# Finding Flow, Facing Fear, and Rebuilding Physical Literacy with Dan Edwardes Transcript

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## Introduction and Guest Background

I'm sure you remember but for the listeners that you came to India and spoke at one of the Barefoot Strong summits. The best human movement is sort of like that.

We're in control but we're also surrendering to the free forces around us. I mean that's really where the emotional side of movement comes in. Hello and welcome to another episode of Root to Rise.

My name is Dr. Emily Spickle, your host, and I am so excited for today's episode. We are talking to one of my very good friends and on a topic that I personally find fascinating.

So I hope you find it fascinating as well. Today's guest is a true pioneer in the movement coaching and personal development space. Dan Edwards began his journey in martial arts when he was eight years old, and then it led him on a path that eventually he found parkour.

in 2001. He trained parkour under the French founders and it really led him to find Parkour Generations, which is the world's leading authority on parkor education and helped him establish Parkor UK, the first governing body for this incredible sport.

Dan, thank you so much for being on the show. Thanks for having me, Emily. It's a real pleasure to see you again. Always a great pleasure talking to you.

Absolutely. So for the listeners who may not be familiar with parkour, can you please share with them and set the tone of what is this sport and how did it start?

It's a good question. Most people have probably seen it by now on the movies or TV commercials. And most people know it as that kind of roof jumping stuff.

But that's just a small element of what we do. Parkour is really a movement discipline based on all the foundational locomotion patterns of the human being.

So running, jumping, climbing. swinging, rolling, vaulting and using those to master any terrain that you encounter to be able to get from one place to another basically.

So it's a very functional, very practical movement discipline and it gives you the potential to do things like amazing stunts but that's just the small part of it.

So what really led to the origin of this sport and when did it become more organized? Was it just some kids playing in their backyard or on the streets and kind of it evolved into something or what's a little bit deeper on how it became a formal sport?

Yeah, you could do a whole podcast just on that topic, because from a sociological point of view, it's kind of difficult to pin down exactly why that particular group of young men and women in France coalesced their play into a discipline that became a movement became parkour because you know every kid moves and every kids explores the environment and that's happened since the dawn of time but for some reason in the kind of in early 90s there was this in suburbs of Paris there's a particular kind chemical mix of individuals who when they as they were growing up they took their play in their exploration of space and just sort of continued to refine it and test themselves further and further as a as they got older and it became, in their teenage years, they then sort of realized actually what we're doing is kind of our own discipline.

It's kind, you know, it sort had rules and kind concepts and philosophies and principles to it. And that was the birth of Parkour. But as to why that group created it at that specific point in time, very difficult to say, but it grew from there and went worldwide, came to the UK pretty quickly from France.

And from the UK, it went internationally. But it was when it came here that we were able to sort of, I guess, in some ways formalize it and create systems around how to teach it, and to create classes, engage with authorities and governments, to get some sort recognition for it as a formal discipline.

That process took a long time. It wasn't until 2016 that it got recognized as the sport in the U. K. So it took So as to why I happen there, who knows?

So when you're jumping from railing to railin, rooftop to rooftop, to me that would attract a certain personality.

## What Parkour Is and How It Evolved

What do you think it is about parkour that attracts certain personalities and what personality is that? Or are people trying to seek something through that method or through Yeah, I mean people are definitely, you know, it's the same as any discipline I suppose.

They're seeking something more than just being good at a sport. Everyone's looking for something deeper, right? And parkour is a great way to learn about yourself and that's I guess what keeps people coming back.

In the early days it definitely attracted a certain type of person 100% because it was very hard to access. There was no formalization around it at all, so you sort of had to be the kind of person that was very agentic and autotelic, and sort-of wanting to, you know, be willing to make the very-hard journey to hunt down the founding practitioners in the suburbs of Paris and, sort, do your best to keep up with them and learn from them.

So it was a very specific kind- of mindset in early days, a slight madness maybe and a obsessive-compulsive mindset to go and learn that particular thing.

But now it's obviously since we started teaching it and we open it up and have spaces that do it, and qualifications for coaches, now, it is much more accessible to everyone.

Everyone from very young children to people in their last third of life engage with it, and everyone from high level athletes to very detrained people.

Anyone can engage because it's really just human movement. Now it is much more accessible, much open. and people use it, definitely use, it to feel more free, to find out sort of what their body and their mind can do in space, and to restore an element of kind of fun to movement and training, which is often we lose as adults, you know, we see going to the gym as as hard work and a chore and and like punishment or you know penalty you have to pay for it too much and all this kind of stuff so so something like parkour is when people try that they realize like okay this is going to make me fit and strong but it's also great fun and that for a lot of adults that's quite that' s quite captivating.

Yeah and I'm sure you're familiar with the the tv show American Ninja Warrior. Do you feel that that is that a similarity in the methodology and the mindset around parkour or is just a kind of glamorized TV version of some of the elements?

It's a good question. Ninja Warrior from Japan has been around a long, long time since back in the 80s, I think, the original Ninja Warriors show. It is not the same discipline.

The skills that you learn in parkour make that kind of activity pretty easy. They make obstacle courses like that, which are made safe and indoors with lots of mats and things like Because parkour people are used to moving in an environment where you are your safety mat.

You keep yourself safe. To be put in environment like that where, you can just throw yourself and stuff, those obstacles become relatively easy. So park or people did really well in those competitions and move towards them and win those competition pretty regularly.

But it's not the same discipline. As you say, that's just an expression of what's capable with parkour physically. Parkour is a much more complete discipline, I suppose more similar to a martial arts or something like that.

It's much better. A discipline of self-improvement, a transformative practice rather than just being athletically capable and agile. Man, that makes sense.

I know one of the big reasons why I wanted to have you on this show is that I am fascinated on the mental side and the emotional side of parkour. Having done a little bit of it, it's something to run towards an eight foot wall and kind of scale it and then jump to another concrete apparatus.

So I'm sure you remember, but for the listeners that you came to India and spoke at one the Barefoot Strong summits. This was probably 2000, 15 around there 15 16 probably and when we were there you gave me a book or you told me about a Book that was called the rise of superman Fascinating book that I think everybody should read but in there a lot of the premise of that book was around flow and you were the first person to who introduced flow to me.

Can you share with the listeners a little bit about what flow is? How does that tie into parkour and then just your philosophy and movement in life? Yeah, I mean, it's very important.

It's a state of the brain, a neurological state that you get into when you're basically very focused on one thing to the point where your sense of self kind of takes a back seat and there's no longer a separation between you and the thing you are doing.

So in sports it is often called being in the zone. a guy called Sigmund Mahaly, he was the one that coined it as flow. Most people have experienced it, most people do experience it.

When you're doing something you absolutely love doing and so you'll just fully engaged in it like playing a sport at a high level or if you were a kid just playing with your friends or, if your a musician, you know, playing a song or composing music or something like that, you get into this state where time basically disappears and there's no sort of sense of self.

And it's thought to be kind of the optimal state in terms of happiness for a human being because there is no resistance to your environment, but also the optimum state of performance.

You perform best in that state because everything is aligned, all of your psychology and your body, everything's aligned and pointing in the same direction.

## Who Parkour Attracts and Why

and fully focused on the task. So, it sought to be kind of the optimal state for humans and the one we seek out the most. And what the guys, Jamie and Stephen in Rise of Superman, they basically identified that a lot of their lifestyle disciplines, so lifestyle sports like hardcore skateboarding, motocross, wingsuiting, climbing, free solo, all these sort of disciplines.

They put you in a flow state almost by default as soon as you start practicing them because they have elements like they normally they're carried out in an amazing environment of some sort or an unusual environment and these are triggers for the flow state.

So those disciplines put you in flow quickly and whenever you practice them and their thesis is that that is the reason those discipline have seen massive progress in a very short time compared to sports that don't, that you can do without being in-flow like for example football.

It's great to be in flow when you play football, but you can play without being in the flow. Whereas when doing something like parkour, you sort of have to flow because there's the element of risk and consequence.

So you're always 100% focused on what you are doing. Your mind can't be anywhere else. It is very central to parkours training. Once you understand it and you experience it, and feel it in whatever practice you do, then you want more of it.

And it becomes something you bite into in gender. and try to seek out, yeah. Not an addiction, but maybe like an addition to the flow state? Sort of, sort of yeah, the downside to that is that the minute you try be in flow, you can't because flow is an unconscious state.

So the moment you're sort consciously thinking I need to be, I needed to in a flow-state, your out of it. It's one of those things whereby you cant seek it and be in it, you just sort of have to create the conditions for it to arise.

There's another really good book called Bone Games, which is about exactly that. It's by a mountain runner, a fell runner who basically discovered that state and then spent 10, 15 years trying to recapture it.

And then eventually realizes that the journey to try to capture it was preventing him from experiencing it again. So that's been another great book on this topic.

Got it. So it's almost like chasing flow. How often do you get into a flow state? Do you seek flow? Again, I think if you engage with a practice like Parkour, I was training earlier today and you're going to be in it, not for the whole time you are training, because it comes and goes and it's not like a binary thing of your inflow, your knots, it is kind of a spectrum so you can be more in or more out of it.

But if you train in something like parkour or do anything that you love doing and just take away the distractions and focus solely on that one thing, then it's quite likely to come about in that situation.

You can't control it exactly, but you create the conditions where it is going to go about. Training in parkour, you're going experience it during that training session at some stage just because you get so focused on achieving a task.

And there is, you know, there are consequences to not getting it right. There might be small consequences like you land on your butt and bruise yourself, or you look like an idiot, in front of your mates.

But those consequences could be enough to focus you so that suddenly everything else disappears and it's just you and the jump. That happens pretty much every time you train in popcorn.

Very very interesting. Yeah, I highly recommend that everyone read the book I was not familiar with flow until I read that again like 12 10 12 years ago and What's interesting is what puts me in flow is when I presented a conference All right, which is not dangerous per se but I am in the moment and I'm so embodied in that present moment that It leaves me feeling more satisfied than anything else.

So it's interesting that it could be something like that as well that is inputting. There's not a dangerous element to it. Yeah, no. I mean, 100%. In the book, Rise of Superman, Jamie and Stephen, they basically identify, I think, 17 triggers for flow.

And only one of them is risk. So there are many, many triggers. The more of those triggers you have going on at once, the more likely a flow state is to arise.

Yeah, consequence and physical risk is only one of them. I was going to say, for you, it probably is presenting or something like that, because you do it a lot.

And being a presenter, too, I know that when you present, again, you can't think about anything else, right?

## Flow State and the Rise of Superman

100% you're just there because in a way there is the consequence of, there's some risk, right, in way because there the risk of not doing a good job on stage under massive observation of thousands of people.

That's a fear, glossophobia, the fear of public speaking is a most common fear in the world. So you are engaging with a, with the fair every time you do it and you mastering that fear.

There is consequence to it, you just very good at doing it well and that's why you enjoy it. Very insightful. I like that. So another concept that you introduced to me, too, which I love, I've actually shared it with so many people and I'm done just a couple of keynotes in my career.

But when I do, focus on this topic. Thank you for sharing this with me. And it is breaking the jump. Can you share with the listeners a little bit about this concept and the origin behind it and just how they could utilize this philosophy in their life?

Yeah, breaking a jump is one of the key concepts, if not the principle of parkour. It comes from the original French, which literally means to break a jumps.

The name comes with the idea that breaking the jump meant the first time you succeeded at a certain jump or a challenge in parkours. If you've had a difficult jump, it may take you half an hour to sort of deconstruct it and build up the psychological will to do it, and practice the technique, then eventually you do that first time you align the physiological requirements and the physical skill and bring that all together to it.

that is called breaking the jump. That's when you've broken the jumps and then after that it's just training to refine the skill, right? So breaking a jump is basically engaging with something at the edge of your ability.

It doesn't necessarily have to be in parkour, it could be anything, but it is that time when your engaging something right on the edges of you ability, what's called the zone of proximal development, I suppose, in sports science terms, where you're really pushing the boundaries of what you can do when you align all your abilities.

And again, we engage with it a lot in parkour. Almost every session you'll encounter movements and challenges and jumps where you have to bring everything into alignment to make it happen and commit to it.

So it's something we're very familiar with. And one of the key factors within it is fear, of course, because that fear is a positive emotion within us to keep us safe.

Whenever you're trying to do something on the edge of your ability, very sensibly, the emotion of fear will arise. basically to check you, to make you think, you know, are you sure you want to do this?

Are you you've got everything right? You sure that you thought it through? Do you have the right ability for it? So it's basically a kind of a safety check on what you're doing.

And you should run through that checklist. So you shouldn't engage with the fear and use it as a positive guide. And assuming you take yes to all the things that fear is asking you, then you can go ahead and do it.

But if some of the boxes are not ticked, you should listen to the fear and be like, OK, maybe not today. I'm going to leave it and train a bit harder and come back to it next week.

So we use it as a friendly guide, really. Fear is the central element of it, and we want to be We want to be experiencing that in our particle training.

We wanna be feeling that moment of where fear arises, just a little bit. Because if we're not, then it means we are in the comfort zone. If there's no fear at all, it probably means just staying in your comfort zones.

You don't grow, you don' improve when you're in a comfort. So the same way when we present, if you are presenting at a big show you haven't done before, probably before you go on, You have like butterflies and nerves,

all presenters do.

That's what that's feeling of fear, but you use it positively. You engage with it and it sharpens your thought processes. It makes you more aware, more alert, on the ball.

So you utilize the fear in a positive way and makes it better. But if you didn't feel it, it probably means that you're just doing something that is very easy for you and you are probably not going to get any growth there.

so it's a really necessary emotion and a key element within the breaking jumps process. How would you explain that to a child? The reason I'm asking, my daughter's five just turned six and she's a gymnast and, she trains 10 hours a week.

Mommy has big dreams for her. But I've taught her and seen her on that edge. And I try not to understand the psychology of how to guide her to essentially break the jump.

How do you teach that a to child. I think the key thing is, and it's similar with adults really, is questioning. When people are afraid and they're experiencing fear, the thing to do is to ask them good questions really rather than just trying to G them up and tell them like, just break through the fear.

You can do it and just do the jump. That kind of approach is pretty simplistic and not really… It doesn't really solve the issue. Because you might have anger or just intensity to break through the fear, but you'll have to do that every time.

It becomes very demanding and it may be safe. So the thing to I would recommend normally is just ask good questions and get specific. If someone's afraid of something, ask them, especially a kid like, Let's think about that.

What are you afraid of? What particular thing you're afraid is happening? And then get them to try to identify on, I'm actually afraid this happening.

And the more you can go into that, more, you could specify what that theory is, the most you then identify and help them overcome it. You go, okay, if you are afraid that Let's just work on that one thing, get you really comfortable with that, and then once they've done a bit of training on a particular element, you then step back and say, okay, now how does the challenge feel?

What are the challenges? And they might go, oh, no, I don't feel afraid. they've got rid of the one specific thing they're afraid of, because fear is not general, it is always very specific.

So the key thing is to ask, what are you afraid or what specifically are your afraid off? And then ask the question, how can we get rid how can you get more comfortable with that?

And they normally know, and with a bit of guidance and a little bit coaching, you can get them through it. So pretty similar to dealing with adults, really, it's just ask them the question and they will normally have the right answer for you.

And often they would be afraid of stuff that you don't expect, which is why it is important to ask that question. Because we might think, oh, they're afraid because of this, because that's what we're are afraid.

But they may be something completely different. You need to find out what that is first. Yeah, great, thank you. I will try that at the slide park the next time.

So do you think this concept of breaking the jump applies outside, or how could it apply for the listeners outside of physical challenges like going down something scary or whatever the physical movement may be?

Could it be something at work or a relationship or different life decisions? So there's two ways to think about fear, I think. The emotion of fear is like, you know, the emotion joy, emotion anger, and emotion love.

They're sort of emotional substrates that exist within you.

## Breaking the Jump and Working with Fear

And then you attach them to specific things and then they become like things. So you attached the emotional joy to a specific thing, that thing becomes pleasurable.

I mean, if you touch the emotions of the fear to the specific you get a fear of that things, a phobia. but the general emotion of fear is always there.

So anything you do in life, there will be a fear that will come about as a result of doing that thing, just because you're doing something. Absolutely, you'll get fears in social situations, in your job, your vocational situations.

You'll With the animals, environmental fears, you get fear of heights, fear darkness, all these fears that come about from us just exploring our world.

And these are all learned fears because there's only two fears are hardwired, which are the sort of startling reflex fears. The fear falling and the fear loud noises.

So these things are in the brain from birth, but pretty much every other fear is learned. So they come about just from exploring a world and encountering things and then go, okay, this feels good.

This doesn't feel good, but this is safe. So absolutely, once you get good at understanding what fear is as a mechanism within your brain, you can then apply it to anything else.

If you're afraid of going for a job interview or afraid to go and talk to a good looking person in a bar, the fear mechanism is the same and therefore breaking the jump is same thing.

to actually go and talk to that person is the same as the psychological energy it takes to do the jump. It's the psychologically energy you're using to break through a fear barrier.

So once you've done it in one environment, it will help you do it better in other environments. Because you are just practicing at managing and engaging the emotion of fear.

So parkour in some ways is just the embodied practice of fear. And if you get good at that, it makes you very comfortable with other things, especially things that are less like visceral fears.

You know, if you go in training, I was talking to a very experienced practitioner this weekend who was here at an event we were doing, and he was doing a talk not on fear, but on how to use your life well and not to waste time.

And basically, he understood that he just started setting up his own businesses recently, And he was thinking, you know, this is a scary thing, telling all my own businesses.

But then he realized, wait a minute, I've spent 20 years doing very, very high level extreme movements and jumps across buildings and mountains and things that are very highly risky.

And if I didn't get them right, i could be very badly hurt because he's a very hard level practitioner or lose my life. He was like, well, if i did all that, Why am I afraid of, you know, potentially losing a bit of money by setting up a business and not working?

Like, who cares? There's nothing. I'm not really risking anything compared to what I was risking for 20 years in my practice. And as soon as you realize that, it was like, oh, yeah, I can go full steam ahead and just take these risks and go for it and do stuff because you suddenly realize those risks, those fears were much more easy to handle than the visual fear of like keeping your life safe while you're moving at a high level in parkour training.

So it does carry over to everything. Yeah. And you could probably see a lot of self growth on the other side of when you actually break a jump. I remember one of my most pivotal jumps that I broke is when I left traditional podiatry and I.

Left surgery and traditional medicine and that to me, I felt like that was exactly what you're describing. I had one foot there I was right on the edge and I'm like I just need to push into this and essentially break the jump and leave traditional podiatry and this whole world opened up.

So to the listeners definitely push in to breaking the jumps. You don't know what's on other side. One is switch gears a little bit. i do have to talk about feet with you because of the the demands of parkour.

What do you think about Feet, the ground, just how you play with the grounds through parkour movements, and then footwear, how footware could impede or actually support the movements of parkours.

It's something that I implement and incorporate in our teaching and our education programs a lot and in training a lots and even more so since we met.

I think we first met at an idea maybe one of the big fitness things in the States and I remember sitting in on one your workshops and that was pretty awesome because I remembered a little of stuff you were saying I was like wait this This actually, especially when you went into the feet and the nerves and you have the absorbing of impact and how they tell that.

And I was like, wait a minute, this is exactly how she's basically explained the mechanisms by which we absorb impact in parkour. This makes a lot of sense.

It all kind of correlates exactly with our understanding of parkours. I thought this was perfect. I can actually use this to now explain why these sorts of landings and why the foot needs to do this in parkour.

So it was incredibly useful meeting you and learning all that stuff from you. And then being able to translate it and basically use that terminology to explain.

Because in Parkour for sure, the feet, base of all movement, as you know in your teaching, and if your feet aren't strong and capable, it will hugely limit what you can do in parkour.

It will massively limit your expression of force and power which therefore limits your ability to absorb force which means will affect the amount of impact you take safely.

So in Parkour that's absolutely central so it's really really important. We do loads of barefoot training, we do lots of footwork, lots big toe training to work with the power and all that sort of stuff and the spread and Super, super important.

So parkour is the use of the human body, the optimal use for the body to cross terrain. It's the only discipline that uses all the locomotion patterns and trains all of them.

And as a result, you know, the whole of your body is your tool, so you cannot afford to have a weakness in particle. Your grip must be strong, your feet must strong.

You know your core must to be stronger, you're upper body strength must good, leg strength, power, agility, mobility, flexibility, elasticity. Everything's going to be good.

Because this is our tool, and we use every element of it. So when you understand that, you realize, OK, I really need to make sure my feet work properly and optimally.

I think it's 100% central to movement. And for most people, it completely changes everything when your identify just how weak and limited their foot is by the shoes they've worn and all this sort of stuff.

When they begin to change that, they become much more athletic. So I think it's very important. Do you tell people to get out of cushion shoes when they're doing parkour, like their first classes, either take their shoes off or take off the hokas?

Oh my God, yes. Yeah, yes, basically we say, obviously we don't enforce anything, but early on in their training we will say right, you do need to think about your footwear choices because basically in parkour the more experience you get, the thinner sole shoe you will wear.

Basically because you realise that you need to have what we call touch, so you have sensitivity with the ground. So your foot needs to be able to feel the object you're trying to land on.

As you say, sometimes we land with rails, we're landing with great precision. So your foot needs to sort of feel exactly where it is on the surface and it might need to mold and adapt.

So you need shoes that have soles that are very flexible and light and thin. And the thicker the sole, the more it's, as you explained so well in all your education, and the thick of the soul, you're sort taking away from the impact to absorption abilities of your body and we don't want that.

We'd sell them pretty early on, right? If they come in wearing massive, thick hokas or really thick, straight running shoes with these big plastic soles, we normally say, look, you can't force you, but really think about the shoe choice, because if you move around in a shoe like that, the chance of rolling your ankle and getting an inversion is going to be very high, plus you're just taking more force in your knees and lower back than you need to, it's much better just to straight back, do smaller movements with a thinner sole chew, with wider toe box and just let your feet do a lot of the work and let you feet get strong and then you'll be able to do the big jumps and your body will be stronger for it.

So yeah, we pretty early on get them to understand that and encourage them think about it and if they train for any length of time they will do that just because they'll look at the other practitioners.

And then people get experienced people and go, all of those people wear X, Y, or Z shoe. So maybe I should get that shoe? So they then all kind of replicate that.

Yeah, I know that makes sense. Do you focus on continuity of momentum? Or maybe you would use another word, but you have to always be moving. I imagine that you don't jump off of a railing, land, stop, hold, run to the next apparatus.

There's this fluidity that it, you keep moving with gravity and momentum. Am I saying that the right way? Yeah, 100%. Sometimes we need to do what we call stick a landing, sometimes we do need stop dead.

If you're jumping from wall to wall and you are 20 feet in the air, you need stick dead on that wall because you don't want to fall over the edge.

## Feet, Footwear, and Movement Mechanics

Sometimes, we have to be able to stop with great precision, which is what is called sticking a and hold that form and posture and absorb the impact in our body.

And we also need to be able to land and keep moving. So the elasticity, the parametric ability in the body is very, very key for us. The elasticity in general, we want to create an elastic body that can bounce, that rebound and that transition force, use the free forces of physics within our movement because movement is an interplay of muscular effort and so self-generated energy force and the free forces like gravity, like momentum, muscle elasticity, the stored energy that goes in the stretch shortening cycle.

So, these forces, we're combining those forces with our muscular force. to create movement. That's how all movers and athletes and animals move so quickly and powerfully.

So we want to be able to master those forces, but we also need to really good at managing the force that we generate ourselves and just being able control every movement as and when we need too.

But yeah, ideally you're looking for this fluid, graceful, non-stopping movement like an animal. I mean, animals are always kind of our gurus in parkour because the way they move, it's so effortless, so fluid, graceful, elastic, and so free and lacking in limitations because they're not limited by the controlling prefrontal cortex that we have.

They're just moving instinctively, an automated movement. We want to get that and so yeah the fluid movement is absolutely a key part of it and that requires a certain amount of surrender it's kind of the you know the sort of um the paradox really of movement, is that we want absolute control of our movement so we can do very sort of high-level and precise things, but we also need to be able to surrender to the free forces such as momentum and gravity and elasticity, because if you don't surrender them, you're not going to move very well.

So it's kind of this paradox of like we need real control and also real surrender. A way to think of it I think sometimes is like dance, dancing. So when you dance a dancer is in control of the dance but they're also surrendering to the music, right, they are also being moved by the So but they're also at all times in control of their movements.

So they so a dancer is in controlled, but also fully surrendering to the music. And, you know, the best human movement is sort of like that. We're in.

But we're. Also surrenders to. The free forces around us, which is quite an interesting thing to get into, I suppose. I mean, that's really where the emotional side of movement comes in is when you can find that that element of control and surrender is then you are releasing and finding, I guess, that true happiness that you were talking about earlier.

Yeah, and that's when you feel the best. When you're dancing and you just surrender to the music is when, you know, when there's no sense of self and it's the same in movement.

You move really well in parkour or gymnastics or any sport. And when everything is like perfect and you're in the zone, it feels amazing. And that's a pretty good state to be in, I think, yeah.

Yeah, absolutely. I want to cover one last topic before we wrap up, and that is physical literacy in children. and I know this is a topic that you are really passionate about.

Just what does that mean and why is that so important to you? Yeah, it's a huge topic and it is important to the whole world. I mean, its important for the species really.

So, a pretty big one. Physical literacy really is just the idea of when you're growing up, if you expose a kid to lots of locomotive play and just, you know, make sure they do lots physical play outdoors with their friends and no focus, just let them move and explore their environment and jump around and climb trees and fight and play, whatever.

That builds, that's the natural way for the human body and brain to build movement skill and cohesive, coordinated network in its nervous system. so they can respond to stimuli, you can keep yourself safe, it can do tasks, so the human body and brain needs to have that growing up.

It needs have lots of it, lots and lots, and it's literally how it is calibrating its movement skills. If you therefore deprive a kid of that at a young age and make them sit down a lot of the time or put them in environments where they cannot play and cannot move, they don't actually develop, calibrate that movement skill so that they end up being a physically illiterate adult.

and if you are physically illiterate or less literate you're less likely to engage in movement and active physical activities of all sorts because you'll probably not be very good at it so it will feel very hard and it'll feel bad it would feel tough and difficult and clumsy and so you won't you you move away from it and therefore you get into this negative spiral and you end up with a generation of people who are not very physical not therefore very unfit,

therefore, very susceptible to things like diabetes and heart disease, postural problems, liver issues, all the things that actually are responsible for the deaths of most humans.

So therefore the best way to prevent that is to make sure that we have physically literate generations of kids so that they're more likely to easily engage with sport and physical activity and fitness training as they get older.

And therefore it's super important because we're in an environment now where more and more people are living in urban environments and industrialized worlds.

So fewer and fewer people moving regularly.

## Momentum, Surrender, and Movement Control

So, and we can already see this very easily in the young generations of kids that we teach around the world. In the built-up areas in cities, the more industrialized and urban the space is, like Hong Kong, you know, places like this, Saudi Arabia, even, Western cities too, whatever, but the, more they raise in those cities the less likely they are to be physically literate.

And it's a very stark difference between those kids and kids raised in, say, the countryside. They will be just night and day in terms of what fit their physical literacy and what they can do with their bodies.

So we're setting up, we've put in whole generations of kids in environments where they're not able to play or move, and we are setting them up for a difficult adult life where they're going to be sick and ill and not good movers and clumsy and awkward and more prone to injury and heart disease etc.

So we're setting them up for a very bad adult health-wise simply because we are not getting them to move enough when they are young. It's a very difficult problem to solve in the industrialized and urbanizing world, but it's something that we do kind of have to find solutions for.

Otherwise, you'll see a continued decline in physical capabilities of the species at large. What do you think is the cognitive effect of that? And yes, the cognitive effect is also huge because the brain is primed by movement.

You know, when you do complex movement skills, that's the 20 minutes after that is when your brain's generating the most new brain cells. So the deeper intelligence increases the more you move.

I mean, one of the reasons we have the intelligence we has is because we had to develop such complex movements skills. And because did develop complex skills by throwing and cooking and catching and building fires and these things, help shape our intelligence.

So our cognitive growth is tied in with movement. There's loads of studies now that show the more you keep up movement skills as you get older, the like you are to stave off things like Alzheimer's and things.

And you can actually reverse those things in older people by giving them movement training. You know, you have to get people moving. You have keep it moving, not only because of physical health, but because their cognitive health.

And we are now seeing negative results on that side. I think I heard recently that the UK has lost an IQ point on average across the board. That's a huge negative.

If that is true, then they attribute that to the rise of technology, social media, more screen. But not only the use of the screens, but the fact that by using the screen, you'll be more sedentary, so you're moving less, or engaging more with physical skills less.

You're developing fewer physical social cues, et cetera. So you just move less and therefore, we're becoming less intelligent. It's a big, big problem, and we need to get humans moving more, we get kids moving, give them

environments where they can move and can play, be brave enough as adults to say, yes, let them play.

Let them take risks. Because if you don't, you are you are subjecting them to, you're exposing them, to the likelihood of a very unhealthy adulthood. And that is our fault as adults and as the parents in the schools and educational systems and the governments, it's their fault if those kids then grow up and be unhealthy.

It's not the kids' fault because the kid had no choice.

## Physical Literacy in Children and Lifelong Movement

So it is a responsibility on us to be brave enough as a society to let kids move and play and take risks and and live more like we used to live you know back in the back before this modern technological age and even when I was a kid we moved kids moved away more than they do now yeah and that's you no difference of 30 40 years so it's a big problem Oh, no, I would not agree more.

And it's something that I'm very passionate about as well. I make sure for my daughter, but I see the changes in school and technology. So, yeah, never stop moving.

Keep moving, start off moving and never stopped moving! Thank you so much, Dan. Is there anything that you wish I were to ask you that, that didn't, you want to share, or that just want lead the listeners with?

I mean, you're very good with your questions, so you ask sort of all the answers, which is great. But I think what I want to leave people with is, because I don't want end on a negative note, like, oh my god, this big problem, how do we solve it?

But it is a big thing, but at the end of the day, sort of, on a large scale, you can't control, most people are not able to control sort what society does, but you absolutely control your life and the life of your children, your friends, and your family.

You can influence that. And we have more and more information now than ever on how to stay healthy and how move well and be fit. We've got so much good science around it now and good examples of how debate that into your And that's the thing I'd get people to focus on is society is just a collection of people.

So if everyone on an individual level makes a positive change and a postive move towards that, then it will shift the direction society moves in. That's what we have.

We have to just take personal responsibility for ourselves. And everyone can do that because you've got, you know, with the phone in your pocket you have got access to all of human knowledge at your fingertips now.

So there's no excuse not to use that knowledge. And I think everyone should feel very empowered to be able to do that. That's all you need to focus on yourself and the people around you.

If we all do Shift the direction of the Titanic away from the iceberg. Yeah collectively Yeah, just time at one degree, you know, yep. Yep. So where where can the listeners learn more about you?

Parkour generations, but just parkour in general and a lot of philosophies you spoke about There's good parkour organisations all around the world in most countries, so wherever you are, you'll probably be able to find some good teachers.

Parkourgenerations.com is our kind of umbrella website for our international branches, because we have branches around world. So if you just go there, just there you'd be better find probably something relatively near you and or information about the discipline.

And then you get started, like I said, there's so much information online now, good sources of information, good tutorials, and good coaching groups to seek out.

I would say just look for experienced coaches. Look for experience communities. If the coach has an adaptive qualification, that's the global par 4 coaching or official qualification.

So if they've got that, then you know they're a professional coach, a decent coach. But I'd say just do some research and look for good, experienced communities and then go and meet them and train with them, and just see how they'll use your common sense and your wisdom and see are these people genuine, serious practitioners that are going to be good to learn from.

There are so many now around the world that you can find pretty much any country and you'll be able to find someone who's going be to help. I love that.

I wanna share one last little story about parkour as we wrap up. So, and this was, I don't know, years ago when I was living in New York City, And I went on a date, like a blind date and I'm five, two, we went to park or that was our first date.

And like, oh, this is great. This guy was like seven feet tall, just a giant. and he's like oh you're short. to say, sure. And what we're doing this as our date and I am probably crushing it on this parkour course.

I scale at eight foot wall and i'm jumping, I got the bars, i could do flips. He was doing his thing at seven feet where he could probably just reach up and climb the wall.

Then never heard from the guy again and he left a message and said that I'm too short.

## Closing Thoughts and Where to Learn More

And I was like, I just crushed this parkour course, even though I'm five feet. And it's just one of my funniest stories about park or I. Was that Brooklyn Beast, which is a park gym in New York.

Yeah. I thought it was so funny. But I said, man, i got that eight foot wall. It was. So proud. He's lost, obviously. I just thought it was a funny parkour story.

Anyway, thank you so much, Dan. I really appreciate the conversation. i absolutely love your work.i love the messages that you're putting out and really your focus on the next generation and physical literacy.

Very passionate about that. So thankyou soo much. Likewise, keep doing what you are doing. It's awesome. Thank you so much and then thank you everyone for tuning in.

Definitely check out the book Rise of Superman and I would try to explore how you can bring breaking the jump into your life. Enjoy.