0 KG: It's interesting to think of what quotes do for us, 'cause at some point it just... Yeah, they're just words there. Honestly, sometimes a lot of them would come from your emails, like little nuggets of wisdom from your emails. You're right, I don't know if there's any greater thing I'll ever do with these, but it is just grounding for me to look at them, and I do think it changes throughout. I do think having, as you said, one for you around the Arizona Trail, it kinda brings you back to a certain mindset. Even the ones that I used in 2016, before Rio, I'm not necessarily using those same thoughts now, but it's kind of fun to look back sometimes, and weirdly it's like a journal of where my mindset was.

1:03:06.5 NA: Yeah, no, definitely, or I almost feel like it's a snapshot of what you're working on mental toughness wise. Because if it's really focused on the fire and the giving the last drop, what does it look like to be courageous enough to go to your edge like that and not back off. [laughter]

You're getting off the treadmill or I'm gonna die [laughter] there's something in that, yeah. We're having this conversation the first Sunday of June, obviously, but the episode will go live on the 23rd, which I think that's the day before the first round heat of the 800 right?

1:03:42.0 KG: Mh-hmm.

1:03:42.0 NA: For you, so that's very interesting, auspicious timing, I like that. Tell me about the day, last year, when you found out that the 2020 Olympics were gonna be cancelled, that thing that you'd been orienting toward and preparing for for so many years. How did that feel?

1:03:56.3 KG: I've been thinking about this a lot recently. I have... So I woke up that morning, it had kinda for a few weeks... It obviously, Covid had been building or Covid was happening. I think we were in the middle of a lockdown, but this was still the two-week lock down when we all thought "It's spring break and it's gonna be over in two weeks, right? We're gonna go inside." It was a "two-week lock-down". There had been talk, Tokyo had talked about postponing, but my coach was very much so like, "we're pushing through this, we're still training, nothing is changing. We're gonna put our heads down here and get through this and we're gonna all go to Tokyo." And I think he felt like he had to do that just to give us some kind of focus, but because of that, I wanna say... I really did not think it was possible. I was just head in the sand and it was like, at that point, I was within 16 weeks, and we were just going. I remember I woke up that morning, I got a text or something, so I open my phone.

1:05:00.1 KG: I was in bed, still. I saw that they had been cancelled, and... I immediately started sobbing, like audibly crying, and I'm trying to think back, I cannot remember a time in my life when I have... Wept like that. Cried like that. I'm sure there is, and probably when I was in high school on point, but again, immediately crying. Called my coach, was like, "I don't think I can come to practice. I can't even get out of bed," and I decided to go to practice, but the whole... I wanna say four hours straight, I was... I ran alone. I cried in the warm-up, I did my workout, I cooled down, I cried in the cool down. I saw this girl who is one of the girls that we would coach in the youth group [chuckle] and I think of my face was just like a shoddy mess and so I kinda awkwardly waved at her, but I do remember seeing her that day. So I was kind of embarrassed that I was so inconsolable.

1:06:03.1 KG: And, yeah, the whole... Again, I just... It was the most emotion I think I've shown maybe ever, and... It was interesting, but then I kinda think I went and got some ice cream. Kind of was able to talk, this is back to not failures, but just sad times, all you can do is just kinda laugh about it. And I think by night I was... We had ice cream and watched TV and I don't know, just... Were able to start composing myself, but in a way... Now thinking back to that time, I gain weird, not strength from it, but just kind of appreciation for myself, I don't know, or for my dedication because I think in a way, it proved to me that I do really care about this. There is something in this that I love and that I have really dedicated myself to, and sometimes, I think going into it, I sometimes was questioning that. Even with, for example, like what you're telling them, this killer instinct of this hardcore, killer instinct. It's like, "Do I really have this? Do I really want this? Or do I just want everyone to be happy and my competitors to win as much as I do?" I was like, "No, I

have dedicated myself to this... There is something deep in me that believes and wants this goal," and something about that, even just the wanting. Not even the getting, but just the wanting was so powerful for me, to realize that, at such a guttural level... That I had this response.

1:07:29.0 NA: Yeah, and allowing deep desire... Like that... It goes back to what you were saying before about if you know that you can handle disappointment, then it becomes safe to let yourself want something. But so often, I feel like we put the things that we want most... We hold them at arms length. That it's a lot easier to say, "Oh, I don't know what I want," than to say, "Oh, I know exactly what I want, but I'm afraid that I can't have it." Or, I'm afraid that I'm not good enough. I'm afraid that I can't do it.

1:07:54.3 NA: And sometimes it takes the thing being pulled away from us, like... Like the Olympics being canceled, that's completely out of your control. It has nothing to do with you as an athlete or your performance, or it's not like you didn't make a team and then you're telling yourself this story about how it doesn't matter that much to you to save your own ego. It's like in that moment, it's so raw because it's gone and you're like, "Oh, fuck! I actually do want this so much." And so then, what does that do for... Do you think that realizing that you wanted it so much has changed what the lead up has been to the trials this year?

1:08:29.4 KG: Yes. Yes, a 100%. I feel that it's like something clicked in me... One of the things that changed... I literally changed coaches and training groups in January. So with six months to go, I ended up basically changing my whole training system, which would be kind of a risk to put it mildly just because... I don't know. That's the whole thing is you try to work for a long time with a certain group and you try to... And they say that it takes a few years for a coach... For you really to get the best out of yourself with a coach. But honestly, I think part of it was, I was just like, "You know what? I... " As you were saying, it's like, "I know I want this so badly and I must in there... " And I believe in myself so much that I am going to fight for myself. I'm gonna do what I believe is gonna put myself in the best position for this. And I think that just included a slight tweak in training, and so ended up... That's why I'm now sitting in someone else's house in Boulder [chuckle]..

1:09:37.0 KG: Yeah, so I would say that was the biggest thing that's changed. And honestly, even the way that I treated COVID and that I treated... Not treated COVID but treated the time... What I did with my time in terms of training during last year. Where I... Almost immediately very much started doing exactly what I needed to do and not really doing what I thought anyone else was asking of me or expecting of me. I got a little injury a few weeks later. A part of me thinks literally a part of it was just the stress of life at that point. And I ended up taking two months off running, which is a very big amount of time, especially for us... That very rarely happens. And really ended up almost being three months 'cause I came back so slowly, 'cause it just takes a long time to get back to running after you're not running.

1:10:29.1 KG: And I think part of that was just like, "Okay... " That was a little bit just I need a mental reset, especially when everything in the world is so crazy and unknown. And also giving my body the best chance it could to heal... I believe that's turned out well. I'm rounding the shape at a

very good time right now, but that was also a risk, because whenever you take time off, it just... Yeah, you're not gonna be as much on your game in the few months after that point.

1:10:56.3 NA: Yeah... This idea of being willing to take risks of various sizes I think is important because it's so easy in retrospect to create a narrative of something. So, we're obviously having this conversation before the trials. If you make the team, I think it's really easy for someone to then say, "Oh my gosh, you were so smart and insightful to switch coaches because you knew that this is what was gonna be best for you." If you don't make the team, I think there's an easy narrative of, "Well, you took too big of a risk." Almost find meaning where there isn't necessarily meaning. Very few things are, "If A then B." It's usually A, B, C, D, six, unicorn, seven, purple. Maybe it equals something... If all these things get added together and there's so many more variables than we think.

1:11:41.1 NA: But it's... I appreciate the reminder that essentially we're all just making what we think is the best next step in our lives, in our work, in our relationships, in our hobbies, whatever... You just do what you think is the next best thing, but you have no guarantee of whether it's gonna work out. Nobody can give any of us a guarantee for anything. And so it's like you just do it and sometimes it's gonna work out and sometimes it's not, but how much more... Like what you were saying about... In 2019 or in past years, choosing to run the 1500 instead of the eight, because it seemed easier, even though it was going against your gut instinct... It's a lot... Failure is a lot easier to live with if you've done what felt like the right things for you to do along the way. At least that's how I feel.

1:12:23.5 KG: Yeah, that's exactly it. And so maybe in a weird way, by having the Olympics being taken away, it again primed me to be in that spot where I wasn't... Yeah, I wasn't scared to... Exactly. To do everything so that I had no regrets. So even if it's... Even if it... And it doesn't end up working out, I have done the things... The courageous steps and the small things and been... Like, all along the way... You know... And honestly... I mean. It's this funny back and forth with process and outcome 'cause in our sport, it's all about process until it's all about outcome and then outcome is all that matters. But that's what a lot of life also... In the end, as much as we... As much... I talk about process, in the end, there's gonna be... You want certain results... And... Yeah... But I think even all the choices in the last year have been very much toward outcome... Or because of what I thought would be the best for this summer, it also has ended up being like just the best... It's been so much fun. And so it's like they can both... They can both happen...

1:13:36.5 KG: In a way, by choosing things that I thought would... By choosing things almost like more freely and that I thought would be... And kind of without being self-conscious about it, it's opened me up to this is great training situation, really fun teammates... Just very positive situation that after 10 years as a pro-athlete I'm like, "Wow, this is the most fun I've ever... " It's the most... It's the best.

1:14:01.1 NA: Yeah and as your friend can reflect back to you, this is the most fun that I have seen you have in training. And I think there's something in that too, of we can get too serious with important goals. I think there's a difference between taking it seriously and being too serious about it. And something that I have been working on all of this year and last fall as well with my business

coach, is around the idea of mentally lowering mistakes for myself.

1:14:27.9 NA: And this is sort of part of the way my anxiety manifests of... If I make this mistake, then all of a sudden it's gonna mean such and such, and then I lose all my money and I don't have a business anymore... I make the stakes much higher than they need to be of like, it's a podcast episode... At the end of the day... And so part of what they've been helping me with is how can we lower the stakes on this. And it's interesting to hear you talk about like this is a goal that you care about so much that you're openly weeping for hours and hours, and it's taken away... And that you're changing your whole life to hopefully make this happen, and you can also have fun. I think sometimes we do ourselves the disservice of the archetype of what we think it has to be like or look like as a person who has big goals.

1:15:11.4 KG: That's a good point. Yeah, if anything I... There's like... Whatever the phrase... Happy athletes, race better, but I think it's for any people. It's happy people do better. Although I hate the word happy because I feel like it's... We can't always control that emotion. But just in general content or... Yeah, actualized people, I would say. But I think it's... Even in a way... I'm trying to think if this is... Fully related to this. But I think even with the amount of sadness that I did feel on that one day, there was that... So much sadness, but it also... That was... I didn't... After that one day of feeling that it kinda went away. I obviously... The whole situation lasts... Everything with the pandemic has been horrible or not fun or not positive. But in terms of my specific sadness around that thing getting cancelled, I very much did feel that emotion and then it was a pretty cathartic and I like was then able to, in some way, move past it and just... I don't know, be able to make future plans and not really think or be upset about the cancellation.

1:16:33.0 KG: Yeah, it's just interesting how things change that you haven't really... In ways that you can never fully plan for. But now looking back at it, I'm like, "Oh my gosh..." Not thank God that everything happened but I am so thankful that I was given that extra year because it has brought me to this place. And it has given me all of this last... It has given me this training, it has given me all of... All that I have at this moment.

1:17:00.2 KG: And this isn't really to do with what you were talking about, so I think I just kinda went on a tangent, but... I don't know. Basically, I think it does go back to how you deal with the failures is just... Or with sadness... Is just also realizing that by in a way, like letting this year happen... Again, this is different because it was fully out of anyone's control, but there have been things that have come out of it that I am now... Now looking into these trials and this Olympics, I can't imagine it any other way. And I feel so prepared and so ready and so excited, and I'm like... I'm so, so thankful that I have had this last six months with team Boston, with Joe.

1:17:42.3 NA: I wanna ask you... We've obviously talked about failure a bunch... I wanna ask at least for right now... For a race like this that's coming up, what is your goal-setting strategy? How do you define success for yourself? Is it a zero sum game of making the Olympic team is the only goal, and thinking about anything else is a distraction, and so I can't even conceptualize other paths? Or does it make you feel better to have more of a tiered approach. Like this is an "A" goal, this is a "B" goal... What is your... I guess, what is your mentality or what strategy works for you when you

start to define what success looks like?

1:18:23.6 KG: For me, it's gonna be a little bit of a both and, which I feel like it's one of your good... Or one of your classic things... I very much... The goal is making Olympic team. Yeah, so that's the goal. And anything that's not that goal is not what I want. You know?

1:18:43.7 NA: Yeah.

1:18:44.2 KG: And even part of that... It's fun looking back... It's been interesting thinking, even back into 2016 recently... I won the US trials in 2016 to make the team, but it was like a crazy chaotic race and two of the favorites fell. And so it's been something that I've felt... I actually haven't really realize till recently, just like how much kind of guilt I still feel around that. And I still don't own the fact that I'm the US trials champion, and... I don't know, weirdly feeling like I had this... I wanna prove again that I'm there. So in a way... I guess that's all I'll say... Like, winning the trials is another thing that is definitely has crossed my mind as something like, "Okay, that'd be awesome." I don't know. That would be... I don't know. Things like that are... But again, making the Olympic team is the goal.

1:19:33.0 KG: I think where the, both and, comes in is just the realization that of course, if it's a incredibly hard thing to do and there is a situation in which it takes an incredible time to do that... And so I know that there's a situation in which there's an incredible time that's run... Or whatever the top three people run incredible time, and maybe I run an incredible time as well, and I'm not in that top three. And that is not... And that's something where it's like, you know that it's a possibility and... But I would never say that's a tiered goal... Like running a fast time by itself is a goal. I just know that in that possibility... It's like anything... It's like if you give it your all, you know that you're gonna be able to wake up the next day and be like, "Okay, I gave it my all." But for me personally, when I'm looking at goals, this is like, "No I'm making the team." That's what I want.

1:20:34.5 NA: Yeah. So I would love... And I don't even know if you can put this into words, but when you just said... If you've given it your all, you can wake up the next day and feel okay about that. What it... How do you know if you've done that? What is giving it your all in this context? Like if you literally can't stand up at the end... I'm interested... How do you know?

1:20:55.1 KG: Well, there's two things. There's giving your all in the lead-up, and then there's the race. So I think literally part of the way... I mean, this is also, I think part of the way to deal with nerves in many different settings is just live your life as the person you wanna be... Live your life with as much integrity and whatever excellence or... Whatever your different adjectives would be. Do that every single day, and then you know you were that person and then whatever happens on the day isn't gonna necessarily affect your identity.

1:21:29.6 KG: So I think that's a major part of it. And... For me, in terms of what I have done this year, how I have... Even just throughout your whole career, there's that. And so, you know you've given it your all in the lead-up. And then on the actual day... That's like... Well, that's the big thing. It's like you... I right now, I'm thinking about... Yeah... Like not being able to stand up afterwards...

Like, just being... Just laid out. I had one race in college where I... It was a 4 x 4 and I got the baton... So it's a relay and it was the last leg and I got the baton like way back... Like a 100 meters back, and I chased down a few girls.

1:22:13.3 KG: And it was weird... I was only going for third, but... 'Cause we weren't the best. But I ran my fastest time ever in this 400, literally my legs gave out... Over the line. And I ended up... 'Cause they gave out a little bit before the line. I ended up actually like... She passed the line first because I literally fell over the line. But that to me was for so long the idea of just the best feeling in a race. Like, I could not run a step further. So that was giving it my all. [chuckle]

1:22:42.4 NA: Yeah, I'm fascinated with this question because I think outside of a sport context, it's almost impossible to measure. I mean, even within a sport context it's seemingly impossible to measure, but did this question... So right now... And you know this. But I've been working on... I mentioned before that in 2017, I hiked the Arizona Trail. I've been working on essentially writing a little tiny book, about it... Basically writing something about it. I don't know necessarily what it's gonna become, but I've been thinking about it, and one of the things that I'm... In the part... So it took me 44 days to hike that... Whatever, 800 miles. And at the time... That year, the fastest known time... The speed record on that trail... The woman who had set that it was like 19 days and something.

1:23:27.1 KG: Oh my gosh.

1:23:29.5 NA: And I remember getting to... It's faster now. It's really wild, I'm sure you've seen what's happened with FKT culture, but... I remember getting to day 19 on that hike and just cacka-laughing and how much I had left. And trying to imagine how she had been done with the whole trial at that point.

1:23:43.2 NA: And it was a real kind of fork in the road for me mentally of realizing like, I'm never gonna be the best. I'm not gonna set an FKT... That's not my... And I'm not saying that in like, "Oh, poor me." That's just not who I am. That's not my physical ability. And to have to be like, "Okay, it's still worth getting the best out of yourself even if you can't be categorically the best." It's like a... I don't know if that makes sense as I'm describing it. But it was like, "Okay, I still have many hundreds of miles left to do."... I'm never gonna be the best like she is, but it doesn't mean that it's not worth trying to get the best out of myself.

1:24:17.5 NA: And so I've been thinking about that in the four years or whatever, since of like, what does that look like in different contexts to get the best out of yourself or to give your all, and then how does that... I've... Now, I'm about to go off on a tangent. But how does that then relate to the level of life balance that you might or might not want. Because giving your all... If you're actually gonna do that, is that at the extent of everything out... Right. Like, "Could I be a better writer if I didn't have any friends, 'cause I never spent time with anyone?" Like, maybe, but then I'd also be sad and lonely. It's just like an... It's an interesting puzzle of what is it. And I think it's maybe a little bit easier to conceptualize in a, did I give my all in this sub-two-minute race, but it's an interesting question.

1:24:58.4 KG: No, and even... It's interesting... Even when you were saying that before you even talked about the balance thing, I was thinking, even when... Yeah, me saying kind of giving your all in the lead-up. Like, "Did I actually give my all in the last six months?" And that's... Again, where the journal thing comes in and the bullet journaling... Whatever. Like... Doing small things every day, but I mean I... If you talked... I could list off a few places, even just right now, of like, no there was this time when I... I don't know. Like, missed a few days here, went out to late here, whatever, whatever... A few different things... Was up... Yeah, like being stupid with packing or out walking around... I don't know. There's just multiple times where I could say, "No. Okay, technically, I wasn't like all in athlete for these amount of months." Right. So yeah...

1:25:44.8 NA: But like you're not a robot, right?

1:25:47.3 KG: Right.

1:25:47.3 NA: So it's like that's not... It's like giving your all in a sort of relentlessly realistic way... Like, I think that it. And that seems to almost be part of the mental training. Because... If you want to, you can always find something to fixate on that I could have done that better.

1:26:00.8 KG: Right.

1:26:00.9 NA: And that's true for everyone, at any point, but what kind of life does that give you. Like, I'll never forget, I interviewed our friend Lauren Fleshman a couple years ago, and she was talking about like... The habit that she was working on of practicing satisfaction. And I think that's incredibly relevant here of like at some point you have to decide to be satisfied with what the thing is or you have... You have to decide that it's enough because otherwise you can actually make yourself crazy.

1:26:27.7 KG: A 100%

1:26:29.7 NA: Oh, if I only would have this... Or if I would have said that word differently or... And you just ruminate and ruminate. And that's not helpful either.

1:26:35.1 KG: Yeah. Yeah, a 100%. And it's like... It's this interesting balance where... As you were saying, even with hiking, it's like, yeah, you have to be... At one point, we can be good all about like trying to be our best, but then you have to when your foot hits the pavement or the trail or the track, you have to be like, okay with exactly where you are. And like enjoy the fact that you can then go out and show whatever you have.

1:27:01.0 NA: And I also think that... Being clear about what you're not willing to sacrifice... Like maybe you stayed out "too late," because it was someone's wedding... That it's... Okay, maybe you would have gotten a little bit more sleep, which is in theory better for athletic performance, but like at what cost. Sometimes I have to think about too, like going all in, but going all in while being someone who has... Who is like mentally well. Like, that matters also.

1:27:32.9 KG: Exactly.

1:27:33.7 NA: Yeah. Something that you and I have been talking about lately, outside of this conversation, is sort of the experience of aging. In general, what it is as your body changes and stuff, but then also for you being like a... I don't know, "older athlete". I'm interested in how that... If and like how that factors into the lead up to this. Do you feel like this is the last time that you're gonna be in this Olympic trials position? Does that factor into your feeling at all... What is it? This is a huge question, but maybe I'll just like leave it there and let you pick up the thread wherever you want.

1:28:15.0 KG: Yes, I've been thinking about this a ton recently. I... Simply to answer the question, most likely, yes, this will be my last Olympic trials, just because... But at this point, it'd be mostly like... I would say it's still a choice saying, "Okay, no I want to do other things to my life." At one point have kids, and just the timing... Yeah... That have to start making kind of trade-offs. It's been funny thinking about this year, this last... Kind of how I've oriented myself this year versus the last few. Basically since... As an athlete, almost immediately out of college, but definitely when you're mid-20s, you kind of start to internalize this narrative that you're gonna be over your peak soon. That there's a peak, and... Some peak that's kind of mid to late 20s, and at one point you're getting close to it and you're gonna be... And everything's from now on you are just gonna be grateful for anything, but you don't... Probably don't hope for like great moments, and it's just gonna be... Like your potential is behind you.

1:29:29.1 KG: And kind of now looking back, I realized that even almost immediately after the 2016 Olympics, that's what was... Of many ways, what I was telling myself. Like, "Okay, I was really good here." I was like eighth in the world, but still like, "No, that was my peak." Even if I had only been training for a year, that's probably all I can get out of myself because I'm... Some arbitrary age... I'm 27... And 800 runners are just not... They're just like... Gonna be not as good. So I should definitely move up in distance because that's where my potential lies. And you can move up in distance and you might be able to get a few more years out of yourself.

1:30:02.2 KG: And I wasn't actually saying those things, but that definitely is in many ways what determined my decisions... Where I went to train, different things. Also, I was excited about the idea of changing... Or just experimenting around with different distances and doing more distance training, but... Yeah, there probably was also I'll never just... I thought it was inevitable. And it's been so interesting this year, especially the last few weeks or a few months, as I'm training well, and honestly just feeling so... Just feeling great. Like I just... I can even... If you took away my perception... If you just gave me amnesia and told me that I don't know how old you are, I... I honestly feel like as strong, as fast as whatever, whatever, as ever. And so I'm just... It's this amazingly strange sensation, of realizing how much of this was I just telling myself that has no basis in reality. Like zero basis, in what my body feels at this moment. I feel so good in terms of my training life.

1:31:09.3 KG: But yeah... But for some reason, like for so many years, I realize even if I was trying

to work against it that I had in my mind that there was like... It was inevitable that I wasn't gonna be as good. Even last year, crying, about the Olympics cancellation, part of that was also like I have missed my chance. I was just gonna be barely making it, and now I'm... I won't. Or I'm it's just gonna be holding on and barely... I would tell myself like, "I'm good enough that even if I'm not at my best, I can still be there."

1:31:36.0 KG: But now I'm like, "Wait, like what if I'm just at my best?" Why... I don't know. It's such a weird interesting experience as an older athlete realizing how much... And kind of also just second guessing. Where is this coming from? Why are we all thinking this way? And like... Who's gotten in my mind, and get out of it 'cause... I don't know.

1:31:58.0 NA: Completely like the glorification of youth in every way is so prevalent. And obviously, if we're looking at a longer time arc, of course, there's truth to that, you're not gonna be running these times when you're 60. Do you know what I mean? But that's just because it's true overall. What's the point I'm trying to make? It's interesting that you will never actually know. It's not like there's a light switch, you will never actually know when you have crossed the peak where no matter what you do in training that you'll never be as fast again. You don't, it's not like there's a right me online on the ground where you're like. And now I am a 31 and a half years old or not. And every day from here on it, it doesn't exist. And so when you're in that time span of like sure, I think you're faster at 25 and 55. If you take the long view it makes sense. But when you're in that window, how much of it is self-defeating, internal limitations that you aren't even able to access your potential, because you're telling yourself that what you've done in the past is the best that it can ever be there? That seems to me to be some real sport psychology stuff to have to work through.

1:33:11.8 KG: Yeah, 100%. I also think it will continue to change. It honestly is starting to change anyway. You're seeing a lot of tennis players, for example, people just... I'm thinking of Serena, but just in different people that are just doing so well later in their careers. Also you're seeing a lot of women doing well later in the careers. And so then part of the question is, is all of this just based on male development? Because they have... And is it gonna be a little bit different as we see what it means to be a very high-profile female athlete and... Yeah, and you're right. Obviously at one point, it could be over. And I also think about sometimes like, Oh man, if I like... What if, what if you had this training when you were 25? Would you just be over the moon and then? But at one point, you just can't think that way right? It's like the story has been great, it's been fun, and like. Let's fuck it up now.

1:34:09.5 NA: That's an interesting mindset. So what does that mean to you, that last thing that you just said? When you're like, "Okay, it's been fun, let's fuck it up now." What does that mean?

1:34:16.3 KG: I'm just saying that it does know what any good to think back in terms of what ifs. And I think for me, for example, what if you had really gone all in 80 after the Olympics, versus having a few years where you're doing both? And again there's no good. And I think that there are benefits from having more aerobic development or whatever that I did have in the last few years. And, I said fucking out now, I'm just like, let's just have a ton of fun. Let's do this thing. And I think that's the other thing that has been a little bit different in terms of being an older athlete. That I

really appreciate again with this training group. It's just an idea of like, It's okay you still have fun in your 30s or at any age. You don't have to, we don't have to be all serious.

1:35:03.6 KG: We don't get to the point where we're so many adults and then we're like, "We can't enjoy ourselves and put on a great show." And I think for a bit there, I got into that mindset like, "Okay, Now I'm serious and I've settled down. And I can never do anything embarrassing or... I don't know. Or sexy or outrageous or anything." And I think the one thing that real appreciate Macomber and is the woman who started the group here. And she's a step chaser and multi-time Olympic and world medalist. She's a few years over the meet, but still... I think, yeah, she's 30 and she is... I think just the whole ethos of this training group is just one, that we're gonna... It's okay to enjoy what we're doing and we're gonna have a good time. And again, we can be responsible adults or we can be responsible. But that doesn't mean boring, I guess, or just... Or just be anything. There's just no labels. Why are we labeling each other. And I think for some reason for me, for a bit there... I don't know. I just got out of that. I got out of that mindset and it was like... I think... I'm just thinking in terms of maybe losing a little bit of fire in racing or... As you said that there's no expiration date or there's no set line that you cross over, also there's no expiration date on any kind of youthful energy that you had at one point. You know, and maybe I put it in a box for a little bit, but I'm like, open that box. It's okay.

1:36:37.7 NA: I think that's an incredible perspective and advice. Again, well outside of running that it's... Yeah, we really embody or try to step into what we think it means to be... Fill in the blank, what does it mean to be an adult? What does it mean to be a professional? What does it mean to be a wife or a mother, or just put any of the sort of titles or identities in there. And obviously, we get those ideas from our family, from popular culture, from all kinds of different places. And I feel like we all just wanna belong. And so we think that if we follow the rules that are set out for that identity or that label. There's a subconscious almost like trying to fit the mold, so then we belong and we have love, and I'm over-simplifying this obviously. But I think it's so freeing what you're talking about. If you can break that open, you can open the box. You can be a professional and you can be incredibly dedicated, and you can want this so much, and also you can laugh as serially and wear silly outfits and... It's so much more nuanced. If we let it be.

1:37:49.8 KG: That's exactly it. And you're right. All of yes and yes, all all of those categories can fit you. And it doesn't just mean that because... Yeah, I still, again, want to be... I love being an adult, an adult, and I love being... Yes, taking care of other people, and you're right. Stepping into various other roles that maybe weren't available to me when I was younger. Educated to have all the different adjectives.

1:38:21.1 NA: To do those roles your way, right? Yeah, no, I love that. Is there anything that we haven't talked about so far that you wanted to share or mention.

1:38:30.7 KG: I love that we've gone all over the place. I mean, this is just personal to our friendship. But I don't know, I just... I feel like it's been... Also, cause I know that the podcast wrapping up, I feel like it's... The arc of our friendship has been so fun, and we literally only lived in the same place for a few months, and when we first met in Bend, and it's been very special to me

having you... Just throughout that, I feel like I met you right when I was in a transition point in my life and I decided to make a big move right before the 2016 Olympics, and I talked with you all the time. I remember going on walks, talking with you all the time then to work through my various feelings with, I don't know, with how to deal with that transition and feeling confident, and then we've been able to support each other throughout the years, and it's meant so much to me to have that support. And it's also been very fun to watch your journey of self-discovery and transitions and changes. And as you said, our COVID coworking dates were such an anchor last year, and I just love that we've been on this weirdly parallel journey and you're very special to me.

1:39:49.8 NA: You're gonna make me cry. Thank you. I was thinking this morning, yeah, that we've been friends for six and a half years, and like you said, only lived in the same place for a really short amount of time. And I feel like when I think about our relationship, it's such an example to me of... We really chose this. But it wasn't a friendship of convenience. And not that there's anything wrong with friendships of convenience in proximity, if you see each other at work every day, or you... That can also be really beautiful and fulfilling, but it would have been very easy to not continue to be friends. And, yeah, like parallels in our journey, I'm feeling quite emotional. This is, when this comes out, we'll be the third to the final episode of this podcast, and I've been thinking a lot about what does it look like to end something with as much care and grace as you started it with. And I think that it's so natural to put a lot of love and attention into the beginning of something. Like at the beginning of a friendship, or the beginning of, you just start dating someone or a new job, or there's all that new excited energy and maybe this is even how you felt as a pro runner at the be... There's so much energy and then maybe over time it changed.

1:41:03.2 NA: What does it look like to continue to re-invest in a thing, whether that's a friendship or your career or for me with this creative project. And then when it does get to be the time, but its completion to not just rush past the ending of something. And so I'm thinking about that a lot, and it's been really interesting within the Patreon community, people are sharing what their favorite episodes have been and how it has impacted them. It's been very emotional for me. So thank you, and I feel very much all of those same things, right back at you. If you could leave folks with one call to action based on this conversation, what would that be, maybe a question to ask themselves or a small action to take, what would you love to leave people with?

1:41:55.8 KG: I... A call to action. I'm. Looking at one of my quotes here that, and my most recent one is, I meet this life with my whole body. And then the other one is, this talking about shedding of skin is taking the exquisite risk, open up, every time we open up our cocoon and contact a wider reality. And I would just say, Yeah, what does it mean to you to, in your life, take that exquisite risk or meet your life with your whole body. And to, as we were talking about, do the things that might be scary, but that you'll find that you have the courage to do and that you look back and you won't... And you'll have no regrets.

1:42:54.9 NA: Now I feel like I'm gonna cry again. I feel like I will re-listen to those last two minutes very, very often. That's such a good thing to leave people with. What does it look like to meet it with your whole body. Yeah, I'm gonna be thinking about that. What is the best place for people to find you, or stay high, or watch the Olympic trials or basically where should people to go?

1:43:21.1 KG: Instagram is my main means of connecting with the outside world. My one social media channel, so it's fastKate. All spelled out one word. And you can also feel free to DM me, I respond to DMs. And the Olympic trials will be on NBC, and as we get closer, I will post the exact times and dates.

1:43:44.1 NA: Yes. And so everyone can join me in cheering very, very loudly for you. Thank you so much for doing this. It means you were one of the very first guests on the podcast, and then I think what our second episode was right after Rio, I think. I remember you told the story about getting locked in the bathroom or something, at the Olympics. People who haven't listened to that, then go listen to that episode. I feel really honored that you agreed to be one of the last guests on the show. And yeah, having you involved in this creative project has meant a lot, but also just having you in my life as someone to care about and look up to and show up for and be supported by, means so much to me, and I love you very much.

1:44:25.0 KG: I felt so honored to be asked by you and I feel the same. So yeah, thank you so much.

1:44:34.8 NA: And that's our show for today. Thank you so much for listening to this labor of love. Our music and sound editing is by Adam Day, who it has been a total dream and a pleasure to collaborate with for the past six years. And thank you especially to the people in our Patreon community who have made all 200 plus episodes of Real Talk Radio possible. You can find that community of ours at patreon.com/nicoleantoinette. It's a wonderful group of folks who crave honesty, intimacy and possibility, and for whom I love creating essays, live gatherings, exclusive audio content and more each and every month. If you'd like to join us, I will see you over there, patreon.com/nicoleantoinette.

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