Patrick S: Do this and you won't have any problem. Yeah. I think they're going to try and test. Singapore did such a great job. They've got, they're whatever, 20 miles from mainland China, but they've got thousands of Chinese coming in every day, and they've had 30 cases total, no deaths.

Bill M: Wow.

Patrick S: Right? Just because they were right on top of it. And so all this stuff we're doing now is arguably two weeks too late, but you can't do anything about it.

Bill M: Yeah. Crazy. [00:00:30] Well, so let's jump into this.

Patrick S: All right. Are we rolling?

Bill M: This is going to be fun. We all ready to roll, Patrick.

Patrick S: Good. Good. All right.

Bill M: So we won't go live yet, but I just want to ... I'll just do your main intro where I'm going to read all your bio and all that, I'm going to do separately.

Patrick S: Okay. Sure, sure. After the talk.

Bill M: That'll give me some time.

Patrick S: And you can give a little summary on it, sure.

Bill M: Basically it's a [inaudible 00:00:53]. Why should I listen to this? And so I'm going to focus on that. We'll do that post. So right now, more now [00:01:00] is just kind of go into the story.

Patrick S: So give me the audience, Bill.

Bill M: The audience is going to be entrepreneurs and top IT decision makers. So it's going to be senior VP of IT, CIOs and anybody that's making IT decisions within organizations, all the way from what I can hear from people communicating with me, entrepreneurs all the way through the companies themselves, [00:01:30] so that's the general. So the fear we talked about is them as leaders in situations that they're running into, the innovation, pressures in business, their role, how you can be old and still be effective. Maybe you're not quite have the traits of a 20, 30 year old from a leadership and technology perspective, and now you've got [inaudible 00:01:52] of wisdom, and so how you deal with your own brain basically, as you get ... So I'll prime you for some of those [00:02:00] that I've pulled up. So I want to welcome you to the show.

Patrick S: All right.

Bill M: All right. So this is a very, very special guest today that I've actually known. Was it 30 years ago?

Patrick S: Damn. Isn't that crazy? Golly. Hard to believe.

Bill M: It's 25 at least.

Patrick S: Yeah.

Bill M: Yeah, 25 at least.

Patrick S: We can stick with 20.

Bill M: So I know a lot of your backstory, but my audience doesn't. And so I'd love ... Let's go back. We'll go back as far as you want.

Patrick S: Sure.

Bill M: But I would at least like to start at [00:02:30] U and H. But I know you have some stories that go a little bit further back. And I just want people to understand where you're coming from because even though I've introduced you a few minutes ago, you come from both athletic background, not necessarily immigrant, but influenced-

Patrick S: First generation Irish immigrant parents, yeah. Blue collar area of Boston.

Bill M: That no doubt has an influence.

Patrick S: Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

Bill M: In business and all that. So let's just start at the beginning.

Patrick S: So [00:03:00] born and raised in Belmont, Mass, which at the time was either Irish or Italian. Right? And Irish Catholic. And we used to play baseball together. My baseball team in Belmont was Johnny Fitz, Fitzy, Hubba, Zone, Sully, Sully and Sully, and then Murph. And it wasn't where you're from, it was what parish. So that was the kind of the whole Irish Catholic upbringing. And as dysfunctional as it was, [00:03:30] nostalgic to look back on right now. And then moved around a little bit.

Bill M: So your parents came over from, both from Ireland?

Patrick S: So my dad was born in the states, and then they went back when he was a little kid, and then came back. My mom's mom immigrated to Newfoundland and came down from Newfoundland. And so it was a good story. My whole family is the region, is Donegal, the western coast of Ireland, which is beautiful.

Bill M: That's where my family's from too, Donegal.

Patrick S: National Geographic just named [00:04:00] one of the most beautiful places in the world last year.

Bill M: I didn't know that.

Patrick S: Yeah, yeah.

Bill M: Yeah. When I was over in Ireland in '78, that was when there was a lot of problems.

Patrick S: Lot of troubles, yeah.

Bill M: So we were in Belfast at the time, and tanks, and it's changed quite a bit since then.

Patrick S: The checkpoints, yeah.

Bill M: Talk about some of the PTSD and stuff.

Patrick S: Oh my gosh, yeah.

Bill M: My grandfather there, he was one of 16 kids, seeing guns and people getting shot. It's like no doubt sent [00:04:30] him over the edge. And we had to leave the city pretty quickly.

Patrick S: Absolutely.

Bill M: Yeah, just no doubt, it forms the influence of the Northeast in that area.

Patrick S: That's one of the things I talk about in the book, Bill, is that we made 70% to 80% of our decisions subconsciously. And we do it based on something neuroscientists call prior beliefs. And your prior beliefs are basically your experiences. But the really fucked up thing is we don't create that database. Somebody else creates it for us. And your grandfather's a great example.

Bill M: Yes, yes.

Patrick S: [00:05:00] He didn’t choose where he was born. He didn't choose how many brothers and sisters he had. He didn't choose what language he speaks. He didn't choose his religion. He didn't choose the color of his skin. But all those things became his tribe that he identified with. So unless he did something to enhance that database, which most people never really have the consciousness to do, then his tribe is going to be the only thing that won't set of his amygdala, that won't create these fear responses. And that's at the root essentially [00:05:30] of any war, of any conflict, and that sort of thing.

Bill M: So I actually haven't had this conversation with anybody except one other person. But I think that's an area in your research. How much of the past ... We have the generation of grandfather, or father, grandfather, maybe great-grandfather. But there's potentially, just picking on Ireland, it's a windswept island in the middle of nowhere. And we're just talking about two generations back. What about 18, [00:06:00] 17, 1600s, and how much of that, those patterns, are we just ... We just have them, but we're not conscious of them. Is there any-

Patrick S: There's tons of new research about that. And I'd say we've got three layers that are really critical. First is just genetic. Right? Why anyone should ever be afraid of snakes in Ireland makes no sense. Right?

Bill M: Right.

Patrick S: Because one, St. Patrick got rid of all of them. So there are zero deaths every year in Ireland [00:06:30] from snake bites. Right? Zero deaths. But you'll find 20%, 30% of the population is terrified of snakes. That's totally genetic. That's written in the DNA, and that's why it's there. That's where snakes and spiders and sharks and other irrational thoughts are if you look at just statistics. We should really be afraid of cars. That's what should terrify us because that's where all the deaths are.

Patrick S: The second thing is, within a single generation, parents can pass on fears [00:07:00] to their offspring. It's called epigenetics. So parents can actually influence and rewrite your genetics. And most people don't realize it happens that quickly, so it's quick to change. It's not at all fast to get rid of. That's why Irish people are still afraid of snakes. And then lastly, how we populate our own database can influence it. So those are sort of the three big influences. And the ability, one of the biggest takeaways I'd leave, especially for leaders in companies, [00:07:30] is trying to replace judgment with curiosity.

Patrick S: And one of the easiest examples is if you took my dad or your dad into Starbucks, and you see some kid who looks like he's a victim of a drive by piercing, and you're old man might say, "Geez, look. What the fuck is wrong with him?" And what you'd find out is he's judging based on his tribe. And when you do that, you literally use half your brain.

Bill M: Really? Okay.

Patrick S: [00:08:00] So the brain is the most energy hungry organ in the body. It's 5% of the body, but it uses 20% of our energy. So what we try to do is create these shortcuts called valence. So when we see something like that pierced kid, the pierced barista in Starbucks, we route that immediately to the right side of our brain, and just use the right hemisphere to decide that kid's bad. So basically, if you go back to when we were trying to survive [00:08:30] a couple million years ago, and the software on our amygdala, our fear center, was written, we want to judge within a fraction of a second if I want to kill you or if I want to mate with you. And that's basically it. So how can we get the genes to the next generation? So in order to do that, we've had these shortcuts called valence. Now if we can-

Bill M: How do you spell that?

Patrick S: V-A-L-E-N-C-E.

Bill M: E-N-C-E. Okay.

Patrick S: So if we can stop and say, "Okay. Wait a minute. I just said the kid looks really messed up because he's [00:09:00] got all those piercings. What can I find admirable about that?" And you think for a second. And as soon as you start to think and soon as you start that process, you light up the other hemisphere in your brain, so now you're literally twice as smart. You're literally using twice the processing power in your brain. And so when you stop and try and think furious-

Bill M: That's a powerful question.

Patrick S: With curiosity, you might say, "Well, he's probably got a great threshold for pain because I could never put one of those little things up in my eyelid like that. [00:09:30] And he's probably incredibly self-confident because he doesn't care what people think about him. So I really admire that about that guy." And then when you go up to him, you're going to have a much different interaction because now you admire the guy instead of thinking he's a freak because he's not part of your tribe.

Bill M: So what do I like about it? Can you train that part of the brain like a muscle? So if, for example, an email that comes in, or just what we're involved right now with the virus situation.

Patrick S: Yeah. Yeah.

Bill M: Can we train the brain [00:10:00] to get in front of it? Can we actually coach it?

Patrick S: Yeah. So you have to consciously be aware of that. And one of the stories I tell in the book is a guy named Ray Dalio, who one of the richest men in the world. I think he's worth $20 billion, the CEO of Bridgewater. And he's got a great way of doing it. And he found out by trial and error and lost absolutely everything, became this superstar on Wall Street. And then he said, asked to testify in front of Congress about the Mexican debt [00:10:30] crisis. And he said, "Look. I've got all of my money shorted. We're selling stock short. We're putting everything in cash. I've got all my, because I know the market's going to crash." And the chairman of the Fed, who I think at the time was Alan Greenspan, said, "Well, how do you know that?" He said, "Because I'm an expert. I know it."

Patrick S: And sure enough, the market took off. Dalio went out of business, lost millions of dollars. He had to borrow four grand from his dad to start up the company again. He said it was the [00:11:00] best experience he's ever had because he went from saying, "I know I'm right," to asking himself, "How do I know I'm right?" So he stopped when he had that initial feeling. So he got the initial gut reaction, which is your subconscious mind thinking, so you're using half your brain when you get it. If you have a lot of experience, it's oftentimes very good and very accurate to do that fast thinking. But it's much better if you can incorporate the slow thinking as well and say, "Okay. Here's [00:11:30] what I think. The market's going to tank. How do I know I'm right?"

Patrick S: And then what that forces you to do is it shuts off the amygdala, which is your reactionary decisions, that fight, flight, or freeze mode. It opens up the blood brain barrier, so you're actually getting more processing power using both sides of your brain. So just simply asking yourself, "How do I know I'm right? Or what can I find admirable? Or what can I like about this situation? What's the benefit?" And being able to take that pause [00:12:00] and take that step back allows you to engage the second half of your brain and start to populate that subconscious database we talked about of prior beliefs, you can start to publish, or to populate that on your own. You can become responsible for your subconscious thinking, for your own internal database, instead of where you were born, or who your parents were, or what teacher you had in first grade.

Bill M: It's almost like we can't use that as an excuse anymore, saying, "Well, that's just how I grew up." [00:12:30] If we want to go somewhere different or be a different type of a leader, we're almost defaulting to a default pattern.

Patrick S: So that pattern, that's a great point, Murph, because the pattern that you're talking about is a defense pattern. So the amygdala, which is our fear center, the amygdala is fully developed actually in the third trimester, even before birth. So at birth, we have the ability to fight, to flight, [00:13:00] or freeze. So we have defense mechanisms from day one. We have the ability to learn how to survive because that was the only thing that was important. That's why we programmed our brain with this two million year old piece of software. And so then we have this other center called the courage center, the SGACC, the subgenual anterior cingulate cortex. Nobody's ever heard of that. People have heard of the amygdala. No one's heard of that SGACC.

Bill M: I agree with that because I do a lot of reading. I hate it right here, SGACC, [00:13:30] courage.

Patrick S: Yeah, that's it. Because you read the book.

Bill M: Yes. I have read the book. But that's brilliant. Talk to me about it because I'm really ... Not people have heard about amygdala.

Patrick S: A lot of people have heard of amygdala.

Bill M: More than-

Patrick S: But they don't know the courage center. And so the reason being, Bill, is from birth up until the age of about 20, 22 years old, that prefrontal cortex, where the SGACC sits-

Bill M: That's where it sits, okay.

Patrick S: That kind of the adult supervision, that's not fully developed until we're in our early 20s. So [00:14:00] habitually, the first 20 years of our life, our habit is defense because that's all we've got. That's the only tool we're equipped with. So we default to defense. But in reality, all the potential is in the present, so all of our defense is based on past history. Right? We know that if we stick our finger in a socket, we're going to get shocked.

Bill M: Yeah. But the PFC doesn't come online until-

Patrick S: Well, it starts to come online as a teenager in what's called cold cognition if there's no emotion involved. So you can sit at dinner with your teenager [00:14:30] and they seem like a normal person. They seem like ... But as soon as emotion gets involved, it's called hot cognition. They lose the connection and it starts becoming the amygdala taking control. So that's why a lot of parents think, "Well, I sat down to dinner and explained the curfew. And then when he went out and his buddies said they could stay out until 1:00, he flipped out. And it was like a different kid." Well, it's because there's hot cognition, cold cognition.

Bill M: Got it. Got it.

Patrick S: But the important thing about the defaulting to defense is we do that [00:15:00] habitually, but we don't have to. So we can find the potential in the present by stopping and asking those questions, and stopping and engaging the brain and stepping back from the situation to shut off the amygdala. And it's basically reprogramming our brain for courage and for confidence. And it's so important for leaders, particularly in a field like IT and in an environment like this, where the pressure's on them to make sure everyone can work from home, to make sure they're staying innovative, to make sure [00:15:30] they're satisfying all these different stakeholders, from sales, to operations, to all of this stuff. So if you're an IT guy in leadership, then this is hugely important.

Bill M: I think what would be the pushback, and this is me pushback, because I know how hard it is to not be hijacked. So I'd love for you-

Patrick S: That amygdala hijacking, yeah.

Bill M: So it's like these are nanoseconds. And how to you become [00:16:00] super aware so that you can get in front of that hijacking happening? Because getting an email, if you're not super present already, and you're just in the momentum of the day, all of a sudden, the momentum takes you in a certain path.

Patrick S: Absolutely.

Bill M: When you're not present.

Patrick S: That you're going to regret later. Yeah.

Bill M: So do you have a strategy that some leader can get in front of it?

Patrick S: Yeah. For sure. So the two ways that we make decisions in life are either out of fear or out of opportunity. And if we make decisions out of fear, [00:16:30] it's always going to lead to regret, to shame, to failure. We make decisions out of opportunity, that's going to lead to growth, to happiness, to success, and to learning. That's how you create a learning organization is make those courageous choices on opportunity. What happens if you get in that reactionary mode, a lot of people don't know it because they don't know what happens to their body when the amygdala switches on.

Patrick S: So when the amygdala switches on, it's there for survival. When it activates that two million year old piece of software, [00:17:00] it's an early warning system for survival. What it wants to do is wake you up, so it stops doing anything unnecessary, like digestion, or procreation, or feeling empathy. And it starts doing only what's necessary to survive. It increases oxygen and blood to your brain, opens your ears up so you can hear better, you can see better, creates adrenaline, DHEA, cortisol. All these enzymes start coursing through your body and you have superhuman powers. That's why if you've ever been in a car accident, everything looks like it's moving in slow motion. [00:17:30] It's because you're taking in twice as much detail as you normally do because you're primed for superhuman performance. Now if you can step back and recognize when that's happening, you can use that to your advantage.

Bill M: Is that observer you mentioned?

Patrick S: Yeah, exactly. If you can step back and feel that happening, you can have superhuman performance. This is why it's so important to scare yourself every day because if you scare yourself on purpose, and you can observe what your body feels like, I call [00:18:00] them the fear tells, so it's like a poker player has these tells when they get a good hand or a bad hand, these subconscious things that people can pick up on. The same thing happens when we get scared. So if you do something that scares you, let's say you hate public speaking, which is I see it with IT guys all the time. I *spoke at a CIO conference in September last year. I called up five people on the stage. And my God, you would've thought I put, we were playing Russian roulette or something, they were so horrified.*

Bill M: Just randomly called them up.

Patrick S: Yeah, randomly called them up on stage. It was terrifying. [00:18:30] So if that's you, and you're listening and you're afraid to public speak, get up one day when you go to lunch with all your colleagues and make a toast. And when you get up and you make yourself do that, notice what happens to your body. And you might feel butterflies in your stomach, or you might feel like a lead balloon in your stomach, or you might feel your shoulders get tight, or your heart start to beat fast, or your breathing getting shallow, something like that.

Patrick S: When you start to notice those tells, then you'll notice them during [00:19:00] the week. When you get that email, all of a sudden, you'll say, "Gosh, my leg's shaking, just like when I made that toast. Now I'm going to be in a position where I can either react, because that's my early warning system."

Bill M: You're saying the body is in front of the brain.

Patrick S: You feel it in your body, yeah. It's totally in front of the brain. Absolutely. It's a great way of saying it too, Bill.

Bill M: Yeah. That makes sense. And I have a couple ... So I've been working on these triggers for a while because it's been a problem. So I went to a lot of things. But [00:19:30] the thing that's made the biggest impact, you had a quote from a guy, from a CEO in the book, that I was like, I knew exactly where he was coming from because I went to Wim Hof's cold training in Poland. And we had to walk up the mountain.

Patrick S: You went to Poland for it.

Bill M: Yeah.

Patrick S: Oh, wow. That's awesome.

Bill M: So we sat in the cold. And I have a cold plunge in my house now because doing one thing you're afraid of every day, like people hate cold, I hate cold to this day.

Patrick S: But it's so good for you, immune system, glutathione, yeah, everything. Yeah.

Bill M: But the most important thing that I learned [00:20:00] was actually the breath work that he taught. And he's just stealing it from India and stuff.

Patrick S: Tummo breathing.

Bill M: But in your book, what I liked is that CEO, because I've done the MBSR, the mindfulness, the John Cabot. All that's great. But the ultimate thing was I knew the body in the coolness, then you can visualize the negative event, or how you want to navigate the negative event and settle into it and breathe. [00:20:30] But the biggest thing was the breathing. And so I'd love if you can explain. And actually, your breathing stuff is not Wim Hof, which I thought it was greater because I was like, "Man, this is something new." So if you can explain your breath thing because I think that for me was the gateway when that CEO in your book that you quoted, it's like listen, I've been doing this mindfulness meditation for a long, long time. It's very powerful. But your stuff on the breath work, to me, that shortened meditation from an hour to 10 minutes.

Patrick S: Yeah. And that's it. Even I do two minutes before I go to bed. And [00:21:00] what I'm doing is basically decompressing and downloading the day, and then clearing off my, clearing everything in my mind and what's called my working memory, so I can sleep.

Bill M: Explain that to people though because that's such a cool concept.

Patrick S: Sure.

Bill M: I haven't heard of that.

Patrick S: So I've got a morning routine and I've got a nighttime routine. And part of my nighttime routine is sitting in this position that I learned when I got leukemia. I had a yogi from this [inaudible 00:21:24], and she was a yogi in Kundalini yogi. And she said, "If you can do this one thing called bound [00:21:30] lotus." And basically, you sit crossed legged in the lotus, and then you cross your arms behind your back.

Bill M: Oh, really?

Patrick S: And you put your forehead on the ground in that position.

Bill M: And where are your knees? Are your knees on that-

Patrick S: No, cross legged.

Bill M: Oh, really? And you just lean forward.

Patrick S: You're sitting in lotus and lean forward. Yeah.

Bill M: Oh, that's cool.

Patrick S: The idea is to open up your hips and open up your shoulders and open up your knees all at the same time. And so when I do that, I go through this four by four breathing. And so there's a couple breathing things I mention in the book, but we'll talk about this one first, is basically [00:22:00] pulling in for a count of four, holding for a count of four, breathing out for a count of four, and then holding out for a count of four. And they teach Navy Seals this at sniper training camp. Yogis have been doing it for years. And basically, you can think of a box, and the Seals call it box breathing. Just doing that two minutes every night and thinking about all this stuff.

Patrick S: Normally before I do, I write down everything I want to do the next day. So I'll write down, I've got a podcast with Bill Murphy. [00:22:30] I've got Good Morning America at 9:00 AM. I want to bring up the point about this story, that story. And I clear everything out of my mind, then I do the breathing. And that's literally, I mean literally five minutes before you go to bed. And I sleep like a baby.

Bill M: So you're just ... That's such a great ... I love the metaphor because everybody can picture this load of stuff they gathered in their brain up until that moment when they've got to go to bed. And then you're just basically seeding the mind for the next day.

Patrick S: Yeah. That's exactly right. [00:23:00] And oftentimes, what I'll do, and I picked this up from one of the neuroscientists I interviewed for the book, oftentimes what I'll do if I have a burning question, I'll ask myself that before I go to bed, and I'll leave a pen and paper next to the bed.

Bill M: Like an intention.

Patrick S: Like an intention. So I had this keynote for Deutsche Telekom's big kickoff two weeks ago. And this huge speech, 1000 people, and I wanted the opening message to be really strong and really engaging [00:23:30] and get their attention. And so it actually took two nights before I said, "How am I going to open this speech?" I just asked myself that before I went to bed. How should I open this speech? And on the second night, I woke up with this great idea. And it was a story I wanted to tell and I wanted to share at some point. But I thought, "Wow, if I open up with this, this is going to be really powerful because the ending's so surprising. And no one will guess it. And I can do that." So that's how I ended up coming up with the way that I was going to open up this really important speech. [00:24:00] And you can do it for anything.

Bill M: So one of the things I thought was really interesting about your story, and I have an advantage because I know your backstory a little bit, although you do talk about it quite a bit in the book, is your athletic background. And I find that interesting because there's people listening here who are like, "I was a good athlete in the past. And I've left it all behind," for whatever reason, work, kids and all that. And then you have this talking about courage and stuff. And I [00:24:30] have just realized this over the past two years, that there's a massive difference between physical courage and bravery.

Bill M: I remember I signed up for the Iron Man. And I remember when I gave them the $600. And I'm like, "What did I just do?" But that took a ... I knew physically that was going to be a hard thing. But it took a different type of a gear. But then when I'm operating red zone, the courage is psychological.

Patrick S: Oh, absolutely.

Bill M: It's mental.

Patrick S: So [00:25:00] we've got three different type of fears, Bill. And I talk about them in the book, and I call it the terror triangle. So if you can imagine a triangle, and on each side of the triangle, one side you've got physical courage, the other side, you've got emotional courage. And then down at the bottom, you have instinctual courage. And so, excuse me, that's where if you can imagine all your fears living, it's someplace within that triangle. So if it's jumping out of an airplane, that's going to be directly against the physical [00:25:30] side because the physical fear is falling and that's it.

Patrick S: If it's getting married, or leaving the military because you've been a Navy Seal for 15 years, or if it's leaving being a CEO to start a photography company, whatever it might be, those are all emotional pains. If it's, go back to Ireland, fear of snakes, that's instinctual. So every fear you have is someplace inside that triangle. And the [00:26:00] interesting thing, I'll go back to the Navy Seals because I've worked with a bunch of them, is they are the most courageous guys when it comes to physical. They can jump out of a plane at 30,000 feet in the pitch black over a stormy ocean and not think twice about, be telling jokes as they go out the back of the C-130.

Patrick S: Now a lot of Seals that I've worked with have been married three times, four times because they don't have the emotional training to understand that's a fear response they have to train as well. So [00:26:30] with each one of those legs of the triangle, you've got to train them. So it's no different. And the fears are no different. So when people are physically courageous, sorry, that means they've worked on being physically courageous. So if you want to be emotionally courageous, you've got to be vulnerable, and that's really tough. I used to build up the old me that you knew before leukemia, I built up this façade. First, it was an athlete. Right? And then it was an entrepreneur driving [00:27:00] a $150,000 car, wearing $20,000 suits. And I was running a $10 million company and thinking I was Gordon Gekko. So it was all to hide the shame that I felt about fear.

Patrick S: When I got leukemia and I ended up getting out of the hospital and recovering, I went into the office a whole totally different guy after my immune system was back. And I said to, we had 30 employees at the time, and I said, "Look, we're screwed. We lost that contract. [00:27:30] I've been out of the scene for a couple months. And we might not make it." And everyone's looking at me saying, "Who the hell is this guy? What happened to the I'll take care of it, this is nothing for me?" Because I was emotionally much more courageous. I was telling them the truth.

Bill M: Vulnerable.

Patrick S: Yeah. Much more vulnerable. 100%.

Bill M: So you and I lost touch after the Olympic trials.

Patrick S: Trials, yeah.

Bill M: And we haven't talked about that. And you can weave that in as we go. Maybe it's just enough to say ... You know.

Patrick S: [00:28:00] Well, it's the second breathing. I'll point that out because you asked about the breathing. That's in chapter six. It's a great section for athletes and for entrepreneurs about a breathing technique and a mind, not really mindfulness, more a visualization technique.

Bill M: Yeah. I love that.

Patrick S: I learned at the Olympic trials, and it's really powerful.

Bill M: So I'd like to talk about this concept for intra-preneurs.

Patrick S: Yeah.

Bill M: Internal. And I believe a lot of the CEOs, for them to reach high performance levels in their business, they've got to come up less [00:28:30] on defense and more on offense, and that's the intrapreneurship, which is a whole other skillset. But back to your point about that we were just talking about with-

Patrick S: The breathing.

Bill M: Yes, the breathing. The practical ability to breathe and just something that people can use day in and day out is ... What's the gateway to settle? Because you had this façade, right?

Patrick S: Yeah. Yeah.

Bill M: And [00:29:00] you got sick, and you had this vulnerability. But you were already pretty high performance before that. But you're saying that some of us are reaching levels where we've got to look behind the curtain a little bit and just say-

Patrick S: Absolutely.

Bill M: What is it that I'm hiding from?

Patrick S: Yeah. And that will, I tell people, "All your dreams are on the other side of fear. But you have to run towards that fear." And the reason, so I got second in the Olympic trials and raced the World Cup for three years. My first [00:29:30] company I raised by $30 million in venture capital and debt. And we sold it and venture capitalists made all the money. So I tell people if I knew what I knew then, what I know now about courage and confidence and working in the face of fear, I would've been an Olympic gold medalist and I'd probably be a billionaire. Right? Because my motivation and my methods were all wrong. I had this tremendous potential. Thank God for my parents because I had good genetics and good coaching. But [00:30:00] because my motivation was wrong, or let's say it wasn't optimal, put it that way.

Patrick S: When I got out at Hopkins, and I was told that the odds were I wouldn't get out, they asked if my affairs were in order. My daughter was a year old. My wife was six months pregnant. And so I sat there in Hopkins thinking, "Memory Shannon is going to have of her dad is the guy who's too big of a pussy to get on a plane [00:30:30] and take her to Disney World, or take her to Paris, or take her anywhere in the world because he's so cowardice, he's so cowardly. And he doesn't have the wherewithal to get over his own fears and to face those fears."

Patrick S: So when I got out, that became my motivation. And I don't know anyone listening to this podcast who wouldn't run into a burning building. You'd run into a burning building to save your kid. So if every day becomes your burning building, if you've got [00:31:00] a chance to make a decision based on fear or based on opportunity, and you feel that change in your body, then you say, "Okay. That's my early warning system, not for survival anymore. That's my early warning system for opportunity." Now if I decide my burning building might be standing up telling the CEO I've got a much better idea. I've got something that's risky that I want to try. And it's putting myself on the line, but that's where the opportunity lies.

Bill M: That's the magic right there.

Patrick S: My little girl wants me to [00:31:30] take that opportunity, and I want to do it for her. Now you've got the motivation. You've got the recognition of when that happens because you've got this incredible early warning system. And now you can run towards that fear knowing the opportunity and your dreams are on the other side of it.

Bill M: And for you, discovering the shame around essentially ... Even though you were quite successful, you're essentially using the motivation [00:32:00] of that shame and fear to create your acceleration.

Patrick S: Yeah.

Bill M: Versus being aware that this was there, and you're saying it creates a different type of acceleration in your life.

Patrick S: It's so much more powerful. Such a faster acceleration if you've got that authentic courage. If you're constantly trying to hide your shame and constantly trying to hide your fear, and trying to create your persona, people make the mistake, Bill, all the time of thinking, "Well, I'll [00:32:30] think and I'll tell myself and I'll use positive motivation to tell myself I'm going to be courageous. Then I'll act courageous." It's the other way around. They've got it all wrong. You have to act courageous to feel courageous. You can feel it and say, "Okay. Now I'll act that way." You've just got to do it. And it's going to feel horrible. It'll feel so foreign if you're the type of guy like me, who was trying to cover things up and act the part, and when you actually [00:33:00] don't feel it.

Patrick S: So that's the first step, and I think that's the big difference in motivation between when you've got this self-motivation, you're trying to create a persona, versus when you're being the authentic you, and you're doing things for the right reason.

Bill M: So what happened when you told that story to the 30 employees and you came in?

Patrick S: It was incredible.

Bill M: Really?

Patrick S: Yeah. I mean, I was shocked because a couple guys came up and they said, "Well, that contract we just lost, [00:33:30] we know the prime contractor, they'll probably want some help. Why don't I call them up and see if we can get a couple guys on that deal?" Someone else said, "Well, you know what, there's this other thing." And rather than me having to shoulder that whole burden myself, all of a sudden, everyone's saying, "Hey, we can fix this. We can jump in." And it just became such a better work environment because we started being way more transparent with each other, or I started being more transparent with everybody else. And consequently, they became [00:34:00] more transparent with me.

Bill M: Did the bravery ... *We talked about fearlessness. Did your experience of Hopkins with the leukemia, did that make you fearless or make you move brave?*

Patrick S: Definitely, definitely bravery and courage. And the distinction I draw there, Bill, is that old me died at Hopkins, that part that was trying to create the image and trying to be the bravado tough guy. That died at Hopkins. And [00:34:30] the real me emerged. And what I found was in near death experiences oftentimes reprogram people's mind when they go through it. You'll hear a lot of cancer survivors say, "It was the best thing that ever happened to me," because their mind got reprogrammed. The good news is after interviewing 36 neuroscientists, we don't have to go through that near death experience to reprogram your mind. You can use the base platform I lay out in the book, which is all based on neuroscience. And basically, what you're doing [00:35:00] is you're able to say, "When I'm fearful, I feel it, and I know it. I'm going to face that fear. I'm going to run towards it." And that's what courage is.

Patrick S: So courage is like Sully Sullenberger, the guy who landed the jet on the Hudson River with no engines. So he is in a state of abject panic. Right? He's got 200 people behind him. He's over New York City, and his engines go out. You can't be any more scared than that. But he had such courage that [00:35:30] he said, "Okay. I'm going to go through my checklist. I've been trained to do this. I'm going to take that fear, I'm going to put it in a compartment, get it out of the way right now because it's not serving me. And I'm going to do exactly what I need to do to get out of this situation." That's bravery. That's courage.

Patrick S: I don't want fearlessness because fearlessness to me is just being used to something. It's habitual. It's numb. Right? So if you've done something, if you've jumped out of a plane 1000 times, when you go up there and you jump out 1001 [00:36:00] times, your heart rate's probably the same as it was at 999. And it's kind of ho hum. You've lost that fear of it. So fearlessness, I think people say that and they use it incorrectly. What I want is bravery. What I want is courage. What I want is confidence. And I think that's way more valuable.

Bill M: So when people come to you and say, "What can I do now?" The book is an amazing resource. And [00:36:30] are you often asked to say, "Is there some practical things that I can take home and test on myself today?" And I'm being really, really, really practical about you have a leader who has to execute on this project, but has to have three hard conversations. And they've got to have it not four weeks from now, they've got to have it within a week or two weeks.

Patrick S: Sure.

Bill M: And how would you coach them to get through to get to the other side of that, where they're going to [00:37:00] have those, and be brave and be courageous and be a leader during that process?

Patrick S: I think there's two important things to go through long-term. One is trying to discover your fear tells, those things I said you should scare yourself about. The second is trying to find your hidden fears and your fear frontier because there's a dark side, or as I say in the book, there's a shadow side to those. Those are a little bit longer and take a while to explain and to walk through. And I do that occasionally with some CEOs and have had some just incredible results and super [00:37:30] breakthroughs that are just skyrocketing people to the next level because they figured out their hidden fears and what their defenses are against them. To answer your question more specifically, if you have something you've got to deal with in the next week, the best thing I think you can do is what the stoics call premeditation of evil.

Bill M: I love that. Yes, yes.

Patrick S: So if you can sit down, do some four by fours, so the breathing is always the key. Anytime you feel yourself activated, do those four by fours. Even if you don't feel yourself activated, like at night, or when you wake [00:38:00] up in the morning, doing a few four by fours just gets you used to focusing on your breathing and brings your attention inward. Super easy practice. And when you do, if you sit there and you think about what you have to do that you've got trepidation about, what's really important, I want you to see yourself doing it, see it going great. A lot of people say, "Visualize yourself winning," and everything else. That's perfect. Do that.

Patrick S: Do that the first time, maybe the first couple of times. *But then I want you to see yourself going sideways and things going the worst [00:38:30] possible way you can imagine it. And see yourself having that conversation with your CEO, and him throwing a pen holder across the desk at you, screaming at you, asking how he could've hired an idiot. Think of the worst outcome possible, then think of how you responded to it. And what you're doing from a neuroscience perspective is you're putting in prior beliefs into your subconscious database.* So when you get to your boss, or whoever you have to have that tough conversation with, now you have all [00:39:00] these prior beliefs of, let's say 10 different things that you envisioned happening, from really good to really bad.

Patrick S: None of them are going to come as a surprise. So it's our brain is a prediction engine. We try to figure out how this event that we're in right now is going to turn out. The way we figure it out is based on our past history or our prior beliefs. So we'll use those to predict the outcome of this moment. So if all of a sudden, you hadn't done that visualization and your boss [00:39:30] flips out and throws that pen thing at you, you don't have a prior belief that aligns with it. This is why the coronavirus is scaring so many people. There's no prior beliefs that say what's going to happen with this virus, so there's uncertainty. When there's uncertainty, we create something called free energy. And that free energy is the root of all fear.

Patrick S: So if you've thought through all the possible scenarios when you go talk to the person you have to talk to, and they throw the thing across, what you'll find [00:40:00] yourself doing is just what you're doing now, Bill. You're going to say, "I saw this coming." Let me get you to sit down. I just want to say something again because I think I spoke wrong, so just let's take a seat. Let me explain it. And you're not flustered and you're not thinking, "What the hell are you doing throwing that shit at me?" And it becomes much more manageable and you're using both hemispheres of your brain at the same time.

Bill M: So you're crafting the neural response well ahead of time. You're getting out in front of it.

Patrick S: Exactly. You're [00:40:30] getting out in front of it with your prefrontal cortex, with the adult supervision, with the SGACC, with that courage center. You're not letting the amygdala hijack, like you were saying, because if you didn't do that, and things went sideways, the amygdala's going to say, "Okay. We're in a threat here." Our default is to defense. So we've got to stop that default to defense, and we've got to find all the potential in the present.

Bill M: And most people can ... And there's a whole part of this on visualization. And you have a whole process of working people through that. [00:41:00] I'm very visual. Are people generally able to light up their brain with a visual, like imagining themselves in the situation and the feelings they get?

Patrick S: Yeah. I would say probably 80% of the population is really able to lean in and do that. Other people tend to be either auditory, using their ears, or kinesthetic, which is what they talk about in neuro linguistic programming and things like that. But I would say probably 80% of the population can get the visualization. The truth is how your brain is [00:41:30] wired, we've got something called neuroplasticity, which means the brain can change at any age. We used to think just up until 15 years ago that at age 20, it was fully developed. But the truth of the matter is it changes over time. So we can become more visual if we want to, if we practice being visual, if we practice visualization. It will have more and bigger impact on us for sure.

Bill M: A lot of the older folks, I'd say 45 plus that are listening, so they have a lot of the young bucks coming [00:42:00] up that there's just a different brain. I imagine there's a different brain in the 20s and 30s. And from a leader perspective, you have this deep well of experience around you. So technically, I guess you could be called wise. But wise can get in the way at times because you have this prior experience. How do you make someone actually wise, and so they're not layering their past beliefs into something?

 Because that's one of the advantages [00:42:30] folks that are younger have, they don't have the trauma of getting yelled at by four or five bosses.

Patrick S: Well, they do have the trauma from back in their youth, and that's really important. They have their fear frontier. They have their defense mechanisms. And millennials particularly have had I think a disservice from their parents because parents became affluent, and they tried to protect them so much that they've had to face a lot less challenges than guys like you and I did growing up. I was the first person in my family [00:43:00] to graduate college. I had to pay for college myself and pay for grad school myself, and so had all these challenges and potentially of not being able to pay the next semester. And was I going to get kicked out? And all these type of things, whereas my kids, for example, they're expecting to go to a $70,000 a year college, have dad cut a check, and not have to worry about anything.

Patrick S: So it's a totally different mindset, where there's not a lot of threat. There's not a lot of challenge [00:43:30] that comes their way compared to the older guys. So the older guys oftentimes have a great way of looking at their life as something that they created.

 *And one of the things that I've found with the younger set that prevails until they have those bosses that are jerks and those experiences that make old guys wise, is that they tend to think of themselves as victims. And you can hear it in the language that they use.*

Patrick S: If they say, "God, I would've been here on [00:44:00] time, but the traffic was just awful. That client is really an asshole. We would've grown this contract if it wasn't for him." So that's a total victim mindset. Right? When you're a victim, I have this thing that I call a drama triangle from my friend, Diana Chapman. And when you're a victim, there's always a villain.

Bill M: Has to be.

Patrick S: Somebody's always the villain. And to get yourself out of it, do you know what you need?

Bill M: No. What do you need?

Patrick S: A hero.

Bill M: A hero, oh, okay.

Patrick S: So a hero's got to come in. [00:44:30] So that's the drama triangle. If you're a villain, I mean, if you're a victim, you've got to have a villain, someone to blame everything that goes wrong on. And then you've got to have a hero, someone who can come in and fix it for you. And so oftentimes you'll see this in people who aren't successful at work. They'll say, "That boss is a jerk. He keeps giving me these bad assignments. He keeps doing this. It's all his fault." That means life is happening to you when that happens. If life is going to happen by you, then you change from being a victim [00:45:00] to being a producer. And that same boss isn't a villain anymore, he's a challenger.

Bill M: Sure, sure.

Patrick S: And now he's challenging me to think, "Well, how could I have done that better? What could I do differently? What's he looking for?" And then if you need help, you don't get a hero, you get a coach.

Bill M: Yeah. Right.

Patrick S: Someone who's going to say, "Have you thought about this? Have you thought about that?" And it all comes down, so going from that drama triangle to that producer triangle all comes down to curiosity. So if you believe, if you have a mindset that everybody here [00:45:30] put on this Earth is here so you can learn. Everyone is here so Bill Murphy can get better at what he does. The world is a very friendly place, and I know you're here to serve me. And if you have that mindset, you might think, "Well, it's manifesting itself in a yelling, screaming fit. So how do I do better next time? How do I understand this? How can I make sure things don't work out?" And what you'll see in really successful people, and you mentioned CIOs. I've got a friend of mine who was a CIO of Capital [00:46:00] One for the first 15 years that they were around, Jim Donahay. And he was the best at that.

Patrick S: He'd have the two guys, Rich and Nigel, the two founders of Capital One, screaming at him about the fact that he wanted to try outsourcing this new storage backup. And they're like, "We can't let this go. It's all our credit card information." And he'd just sit there like Yoda. Right? Without batting an eyelash, and he'd be thinking to himself, "Well, why did I do a bad job presenting it? So these guys don't understand [00:46:30] what a good thing it was. How can I do better next time?" And he turned internal and said, "This is a great challenge." And he became legendary in terms of CIOs.

Bill M: Well, that goes back to one of the first questions. What do I like about this? But it's asking better questions.

Patrick S: Yeah, that's it.

Bill M: Asking. I look at you as we wrap up, Patrick, I look at you as ... I came up with this, and I stole it, but I like to try mentors. Everyone says you need a mentor. But I look at it a little bit differently as I get older. [00:47:00] It's being selective about mentors. And I talk about this quite a bit with my CIO group because we're reaching an age where it's impossible to know everything. It used to be, 15, 20, 25, you could actually be smart and know everything. But right now, it's just too fast and too wide.

Patrick S: So much going on, yeah. Yeah.

Bill M: Too much complexity. We need ... And so as you select mentors, I like to use a trifecta mentor. Do I want to learn business?

Patrick S: That's the biggest payoff. Right?

Bill M: Yeah.

Patrick S: We're coming up on Kentucky Derby day here in about a month. Right? So [00:47:30] we want the trifecta.

Bill M: Do I want the business? Do I want the academics? And do I want to blend of both? Success is, and I might even put in some of the health experiences you've had. You look at this from a continuum. And as one reads the book, it's like, "Okay. Well, this is not an academic exercise on success." There's the athletic success that you've had. And then there's the business success. And then there's the health that you've been over to navigate through. And you look at it, [00:48:00] and then there's the academics in the book of: What's the real science behind this?

Patrick S: The neuroscience.

Bill M: And so some of it, when you look at this all together, I just call it a trifecta mentor. And that's why I think reading the book and listening to this podcast is super because it can be like a voice that someone's playing to kind of coach them up as they're driving to work or whatever it may be. But do you ever have people come to you? And what is your thoughts on mentors and how people can accelerate their progress in life by surrounding themselves [00:48:30] with people just a little bit in front of them in areas?

Patrick S: So I think one of the early mistakes I made in my first company, Server Vault, was the board management because your board of directors should be mentors. And instead, I was so terrified with every board meeting that we would literally spend a week of time prepping for the board meeting.

Bill M: Prepping, sure.

Patrick S: Doing a great board book, putting everything together, trying to anticipate every answer. And that was such a big mistake [00:49:00] because that became me wasting a week to try and look good. Again, it was all about this image to try and look good in front of the board.

Bill M: Sure.

Patrick S: And instead, when I got to ODIN, I bootstrapped that company instead of raising money for it. And I put together a killer board, and would just walk in and say, "This really sucks. Can't do this. I don't know why this failed. And I need help here." And it became much more of, [00:49:30] I was looking actively for criticism. I'd say that's the biggest thing you can do from a mentor, is try and find someone who will give you critical feedback and not feel bad about it, not take it personally, not find someone who's going to sit around blowing sunshine up your ass and make you feel good about yourself. But someone who will give you critical feedback, who will say, "This is where you could've done better. This is where you did well. And this is what you've got to work on next time."

Patrick S: And I think if [00:50:00] you're going to get a mentor relationship, it's great to have someone who will give you a pat on the back every now and then. But that's a lot less valuable than someone who's going to give you that real critical feedback and then help you navigate how you can get to a point where that doesn't become a weakness.

Bill M: It's funny that your process in the book, I just formed a board as well, and they make me nervous.

Patrick S: Yeah, yeah.

Bill M: And I know with your thinking, it can take you out of sort of your brain pattern, your normal brain pattern, because these [00:50:30] are high performers and you want to do good. You want to present yourself well. But you want that feedback, and it's like ... Because I remember I was interviewing for the board members, and one of them said to me, he goes, "Well, I would just toss that." I said, "What if I had a problem? How would you approach that?" And he goes, "I would just toss it back to you and tell you to go figure it out." This is a guy who's a board member of publicly traded companies, and I get that. They want the CEO to figure it out. But I was like, "I need a collaborative person to work with." Yes, I want to feel uncomfortable, [00:51:00] to your point about comfort, but I don't want to be so uncomfortable that I'm like, I have a façade.

Patrick S: Incapacitated, yeah.

Bill M: Or I can't ask vulnerable questions, or I come across as the CEO, and it's a 40 person company for God's sake.

Patrick S: Yeah. Exactly.

Bill M: We're not running a multinational GE Capital or something. So I appreciate that feedback because I think that maps to the vulnerability, and some of the small business owners that are listening to this. And I know you're involved in YPO quite frequently and how they surround themselves [00:51:30] with people that can help them solve problems and grow their businesses and help employ people.

Patrick S: So I've been in YPO for more than a dozen years. And when you join YPO, Young Presidents Organization, you get put in what's called a forum with seven or eight other people. And we just had this amazing forum of eight people, so six guys, two women. And of the eight of us that started in this forum, six [00:52:00] of us now have different careers.

Bill M: Wow.

Patrick S: Because we had a group of mentors, a group of peers who we could be totally vulnerable with, totally honest, and tried to figure out when we were in our genius, and when we were in that zone of excellence, which we're really good at. We get paid a lot of money for, but it's really work. The zone of genius, which is where you want to spend at least 80% of your time, is when you're in that flow state, when things come easily, and you're really good at it. And you look at [00:52:30] the clock and you think, "Holy cow. Three hours just flew by and I didn't even realize it." And it's the type of thing you'd do even if you had a billion dollars in the bank. And so that's, I think, that's one of the benefits that can come from a mentor group, or come from your CIO group when you're getting input beyond something like just what a boss would give you or what you might get in a 360 review.

Bill M: 100%. It's going to be impossible for us to cover everything in the book in one show.

Patrick S: Well, and then no one would by the book.

Bill M: Yeah. Right, right. [00:53:00] But I'm going to put in the show notes for this, Fear is Fuel: The Surprising Power to Help You Find Purpose, Passion, and Performance by Patrick Sweeney. So I'm thrilled to have been one of the first to interview you. And I think the long tail on this is going to be ... You're going to be surprised with the long tail on this. I think it has evergreen value, I think.

Patrick S: Yeah. I hope so. I think, Bill, we were thrilled that it sold out in the first printing, so the second one is due on Patty's Day, which I love.

Bill M: Nice, nice. That's good. That's good.

Patrick S: March 17th, so I think so. [00:53:30] And that was really a work of passion. It was six years of me just trying to figure out a way to help other people learn confidence and courage without having to go through a near death experience.

Bill M: Is there anything that we didn't cover, or any point that you wanted to make related to this, or your legacy, or anything that's a bigger vision that you wanted to share before we wrap up?

Patrick S: Yeah. Something, maybe not a bigger vision, but something came to mind, Bill, when we were talking about CIOs. And [00:54:00] it was just what popped up for me. And that is that a lot of my friends who are very successful technology guys, CIOs, CTOs and everything else, never took care of their bodies. And I always think a sound mind and a sound body, and I was, before I got leukemia, I was drinking six Diet Cokes a day, would go to McDonald's, or Subway, or whatever, scarf down whatever we could. And [00:54:30] I wasn't exercising other than kind of hitting the gym in the morning a little bit. And then afterwards when I got leukemia, I had to change my diet, and this is 15 years ago. I started doing something called the maker's diet, which turns out now people call the ketogenic diet.

Bill M: Keto, oh, nice. Okay.

Patrick S: And stopped doing that, started having meetings by walking around the building, just little stuff. You don't have to go do an Iron Man like you were saying. But just the fact that if you [00:55:00] ... And there's great studies. There's one of the guys I interviewed from Harvard, John Ratey, wrote a book called Spark.

Bill M: Spark's a good book.

Patrick S: Yeah. And it's all about how exercise and movement affect your brain, and how it makes you smarter. And if you're a CTO and you're trying to think innovatively, go out and take a walk.

Bill M: That's a great point.

Patrick S: Get out, get some exercise. But take care of your body. Watch your diet, especially now with the coronavirus coming around. It's a good opportunity for all of us to think, "Am I doing everything I can?" You mentioned I do cold showers every morning [00:55:30] as part of my morning routine, so cold showers, breathing, some exercise, and watching your diet. So I'd say that's probably the last piece of advice that came up.

Bill M: I love that. I'm so glad you brought that up. You've got to have a sound ... We're talking about the body and being aware. I love that. That was a great way to end.

Patrick S: Awesome.

Bill M: Thank you for coming.

Patrick S: Bill, thanks for having me.

Bill M: Yeah, it's fantastic.

Patrick S: It's great to catch up, brother. All right.

Bill M: Patrick, thank you. Thanks for recording.

Patrick S: Thank you.

Speaker 3: That went really well.