

LEWIS PUGH INTERVIEW ON CHAMPIONS MOJO PODCAST #36 & 37

Kelly Palace [00:00:00] We are doing something we've never done before, today's episode #36 will be part 1 of a 2 part show. Next week we'll release part 2 as episode #37 because our interview you are about to hear was so powerful and inspirational we wanted to break it up so we could savor it and give it the time and attention it deserves. We hope you'll enjoy this first segment and tune in next week for the conclusion of this interview with the amazing Lewis Pugh .

[00:00:00] Hello friends.

Kelly Palace [00:00:01] Welcome to the Champions Moto podcast where today we guarantee that you will be inspired by our guest Lewis Pugh. Lewis is the only person to have completed a long distance swim in every ocean of the world. Today he has pioneered more swims around famous landmarks than any other swimmer in history. Each of these seemingly impossible feats was done to raise awareness about the vulnerability of our oceans and their importance to humanity. And he's not finished yet. He puts his body on the line to get people talking about marine protected areas. More on this later. Lewis caught my attention several years ago when he swam a thousand meters in the North Pole in sub freezing temperatures so saltwater freezes at a lower temperature than regular water but it was absolutely. If you watch the video which is online he's swimming through chunks of ice. So after that last summer he swam three hundred and twenty nine miles or five hundred and twenty eight kilometers in the English Channel over a 50 day period. And that too was just in dangerously cold waters. While some people call what he's done the Mount Everest of swimming. I say it's way bigger than just Mount Everest.

Kelly Palace [00:01:28] He's in a class by himself. Thousands of people have climbed Mount Everest. But what Lewis Pugh has done no one in the swimming community has ever accomplished. We've had Olympic gold medalist on here but in my opinion as an elite level swimming coach. Lewis Pugh is above and beyond even an Olympic gold medal. So before we bring Lewis in I want to welcome my co-host Maria.

Kelly Palace [00:01:56] Maria great to have you here today. Hello.

Maria Parker [00:02:00] Hey Kelly it's great to be here and you know that I'm interested in people who do really tough things and I can't think of anything tougher than the swims Lewis has completed and Lewis is getting the attention this cause deserves over 7 million people are viewed as TED Talks. Countless others have followed him on BBC Good Morning America CNN John Stewart National Geographic Sky News Al Jazeera Jay Leno and more. His autobiography, "Achieving the Impossible" is a bestseller and was chosen for Oprah's exclusive book list and from what I understand there is more feeds coming. I can't wait to talk with Lewis.

Kelly Palace [00:02:38] Yes absolutely me too Maria. So there's so much on Lewis's resumé. We could talk all day long if you want to learn more about Lewis and his causes go to Lewis Pugh.com.

Kelly Palace [00:02:50] But we want to chat with him. So let's get to it and Lewis. Great to have you. Welcome to Champion's mojo. Yes. LEWIS Welcome. Thank you so much for chatting with us.

Lewis Pugh [00:03:01] Thank you both very very much. It's wonderful to be here.

Kelly Palace [00:03:04] So Lewis flew in today from South Africa.

Kelly Palace [00:03:08] So we are just where we're sitting in Boston in this great hotel and he's come in to give a speech tonight and work on his cause he's tireless he doesn't just sweat these big swims but he gets on planes and goes talks talks with important people about what's going on in the world and I'm going to start with a simple question first for you Lewis.

Kelly Palace [00:03:31] So as a fellow swimmer I have dived into my share of cold oceans lakes or pools and my morning routine is my freezing cold showers. But the cold water is truly one of the most uncomfortable things that I think we can experience as a human.

Kelly Palace [00:03:49] Just it's just it's just blastedly unpleasant, even painful. So. How do you convince yourself to get in and to stay in these dangerously cold waters for a long time.

Lewis Pugh [00:04:07] Let's just put cold into perspective. So if I had one last day left on this earth where would I want to swim. I'd like to swim in the middle of the Indian Ocean and nice warm water.

Lewis Pugh [00:04:18] So I don't gravitate I don't gravitate towards warm water.

Maria Parker [00:04:23] You don't like. It.

Lewis Pugh [00:04:26] I do it. There's a certain thrill in it. And it's very very challenging.

Lewis Pugh [00:04:31] But the reason why I swim in the extreme cold stuff is because these parts of the world are changing very, very quickly. And so I'm getting in to to show the world what is happening. So I'm doing swims in places which until very recently were completely frozen over. So it tells a very very clear story about the health of the planet and the speed of change.

Lewis Pugh [00:04:50] How do you get in there?

Lewis Pugh [00:04:52] You go to have a very, very driving purpose self belief as well in listening to.

Maria Parker [00:04:59] Here TED Talks and reading about you. I'm aware that every time you do this it's really, really hard. I think people can say oh it's Lewis Pugh. He's different than the rest of us. But you have talked about courage and you say that courage is a muscle that you have to work. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Lewis Pugh [00:05:21] There are some some journalists say well Lewis has this thing called "anticipatory thermogenesis". Just a quick explain that. The break the word down anticipatory before thermo heat Genesis creation. So this is before I get into cold water we've noticed that my core body temperature rises quite significantly in temperature by about two degrees centigrade.

Lewis Pugh [00:05:44] And so that enables me to spend longer in very very cold water than than untrained people. And they and they use this as a way of saying well Lewis is special Lewis has got this talent and so he but he doesn't feel the cold as much as his normal untrained people. It couldn't be further from the truth. The reason why I'm good in the cold is because I spent time in the cold. I'm not going into my fourth decade of swimming. Right so for 33 years now of swimming most of that has been in very, very cold places.

Maria Parker [00:06:23] You see if somebody can't remember what interview I read but somebody was talking about this "anticipatory thermalGenesis" and you know like it's like you're Superman and you have this super gift. And the point you're making now is that you've trained but you said once that it's caused by fear. Think that's which is interesting. Like you're terrified and so you get warmer. Am I getting that right?

Lewis Pugh [00:06:48] Yes we're getting it right. So some scientists have said no no. This is a Pavlovian response. Lewis has spent so much time in the cold that before he gets into the cold he realizes subconsciously that he has to warm himself up. And so he is core body temperature rises. I'm not sure that's correct it may be correct. Who knows. All I know is that before I get into very very cold water I mean the article the Antarctic and especially if the polar bears around or the leopard seals in the water I'm terrified be under no illusions.

Lewis Pugh [00:07:18] I'm terrified because you know I'm undertaking swims which have never been attempted before in water which is extremely extremely cold minus one point seven degrees centigrade. Okay. And so I'm terrified of my core body temperature rises but just going back to your initial point which is about courage and about training. I'm good in the cold because I spend a lot of

time in the cold and. I've found that. So now we'll be turning 50 this year. That if you don't push yourself into those very, very dangerous places. Those places of fear. And concern, then you soften up really, really quickly. And I find I begin beginning to soften up and then not so keen to jump into the break cold water and terrified of the predators in the water. And so now we're on a very regular basis. I go down to a beach late at night of Capetown and I swim on my own. And to normal people that would sound like absolutely crazy. What you're going to be swimming in water with great white sharks late at night on your own. But the point is. That when you swim off Cape town late at night everything looks like a great white shark. If you show the great white shark every piece of every piece of kelp feels like a great white shark. I can't wait till I get out and then I get back into bed. But when I've done that then I feel confident that I have what it takes. To go into even tougher environments for example the artic or the Antarctic where you're dealing with. Very serious predators and extreme cold water where your life really is on the line.

Kelly Palace [00:09:05] So when you are faced down in the middle of a swim like that where it's truly extremely dangerous. I mean if someone isn't prepared even an excellent swimmer and we have a lot of excellent swimmers listening.

Kelly Palace [00:09:19] There wouldn't last five minutes in that type of water if they weren't prepared. So for example when you swam 1000 meters in the North Pole in those chunks of ice you were in there for about 18 minutes which is actually for those of you that know a thousand meter time. That's a pretty darn good time just if you swam in a technical suit and drove off the block at a pool that's a pretty respectably fast time anyway. But so you're in there what are you saying to yourself. Each stroke?

Lewis Pugh [00:09:54] You can control your mind if you really understand your mind you can content for a short time. I'm saying to myself there's no other place in the world I'd rather be right here right now. I've got to honestly believe that this is what I was meant to do with my life.

Kelly Palace [00:10:13] And you're willing to even give your life possibly for this cause?

Lewis Pugh [00:10:17] Yeah I mean be under no illusions. You are in a death zone. I mean water is an interesting substance. It's a fascinating substance so at between zero and 100 degrees centigrade is a liquid above 100 degrees centigrade. It becomes a gas but below zero degrees centigrade it becomes a solid. And as soon as you start swimming below zero degrees centigrade something happens. And so people say oh well you know what's the difference between swimming and zero degrees centigrade and minus one point seven. Is the difference between walking in the foothills of the Rockies and climbing Mount Everest in the middle of winter. On your own it is quantumly different. It is extremely painful.

Lewis Pugh [00:11:02] You feel that that water as soon as you dive in. I can barely breathe. I'm gasping for air. That's that water just grips its way around you and holds you like a vise.

Lewis Pugh [00:11:12] Every single stroke is very very difficult to take every single part of you is saying get out of here immediately you're in a death zone. So you've got to persuade your mind. That actually you can do this and that you need to start swimming's but swimming fast.

Kelly Palace [00:11:29] By swimming fast?

Lewis Pugh [00:11:30] Yeah. What do you mean you need. You need to move fast. You can't dilly dally in that type of water.

Maria Parker [00:11:36] Do you. You know how important it is. I mean I know the answer to this. But tell me about the having a purpose.

Maria Parker [00:11:44] You're not just doing this to show off your swimming skills. You're you're doing it for something extremely important. Would you be able to do it without this purpose?

Lewis Pugh [00:11:54] I don't think so. I don't think so. I mean for me it's become a. What I get up for in the morning or what I go to bed at night thinking about as I said earlier I've been swimming for 30 years in that period of time which. In terms of swimming is a long a long career. So I mean for 30 years. But in terms of the history the world is a nanosecond in that short period of time I've seen our oceans change. Hugely. I mean just to give an example when I trained to do that swim across the North Pole I trained on the edge of the arctic ice packs on a little island in the top of Norway. It was a thousand kilometres to the North Pole and I trained on the edge of the Arctic ice and the water was three degrees centigrade. I went back there two years ago. Water is no longer three. It's now 10 degrees centigrade.

Kelly Palace [00:12:45] My goodness.

Lewis Pugh [00:12:46] So that's the speed at which the arctic now in the Norwegian sector is changing because of climate changes runaway climate change. And when you see that you you have a choice. Choice is very very simple. You're either going to do something about it or you're not going to do something about it. I felt that this that I should stand up and be a voice for the oceans and for the incredible wildlife that that live in these regions who rely on us now to make. Good decisions. And to get the earth. Back into its healthy state.

Kelly Palace [00:13:22] That's truly truly amazing. So you're you once said and I think it might have been after the North Pole when this is how painful it is for you that you were done with cold water swimming. And what was that just how tough it was when you came out of that?

Lewis Pugh [00:13:42] When you've been really cold. I mean really cold. You never ever quite warm up again.

Kelly Palace [00:13:52] Wow.

Kelly Palace [00:13:53] So I wish I wish you people could see the look in his eyes what he says that.

Lewis Pugh [00:13:59] So I did a swim a few years ago down in Antarctica where the water temperature was minus one point seven and the air temperature was minus 37 degrees centigrade. And I'll never ever forget it because we're in the most remote part of Antarctica. We've sailed for. Two two and a half weeks from the bottom of New Zealand. We know it so if you're going to compete in the Olympic Games you know that you're going to be competing in Tokyo on the 5th of August at 4 p.m. and in the 100 metres freestyle. And you know exactly what you need to need to do to get yourself ready for that specific moment. So we've sailed out and we don't even know whether we're going to be able to get to the swim site because we're some now we're sailing through in some of the most dangerous seas on Earth. We sail from 40 degrees south at 50 to 60 to 70.

Lewis Pugh [00:14:50] And now in the distance there's this enormous great ice shelf. I want you to imagine the White Cliffs of Dover. OK. That's what it was like. It is ice it's a Ross ice shelf and you got these strong cutter Battick winds coming down from the South Pole coming over this and ice just coming down from from from the from the from this ice shelf into the water and the water is freezing cold minus one point seven.

Lewis Pugh [00:15:17] So nobody's ever swum there before. You know I don't get into the water and if somebody does a quick recce of the water to see what's in the water. So I said to my wife I said Antoinette Would you please get into small Zodiac and go along the edge of the ice there and make sure that no killer whales in the water no leopard seals in the water? You know I don't want to be swimming with either of them and I'll never forget it. My whole life because she was lowered in a small Zodiac into the sea and a wave hitting up against the side of the zodiac. And water splashed up and it turned into ice mid air and hit her and then she went up and down for half an hour. That's

the minimum amount of time. That's required to make sure that animals in the water she came back into the cabin. And she was absolutely frozen and then she looked to me and she said.

Lewis Pugh [00:16:12] We're ready. And so that moment you've got. No serious question to ask you know prepared to get into that water. For your belief. And.

Lewis Pugh [00:16:29] I'll never forget diving into that water because the water's minus one point system but you put your hand out and your hand is going from minus one point seven to minus 37. So you almost want to put it back in quickly.

Lewis Pugh [00:16:44] It's it's it's a very extreme environment in which to operate.

Maria Parker [00:16:51] My stomach is just in a I knot thinking about it.

Kelly Palace [00:16:54] I know, I know, I'm thinking about a hot cup of tea. So how do you train?

Kelly Palace [00:17:00] So this you're saying that this is not something unique to you that you truly train hard to get your body ready to do this.

Kelly Palace [00:17:10] What are some of the. Just like big chunks of training that you do to prepare for this?

Lewis Pugh [00:17:20] Let me take a step back. You know about the Japanese concept of Shu Hari.

Kelly Palace [00:17:26] No. What is it?

Lewis Pugh [00:17:27] Okay, So my chief of staff is Japanese and he talks to me about Shu Ha Ri . Shu Ha Ri. are the other three stages one goes through. In mastering anything. Okay. And it comes from Japanese martial art.

Lewis Pugh [00:17:39] Shu means: learn the law Ha: means break the law and Ri: means make the law. So for the first ten years of my swimming career it was Shu, just learn the law obey the law. Go every single day down to the swimming pool down to the beach and swimming pool my coach Ken Fialcoff and just try and make every single stroke as perfect as is as it could ever be. Long stroke relax stroke take a deep breath of fresh air repeat. That was ten years and I found that the most difficult of these three stages. Because there is no choice of individualism. There there's no choice to you know how many coaches want to work with somebody who doesn't really want to obey the law. Every single coach wants you to obey the law but then you move into the second stage of my career which was a ha which means break the law. This came very naturally to me. I loved it. Maybe I think at the time I was serving as a reservist and the special service which is the British Special Forces your equivalent of US Navy Seals. Where you're taught. To breaking the law is actually. Not a bad thing. You know you need to be pushing boundaries but also because I was living in South Africa and the people who went out to live in South Africa in general there were people who didn't want to live in the United Kingdom because all the rules and regulations there was there was a colonial spirit out there. So at this stage of my life was absolutely great. This is where I had a new coach his name was Bryan button. He said to me Lewis take lane four. And all I want you to do it. Lewis is just swim and you just go for it. And I believe in you and you know when he said I believe in you and he coached. He was 75 years old at the time. When he said to me I believe in you. Well I believed in myself and I started pushing boundaries and breaking every single law that I could break. If there was a harbormaster said I couldn't I couldn't swim through his harbour. I swam past this harbor and it was at this stage where I was becoming an environmental activist and so if there was a government official who said I couldn't do something well I would I would push ahead and do it. And it was at a time when social media was becoming very active and you know I could really start pushing pushing boundaries. But then the final stage these last sort of 10 years is a restage. It's a stage where. Now you start making the law. So now I go and say I'm done in the Ross Sea in Antarctica. Now I go to Russia. To negotiate the creation of this big protected area. And for 17 years government officials

from the United States and from various other countries have been trying to persuade Russia to join the rest of the community and protect this area and all of them have failed. But I believe that I can make the law I can I can put it off and I can begin to make the law and you walk into those negotiations with a feeling that I'm coming in here to make the law not out of arrogance. But out of humility out of I believe that we can do this because it's right for all of us. And when you get to that stage very very few things become impossible to achieve. That is just.

Kelly Palace [00:21:09] I got goose bumps. That is amazing. So when you gain that kind of respect when you when you put your life on the line and say I'm willing to do this for the oceans then I would imagine that just opens doors for you to talk with people.

Lewis Pugh [00:21:26] It transcends culture. It transcends nationality. It transcends everything.

Lewis Pugh [00:21:30] It was very very interesting. There was a Russian called Slava Fetisov Slava Fetisov Americans will have heard of because he was this great Soviet ice hockey player who was the first of the great Russians to come and play ice hockey here in America and he would introduce me to all the Russian officials who had to make the decision that they were going to. Join the rest of world to create this protected area down there I see. It was astonishing because as soon as I arrived in Russia I was put on state television I was introduced to everybody. And I couldn't understand this because you know I'd come from Britain the traditional Cold War enemies we had grown up in very very different environments. When I went out to South Africa as a young man I'd served in the. South African military at the time we were fighting Soviet forces in Angola. And here I was walking into the Kremlin. I said to him I said Slava why is it that the Russians have been so welcoming to me.

Lewis Pugh [00:22:32] He said You know Lewis your message is very very simple. Your message is about coming here. Building bridges protecting the environment. It's about listening. He said that transcends everything.

Lewis Pugh [00:22:47] You're not you haven't come here to cause trouble you've come here to try and solve a problem. And. That's why that's why the door is open. So.

Lewis Pugh [00:23:00] You know with any of these negotiations as a promise land YOU JUST NEED TO FIND IT.

Maria Parker [00:23:05] WOW YOU'RE YOU'RE YOU'RE YOU'RE swims have trust transcended what other people can do and anybody who sees a video of you pulling yourself out of the water onto an ice a piece of ice you know in the North Pole or Antarctica you know they they just they have to stop and listen and they are they're calling it Speedo diplomacy and it's you know it's amazing and but but I'm sort of interested in you know you talked about your coach and that he encouraged you to that you know that you were. He said you were good and you could do anything and that that gave you encouragement and you said in one of your videos that your friend David you had you had sort of a bad ass bad swim prior to your north pole swim and he he he came into the room and said I've seen you train your purpose is important you will succeed. Have courage. We're going to take care of you. And that changed everything for you. I want to know how important this encouragement from others has been and your success.

Lewis Pugh [00:24:18] It's interesting because if I go back to the beginning of my life I was very lucky with my parents. I had very very loving parents. They didn't push me but they didn't pull me.

Lewis Pugh [00:24:32] They just supported me.

Lewis Pugh [00:24:33] If that makes sense to you certainly in the swimming community you do see some parents who were very very pushy others who do everything for their children and others who are sometimes hold them back by by sharing their limiting beliefs with their children. My parents did

none of that. They just said Lewis if you enjoyed crack on and it's wonderful to see you enjoying it and they were always very very supportive. But when it came to actually putting the swimmers together when it came to the fundraising I had to do all that myself. And that is tough. So this is not the Olympic Games where USA Swimming is now going to provide the sponsorship for you and the funding for you to go and compete in the Tokyo Olympic Games. I now had to learn how to raise the money learn how to do interviews with the media learn how to put a whole team together and now start getting a yacht or a boat and start sailing to the most remote parts of the planet. My parents didn't lay out any money for me. They then cut.

Lewis Pugh [00:25:37] They were very warm and encouraging but that the support was there but they weren't pushing me and that was absolutely instrumental in creating a person who felt comfortable.

Lewis Pugh [00:25:51] And yeah.

Kelly Palace [00:25:57] Did you get that question answered Do you feel like.

Maria Parker [00:26:00] Yeah I guess I was looking for. You have. It sounds to me like you have created an amazing team.

Maria Parker [00:26:08] You've surrounded yourself with people who help you to do what you do.

Maria Parker [00:26:14] I mean you are absolutely doing you know the hard work.

Maria Parker [00:26:18] But I'm I guess you know what I'm getting at it. What I'm asking is how did you do that.

Lewis Pugh [00:26:23] How did you find these amazing teammates. I'm always hunting new new members of the team not not so that I can get rid of old members of the team but I'm always looking to see whether I can get the very very best people because.

Lewis Pugh [00:26:39] When you saw right here here's the point. Courage is contagious. But equally fear is contagious.

Lewis Pugh [00:26:48] If I'm standing on the edge of the ice and I'm just about to dive in and I see fear on anybody's face that will ripple through me within seconds and debilitate me. But if I'm standing on the edge of the ice I'm about to dive in and everybody is looking incompetent and there's a fixed mindset that we're going to start the beginning and we're going to go all the way to the end.

Lewis Pugh [00:27:07] We're going to get out and we're gonna have a hot shower afterwards.

Lewis Pugh [00:27:10] I'm gonna get in there with a lot of confidence so I always look for for various things with the members of my team I'm looking for people who in their personal lives are courageous people. So for example the doctor who is with me at the North Pole. He's going to have to be the most courageous person because if something goes wrong it was going to say well what on earth did you think. Why did you think that this person could do it. But equally every single person in the team has to be courageous.

Lewis Pugh [00:27:36] I'm also looking for people who love to push boundaries. I'm looking for people who are optimistic realists not pessimists not cynics not day dreamers optimistic realists people who say let's roll up our sleeves and let's give this a very good go and let's say I'm looking for people who. Realize that time is finite. That we're facing an emergency now that we are now in a race against time to save the planet and so we've got a mission and we must we must act with the sense of urgency but also people who realize that our lives are finite. And that. We have a choice about how we're going to spend each and every day of our lives. And. This is how. I and I hope all the members of my team we want to spend our lives which is being a voice for them for our oceans.

Kelly Palace [00:28:30] So you have an Antarctica hashtag #Antarctica2020. Tell us about that.

Lewis Pugh [00:28:38] Well we're trying. So next year is a 200 year anniversary of the discovery of Antarctica. And Antarctica is the most amazing continent. I mean when you arrive in Antarctica it's like it's like arriving in the Garden of Eden. And do any stand on their journey to see emperor penguins and king penguins and Adelie's and all these amazing amazing animals and.

Lewis Pugh [00:29:06] Whales in the water. It's really it's a beautiful place but it's under threat. We're trying to get a series of protected areas around Antarctica. These are like national parks but in the water. So no Drilling for oil no drilling for gas no industrial fishing. Just allowing nature to recover. We got the first of these big protected areas set aside two years ago in the Ross Sea. Now we're trying to get a very big one set aside now in an area called East Antarctica. And so that's that's that's what I'm focused on now.

Lewis Pugh [00:29:42] And I spoke to you about how important it is to have courageous people in your team. Well the Russians Slava Fetisov. He'll be coming with me down to Antarctica shortly where he will be seconding me during.

Lewis Pugh [00:29:55] A very tough swim which I plan to do early next year down in Antarctica.

Kelly Palace [00:30:02] What is your planned swim for that?

Lewis Pugh [00:30:04] We're going to keep it quiet but straight but straight afterwards.

Lewis Pugh [00:30:08] We we go to Moscow and we'll be in Moscow on the 200 year anniversary of the discovery of Antarctica. It was discovered actually by a Russian explorer called Admiral Benning Billings house. And we're going to be urging the Russian government and the Chinese government who the two governments who still need to be persuaded that we need to protect East Antarctica. We're going to be urging them now to sign this deal. And if we do that we'll be creating an area about a million square kilometres fully protected. It's amazing it's as I say a true privilege to be able to do this type of work to be able to create these very very big protected areas. So my team over the past couple of years we've we've set aside all we've been able to create protected areas of about 2 million square kilometres. So there's no drilling no drilling for oil and our drilling for gas. No no industrial fishing disallowing nature to recover. Two million square kilometres. It's about the size of Western Europe. It's we're happy. We're happy with it. But we want more quickly here.

Maria Parker [00:31:11] One of the things that I am amazed about you is your ability to to balance looking back at your successes and saying look this is good we're moving forward and also keeping that urgency. You know there's so much more to do and I and also I think one of the PR things you do really well is after you swam the English Channel you went right directly met with the government the U.K. they were involved the whole time. And so it seemed you were able because of that nearness of what you did and what you know and you're meeting with them you were able to make a change there and I suppose this is your goal with the China and Russia.

Lewis Pugh [00:31:55] Yes I mean the English Channel swim is a really good case in point so what I tried to do is I try to find a swim which hopefully will capture the imagination of the public. And it's got to be tough it's going to be I mean it's got to be really really hard and so I thought What could I do in the United Kingdom to try and persuade the UK government to properly protect its waters. I mean just to put this in perspective only seven square kilometres of waters around the UK are fully protected. I mean seven square kilometres the waters around the UK a seven hundred and fifty thousand square kilometres of which just seven square kilometres is fully protected. And I thought I mean this is without stressing the point too much. I mean it's an outrage. I mean really is. And so let me think about it so much I could do you know we're seeing United Kingdom swimming across the English Channel so swing from England to France is is an amazing swim.

Lewis Pugh [00:32:47] And I kept to what I do is I've got to put out a map of the United Kingdom. I'm just looking at it looking at it looking at and just trying to think of an idea of swim which may work and that's the thing about creativity. You know you it doesn't come automatically. You've got to keep looking keep writing down all the various options and then suddenly an idea will come and then you're you're you're thinking yourself. It's not an aha moment. It's an ur duh moment. It's why on earth did I not think about the swim years ago? And I was looking at the map and I suddenly thought. Hold on. Why don't I swim the full length of the English Channel? It's not across it. Hundreds and hundreds of people are swim across it. I went to some of the full length so I started lands and now some all the way to Dover 528 kilometres. And nobody had ever done a swim of sort of that length and that would water temperature before. And just to explain. So we we haven't explained this in you know in this podcast. You know I do all my swims in just a Speedo cap and goggles even those ones in the Artic and done in Antarctica.

Lewis Pugh [00:33:56] But I was I must say there was a lot of trepidation about whether I could actually swim 528 kilometres.

Lewis Pugh [00:34:05] Anyway I decided I'm going to do this. I really want to draw this to the attention of the the British government and the British public. And so I took a trainer or went down to two lands and. The beginning of the English Channel and there I made three promises to myself I said Number one we have to leave our doubt here on the beach at land's end n the beach at Land's End because if we don't as soon as I get injured and you know on a on a long some like that you're going to get your nickels. I said I need to leave my dogs here. Number two second rule. Every single day is going to be a swimming day. I mean just from 10 kilometres every day come hell or high water I'm going to swim 10 kilometres. And the third promise I made to the team was that if we couldn't take the yacht out because it was so extreme the following day would be 20 kilometres. Oh my gosh. And that's where we got to the end. And so 49 days later absolutely absolutely exhausted I arrived in Dover. And on the beach was Michael Gove who is a secretary of state for the environment. And you know how it is exhausted by now you're going to have was live on television. I'm going to have a debate with him about about probably protecting the U.K. waters but that was the beginning of it. So I've done the swim I've done 49 days assuming it was another six to nine months of hard negotiations with the British government before before we really started getting results before they agreed to further protect some of the British Overseas Territories sat down near Antarctica there's an island of South Georgia they agreed to do a lot more protection down there Ascension Island in the middle Atlantic Ocean the big protected area around there they agreed to announce a climate emergency in the United Kingdom they agreed that the UK would go what we call net zero so no carbon emissions net zero by 2050 big ambitious steps but it was only by constantly pushing them constantly in the media calling them calling them out for lack of a lack of action.

Lewis Pugh [00:36:10] That we were able to get these things across the line.

Maria Parker [00:36:12] So which was harder the swimmer the the negotiations?

Lewis Pugh [00:36:18] Their different the different in in hardness I remember with the with the negotiations with the Ross Sea.

Lewis Pugh [00:36:28] We had I'd been negotiating for nearly two years and just to explain, I am the United Nations ambassador for the oceans but I'm expected to pay the expenses myself. It's a long story. Why that is the case but. I was running out of money. You know I was it's all out of my own pocket. I'm flying to Moscow. I'm sitting in a hotel waiting to meet Russian officials and then I came to a stage where I thought you know these negotiations have gone on for 17 years. How much longer can we carry on than a call. Call my wife and I said Antoinette I think. I think we're going to

have to call it a day because I'm going to bankrupt the family. She said I just want you to do another six months. And then it was astonishing a number of different things happened and within a short period of time the tide had turned and Russia signed the deal. The point is you never ever know how close you are to achieving a deal.

Kelly Palace [00:37:28] I love that so until it's signed. Now the concept which I think I.

Kelly Palace [00:37:35] Understand more now is the idea of national parks for the oceans there. I think that is a beautiful phrase that we have. You know the United States we have. Tons of beautiful parks. We preserve the trees but. I so connect with that idea of a national park or a state park or a local park for the oceans. I think that's a great idea.

Lewis Pugh [00:38:03] So about 150 years ago the great big national parks are being created and they started here in America. You know Yellowstone National Park and Yosemite these really big ones. And it's amazing I mean imagine what North America or any other country would be like today if the people at the time the pioneers at the time didn't have the foresight to properly protect these areas they'd be gone be gone forever. That's a situation where we find ourselves now in the oceans about 2 percent of the ocean is fully protected and now we're pushing to try get 30 percent fully protected. So around the around the waters around him America's doing fairly well. America has fully protected. And when America fully protects they do a good job. America is fully protected 20 percent of its waters still nowhere near enough. But you look at some of the other countries like China less and less than 1 percent, Japan less than 1 percent India less than 1 percent South Africa less than 1 percent around the UK. It's a mixed bag. So with it's overseas it's got lots of islands all over the world. From its empire over 30 percent fully protected but in its home waters 7. Square kilometres so this is a big fight now which which we're having which is getting governments to realize. So we're now in a race against time. We now need to create these big protected areas around the world. And it's a privilege to work in this space.

Kelly Palace [00:39:31] Will there be any oceans that you'll swimmin that need help that are freezing cold.

Lewis Pugh [00:39:37] Yes. So we've got one scheduled. To start in the middle of 2020. Oh which is beautiful and warm and I just can't wait to start it.

Kelly Palace [00:39:49] Oh that is awesome awesome. So Lewis I'd love for our listeners to get to know you a little just a little more on a personal level because obviously you're a winner you're a champion.

Kelly Palace [00:40:01] And we'd love to know if you have any routines or rituals or things that you do kind of on a daily basis that maybe help you be so successful.

Lewis Pugh [00:40:17] I don't really see myself like that because in order to to achieve these swims as there's been a lot of hurdles and I've fallen on it many of them. But but nonetheless.

Lewis Pugh [00:40:31] I like to wake up early in the morning. I like to make my bed. First thing in the morning and make it properly because at least I got one job done nicely and I like to come back to a nice made up bed. I tried to do my swimming very very early in the morning before any of the of the work. You know the negotiations start during the day. And I try to make every day a swimming day.

Kelly Palace [00:40:57] Every day. So you swim every day.

Lewis Pugh [00:41:00] I do my very best. I mean it's it's not always possible because I do an awful lot of travelling but I try to I try to but I certainly spend. A fair amount of time probably half an hour every day. Focusing on.

Lewis Pugh [00:41:17] These big dreams which we have to create you know to set aside 30 percent of the world's oceans fully protected by 2030. So I'm constantly dreaming and imagining and. And

moving the chess pieces in my mind about how we can get various governments to agree these deals.

Kelly Palace [00:41:40] Does that come in the form of meditation or journaling or visualization or what.

Kelly Palace [00:41:45] What does that period of time each day look like. It's the easiest part of the day was just lying on the bed and listening to soft music and is imagining.

Kelly Palace [00:41:54] That's fantastic.

Maria Parker [00:41:56] That reminds me I had a question. You listen to music. I know at least before you do your cold water swims. Is that part of your anticipatory thermo Genesis. This the music that you're listening to.

Lewis Pugh [00:42:11] You think I think so just because these environments are so very very frightening that you just need to somehow try and get yourself ready to be able to get in them.

Lewis Pugh [00:42:22] In my earlier days I often used to listen to very heavy rap and and and then you know aggressive music.

Lewis Pugh [00:42:31] Now the older I get the more I get in quite gently and just some with a purpose. So I enjoy listening to some soft music these days.

Kelly Palace [00:42:40] What might that be. What would be an example.

Lewis Pugh [00:42:42] You know I love soundtracks of various sort of two movies anything sort of from hundreds simmer will get me ready for the day and getting ready for that specific moment. But the most important thing is that you've got to get yourself to a stage where you believe that this is what you are meant to do with your life.

Maria Parker [00:43:03] That part I love.

Maria Parker [00:43:05] Okay so purpose and so it helicoptering up obviously your purpose is to save the oceans but for anybody else how you know what advice would you give in terms of you know using your purpose or finding your purpose so that you can be motivated to do these you know these great things.

Lewis Pugh [00:43:22] If I can give you an analogy know coming from South Africa.

Lewis Pugh [00:43:25] Let me give you a mining analogy. Some people when they're looking for gold they're very very lucky they go down to a river and they put a pan in a river in a pan and suddenly they find a nugget of gold. It's like that in life. Some people are very very lucky.

Lewis Pugh [00:43:42] They know very very early on that they wanted to be a doctor and you ask them when they were young girl.

Lewis Pugh [00:43:48] Maria what did you want to become when you say I want to become a doctor and you've always known that and then you meet them 30 years later their doctor and they're very very happy for the vast majority of us so that's simply not the case. We gotta drill deep down into ourselves. Hmm.

Lewis Pugh [00:44:03] In mining analogy often you had this thin strata of gold deep down and many people dig and dig and they dig but they never quite get down to that strata of gold.

Lewis Pugh [00:44:17] And when you hit that strata you know it you know that you found what really is your purpose and then you just need to mine right the way along that line.

Lewis Pugh [00:44:27] Keep on going keep on going. And so that's that's what I would encourage so many people. They mine but they never quite get down to that that what they were meant to do with it their lives. And once you've identified it and once you really tapped into it it becomes a very very powerful force.

Lewis Pugh [00:44:46] But what I do before all these swims is I in my mind I I stack things just to explain this. It's it's about self belief. For some people your self belief comes from the from the inside you're just so gifted what you do that you believe in yourself it's a Mohammed Ali's of the world right. But the vast majority of us are self belief does not come from the inside. In fact very. Very few even Olympic athletes. Very few of them that did it. Does their self belief come from the inside. For most of us it comes from the outside. It's a parent or a teacher a coach who says to you. You're really good at what you do and when you hear that you believe in yourself.

Lewis Pugh [00:45:32] For others it's operating in an elite team. When you join an elite team. You then have to step up to that standards and then.

Lewis Pugh [00:45:39] When you step at and you start believing yourself for other people your self belief comes from experience and life. I always see this with mountaineers. It's I enjoy climbing mountains in a climb one mount. You think I can get to the top and then you go even higher the next year and even harder next year and then you find out that some is about to climb Everest. I said I can climb Everest because I've got all this experience but there's a loss for self belief which if you tap into it.

Lewis Pugh [00:46:06] It takes your performance onto another level altogether. And the sad thing is a very very few people actually tap into it and that is what we talking about tapping in to your purpose. It's you know growing up in in South Africa at the end of apartheid there were no shortages. Of role models. I'm talking about people like Nelson Mandela Desmond Tutu Molly Blackburn people who despite everything they were going through they kept on going and they kept on going. Because. That is what they were meant to do with their lives. So now just before I'm going to get into very very cold water I stuck in my mind all these forms of self belief. So I start with the fact. That. In terms of self belief from the inside. I realize I can handle cold better than most people. I didn't go to the outside. And I remember that coach of mine Brian Button who always believed in me. And when he believed in me I believe in myself. I'd be now operating with this team for many many years and I get so much courage out of them.

Lewis Pugh [00:47:21] I look back at my career of 33 years I realize I've done some very very tough swims. And then lastly.

Lewis Pugh [00:47:29] I walk to the end of my life and I realize that this is what I was meant to do and I better make it count. And then I dive in.

Kelly Palace [00:47:42] That deserves a moment of silence.

Maria Parker [00:47:44] I know, I don't even know what to say. That is the most beautifully put thing I have ever heard.

Kelly Palace [00:47:50] Yes. I'm just mesmerized and this Lewis seems to be summing up. 35 of our shows that we've done with champions on stacking and self belief and mental toughness and inner dialogue and mindset and all of these things. It's truly I've got goose bumps that we're not in the cold water so I think that that I don't think we can get any anything more valuable out of him today on that topic. And so I want you. Yes he is. Can I just say this. Yes.

Lewis Pugh [00:48:31] I love climbing. I love swimming. With a sport which I really love is kayaking. And I had the privilege a couple of years ago to train with the South African Olympic kayaking team who were training just before the Beijing Olympics so I trained with them in Budapest and we would be kayaking every day up and down the Danube River. And it was amazing because I've always been a swimmer but once I finish assuming then I'm going to do my work which is a negotiation.

Lewis Pugh [00:49:01] But it was very interesting to be in the world of professional sport because you know if you're going to wake up early and then I would have the first training session then and

we would hammer ourselves up and down that you would do really fast intervals and then and then would come back and then everybody would shower and then everybody would have breakfast and then it was amazing to people would just get onto the onto social media and now that they're texting their friends and listen to some music and then they have a little bit of a sleep and now suddenly it's the afternoon and now we've got the second session and then maybe there's some physio and then maybe there's an evening dinner and then they go straight to bed.

Lewis Pugh [00:49:41] And I just I looked at this and I thought wow you're doing this day after day after day. But what about really focusing on the self examination of yourself and your mind and really realizing that you had this one opportunity to really deliver and stacking all this self belief and so that when you get into the water you absolutely believe in yourself.

Lewis Pugh [00:50:06] You absolutely believe in yourself. So. I think the world of professional sport but a lot of time is spent on and on the physical aspects but actually drilling down deep into your soul.

Lewis Pugh [00:50:24] Not enough time is spent on that.

Kelly Palace [00:50:27] Couldn't agree with you more. That is something that's one of the reasons we started the podcast is to get into the minds of champions and the mojo. You know that's it's a term. I don't know that term, it's the special little secret sauce.

Maria Parker [00:50:42] Well and what I'm hearing you say Lewis is that you know we're giving gifts and we can use those gifts for a purpose other than just competing and winning. You know we can you know and you have full laser focused your gifts on saving the world's oceans.

Maria Parker [00:51:03] And I think that's a call out to every one of us who has a gift.

Maria Parker [00:51:07] Do you know what are we doing with our gifts. I'm incredibly motivated by what you've said.

Kelly Palace [00:51:13] Yes, inspired!'

Lewis Pugh [00:51:13] To have a gift and then not to use it as this.

Lewis Pugh [00:51:19] Is such a waste. But this is one of the great qualities in life. And you remember at school those people who are so talented and then they they really didn't go on to do much. And those with less talent did a lot. It's one of the greater qualities in life. Those with the most amount of talent often have the least amount of ambition and those with less and less talent.

Lewis Pugh [00:51:43] Often have bundles of determination and ambition and those two things put together become a very very powerful force.

Maria Parker [00:51:53] And you can develop both?

Lewis Pugh [00:51:56] I think you can develop both. We have this concept in South Africa called fast boat and it comes from a Dutch word meaning fuss meaning tight and bait meaning bite bite hard. I want you to imagine a lioness running along the felt in Africa and she's running off to a big buffalo and she grabs a buffalo on the top of the neck and then swings down underneath and she's holding on while this buffalo is still charging along and she's holding on and she's being dragged along the felt and she holds on.

Lewis Pugh [00:52:31] Because that is what she was meant to do because if she doesn't hold on to hope pride is in danger and sometimes in life. You need that fast Speight. Yeah. Doesn't have to be there every single day. But there are gonna be moments when you just have to deep you know dig deep and hold on tight so phosphate is grit its resilience.

Lewis Pugh [00:52:55] It's never die. It just keep on going. And I think what I'm seeing especially now with younger people that they're looking for instant success.

Lewis Pugh [00:53:04] But it doesn't come like that.

Lewis Pugh [00:53:07] I spoke shu Ha ri. Take me 30 years to get to this position. Success doesn't come instantly and comes through phosphate it comes through years and years of grind. And then it looks like it's overnight success because suddenly people hear about it. They don't see what's.

Lewis Pugh [00:53:27] What's happened behind the scenes.

Kelly Palace [00:53:32] Fantastic. Well Lewis I know you've got a speech to give tonight and we want to give you the opportunity that's your last question to say what. What can our listeners do to help preserve the oceans.

Lewis Pugh [00:53:47] Oh. You know we rely on oceans totally to survive.

Lewis Pugh [00:53:54] And the three big things now impacting oceans is it's climate change overfishing and it's plastic pollution. I'm seeing plastic pollution of every beach in the world. Even down in Antarctica and the Arctic it's devastating. But if there's one thing which really is of those three which is so significant it's the impact of climate change it's really devastating oceans. I would just say please please do every single thing that you can. To live a lifestyle which protects the environment and which is a low carbon lifestyle because we have a duty to to protect this magnificent place for our children and our grandchildren. And if people do that. Then we have a future if if we if we don't do that then we ought to on a serious trajectory right now.

Kelly Palace [00:54:46] I love it. I love it. And on.

Kelly Palace [00:54:49] Yeah. Lewis Pugh dot com. There's there's like also 20 things that people can do. There's a place to donate. There is a lot of resources that. If people want to really become serious about this and we should all of us as swimmers need to protect the oceans and then they can go to your Web site.

Kelly Palace [00:55:09] Is there anything we haven't Asked you or covered that you want listeners to hear or know.?

Lewis Pugh [00:55:13] I think that as swimmers as kayakers as wind surfers as dog walkers as as people who want to walk on the beach we all have a special responsibility to be good custodians of the oceans. And we think of swimming pools as. Environmentally friendly perhaps but.

Lewis Pugh [00:55:34] Swimming pools has a very very big impact on the environment. Obviously with the amount of water we use or the chemicals that they used et cetera et cetera we have a very special responsibility as swimmers as a community to be right at the forefront of protecting the environment and encouraging others to do it and examining ourselves as a sport and seeing what we can do to to really be leaders in this movement. So that would be my last wish.

Kelly Palace [00:56:03] I love it now. Yes.

Kelly Palace [00:56:05] So this is something we do on all of our guest interviews and I just we have to dig a little deeper of you personally and this is called the speed round of questions and it's just a little fun thing so we can get to know you better.

Maria Parker [00:56:20] Yeah lighthearted way to end this.

Kelly Palace [00:56:22] Lighthearted way to end this.

Kelly Palace [00:56:24] So I say one or one or two choices and you just give me one choice.

Kelly Palace [00:56:31] Cat or dog?

Lewis Pugh [00:56:32] Dog, any.

Kelly Palace [00:56:34] Camping or hotel?

Lewis Pugh [00:56:36] Camping any day.

Kelly Palace [00:56:39] Milk chocolate or dark chocolate?

Lewis Pugh [00:56:41] Oh these are these are the easiest questions ever! Milk Chocolate

Lewis Pugh [00:56:48] OK now this one may not even apply to you but our swimmers are gonna want to know it. Kickboard or no kickboard?

Lewis Pugh [00:56:55] Oh no I think a good kickball really helps with training.

Kelly Palace [00:57:00] OK. Kickboard.

Kelly Palace [00:57:01] Mountains or Beach?

Lewis Pugh [00:57:08] Now that's a tough one. And I tell you the reason why. Because people often say I'd love to go to the beach because it's so peaceful and so so calming. The beaches are very radiating, there is noise etc. But when one goes right up into the mountains. So especially I've done some climbing high up in the Himalayas and being on Everest and when one's up on Everest and one looks down into the valleys and through the great positive places is very very peaceful and there you will find a window into your soul if you spend the time there. So I'm going to take both.

Kelly Palace [00:57:41] I love it.

Lewis Pugh [00:57:41] I'm going to take beaches and mountains there.

Kelly Palace [00:57:44] OK. Now your football is gonna be soccer , so European football or American football?

Lewis Pugh [00:57:54] That's an easy one. European. OK.

Kelly Palace [00:57:58] iPhone or Android iPhone?

Lewis Pugh [00:58:01] iPhone.

Kelly Palace [00:58:01] Coffee or tea?

Lewis Pugh [00:58:05] Probably Tea.

Kelly Palace [00:58:08] You've already answered... Morning person or a night owl?

Lewis Pugh [00:58:10] Definitely a morning person.

Kelly Palace [00:58:14] Texting or talking?

Lewis Pugh [00:58:17] Definitely talking.

Kelly Palace [00:58:18] OK. Maria do you have the last 10 there or.

Maria Parker [00:58:21] Yeah. Take they'll take the last ten but I have to say I'm impressed for. Morning person. It's got to be very late. Body clock you're doing really well. OK so here's here's my last good book you read or listen to?

Lewis Pugh [00:58:43] I'm reading a ridiculous law book at the moment so it's the law of the sea, so.

Maria Parker [00:58:50] That sounds off. I'm sorry you're in there.

Kelly Palace [00:58:52] You're a maritime lawyer right?

Lewis Pugh [00:58:54] Yes I'm a maritime lawyer. So it's just a maritime maritime. OK. Let's say the dress doesn't sound fascinating but it would put it really it's a great look.

Maria Parker [00:59:03] Last Good movie?

Lewis Pugh [00:59:08] I loved. I watched the one about Elton John about his life called Rocket Man and recently and what Sir Elton John has been through in his life has been quite astonishing. And he's a pioneer. I love all pioneers is I love people to be prepared to push boundaries and then go for things. And so it's a beautiful movie.

Kelly Palace [00:59:32] Love Elton John, love him.

Maria Parker [00:59:35] Favorite food?

Lewis Pugh [00:59:37] Mexican.

Kelly Palace [00:59:38] Now. I have to ask you on food Maria and my's one favorite dishes which we actually talk about on the podcast. I swear I saw you eating this and when your videos. A bowl of yogurt with macadamia nuts in it? Did you have that?

Maria Parker [00:59:52] I think it had fruit in it.

Kelly Palace [00:59:54] There was fruit in there but I swear.

Lewis Pugh [00:59:56] Where was this?

Kelly Palace [00:59:57] It was in preparation for your long swim.

Maria Parker [01:00:00] You were gaining weight. You were gaining weight. Yes.

Kelly Palace [01:00:02] But I swear you dumped in a book like we love yogurt with macadamia nuts some fruit and it looks like that's exactly what you're eating what I saw that I'm like Oh Lewis is eating our favorite dish!

Maria Parker [01:00:16] OK. Favorite place to swim? That's probably a tough one.

Lewis Pugh [01:00:22] Yeah I think if. I've just been swimming in the Maldives the Maldives are a group of islands right in the middle of the Indian Ocean. When you dive in there it's like diving onto the set of Nemo underneath you have all these beautiful tropical fish coral beautiful colors small sharks manta rays and turtles. So if I had one last day left on this earth. And it's warm water and there's no such.

Lewis Pugh [01:00:53] So people say oh there must be too warm for you when you swim in the water. So I mean there's no such thing as too warm. So that's probably where it would be the Maldives.

Maria Parker [01:01:02] Mm hmm. That's nice. This last question I want to ask is I don't even. Based on what you've said I wonder if you can do it but how do you relax? Do you relax?

Lewis Pugh [01:01:14] I struggle. And the reason why I struggle is because I'm constantly thinking constantly pushing. And sometimes you only achieve things when you get into that angst and you can't get out of it and you got to keep pushing Keep pushing keep pushing and eventually the solution will arrive. And recently I found myself constantly in that.

Lewis Pugh [01:01:37] I have got four dogs I love to go walking in the afternoons with them on the beach in Cape Town but relaxing is a thing which I I need to work at.

Kelly Palace [01:01:49] What kind of dogs?

Lewis Pugh [01:01:50] Oh I got everything so I got a Jack Russell, who's the boss. I've got a Rhodesian Ridge back. Who's gorgeous. I've got a husky cross something and I've got a sheepdog cross something. All of them are special.

Kelly Palace [01:02:08] Are any of them swimmers?

Lewis Pugh [01:02:10] The Jack Russell is. She's a little swimmer.

Kelly Palace [01:02:15] Very cool very cool. Well those are all the questions that we have. It looks like you did great on the tough ones and great on the little fun easy ones.

Maria Parker [01:02:26] This has been so inspiring. I have got three pages of notes. Thank you so much for taking the time.

Kelly Palace [01:02:33] Yes. Yes it's been Wonderful!

Lewis Pugh [01:02:36] Ladies thank you both very very much. It's been an honor to be on your podcast. Thank you.

Kelly Palace [01:02:41] Thank you and best of luck in saving our oceans and with all your swims. We'll be watching and cheering for you.

Maria Parker [01:02:46] We'll be Following along and supporting in any way we can.

Kelly Palace [01:02:49] Absolutely.

Lewis Pugh [01:02:50] Thank you so much.

Kelly Palace [01:02:52] Bye Maria, love you!

Maria Parker [01:02:54] Love you too Kelly. Bye, Bye .

