

PK Podcast Episode 54 Transcription

Announcement [00:00:00] This is the Paul Kirtley podcast episode 54.

Announcement [00:00:05] The Paul Kirtley podcast Wilderness Bushcraft Survival Skills and Outdoor Life.

Paul Kirtley [00:00:17] Welcome. Welcome to episode 54 of the Paul Kirtley podcast, and it's good to be back. The production of these podcasts is now supported financially by the online course side of my wilderness skills training company Frontier Bushcraft and otherwise kept completely advertising free. If you'd like to check out my online course offerings, then please feel free to do so at onlinebushcraftcourses.com. My guest today is Dave Holder. I'd known of day for a good number of years before I first met him, which was at the 2019 Global Bushcraft Symposium in Alberta, Canada, which is where Dave is based. Dave is originally from the UK but is now resident in Canada. He was in the British army for 27 years until the early 2000s and since then has worked as a civilian wilderness skills instructor and wilderness guide in Canada, as well as working alongside his wife Brenda at their Mahikan Trails Outdoor Education Business. Dave is also in demand as a television safety consultant. Indeed, Dave is the lead survival consultant on The Alone Show on the History Channel. We'll get into the more granular details of Dave's background and his work in the conversation you're about to hear. But before we jump into it, I should tell you, dear listener, this conversation was recorded a little while ago, and for a number of reasons it's only being released now. Rather than this being detrimental. Though, there's actually even more context around the conversation that we have in the form of more alone series now having been broadcast since we had this discussion and the world having moved on since covered in particular in this conversation, we gain insights into long term survival situations, psychological factors for success, skill sets, required equipment, nutrition and more. So without further ado, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Dave Holder to the Paul Kirtley podcast. Well, I'm very pleased to have Dave Holder on the line here for this podcast, and this is been a little while coming, Dave. We've been talking about doing this for a while, so I'm glad we've managed to sit down at the same time. How are you doing today and where are you today?

Dave Holder [00:02:47] I'm I'm doing really well, actually, although perhaps a little chilly when I look outside and I see it's a little chilly. But yeah, I'm in Canada where I live. I live in Canmore in in the Canadian Rockies. And we've got a fair -18 with a little bit of a blustery wind blowing outside haha.

Paul Kirtley [00:03:07] So it was I saw on Facebook that you were out trying to do some snowshoeing and we were just talking before we started recording. You said that you tried to do some ice fishing, but it was actually raining. So as the temperature dropped down again than has it today.

Dave Holder [00:03:22] Yeah, it has. We got Chinooks flying in and a Chinook is is like a third wind, the one experiences in Europe and of course, you know, fringing really warm winds. And we can have temperature rise or fall of 30 degrees in one hour. It's it's quite incredible actually what wind blows in. And it blew in the other day and brought rain with it, which is quite unusual this time of year. And yeah, upset by my ice fishing.

Paul Kirtley [00:03:54] So Dave, I think most people that have an ear for accents will know that you're not originally from Alberta or even Canada. Can you rewind a little bit? And I think for the benefit of the listeners, it be really interesting to know how you got there

and what your background is. And you know, we're going to dive into all of the the survival and the bushcraft stuff in due course, but it'd be really good just to get a little bit sense of your origin story, as it were.

Dave Holder [00:04:25] Yeah, absolutely. I was I was born in the UK and in a flying town called Bognor Regis in Sussex, where my my grandmother owned owned a hotel there. I joined the Army and I was in the Royal Engineers for 21 years. And during my career, I was lucky enough to to get into the world of adventure training. So I became a mountain leader. I did top roping, I was a rock leader. And I spent a year while I was in the military at one of their adventurous training locations teaching, kayaking, caving, climbing, navigation, hiking, and all of those great skills. And I was lucky enough to to be invited over to Canada and to teach some rock climbing here in the Canadian Rockies. And that's why I where I run into my my wife, Brenda. And a year later, I gave up a promising military career. I cancelled a brand new sports car that I wanted. I resigned from the British army. I married Brenda and went to college for for a few months to finish off a diploma in safety management that I've been taking while I was in the military and then emigrated to Canada. And I was lucky enough that as soon as I arrived in Canada, I was hired as a civilian instructor at the British Army Adventure Training Centre here in the Canadian Rockies. And I worked there for eight years and I was teaching caving, mountain biking, backpacking, canoeing, climbing, a little bit of survival, orienteering and great skills like that. And I also taught dog sledding and I took military crews out for five day dog sled expeditions where we covered winter survival skills. That's how I got there.

Paul Kirtley [00:06:33] Fantastic. Now, that's that's nice and nice and concise. What year did you emigrate to Canada, Dave?

Dave Holder [00:06:41] I emigrated to Canada 1994.

Paul Kirtley [00:06:44] 94. So you've been out there a long while now? 25?

Dave Holder [00:06:47] Yeah, been out here a long time. And it's, it's been a great journey, certainly, and it's just flown by and it's a wonderful country to be in. I mean, as you know, you've been here and. Yeah, and I once I arrived here, actually, I started to shed my my English background and started to take various Canadian guiding courses and various qualifications over here.

Paul Kirtley [00:07:13] And how would you characterise the differences that either technically or philosophically, Dave, in terms of those similar but parallel approaches.

Dave Holder [00:07:25] Within the world of outdoor training?

Paul Kirtley [00:07:28] Yeah, you you said you started taking some Canadian qualifications. Clearly you had done some British ones. I just wondered what you noticed is the differences there.

Dave Holder [00:07:36] It was very difficult at first, actually, because the English system seemed to be more mainstream. And I think because the government had quite a hand in how adventures, training pursuits are run in Great Britain. So I was working with the Mountain Leader Training Board. I was working my way through that all out experience helped me when I came over to Canada and I joined the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides and and a bunch of other organisations and got my canoe instructor

awards, ski awards and all of that. But it was different, very difficult actually, and it took some time, but I got there and.

Paul Kirtley [00:08:14] What was, what was difficult about it?

Dave Holder [00:08:16] Dave Well. Each province over here seems to have its own certification level, and that's changing more and more so to become qualified. In Alberta, for instance, I became a canoe instructor with the Alberta Canoe Association's, I believe it was back in those days. But if I wanted to go instructing British Columbia, the province west of us, or Saskatchewan, the province east of us, I would have to take another qualification that they would recognise. So to transfer your qualifications, you get in one province around Canada? Well, it was quite difficult back in those days, although it has changed. It's, it's, yeah it's moved on since then.

Paul Kirtley [00:08:58] Right. Right. So in terms of if we, if we fast forward to now and we might want to bridge that gap there, but in terms of what you're doing now, I know you're very much involved with a loan show now, and we're certainly going to come onto that. And what were you doing immediately prior to being involved with your own show?

Dave Holder [00:09:22] Well, I as I say, I worked with the British Army for for eight years, teaching there a little helping with their adventures, training programmes. And then I left them and my wife and I started a company called Mahikan Trails and Mahikan is Cree for for me, my wife is is Chris, she's indigenous and she's has a number of outdoor guiding skills herself. So we set up this business and we started to teach various skills and hiking, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing. My wife is a herbalist, so she teaches plant medicine programmes and because she has an indigenous background and she has a medicine lineage within the Cree nation, she teaches a lot of traditional medicine as well. But yeah, we were teaching Wilderness First Aid. We're running tool groups around the Canadian Rockies. I'm teaching survival bushcraft yeah. A number of skills.

Paul Kirtley [00:10:32] So quite an integrated and and all encompassing approach by the sound of it, between the two of you.

Dave Holder [00:10:39] Yeah, it definitely is. And I think I suppose the question should be asked, you know, how did I get into the Bushcraft survival world? Because I was into the into the mainstream outdoor industry. And I always had this interest in survival. And I did teach a couple of small programmes within the military. And when I came over here, this this interest followed me and a chance meeting actually with with some guy this, this campground, this obscure campground in the middle of nowhere, near Jasper in the middle of nowhere. And I happened to be chatting to him about taking out a Bushcraft survival course. And I was looking at going down to the state train with Tom Brown mats, and he told me about Mors code hounds, this guy, Mors Kochanski. And I said, Well, I've seen one of his books around and the guy I was chatting to said, Well, you should go see Mors Kochanski. He's more of a local Bushcraft survival instructor. So I went and started taking courses with Mors Kochanski, and eventually, 12 years later, I ended up with this grand certificate from Mors. And he is a wilderness living skills instructor.

Paul Kirtley [00:11:57] Oh, that's fantastic. That's a wonderful accolade to have. Definitely. And a sad loss recently as well to lose Mors. Yeah, he was one of the giants of the subjects really. And so that was all down with Parramatta, was it, or were you doing things independently with the Moors as well?

Dave Holder [00:12:17] Well that's right. I did it with Karen. Matt and I took three courses with Karen Matt and then I went backwards to to the refuge rendezvous that they have there every year. And then also in between I was meeting with Moscow Landscape on some other written projects that I was working on. Mors was helping me edit those, and we had long conversations about some of the work I was doing there. Yeah. So so Randy and Lori, Bruce Meier with Paramount there. Yeah. Good place to go. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:12:53] So we might as well jump on to the alone thing then. Dave, you told me when we met last year that you originally applied to be on the show, is that right?

Dave Holder [00:13:06] That's right. Yeah. And I went along to that boot camp in New York and and then I wasn't accepted on the show. And I grieved about it for a couple of days and then gone on with my life. And then the following year I was invited onto the Ellen Show by a couple of the producers. And turns out that they were impressed with my skills in season one when I applied, and they like to have me as one of the survival consultants on season two. So I came in on to season two and I've been there ever since.

Paul Kirtley [00:13:48] And so what's what specifically is your role then as a survival consolation on the show days?

Dave Holder [00:13:55] I think most people think that I sit around, drink coffee or, you know, for months on end waiting for people to tap out. And I wish I did. It's quite I do get quite busy as I'm the lead legal consultant there. So so what I do generally is I arrive early, so I go out onto location several weeks before anybody else arrives. I'll be there with one of the main producers of the show and I'll move around and try and learn as many of the local plants that I can once to add to the ones I don't know. I work with the local Fish and Wildlife offices and office offices there and try and arrange the hunting and fishing permits and find out what we can and cannot harvest in that area. And if there are any local indigenous people there, I try and spend time with them as well to see if they really any useful skills that our cast could use. And then we put that together in a cast handbook that each cast member gets when they when they come out there and when they arrive. I'm with them for the ten days before launch, teaching them about the local flora, fauna and any local cultural tips that I've picked up there as well.

Paul Kirtley [00:15:23] So that they're effectively guiding a ten day survival course before they start.

Dave Holder [00:15:29] And, you know, not not a complete one, but but certainly, you know, we like them to know about some of the local idiosyncrasies and implants which which could benefit them while they're out there. And also, I go around with with the producer there and we choose the sites that we're actually going to use for the show. And then for each cast member, we try and make make each site as fair as possible, like a water source and plant local animal parts going through the area, etc..

Paul Kirtley [00:16:04] Yeah, because I guess you want there to be as level playing field as possible in terms of what they start with.

Dave Holder [00:16:11] Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:16:13] I guess that's that's easy to say and write down on a piece of paper, but I guess that's actually quite difficult to do in practise sometimes.

Dave Holder [00:16:20] It is actually takes days, days and days to figure it out and you know, heart on how do you we really want to make it easier for each person. So we do spend a lot of time on the ground and walking the ground and seeing what's actually there.

Paul Kirtley [00:16:37] And if I'm right in thinking that, you've also got to put those spots far enough apart that they don't run into each other as well.

Dave Holder [00:16:44] Yeah, that's that's quite true. So you're going to have a buffer zone between each site. We've got to be able to access the sites. And safely, easily and quickly.

Paul Kirtley [00:16:55] Mm hmm. This says quite a few conditions to meet there then, in terms of setting the whole exercise up. Yeah. Because I guess the cynical the cynical people out there and you see these comments sometimes might think that you choose places that are difficult for people.

Dave Holder [00:17:13] No, not at all. And the. Here. You know, I suppose somehow just thinking of some of the comments I read on Facebook. But yeah, I spent a lot of time on the ground, actually. It's, it's, it's it's certainly a period where my fitness level goes up to quite, quite a degree. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:17:39] And then, then you have to be there the whole time that the the show is going on.

Dave Holder [00:17:45] Yeah, that's right. Because I get involved in the the medical checks that we do, we monitor and monitoring with the other crew members. So it's not all me, it's other people there. A lot of put a lot of people on the ground. So we're monitoring for the car safety. I work very closely with with our main producer then to look at storylines and and how people are doing, monitoring the people and medical issues we might be concerned about and etc.. And then and then and then sometimes I just go out as a safety dude with, with the camera or one of our camera guys who shoots the B-roll in the area. So when, when you see the TV show, of course, all the cast members 100% shooting their own film there, but all the beautiful shots that you might see in between are done by professional cameramen just to show all the sights together when they move from one side to another on the show.

Paul Kirtley [00:18:43] Yeah, and I think that really helps give some context to the landscape as well, doesn't it?

Dave Holder [00:18:48] Yeah, definitely. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:18:50] Makes sense. Makes sense. And now one of the things I read somewhere is that participants are told that the show could last up to a year. Is that right?

Dave Holder [00:19:03] They are. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:19:06] So presumably that means that you could be there up to a year as well.

Dave Holder [00:19:10] Yeah. It's a strange, strange show. I when I go on it, I kind of write off everything. And my wife has to just hit the panic back in running the company and

hiring other guys to take my place. The good team. We don't really know what I'm coming back.

Paul Kirtley [00:19:27] So I guess that's just, I guess, you know, broadly the minimum. Well, you've got more data now, haven't you? We'll get on to the data. It seems to me like the winners tend to win in about 70 to 80 days, it seems these days.

Dave Holder [00:19:43] So so far, yeah. Sometimes I forget how many, how long people have been out and I go onto to Wikipedia or whatever it is and and this just check on the on the periods that people have spent out there. But, yeah, it seems to be about that. Yeah. Mm hmm.

Paul Kirtley [00:19:58] Mm hmm. And the again, I mean, I'm interested to know your perspective, because I only have my outside perspective. And as we were as I was saying before we started recording, I'm not the greatest TV watcher these days. I simply don't have the time. And even within this sort of niche that I work, you know, Bushcraft in particular, I don't watch a lot of these shows, although alone does. I think for me hold a little bit more interest in many of those shows because of the nature of what they're doing. But from my perspective, it seems like you have a certain amount of attrition early on and then there's a sort of paced attrition after that. So it seems like there's a few people who leave quite early for various reasons, and then it seems to kind of settle down and then you've got the few that seem to last until almost the end. And why do you think that is? Why do you think you get that distribution of of when people leave?

Dave Holder [00:21:06] He. I suppose some. Some people arrive and they it's overwhelming. Who might be? If I could say that it might be overwhelming for some people. Initially when they arrived and they had all the big plans that they're going to set up their sites become comfortable. And when they actually arrived there, of course, thoughts of home seem to drag so many people away initially. And you know as well, as I said, the thought of how much is dragging people away initially. And then after a couple of weeks, people settle down and for various reasons actually which which which I put in my book. But it's it's a hard. Hard answered to give it to you in a short time. There are so many. So many things.

Paul Kirtley [00:22:00] Okay, well. Well, we can dive into more of the details, but I just wondered if you had. So clearly, the psychology is a big factor and obviously what maybe what items they choose. Because, again, the last time I checked, is it ten items they can choose from a list of 40.

Dave Holder [00:22:19] Now ten items. So yeah. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:22:22] So I guess the list, the items they have might have an impact on how they do and the psychology will have an impact on how they perform. Certainly at the beginning, if not in the long term, then I guess there's some practical skill sets as well that maybe some people have another people don't. Which of those do you think is most important then? Do you think the practical skill sets the psychological approach or the kits that's chosen? If you had to rank those. I know they're all important, they're all interlinked. But if you had to rank them as most important, the least important, which would you say?

Dave Holder [00:22:58] I think. The psychological. The practical skills and then the ten items not most people see C to to to choose the right items for their their survival journey. If you talk to the cast members afterwards that there might have been one item, maybe

two that they regret taking, but it's not a deep regret. So I think the psychological issues, when you hit the ground, when people actually find they are truly alone, it's. It's yeah, it's it's a hard time just to deal with those psychological issues.

Paul Kirtley [00:23:37] And.

Dave Holder [00:23:38] It will progress even further and become even more severe with with lack of food.

Paul Kirtley [00:23:43] Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So how would you characterise, if you could, the psychological characteristics that seem to or even just such a self-talk? Not that they necessarily tell you everything that they're thinking, but, you know, in terms of you try to characterise the people who seem to do and I'm not just talking about the winners, the people who seem to do reasonably well and last a reasonable amount of time and get past those first few days. Are there any commonalities there in terms of their their psychology or their mental approach to it?

Dave Holder [00:24:19] I think the people that I see on the show that do really well and deal with those psychological aspects are those who are in the primitive skills community in general that that's how they live their lives. You know, they're going from primitive skill gathering to primitive skill gathering. And then when they arrive on their site for the show, it's just a new location where they're going to live. They're going to live at one with the lands of air. And so they're not fighting the land. It's just an extension of how they live their everyday life. Anyway, back in the States.

Paul Kirtley [00:24:55] Mm hmm. And most of them are from the States. Yeah.

Dave Holder [00:24:58] Most of them are young.

Paul Kirtley [00:24:59] Yeah. Where there is clearly a very strong, primitive skills community, isn't there, in lots of gatherings and.

Dave Holder [00:25:05] You know. Absolutely. And of course, we had the two winners, Jim and Chad, who were from Canada. Who are from Canada. And when you look at their background and they have a very tough, adventurous background.

Paul Kirtley [00:25:18] Yeah, I was going to come on to that because in some ways, that said, I mean, it's a slightly different set up there, isn't it, with the seven pairs in season four. Yeah. Yeah. And I guess they have each other to bounce off. Although what I've seen off of those two brothers, I've watched more of a, you know, of Jim's YouTube videos than I've seen of the alone stuff with them on. But they seem to bicker quite a lot, but in the end, kind of get on. Okay?

Dave Holder [00:25:43] Yeah. Yeah. They're a great couple. They really are. But that's not how they live with each other. And they said they're tough, tough young men. They really are. It was highly impressed with him. Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And I think that deep discussions are just the way that they get through all of their everyday life problems when they're absent adventures. Yeah. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:26:07] What was it in particular then that was impressive about those guys because you've sort of singled them out. I know it's one series where you've had

pairs and it's different to the other series, but. And what was it that singled them out as being impressive?

Dave Holder [00:26:23] So just the way they they dealt with with every day. And so and I think they'll admit themselves that they didn't really have the bushcraft survival skills per se, but they had the outdoor expedition background. So that background is is one that they would go on long trips, Jim. Of course, he Baffin Island. He was crossing Baffin Island just before he came on the show, I believe. Just him and his dog on this solo trip, in these extreme conditions. And they're both used to to spending time in extreme, wet and cold conditions. And then just that's just their everyday life. So when they're on the show and they had these wet, extreme conditions, it was just another day on on an expedition for them a little bit longer that that's how they got through. Mhm.

Paul Kirtley [00:27:19] So it seems to me both with the primitive skills and characterisation that they're living outdoors a lot, the living in harmony with the land and often in very simple, so pared down ways of life. And then you've got the guys, the bad brothers who have that experience of being out in the wilderness for long periods of time. It seems like that experience of just being out for a bit extended period of time is a is a kind of good inoculation for just the baseline of being out for a long period of time on the show.

Dave Holder [00:27:56] Yeah, I would say that. And it I suppose it comes down to one of my gripes in the Bushcraft world, actually lower on it, go for it is that people will attend a one week or two, one week bushcraft survival courses and then without without any prior experience apart from carving spoons or something. And then, then at the end of those two weeks, they'll start to set up their own Bushcraft school. And they haven't got that, that hard experience of, of living outdoors, going through the everyday experience of getting so wet. You've got no dry clothing left or so wet that you can't make a fire or you've gone out and got lost when you've had to spend a day trying to relocate yourself. And I think those are all important skills to to set up our outdoor outdoor resume, to then take further courses and become skilled and declare ourselves and survive.

Paul Kirtley [00:29:00] Yeah, I couldn't agree more with you, Dave. Actually, I've had very similar conversations with some of the guys who who work with me, and that's what I'm looking for in people that, you know, move beyond just being a, say, a camp assistant and people who are actually instructing. I want them to have real world experience, have made journeys, difficult journeys. Of course, if they've been working with me for long enough to have spent a lot of time just living outdoors teaching, but that's very different to making a journey. When you've got limited resources and you're at the behest of the weather and what nature wants to do to you. But yeah, I think that's absolutely essential. I think there's a lot more to it than just a toolbox of skills as important as they might be. And and again, interesting that you put psychological approach and I guess mental toughness in amongst that above the practical skills in terms of that that hierarchy.

Dave Holder [00:30:00] Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:30:03] Yeah. So how do people I mean, we talk about, you know, Jim Baird walking across Baffin Island and dealing with these dogs, frostbite and all the other things he had to deal with. But that's kind of a very extreme way of of getting experience. How do people, in your mind, build up a a level of experience in the outdoors that's going to be fertile ground for developing that mental toughness that they need for enduring? And that's not just talk about the alone show, but, you know, difficult situations in the outdoors.

Dave Holder [00:30:43] You know, and I think it starts off with with safely attending courses. And I look back on, you know, my period. I went off on a mountain leader course. I spent time at Council Creek there and in North Wales attended courses.

Paul Kirtley [00:31:00] As a Brennan.

Dave Holder [00:31:01] Yeah plus and yeah. So I had time there. So, you know, I'm fairly safely being introduced to the outdoors and of course North Wales soaking wet but at the same time learning how to, to be uncomfortable and then get comfortable and slowly then after. A stone to to reaching a skill level where I could lead my own expeditions and take those out and make my make mistakes, but happily live with the ending of those mistakes and learn from those mistakes.

Paul Kirtley [00:31:38] Yeah. That's that's a key thing, isn't it? It's it's being just inside of that envelope where you're going to come to harm. But you've learning some valuable lessons. Indeed. Indeed. So back back to the back to the show. You mentioned a book, and I know that you've been writing something about how people deal with the lack of food. And I'd be very interested in that. And I'd also be interested to know, you know, the scope of the book and for people to hear about that, because I know it's it's coming reasonably soon. And so could you give us a little bit about, you know, the overall scope of the book and then we can maybe jump into some aspects of that and refer back to maybe the seasons of the of the Alone show that people are familiar with, perhaps because I guess that's kind of a common thread of contacts for some people listening to this.

Dave Holder [00:32:35] Yeah, I. I actually started off writing a survival book and then that's when I was at Moore's house one day and we got into this big discussion on calories and eating, and he gave me some of his ideas. And I was working with The Alone show it at the time. And I was, I suppose, initially figuring out that that perhaps in the survival world we are survival instructors might be teaching the wrong facts, the wrong skills around food. Just from what I was observing on the show and it it led me to have to think back on other expeditions and trips I'd been on, observing people and how they eat when they eat and what they eat. And anyway, they led me to, to then putting this book together, I'm at the moment is going to be titled Counting on Calories to to survive a TV show or Real Life Situation. But it's it's split into three parts and part long a deal which has a sequence and prioritise what to do in a survival situation because I think that's very important to do. You must be able to sequence and prioritise quite naturally and instinctively within a survival situation, and you should practise that before you end up in a survival situation. So one of the book is about that and and also some self assessment skills before you, you actually move around in the outdoors solo or or think about perhaps going on a TV show. Part two I started to look at what happens to someone in a long term survival situation. So why do we physically and mentally start to break down and deteriorate out there? And I look at what to eat, when to eat or when not to eat. The importance of nutrition in a survival situation, which I don't think too many people actually deal with.

Paul Kirtley [00:34:44] No, no, not really. There's a few things that I think I know, but I'm going to ask you about them in a minute when you finished giving us the overview.

Dave Holder [00:34:53] Yeah, and I've learnt so much on the way myself. So I think from show to show, working with, with doctors and psychologists, psychologists, it's been a big learning process for me and I've been careful to take notes, keep notes on what I've learnt there. Mm hmm. And also having a look at our evolutionary past, you know, within the world of survival and starvation, because so many people think that because our ancestors

would fast, you know, we still have that ability and we don't we I can't really answer that question, but I brought up a few interesting facts that tie in with that part three. I deal with water purification, drinking water because ironically, there are so many people on the deal until and and not only the alliance here but people here that I run into getting themselves into trouble because of dehydration. It's just as simple as that. Yeah. Yeah. And although they think they know about water purifying water and then I find deeply interviewing, they don't know about true water purification, why we do it, how we can do it.

Paul Kirtley [00:36:08] So do so just to jump on that. And so if that breaks your training. But just do you do you mean that they don't understand how how to actually purify water like the technical sides? Or do you mean that they don't appreciate how much work it can entail?

Dave Holder [00:36:29] That's both. I thought about that also. Yeah, the work that is involved in boiling water, you know, one has to get out going. Collect your water. You have to get the fuel to to to bring the the water to a rolling boil on the fire. And that all takes effort. You know, if it's raining outside or it's freezing cold outside, some people don't want to put in an effort, so they therefore become dehydrated because walking down to the to the river of the lake or the creek takes a lot of effort. And they don't want to go out in the cold to expose themselves to the cold, to hydrate. And consequently, they'll end up dehydrated.

Paul Kirtley [00:37:11] Mm hmm. And then they're in a in a vicious circle, then, aren't they?

Dave Holder [00:37:14] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And many other reasons tied into that, of course, but. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [00:37:19] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So sorry. Sorry to jump in, but I just thought it was worth clarifying at that point. You were you were going to follow on with another point after the water purification and dehydration that you mentioned.

Dave Holder [00:37:30] You are so still on the kind of part three of the book. And I'm looking at some of the main first aid issues that people or illnesses that people might have to deal with when when they're out there surviving. And and surely I saw many of these issues just in the military as well when we were on long term trips there, such as diarrhoea, constipation, small skin rashes and issues of that nature. And I look at, you know, how we can actually cure them, how we can prevent those issues happening now. Because, you know, you can have extreme constipation and extreme diarrhoea can can actually cause you to to be evacuated from the back country. And I think it's National Outdoor Leadership School down in the States. They were saying that you more likely to be evacuated in the backcountry because of the gastrointestinal issues, then cutting your finger off or breaking a limb. So that was a very serious issue. So I don't think people deal with or know how to deal with it in many cases. So I look at it some some plant medicine there and some plants that would actually help people out in those locations and that situation.

Paul Kirtley [00:38:46] Mm hmm. Interesting. Very interesting. Very interesting. Um, so to to jump on the the nutritional side of things because I guess, um, so one, one question I wanted to ask you. You said so just so I'm coming around back to the point you said after observing what goes on on the show and, you know, in terms of skills and facts that are taught, so do you do you mean that some of the people coming on the show and what

they're doing as a result of what they've been taught or what they've read is wrong? Or do you mean that you have more data now or having seen people succeed over periods of time, seeing what they do? And so are you observing the positives? Are you observing the negatives or is it both? What is it that's kind of drawing you to some perhaps different conclusions to what is being shared before?

Dave Holder [00:39:49] I think certainly with my conversations with Mors, I mean, he quite often would say that, you know, if you if you can't get enough calories to to satisfy your, you know, your based on an antibiotic rate. And my days on measured by bullet rate would require, say, 1400 calories a day. And if I can't get the food to satisfy that that BMR and walking around would cause me to burn off more calories, then it's not worth eating in the first place. And I suppose from those conversations and I started to look at, you know, is it better to ration your food or save your food till later or not eat at all? So those were the kinds of questions that I was I was asking myself. And they try and answer those in the book as well.

Paul Kirtley [00:40:46] Now, I used to work with loss, felt a balance and and he made me aware of some studies that the Swedish military had done where they had people just drinking water and doing whatever activities they were doing versus people that were getting. I think, if I remember rightly, 500 calories per day through some source of complex carbohydrates in addition to whatever water they were being provided. And then they did some studies on both overall weight loss, but then also in terms of body composition, fat loss and muscle loss. And the the the assertion is that those people who were eating trick or feeding some carbs and. Not only had slightly less weight lost and, you know, that would kind of be a fairly obvious point. They're getting some calories, perhaps. And so they're not having to completely find all the calories they need from from the body. But the other interesting finding that seemed to be there was that they they lost less muscle mass than the people who were eating nothing. And, you know, I've always taken that as reasonably authoritative. But what are your findings around that? Do you have any thoughts around that assertion?

Dave Holder [00:42:09] I was looking at something called the Minnesota Experiment, which Dr. Keyes ran back in 1944, 45, I believe. And they had some volunteers who volunteered to do two to starve themselves and take part in this experiment. And the reasoning behind it was the they they didn't have much knowledge about long term fasting. And, of course, people will be liberated at the time to various prisoner of war camps and concentration camps. And soon as they were being given food by the liberating forces, some of these people were dying. And so mainstream science back in USA decided to learn more about it. So I'd refer to the Minnesota experiment a lot, and I've used that for a lot of my research, and I've picked up various other experiments along the way that, well, what I'm finding and what I think one should do is, is the food that you have at the beginning, you should try and ration into into larger, more realistic amounts. And rather than trying to break them down into smaller, unrealistic amounts over a long time, the long period, you should eat those larger amounts over the first few days and that will help sustain your body for a longer period. I believe is a year long.

Paul Kirtley [00:43:37] Is that predicated on them tapering, like transitioning to providing food for themselves off the land? Because I guess in those first few days they've got everything to do, haven't they? They've got to establish, they've got to get to know the area. They've got to get their bearings, find where the resources are, establish a shelter, find firewood, get firewood. And all of those things about making yourself comfortable. And then after that, presumably they have a bit more time to start sourcing food from the

environment. So is that part of that equation that, you know, that you're coming to that conclusion about eating the food they have in those first few days while they're doing those other things? Is that part of the rationale?

Dave Holder [00:44:23] Yeah, that's part of the rationale because that takes up a tremendous amount of caloric energy, too, to accomplish all of those tasks. And, you know, I'm on my book doesn't just deal with it with the allowance. You know, it's it's, you know, it's about regular outdoor activity, survival events that one might buy in one go.

Paul Kirtley [00:44:43] But you've got access to some interesting observations and data that with your own show, haven't you, which.

Dave Holder [00:44:47] Come to you which, which, which can perhaps lead me to other conclusions. Yeah. And of course, one of those items that people could choose is, is a bag of good ole raisins and peanuts. Or trying to remember all of these myself. Yeah. That they could take beef jerky with them, for instance. So those are some of the choices that people have. And and I think that as I advise all the cast members, that that I'm against the rationing of of that of that food over a long period. And I think you should eat it sooner at the beginning. Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Paul Kirtley [00:45:28] And in terms of when perhaps they run out of food, then, you know, if they've done that, they're eating food. And again, we don't have to be talking about their own show. We can be talking about somebody who's just stranded for an extended period of time and they're looking to feed themselves from the lands, whether that's through foraging, all the various different elements of plant foods and things provided by trees and plants that could be eaten, everything from, you know, nuts and seeds through to underground storage organs and everything in between and getting fish through fishing, trapping, small game, etc.. What should they be aiming to achieve in terms of whether it's, you know, because we have these days in the first world, there's a bit of a there's a lot of negative press about carbohydrates, for example. And yeah, and there's a lot of, you know, low carb, low carb diets, no carb diets. And a lot of that seems to be around losing weight. And, you know, the Atkins diet, for example, is famous for being, you know, high in fat and high in protein. People would still lose weight on it. So in terms of what they should be targeting, I'm not necessarily talking about the effort to to to get it, but other things being equal, what should they be targeting in your mind in terms of food from the land to sustain themselves for a longer period of time?

Dave Holder [00:46:55] I advise people to try and go for to the animals. So we're looking at the fish and targeting from those fish that are diet should be perhaps as high as 50% fat from some of the creatures that we harvest in the area. So we're looking at mainly fish probably that they're the easiest creatures to get. And the here because we have an abundance of snowshoe hare and squirrels as well. So it's one to put out traps, feed for those creatures and get those. And that would give you an advantage. I, I don't believe in the northern environments anyway that you could survive just on, on vegetation alone. So if you're a vegetarian, you're going to die out here.

Paul Kirtley [00:47:44] And that and that is the the lack of vegetable based plant based foodstuffs or just the caloric requirements of a combination of both.

Dave Holder [00:47:54] It's a huge combination there. So it's a lack of fat in your diet and. For instance we need animals that to digest vitamins, ad age and K. So if we don't have those vitamins in those and not in our diet, I've got conditions going to spiral downhill.

Paul Kirtley [00:48:17] So that's clearly important. You mentioned squirrels and has clearly there's not a huge amount of fat on those. So is that more about protein.

Dave Holder [00:48:27] That the protein comes into the. I'm just a small amount of of fat on those creatures. But then we break into the world of protein poisoning, rabbit poisoning some some people refer to it.

Paul Kirtley [00:48:40] As rabbit starvation.

Dave Holder [00:48:42] Like the rabbit starvation. Yeah. So what's eating a high amount of protein as a human mean, we can possibly digest up to a thousand calories a day from a protein source. So if we we had a lump of meat that was 2000 calories. Well, a body, according to mainstream science, says that we can only digest 1000 calories from that meat. And the rest of it would be a useless uptakes that could cause a condition to actually deteriorate.

Paul Kirtley [00:49:14] And that's down to that metabolism of the proteins in the liver, is that right? And how much the liver can cope with the gluconeogenesis?

Dave Holder [00:49:22] Mm hmm.

Paul Kirtley [00:49:25] Yeah. So we so we need to be looking for fat, which, of course, is a lot more calorific per gram than proteins or carbs as well. Is that part of the reason why that's a good return on investment as well to cut caloric density?

Dave Holder [00:49:41] The colour on caloric density of the fat, yeah, is an extremely good return I believe when we run off lines and Mike's drought cost down toxic air, I think you're eating blocks of bacteria or something. And then yeah, early you said, well, I like the ice cream. So I've been to various get togethers where we have moose nose soup or moose nose stew. And when you eat that meal, there is just lumps of fat in that. The whole meal is all about that and there's hardly any meat in there. So you look at what the indigenous people eat here, it's quite incredible how much fat my mother in law, she would eat dried moose meat and she would take the moose meat and dip it into lard and, and then eat it that way. Mm.

Paul Kirtley [00:50:31] Yeah. It's interesting. Are you familiar with Daniel Moerman's book on native uses of plants in North America? Are you familiar with that book?

Dave Holder [00:50:41] I'm not familiar with that one, no.

Paul Kirtley [00:50:44] Okay. I'm blanking on the exact title of it. But it I believe that you can actually access the the database online for free as well. Just see if I can take that out for you. But one of the interesting things there is that a lot of the a lot of the plant foods because again, it's based around use of plant foods. But a lot of the plant foods, you know, it often refers to them being eaten with, you know, fish fat or being, you know, added to fats for consumption. I guess one of the classic examples that a lot of people know about is pemmican isn't I mean, there's quite low fat in pemmican, but it wasn't solely that that, you know, there was a lot of things like they were mixing, you know, bear berry with fat. There were mixing all sorts of different berries with fat, just as, you know, some of them even eaten as desserts or puddings.

Dave Holder [00:51:34] Yeah. And a pemmican is horrible. I mean, you know, if you're well said and somebody comes in and gives you a bowl full of Tamika and you really don't want to eat it, but having been outdoors for a couple of days and battling the elements, it's it's the most tastiest Morsl one can ever eat. It's the incredible stuff. And the pemmican my wife makes is possibly 50% fat, if not more.

Paul Kirtley [00:52:02] So what goes into that for people that don't know is that is that's what there's a particular animal that the fat comes from.

Dave Holder [00:52:09] The fat comes from from the animals that you've harvested. So it could be a moose, of course, very traditionally it is. You have look at some of the Blackfoot tribes in the area here, and it would come from the buffalo. They would harvest it and it would be mixed with with the berry of of that particular season. So the blueberries, I suppose everybody would know. But we also have buffalo berries here, a very tart small berry that could be mixed in and and fat. So so the meat would be taken, dried out into thin strips and it would be broken up. It would be ground into to a protein dust. And it berries will be dried and also ground into a dust mixed together with the fat. So. There's not much to chew on, the same kind of melt in your mouth. It's. It's really good. Three days.

Paul Kirtley [00:53:10] Yeah. It's interesting that that fat craving that that you get. And again, I remember reading accounts of people who were in that sort of rabbit starvation situation where they were sort of gorging themselves on very lean meat, yet still feeling weak or feeling hungry after a while. And some of them describe having a craving or a hunger for fat in particular. So. Yeah, yeah. I think you have to listen to your body, don't you, in terms of, of what it needs, you know. Yeah. So in terms.

Dave Holder [00:53:45] Of.

Paul Kirtley [00:53:46] Food then do you have a I don't want to give everything away. I'd certainly want people to buy your book. But are there any other and I'm sure people. Well, regardless of what we say here. Do you have any of the big takeaways that are either maybe nonconventional wisdom, things that maybe turn what we may be sort or what's commonly taught on their heads?

Dave Holder [00:54:14] Yeah, without giving too much away. And let me think now.

Paul Kirtley [00:54:22] Because of course, they're going to have to buy the book to get the full context anyway, even if you tell them the headlines.

Dave Holder [00:54:26] Yeah, they are. Yeah. I think it's the amount of food. And and also I talk about the animals as well because so many survival books, you will see a trout that's eight inches long that has 325.6 calories. How does one know that? And how can you assess whether that animal does have 326 calories? But they think from season to season that the calorie value in that animal will change. And I've I've reference some of the journals from some of the expeditions across here where the passer expedition came across here in 1870. And and they were eating buffalo meat. And they found later on that they'd been harvesting the wrong buffalo, had been harvesting male buffalo in the time of year when they needed that food. They should have been harvesting female buffalo because the female buffalo at the time had the most fat at their local guides were had that knowledge that they could pass on. And then later on in the year, there's a turn around. The female buffalo had less fat and then the male buffalo have lots of that. So that happens within the whole of the animal kingdom. So we can't just rely on a trout giving us

300 calories, for instance. It depends on the time of the year and it depends on the location of the of the creature as well. So some of those those points out, I look at that and I do I do have a look at, as I mentioned before, about how many calories we can get from from eating meat. Because I've seen people eat meat for days on end, yet still lose weight and they need several pounds of me today. So they'll still be losing about a pound a day because there's so much protein that are consuming, they're not getting enough fat.

Paul Kirtley [00:56:25] Yes. Yes. And where does carbohydrate fit into this then diet? We talked about fat and proteins quite a lot. Where does where do carbs fit into your equation? You know, that is the other macronutrient macronutrient.

Dave Holder [00:56:40] So yeah. So, you know, high up on the on the list is the fats and then comes the proteins and then of course, and then comes the carbohydrate because carbohydrates in the wild will be the root will will possibly be the berries as well. And look around with the carbohydrates, of course, is all the other micronutrients, such as the vitamins and minerals, which are which are very important. So I addressed that in the book and I've got a whole list of why we need certain vitamins and minerals, because if you don't have them, your body's going to deteriorate. You're going to experience extreme muscle weakness. You're going to need you're going to have sleepless nights. Lack of certain vitamins and minerals can lead to depression. And so that all leads leads downhill. And I think I also address the point of the psychological issue of depression in that if you're not getting the right nutrients, you're going to be depressed. So as much as you see on some survival shows where they said, well, this is, you know, bring out a picture of your husband, wide loss of life case or whatever, and that'll make it feel good. And just just get tough with yourself and you'll be able to push on through the situation. Well, it's much harder than that, because if you don't have that, the the macronutrients that you need, you're going to be unable to push on through that situation because you need that nutrition to help you mentally. Mm hmm.

Paul Kirtley [00:58:12] And so most people in the first world are, despite the increase in popularity of low carb diets, you know, even ketogenic diet, most people are running around with their brains, you know, consuming as much glucose as it, you know, glycogen as it is. It wants to through the carbohydrate intake. And how do people cope with coming off that in your experience? Is that a big factor in if they're more used to operating on low blood sugar, does that help or does it not help at all?

Dave Holder [00:58:50] And if they if they do steer towards a more primitive diet before they end up in a survival situation that will benefit them more because the body's prepared for the environment that they land in. So it's not so much of a shock to the system, so be more beneficial to go through that shock for your system. Moving on to a case of journey diet before you end up in a survival situation than doing it when you arrive. And of course, if one is planning on a TV show, well, you know when you're going to be launched. So you could work through that process weeks ahead of time. The course is a real survival situation. Well, it's not something you can plan for. But I do believe if we have more of a this my own personal belief here, but I believe if we have more of a ketogenic diet, we're eating anything that runs around the legs or grows from the ground rather than refined and processed foods, we'll be prepared for life in general, surviving life in general, so that if we do end up in a survival situation where we're well, well ahead of the game.

Paul Kirtley [00:59:55] Mm hmm. And would you would you recommend as as part of people's survival training that they that they maybe even go through intermittent fasting? Is that something that you would think might help, you know, where they go through periods

of not eating, going into ketosis and then going back to maybe a more a more balanced diet?

Dave Holder [01:00:16] Yeah, I think there's certainly a lot of research to say that those people who practised fasting for, you know, one or two days, that they're more successful and efficient, moving into a fasting state in a safer fashion than those who've not practised fasting before. And I think I, I had actually observed that and I think I felt that myself because I tried this fasting thing myself. And certainly I feel more comfortable now fasting than I did do in the past. I remember when I first tried fasting for for a day, two days, and then I'd actually feel quite sick and have flu like symptoms, which I think people refer to as ketogenic flu. But now when I tried fasting for a day, two days, actually, I find it quite a comfortable process to go through.

Paul Kirtley [01:01:06] Hmm. Interesting. Like, sort of stretching a muscle in a way. Um.

Dave Holder [01:01:10] Yeah. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:01:12] Yeah. That's very interesting. Um. So in terms of people operating then on low blood sugar, do you do you see any effects of that on in your observations of people on the show or just more generally? Are there any pieces of advice you would give to people? Because being aware of what's happening to you is half the battle, isn't it? And yeah, but but clearly you are not necessarily going to be thinking as clearly or you're going to be moving more slowly, perhaps initially. Any any piece of advice there for people transitioning off what they used to eating to. To a situation where they're having to feed themselves off the land.

Dave Holder [01:02:00] You know, I think it's it's not a natural process. You know, we have to have the training to deal with that situation. And, you know, part one of the book I talk talk about sequencing and prioritising in a survival situation should be training the one goes through. So it's instinctive so that when you're not thinking too well, you're getting a brain fog because lack of food and your body just naturally carries on and moves on. You don't have to think too, too hard about what to do next. And this also ties in with a great knowledge. You need a great knowledge of where you're going to to actually survive. Most times, people always say you need to know you have a knowledge of 250 plants to survive in. You're in the area that you happen to be in. I believe it could be less than that depending on the area that you're in. I mean, last year we were up in the Northwest Territories and we had a huge abundance of berries there and the people could live on and perhaps supply all the carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals that they actually need. So knowledge really empowers you and helps you in your situation. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:03:15] Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And how do people get that knowledge then, would you say, in terms of the plant foods? I mean, there's I mean, what we're all what we're coming back to here is you need a lot of knowledge of animals, fish, the seasons of plants, and I guess in itself might be overwhelming for people who want to scale up in these areas if they're not living with these things day by day. I mean, do you do you have an approach for people to to maybe start chipping away at that.

Dave Holder [01:03:51] You know, take a course with Intel or you or. Oh, Brenda. Yeah, for sure. Well, actually, I'm training to be a herbalist now, so. So I've always had this, this interest in the plant world. And yeah, a couple of years ago, my wife said to me, she said, How long? She said, You should do a course on this, you know. So she said, I need some assistance. But, you know, it's it's taking the courses. I believe there are many you can

take in the UK is certainly we've got a lot of courses here in North America. Robert Dale Rogers is one of my heroes across here and my wife has spent time training with him and he is an expert on boreal plants and has many books. My library's huge. I spend so much time reading on YouTube. YouTube churning out search of the great plant videos that one can, can watch and and then experiment with afterwards, I believe quite safely as well. But it's also knowing what those plants contain. You know, they're going to go up to 50, 50 middle age. I mean, I've been across here too long because.

Paul Kirtley [01:05:05] I as long as people understand, that doesn't really.

Dave Holder [01:05:07] Matter. I don't know what vitamins the plants have. As best you can know which which which which plants are really safe and long could use for for stomach upsets, surface cuts, skin skin abrasions, etc.. But it's learning. It's learning. So I know many people, for instance, who can it can make a trap. And I, I spend time with people who show me all these different traps, and some of them are just fantastic. I love it. I love trapping and I love working through and learning all these new and different traps. But but quite often when you pin people down, once they show you all these magical traps is I say to them, Have you actually trapped any animals in in those traps? And they don't turn round to me and say, No, I've never trapped an animal in my life, but I know these great traps. So it'd be nice if they actually went out there and experimented with them in the wilderness and see how these traps work. For days on end. I went out and they joined the the Alberta Trapping Association and became a trapper and that was part of my etiquette education cross here with with Ross Hamza. Actually, he was at the Global Bushcraft there with us.

Paul Kirtley [01:06:26] Yeah, well, it's funny you should mention Ross, because I'm going to spend a week with them after I've done the caramel course when I'm over there. So, again, similar, similar thoughts find people who actually know what they're doing.

Dave Holder [01:06:36] Yeah. And so much.

Paul Kirtley [01:06:41] And learn from and learn from them. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. And I think that's one of the things as well is that, you know, I think what's coming out of this conversation and it has come out of conversations with other people on this podcast as well. Whatever level you're at, there's always more to learn. And there is a there's a real depth of knowledge required to make some of these things work in practise. You can have a superficial knowledge and have some nice party tricks almost in terms of things that you can show people. But actually making it work in practise is a completely different ballgame.

Dave Holder [01:07:15] Yeah, and they really are the party tricks so often within the survival world or post-rock world to see out there on taste of YouTube. Quite often that annoy me. But anyway.

Paul Kirtley [01:07:28] Well, it's just the you know, it's just getting attention, isn't it. That's the you know, it's the attention grabbing stuff. Yeah. Yeah. Whereas people aren't I mean, in my experience, people aren't as willing to put effort into really learning a bunch of plants, really learning how to fish while really learning some practical ways of, of getting meat from the land. They, they want easy wins and they're not willing to do the research or read the studies, read the books, read the accounts of expeditions, do hard trips themselves. We live in in some ways, we live in a very superficial world. That said, there is, you know, compared to, you know, 20, 30 years ago, there's a lot more survival TV around. There's a

lot more resources on the net around. I mean, people are clearly interested. It's just, I guess, corralling people's attention to the right places in some ways, isn't it?

Dave Holder [01:08:27] Yeah, I think so. And it's it's great to see these these shows out there because I believe it's drawing attention to our disappearing natural world, because certainly, you know, we're lucky over here in Canada, we have a great deal of forestry to work in, a great deal of wilderness locations to work in. I should imagine back in Great Britain it's a little more difficult, but perhaps there are people there are people there who are asking the question, so where's our natural land gone? And it's now driving people to protect this natural resource and care for this natural resource.

Paul Kirtley [01:09:07] Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think, you know, there isn't a huge amount of natural land left in the UK. I mean, we've not only are we a small piece of land in the global scheme of things, we've also had human habitation here for pretty much the whole time since the last Ice Age, which is going on for 10,000 years ago. We've had the introduction of agriculture and the landscape changed massively. And then there's a large population density as well compared to, say, Canada or Australia or some of these south was parts of South America, for example. And so, so yeah. So you end up with not very much wildlife and very managed environments, no natural predators left for some species introduced species, all of that going on. And it's it gets you to a crux point. And I think that, you know, there's a bit of a rewilding movement over here and that's got it's an even amongst conservationists. I think it has it's it divides people as to whether or not that's the right way forward and whether it's practical to reintroduce lynx or wolves or any of these things where they where they once were with a number of, you know, sheep and people and family pets around and all that, there's all that kind of discussion going on. But yeah, I think people are at a point now where we we are thinking, you know, what can we do to draw a line in the loss of natural habitat and what can we do to reverse that? But then the interesting conversation I think that goes on as well is that, you know, you can have, you know, sat here in the UK kind of going well while, you know, if we could turn back the clock, maybe we'd do things differently in some respects. And then you can see those things going on elsewhere in the world and you try and say, well, actually that's maybe not a good idea for you to chop that forest down and plant it with, you know, whatever, or put cows there or what have you. And then you get the response, well, you did it, so why can't we? And it's quite a difficult cycle to break out of.

Dave Holder [01:11:05] Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:11:10] But it strikes me that you've you've used Vancouver Island, you know, B.C., a fair amount for the show. You've used Northwest Territories. You've been down to Patagonia and Mongolia, I think one series as well.

Dave Holder [01:11:24] Yeah, Mongolia.

Paul Kirtley [01:11:25] Yeah, yeah. I mean, how hard do you have to look now to find the sorts of places that you can run these experiments, if we call them that way, these challenges?

Dave Holder [01:11:36] I think experiment. Experiment is a good word, actually. It's yeah, it's very hard because we have to seek those remote locations that we're still able to, to harvest as our ancestors could. And. And I'm certainly not not upset the local Fish and Wildlife regulations as well. So it can be quite difficult and it is quite difficult. So, you know, goodness knows where we're going next and I don't know. So until I get an obscure phone

call and say, hey, we're going here, great, let's go. Yeah, there is a big process, though, that happens and there is a great deal of thought that is put into it.

Paul Kirtley [01:12:23] Well, that's that's good to know because I guess some people, again, the cynical people and there's plenty of them out there, think that there isn't a lot of thought that goes into these things. But to me it seems that clearly there is.

Dave Holder [01:12:35] But yeah, yeah. But quite often we joke about it. It'd be nice to have a behind the scenes, a long show, and to explain a lot of what goes on and that we don't sit around drinking coffee all day and we great. I love that and I think people would enjoy that.

Paul Kirtley [01:12:55] I'm sure they would. Maybe a YouTube series or something might be might be quite good, lower production values, and you could probably put it out quite easily. And some for people to watch or, or extras on the on the channel or something, I don't know. I'm not familiar with how all of these different delivery channels kind of integrate these days. There's so much, so many. One of my frustrations now, Dave, and it's got not much to do with this conversation, but I'll vent it is that we kind of went through this process where you had terrestrial television and then you had satellite television with the likes of Sky or what have you here in the UK. And you could pretty much get everything he wants to watch in one place. And even when we were in the days at the video store, you could go down to a video store, you know, Blockbuster or a local independent store and get as long as they had it in, you know, somebody hadn't taken out that evening already. You could get the film that you wanted to watch in one place, or you could go see a satellite TV and you could go on to Discovery or National Geographic or whatever and watch the documentaries of shows you wanted to watch. Whereas now, with the proliferation of different platforms, we seem to be going in the opposite direction where you've got Netflix, you've got, you know, Apple, you've got Amazon, you've got all of these different platforms and none of them speak to each other. It's it's kind of quite frustrating. As a user, I'm trying to find things to watch. Not that I spend a lot of time trying to find things to watch. So maybe that's why I find it frustrating that I just want to watch something. I can't find it.

Dave Holder [01:14:28] I, you know, I spend so much time learning, I suppose now I'm watching YouTube. YouTube. I think my wife and I watch the most actually out of anything and just picking up on various experts out there and trying to learn from them or critiquing some of the the people who need more expertise.

Paul Kirtley [01:14:48] But yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I'm the same. I do. I do spend a good amount of time looking at YouTube YouTube videos. As I say, I've enjoyed quite a few gym beds, trips on his YouTube channel.

Dave Holder [01:15:01] And he's got great stuff. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like the.

Paul Kirtley [01:15:05] Kids shows. Good shows for sure. So you spend you spend a lot of time out working on the alone shows. Have you had a favourite location to be in? Notwithstanding any of that, any of that you can't tell me about yet. But, you know, in terms of the ones that have Ed.

Dave Holder [01:15:25] Kelly, the ones that are bad, you know, I really have loved them all. Mongolia was was certainly very interesting. And just the people who helped us make that show are just absolutely fantastic. And I had such a great time with him. I remember

bouncing down the road in a Russian truck to go and repair the road, which, you know, sometimes we have to repair roads and all sorts of people. And Argentina was just beautiful and very still very dry and cool. But I think at the moment my favourite place has been the Northwest Territories and we we worked with the DNA, little K Nation up there and they were very, very kind. They helped us out a lot and I learnt some more skills from them, which was great. And the location itself, so wild, so truly wild. So yeah, last year Northwest Territories great.

Paul Kirtley [01:16:31] Southeast sounds wonderful. And I remember Ramirez, who I used to work with. He, I think, made a show with some then a First Nations people, and it seems like their traditional knowledge is somewhat more intact than maybe in some other places in North America. Is that right?

Dave Holder [01:16:54] Yeah, definitely. So they have quite a connexion to the land. And I spent time with some of their elders who were able to to give me some information on some of the barriers that that I wasn't familiar with. We don't have crow, Larry, down here, for instance, but they have Crow Berry up there. They have a northern patron negra.

Paul Kirtley [01:17:21] Is it that one?

Dave Holder [01:17:22] Yeah, yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:17:23] Yeah, yeah. So we have a lot of that over here. I mean, you get it in the moors up in Scotland, so be interested. Did they have anything particularly interesting to say about it?

Dave Holder [01:17:34] Yeah they use it as a dye and and of course the beautiful thing about that very you know it appears in the fall and it's still there in spring the following year. Which which which was good. But yeah, I mean they mainly use it as a dye and I was looking at trying to turn it into a tattoo ink with my, with my body on the Ellen show there. So, yeah, we're not just drinking coffee. You're also tattooing.

Paul Kirtley [01:18:03] Tattooing each other as well.

Dave Holder [01:18:05] From well he was making Drew to tattoo needles so and that's that's out of my body there. So yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:18:14] Do they, do they use it for food at all, Dave.

Dave Holder [01:18:17] Yes, yes. Yeah, they do. And, and that was the interesting thing. They last year, they, they gave us a Flyers ceremony and they introduced the cast to two hand games and all along some of their traditional foods, which was fat, fat and fat with a little bit of meat and some berries and and more fat, but just great, great stuff. But yeah, I was looking at their, their fishing techniques, the fishing nets they, they've made their and I was talking to them about migration routes and their trapping techniques. And the interesting all of their trapping techniques are really simple, really nothing complicated. Mhm.

Paul Kirtley [01:19:00] Mhm. And what are they. Is, is it snowshoe hare and.

Dave Holder [01:19:05] Stuff like that. Yeah. Of course they, they, they have more mainline trapping as well so they'll be using logging traps like convert conning bass, spring

traps for instance because they sell their furs. But for the smaller creatures that have be making snares out of senior tamarack routes and more more materials to be found on the land for this. But it also used wire as well. Right. Right. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:19:38] And in terms of their fishing nets, what they're making the nets from up there.

Dave Holder [01:19:44] Will allow me like shown some, some nets that were made from from natural and also from sea of as well.

Paul Kirtley [01:19:52] Oh, interesting.

Dave Holder [01:19:53] Some some rawhide as well. Hmm.

Paul Kirtley [01:19:56] Yeah, very interesting. And what sort of size of those nets are they? Sort of quite large gillnet style nets. Are they for for lake use?

Dave Holder [01:20:02] It depends. You know, one of the nets I initially looked at was about two metres long by about a metre in death, but some of them can be very long. I think I've seen them up to to around ten metres long by about 1 to 2 metres in depth. And of course they're pushed through the ice and pushed along underneath the ice to another hole further down, which is quite a complicated process, but it's good to see.

Paul Kirtley [01:20:34] So they are they mainly using the nets? Is it mainly for winter use?

Dave Holder [01:20:37] Is it it mainly for winter? Yeah. Right.

Paul Kirtley [01:20:40] Okay. That's interesting.

Dave Holder [01:20:42] Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:20:43] Interesting. Interesting. And do they do they you talked about migration routes so they still get caribou up there. Do they coming through?

Dave Holder [01:20:50] Yeah, the caribou are still there. The caribou herds dwindling.

Paul Kirtley [01:20:57] We seen a big drop off, haven't they, in the last few decades?

Dave Holder [01:21:01] It's interesting, as I say, through many reasons, perhaps it's come down to Alberta, Canada. It's probably dwindling because of oil exploration and and taxing means as well up there. Their dwindling populations of caribou are accordingly being replaced by expanding populations of musk ox, which we saw quite a few of up there. They're an ungainly prehistoric looking beast.

Paul Kirtley [01:21:36] Yeah. Yeah, they they are kind of weird looking.

Dave Holder [01:21:38] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:21:41] So that does sound like quite a fascinating place to, to spend some time.

Dave Holder [01:21:45] Dave for that. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:21:47] For that period. How long were you up there for on that. Was that Sarah That was serious. Six. Wasn't that.

Dave Holder [01:21:52] Serious. Six of us up there four months or all in all. And yeah, it's a long time. But certainly if we're not out with the calves too, we're kind of wandering around the bush. Well, I'm wandering around the bush looking for new plants and trying to process the plants and experimenting myself. A lot of the time when I'm out there and getting into a little bit of spoon carving as well, that keeps me sane even now painting watercolours, which I can, which I do as well.

Paul Kirtley [01:22:27] Yeah, I think that's there's something nice about art that is like anything that makes you observe. Your surroundings in more detail. It kind of connects you more with the landscape, doesn't it?

Dave Holder [01:22:38] Oh, absolutely. You know, mushrooms and I don't declare that I'm an expert in mushrooms. And that's another course I'm taking at the moment. But I like to pick the mushroom. I like to take a good photo of it, and then I'll spend time in the evening sketching and colouring it in. I find that helps me get in touch with that, not that particular mushroom or little plant, whatever I'm working on at the time. So that's just one way I kind of remember what I'm well, what I pick that day. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:23:12] Like I guess it forces you to again look at the detail, doesn't it, and spend more time observing it. Yeah.

Dave Holder [01:23:19] Yeah. And I think, you know, a lot of people I know now in Bushcraft Survival World love to journal you know that within a book and then of course video journal as well and and paint and draw. And I think that's just a great addition to our skills.

Paul Kirtley [01:23:37] Absolutely. Did you have a background in in art or anything or is it just something you've developed for yourself along the way?

Dave Holder [01:23:44] It's I've always had this background. My mum's quite the artist. My my grandfather was was quite an artist and really good artist. And so today, I suppose in my my genes and yeah, wherever I've gone up, sketched and made simple paintings. And if I had more time here, I think I'd do some more paintings. But I seem to be drawn into it. Just everything bushes that happens in my life. Yeah. You know, we have have so many skills we have to become accomplished in painting. Takes a little bit of a background and until I'm there on the show drinking coffee for days on end with something to do.

Paul Kirtley [01:24:27] Um, one thing we jumped over kind of early on in the conversation, but very interesting to go back to was what was the year. And especially given what you've just said about the artists in the family, what was the motivation for joining the Army in the first place for you to come?

Dave Holder [01:24:50] Oh, gosh. I think it's my brother, actually. He joined the army and then he joined our team, Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers. And then I wanted to join the Army. My father was actually in the Air Force. He was he was a pilot in the Air Force. And Anita to me said, I don't care what you do in the Army, so long as you learn to trade and don't just join the infantry. So I ended up in the engineers because of all the different building trades that we could we could gain while serving there. But it was a life of

adventure. I think, you know, I wanted to travel and wanted to certainly see different parts of the world live in these different parts of the world. And now I think it was all the commercials that were flying around at the time that drew me in. And certainly I managed to do that and I managed to take what I learnt and I finally found myself personally. I did a couple of tours in Central America and Belize and one of the books I had was a Tom Brown book on survival. Hence I was going to do a Tom Brown course later in my life. So that's what led me to wanting to go.

Paul Kirtley [01:26:04] It's funny how books do that.

Dave Holder [01:26:06] Yeah. And so part of my response was, well, one of my responsibilities in Belize was was running a water purification point. So we had all these these wonderful engines and filters all connected up. So I'd go down and I'd start them in the morning and then I'd ask to stay around there just to make sure everything was running properly. And I set foot into the jungle there with my Tom Brown book, and I'd be making out novels and sleighs and traps and just playing around by myself.

Paul Kirtley [01:26:41] Sounds like you've often had some great opportunities to to experiment. In fact, you've had some dream jobs from the perspective of probably quite a few listeners to this podcast.

Dave Holder [01:26:52] Yeah, I'd, I'd like to say Lucky, but I'm a member of a mountain guide over here. So you're saying it is not an update? It was the choices you made and you steered yourself to this this present point in your life through all all the courses you've taken and the experiences that you chose to to embark on and not just sit around at home doing nothing.

Paul Kirtley [01:27:21] Absolutely. Yeah. You do make your own luck in that sense. And also the decisions you make are I mean, I have similar conversations with people, you know, whether it's around the campfire on a course that I'm teaching or someone who emails me, and particularly young people are interested. And I think we serve young people particularly badly in terms of careers advice at school and other careers. Advice I had at school was particularly poor and quite one dimensional. And and that's not necessarily criticism of the individual teacher who was put in that particular position. I guess somebody had to do it. But, you know, the whole infrastructure around giving young people advice because I think there's a lot of things that we take for granted about how the adult world works and the world of work works. And, you know, people feel like they don't have as much choice as they do. And I think you get a bit older and you realise that you've actually got quite a lot of choice in terms of, you know, as long as you're willing to make certain compromises in other areas perhaps and you've got a lot of choice in terms of what you do and how you do it and moving from one career to another. But we don't do a very good job of transmitting that to young people these days. I don't think.

Dave Holder [01:28:34] No, I don't think so. You know, and it's ironic now that the opportunities available to young people, there are so many opportunities out there. But but at the same time, there are so many distractions that perhaps I didn't have when I was a kid, like computer games, etcetera, video games. And I'm thankful I didn't have those distractions as a youngster because I'm sure I would have gone down that route, actually.

Paul Kirtley [01:29:03] Yeah, it's it's easy to I mean, they're designed to be entertaining for long periods of time and I those those games and yeah, I mean I think it's is fine if you

want to be a drone pilot or something, but perhaps otherwise it might not be the best use of your time.

Dave Holder [01:29:23] But yeah. Yeah, I know I, I still teach people how to shoot too good. I teach Hunter education as well across here. So I'm quite, quite off and I'll have a youth there and they get so frustrated shooting a rifle on the range because the rifle is not behaving in the same fashion as it does on a video game. The one pushes a button or a guiding stick up and down and pushes the button to shoot. You know, there's there's a lot of thought and a lot of things going on when you put. The trigger. So.

Paul Kirtley [01:29:54] Yeah, yeah. So anticipation. Presumably things like anticipation of recoil and breathing and all those sorts of things that you don't have to do on a on a computer game.

Dave Holder [01:30:05] Yeah. Yeah. And Microsoft has to as well. Listen to that. Yeah. I have frustrated children handling knives and they can't figure out why they can't do what I can do. And they've got to understand there's a whole process there as well. So yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:30:23] Yeah. I mean, I see that with adults actually even now. I mean, you know, I guess we've I guess we've got to a point now where there's plenty of people in their thirties and forties who've grown up with the Internet and with computer games and even, I guess, young adults now that have grown up with mobile phones. And and I do sense that one of the. You know, I'm I'm not so negative about certain aspects of the technology. But one thing I have noticed, I think and I and it's it's it's, you know, me putting my observations together anecdotally, but I do seem to think that people expecting practical things to come easier than they than they do because it's very easy to click a button. It's very easy to, you know, order something on Amazon or, you know, click a button to achieve something on a spreadsheet or what have you. And a lot of practical things are less immediately achieved than than those things. And I think that that's, again, going back to the psychology and the mental training, people aren't used to going through a learning process that is maybe a little bit more prolonged. And also the physical effort of achieving something, even in a carving, something requires less immediate gratification. And I see that quite a lot these days, people getting frustrated with themselves and not necessarily even knowing why they're frustrated.

Dave Holder [01:31:57] Yeah. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:31:59] Yes, it's an interesting and interesting world. But then again, I also see a lot of people coming on courses because they feel like they have a lack of connexion with the natural world. And that's one of the things that is a commonality with why people come on. Courses with me in the UK is that they feel like they want to connect more with with nature. But then there's this process they have to go through that they realise that it's maybe not quite the same as watching, certainly not as passive as watching a YouTube video or an episode of Alone.

Dave Holder [01:32:32] Yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely. But I'm so pleased, you know, people have all these schools that they can go to and to learn these skills, which is I don't think they were around when I when I was that, you.

Paul Kirtley [01:32:47] Know, it didn't seem that way. I mean, I remember I used to there used to be a couple of sorts of fairly low production quality survival magazines in the UK. And I remember clipping an advert to Lofty Wiseman School. He taught down in Devon for

a while and yeah. And then when I came back around I kept it in a folder somewhere and I wrote off to the P.O. Box or whatever it was asking about current courses. And I got a short note back saying that he no longer did that. But yeah, it was actually quite hard to find someone to that you felt was competent to teach you anything useful back in the day was there is now a proliferation of places people can go and learn, which is good and they're easier to find, I think because because of the Internet, you can still Google search and find find some stuff. One question that I had for you, Dave, and it does pertain to alone, but I think and I think you've got some insights because of that. But also, you know, to your book work more generally, do you think there's a romanticism about living off the land that's out there in wider society? Do you think there's just an overly romantic idea about being able to go and live off the land?

Dave Holder [01:34:06] I do believe there is and and certainly I've observed that and just listening to people talk to me and by the questions they ask me, they have this, this, this romantic view, not realising, of course, that it's it's just plain hard work when you're there and certainly plain hard work living by yourself. Of course, we we come from these this ancient lineage where we live together in tribes. And, of course, we work together as a tribe to create time for ourselves, to engage in in art and and learning. But when you're out there by yourself. No, it is just an outlet. Mm hmm.

Paul Kirtley [01:34:50] And yet, it still seems that people aspire to be self-sufficient and stand on their own two feet. And, you know, I often have people, again, on courses who feel like the ultimate would be to go out and survive on their own for a period of time. Do you do you think that there's almost a sort of inbuilt psychological rites of passage there? Because I think once people have done that a bit, a little bit like maybe the walkabout that Aborigines in Australia would have to do is their kind of rites of passage. I think once you've done that, you kind of appreciate being with other people a little bit more and what everyone brings to the party in terms of sharing the load.

Dave Holder [01:35:32] Yeah. So some people have do have this romantic attitude about spending time by themselves and they get out there and find it. It's much harder than they thought because they don't they don't have the knowledge which they need. And then there are people who do view it as a rite of passage as well. So they want to prove to themselves they have the skills to be able to last for a long period of time. And and they want to learn those lessons of getting ahead, getting getting the skills wrong or just just getting life played wrong out there, you know, setting the traps incorrectly, not being able to get certain foodstuffs and they know that will benefit them in their future life as survival instructors or just within their regular life. I think it's the struggle that they they work that way to help them in their modern day life. Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Paul Kirtley [01:36:27] And do you think there's a real. Because it strikes me whether you're talking about running a small business.

Dave Holder [01:36:34] Or.

Paul Kirtley [01:36:36] Being in one of these situations that we've been talking about, that being just willing to accept a failure, that an idea doesn't work, that something isn't paying off, and rather than getting down about that, is trying to be positive and say, okay, what are the lessons from this? And then moving forwards, building on that lesson.

Dave Holder [01:36:58] You've got to go out there and accept that you're not going to be successful in every area, that you're going to fail in certain areas. And it's I suppose one

needs to learn how to fail. And one of the skills that I mentioned in my book that teaches you how to help get you through that failure is learning emotional freedom techniques, which is kind of tapping you tap you tap on energy or meridian points, and that can help you through a situation. So there are strategies, there are skills that one one can employ to to help you through stressful situations or if something goes wrong. But you've got to be prepared for things going wrong and not being hard on yourself.

Paul Kirtley [01:37:48] Yeah, you've got to be kind on yourself. The world life's difficult enough, isn't it, without you beating on yourself as well. With that again, without giving too much away from the book. Would you mind explaining because because I'm not familiar with what you're talking about there in terms of the meridians, etc.. Would you mind explaining a little bit more about that?

Dave Holder [01:38:09] Oh, yeah, very basically. Certainly there's that there are some psychologists, doctors found that using EFT one taps on certain points of your body. And if people listening to this can actually look at the EFT on online and you'll be overwhelmed with the information there, but it's one of those marvellous birthday presents that my wife bought me. We went off and did a EFT course and she's a she's a practitioner instructor in it. But in those situations, if one is overcome by stress or decision making and the anxiety is becoming overwhelming, you can turn, for instance, on the karate chop point on your hand. So your left hand, if you hold up your left hand and then with your with your index finger. Or two fingers on your right hand, you can just tap on the karate chop pointing help that you always hear. You will find out that that actually relieve some of the anxiety and lowers the anxiety to a point where you can think clearly again.

Paul Kirtley [01:39:20] Interesting. Is there any link to to so Chinese medicine and acupuncture points and.

Dave Holder [01:39:29] I think there is there is a certain certain linkage. There is with some of the acupuncture points. And, you know, I just described in one of the areas to tap on tap on your fingertips. There's ways of doing that. If you go online, check it out there. Now I'm interested. Yeah. Yeah. And then if my wife has a patient, for instance, you actually start off talking with both of hands on top of your head, points around your eyes, you know, below your nose, your chin. And it's surprising how quickly you can defuse an anxious moment and reduce that anxiety to a point where you can think clearly again. Of course, what you have to think about, well, I've got to do EFT now to get me through this anxious night rather than going into full flight, flight or freeze, which I talk a lot about in the book, because that just that just messes you up big time. If you're in this, this area of flight, flight of phrase.

Paul Kirtley [01:40:30] Mhm. Yeah. That would be interesting to read what you've what you've written about that for sure. For sure. In terms of the other thing, you know we sort of gone on to slightly more esoteric things that perhaps might buy some people's writing. But am. Have you have you any idea about whether any of the successful participants partake in things like meditation when they're not on the show or even if they are on the show?

Dave Holder [01:41:06] Somehow. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:41:08] Is there a positive correlation between people who do do well in terms of either minds, mindfulness or meditation of any other type?

Dave Holder [01:41:19] This is more like a handbook has as a credo. Creed in the beginning of his books is saying, you know, the land is neither for or against you. And so it goes on. I, I should know by heart. Now he's told it to me so many times, but I think if you arrive and don't fight with the land, you accept that you're part of the land. You move with the land, you move consciously on the land and have a deep regard for it. You're going to be more successful. And that's what I take away from a lot of the people that I see. Hmm. Is that changed?

Paul Kirtley [01:42:02] Yeah, it does. It does. It does. Are there any ways of thinking that you've learnt from your wife, Brenda, in terms of either her specific viewpoint on the world or her First Nations perspective on things? Are there any things you've learnt there that you've not been able to learn in other places?

Dave Holder [01:42:30] Yeah. There is going to sound a little weird, but my my wife teaches an exercise and she names it as traditionally being taught to her. And it's called Walking on Your Grandmother's Face. So the land is your grandmother's face. So if you are walking across your grandmother's face, in all reality, you would have to walk very, very gently and you would have to feel a connexion to the land. And, um, but when she teaches that exercise, everybody takes their boots off and they walk across the land, caressing the land with their feet, feeling the land and moving across it, noticing everything that's around you, the way things smell, the different colours that are around you, the breeze on your face, just the essence of that exercise. And then there's another one. See, throughout our Lives, which John Young teaches on the West Coast, is a command school and certainly an exercise where one stands and looks across the wild landscape. And slowly you engage each sense one by one. So I'll get people to guide them through the smells that they might be smelling in the area, smells that they probably haven't noticed before. That might be me simply mentioning that there's a certain odour in the air, they suddenly tie into it. Then I'll get into open their eyes and look at the colours. I'll get into breathing deeply. And so I guide them through all these sensory sensory exercises when they're out there and we can see through our eyes which which the Cree do as well here. Mm hmm.

Paul Kirtley [01:44:24] And is that, too, is the aim of that to engender more awareness and more sort of being present in the in the moment? Is that is that the aim of that?

Dave Holder [01:44:37] Definitely. To be more present in that particular location. And then when we've done it with with clients of ours, we actually walk out after it. And for the first 10 minutes, we invite people to say nothing. But just just walk through that landscape and they give a report at the end of that 10 minutes of what they've noticed. And is it more than they've ever noticed before and they've be simply walking through the landscape?

Paul Kirtley [01:45:03] That's that's interesting. That's interesting. It ties in with a few of the things that we do on a tracking in nature awareness course. That's that's very interesting.

Dave Holder [01:45:13] And do you find that people can't look into the forest? You have a you have a facade of trees there, but people can't look beyond that facade into the depths, the interior of the forest, you know, whether they're plants growing out that they can't see. Like I point out, the plants to people and and their eyes stop at the trees right in front of them. They don't know how to look round the tree through the forest and into the forest at the plant that might be there. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:45:40] Absolutely. So I think there's there's two things. One is, as you say, that they just see the facade and they don't look into. And funnily enough, one of the things I find really useful with that is when you introduce binoculars to the equation, I find that that kind of forces people to look into the woods. And then when they're not using the by nose, they can they can more easily do it afterwards. But then I think the other problem you have with with people trying to single out particular trees or plants is if they're not familiar with many species, which a lot of people aren't, which is, you know, why one of the reasons they're on the course, perhaps, and they have a difficult time differentiating, literally seeing the wood for the trees. Is it where they just see everything as the same thing? And you have to get them to tune into the differences between different species and different individuals within those species before they can start isolating them in their conscious brain, as it were.

Dave Holder [01:46:43] Yeah, yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:46:45] Absolutely. It's interesting. It's interesting. Um, I think that the last thing in terms of what we touched on that perhaps I want to circle back to Dave is the water purification point and that we talked quite a lot about nutrition. We talked a little bit about sequencing. And again, I would love to know more about that, but I would encourage people to to buy a book. And I'll certainly be queuing up for a copy when it's when it's published. And. But the water purification point. And what are the main things that you think people are doing generally and we're not just talking about alone, but but generally all that don't know that they should know. Even if you don't dive into. All the details here. They can clearly get that from your book. But what are the headlines there in terms of what are the misconceptions? What do people really need to be doing? How much water do people need to be drinking? Do they need to be drinking more if their diet changes? What are the things that people need to know there?

Dave Holder [01:47:47] Yeah, I mean, there are certainly a few, few issues there. You know, starting off, I think people boil water too long and really you just needed a need to bring it up to a level where it's going to be pasteurised and keep it there for 4 minutes. So. Well, gosh, I'm going to let's figure out the air, but I think it's 65 degrees or 67 degrees Celsius. If you bring water to that temperature for 4 minutes, it'll be pasteurised. And it will it will kill all the bacteria protozoa in that that will harmless. Of course, the problem is that you're not going to carry a thermometer in the bush. So you bring it to a rolling boil and you know, you're at a 100 degrees Celsius or whatever, depending on your altitude. If you bring it up to that temperature, take it off the boil and let it cool down so it's cool enough to drink. Well, it's okay to drink it. You don't need to have it on a rolling boil for 4 to 10 minutes like so many books tell you. And you might be wasting a lot of fuel in the process unless you're cooking a meal at the same time or whatever. So that's one point I like to get across to people.

Paul Kirtley [01:48:57] Yeah.

Dave Holder [01:48:58] And process of water. So a lot of people like to drink cold water. There is some evidence out there that the cold water does upset our digestive system. And the two Russian scientists that most introduced me to that have got extremely long Russian names that won't come to my mind at the moment. But they they had experiments or conducted experiments where they believe that drinking boiled water is more beneficial for you than drinking cold water. So water that's been boiled recently and you drink it quite, quite soon after. It's been boiled, say, 10 minutes or so, it's more beneficial for your body. Another one I get asked a lot is is snow? Can we eat snow? And I say, Yeah, you can eat

snow. But normally if I eat snow, it's it's when I'm snowshoeing or cross-country skiing along and I'll pick up a handful of snow, I'll compress it down into a snowball and a mouse sized snowball and then push it into my mouth so that it doesn't touch my lips and chop my lips. And now I will let that melt in my mouth as I'm I'm skiing a. Yeah. It's hard to get enough snow to satisfy your. How, how how many litres of water you need to drink a day. But at least you're topping up your reserves as you ski or snowshoe along.

Paul Kirtley [01:50:24] Yeah, I guess there's that old wives tale about not eating snow, isn't there? Which I guess if you're static and you're cold to start off with, it might not help in terms of your cold temperature. But if you're if you're active and you're giving off heat, which would be if you're snowshoeing or skiing often, then this I can't see there's much issue other than sort of contact freezing or anything like that.

Dave Holder [01:50:45] No. And I've got one of the small bunch of plastic bottles that you can buy from a from a liquor store certainly here. I don't know about England, but small bottle. And, and then I'll fill it up with water before I start my journey. And then every time I drink from it, I'll top it up with snow. And then I'll just put it onto the inside layers of my jacket there, and that snow will melt as I'm travelling along there.

Paul Kirtley [01:51:13] So do you have that on some sort of cord or strap or harness or is it just go in a pocket.

Dave Holder [01:51:19] On little next string there as well? It's the next string gets in the way. You know the land, you're out there, whatever. I just put it into a pocket of my jacket. Yeah, my jacket generally got so many pockets, so I'm not like it's interesting.

Paul Kirtley [01:51:38] I many years ago I did a cross-country ski tour in Norway and we ended up near rock and where they here is a telemark action on the heavy water plant took place and just near this sort of mount this fails to this mountain little mountain hotel. There was there were some Norwegian troops who were on an exercise and they were they were living nearby. And we went out to to see them and they were travelling very light. And one of the things that they were doing for, for water and I it's interesting that you mention this because I learnt it from them was that they had a small I think it was like a 500 ml plastic bottle with a little neck harness that they use for producing much of their drinking water. Doing exactly what you said that they. You know, they're using the body heat as they ski along to to melt the snow that's put in that bottle and keep topping it up. And then they can generate a reasonable amount of water while they're moving during the day doing that. So that's. That's interesting. I was going to say, is that something you picked up in Scandinavia or just something you arrived at independently? I'm just interested where these things come from.

Dave Holder [01:52:51] Guess who I learnt that from? Mors Kochanski. I you know, I spent time in Norway. I looked across the whole gang of Ira and spent time face the mountains, north fence and. Yeah, and, but I did learn it then, you know, I've learnt so much and it's funny that a lot of the survival stuff I learnt in the military was, was, it was bullshit really. And then you come across here and spend time with people like Mors, Ross Hinter. My life, my wife's people. I spend a lot of time with Blackfoot and Stoney indigenous people here as well. And you kind of pick up on the real skills of the land from them. You watch what they do and you learn so much from. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:53:38] Yeah, yeah. What do you think are the biggest survival myths that still persist? Because clearly, I guess even military survival training has moved on in, you

know, in the past decades. But and so it might be a little bit unfair to comment on maybe some things that were being taught, you know, years ago. But in terms of what you see now, in terms of still persisting myths, what would you say? The biggest ones that we need to shoot down?

Dave Holder [01:54:09] There are a lot of these these points that I mentioned already. And and to your point here, the military has moved on leaps and bounds. I've still got friends in the military. I know it's moved on leaps and bounds since my my old days are running around. But the water boiling the water processes of what one should do next in a survival situation with Mors Guarantee, I learnt that perhaps you don't need to put up a shelter and you could just build a fire and lay down beside it and be quite happy because, you know, 45, perhaps more percentage of precipitation will be held up in the trees above you anyway, so it's not going to fall on you. So just make a fire, lay down, go to sleep now with powers underneath you. Of course. And I did that so often when I went out dog sledding. I wouldn't bother putting up a shelter, actually, because we were training now. I mean, I could see them putting up their shelters or sometimes they had a tent, spent a lot of time doing it, and I would just roll out my sleeping bag and go to sleep. But. Yeah. Food. Food is the big issue, I believe, and that's what I addressed in the book about what we should eat, when we should eat it. And I think that will be an ongoing issue anyway. And whether I've got it 100% right, I don't know. But I'm perhaps I'm closer than some people who have not observed what I observed or even tried out what I've tried out myself when I've gone out on trips.

Paul Kirtley [01:55:42] Yeah, well, it sounds like you're at least moving the conversation forwards. And there are some tropes and cliches out there which oh.

Dave Holder [01:55:52] Nice. People are huge. Bush Nice. And that's one of my pet peeves, I suppose that really needs addressing. And yeah, I'd go small, have a look at what the Scandinavians use Puck on to just yeah. Go small lives not big not yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:56:16] I mean there are some ridiculous noise out there and I'm not talking the sort of zombie knives, I'm talking all the fantasy knives, I'm just talking about some of the survival knives. They're still very much in the, the sort of Rambo. Not that Jemmy Lyall wasn't a good knife maker, but there are still there's just like they want to do everything. And again, it's about real experience, isn't it? You know, I look at some knives or people reviewing knives. I spend a lot of time looking at that stuff, but you can't escape that in our world. And yeah, it's I don't even want to go into it. I just get frustrated with the obsession with big ridiculous knives, with lots of gadgets on them.

Dave Holder [01:57:00] I'm just yell, Let these two dogs out. They're killing each other at my feet. Oh, wow. Yeah. The knife issue. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:57:15] Yeah. So as I say, I kind of get frustrated that it's, you know, there's this persistence of ridiculously big knives that you can't make anything with. You know, you can chop things with a maybe, but you can't actually make anything.

Dave Holder [01:57:30] Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:57:32] Well, we'll keep chipping away at some of those myths and I if I do that.

Dave Holder [01:57:37] So I think just you'll probably find more that I've burst the bubble on some of these mentioned in the book as I go through. Yeah.

Paul Kirtley [01:57:45] Well, I very much look forward to reading it. Dave, where can people keep track of your your book and also maybe make contact with you or follow your adventures or other materials online? Or do you have a website, social media? Where's the best place for people to connect? Connect with you?

Dave Holder [01:58:05] The best places is our company sites. And that's <https://mahikan.ca/>. And so that kind of tells you what we're doing. We're not very good on keeping it up because both of us just laugh. And I'm just so busy running around the country doing everything we do, but we try and try and put out our courses that we're running on our own personal Facebook sites. So Brenda Holder and Dave Holder and.

Paul Kirtley [01:58:41] And I'll link to all of these on the in the show notes. So we'll have a page that's dedicated to this episode of the podcast and the links to Mahikan and Facebook and some of the other things that we've talked about as well. I'll, I'll make sure they're all there for people to refer to.

Dave Holder [01:58:59] And then we have an obscure YouTube channel, I think police called Survival Crafts. And my life's done a lot of beating videos on that. How to Make a Buckskin Jacket. And I've done a little bit of dog hair spending on that and some other crafts as well, which once again would be so busy running around that we haven't really maintained that one.

Paul Kirtley [01:59:23] Yep, I understand.

Dave Holder [01:59:26] You, but still.

Paul Kirtley [01:59:29] Yeah, no, I mean, that's.

Dave Holder [01:59:30] I don't know how you do what you do for quite a.

Paul Kirtley [01:59:33] While. Thank you. Thank you. I try, I try and be efficient and I try and leverage the things like this podcast that are going to have some impact and deliver value to people. But we've seen the benefit of people single mindedly focussing on one particular platform. You know, we've had like Joe Robinet, who, you know, for example, he's very much focussed on his YouTube channel and grown it massively. There's a guy over here called Mike Pullen who I come to know quite well. He's a good, good lad and he his tie outdoors channel. When I first knew him, I think he had 80,000 followers, which is quite a lot by most people standards, but very much like. Joe. He's grown that just by single minded focus. And that's all he does, is do YouTube videos. And now again, he's got over a million followers. So I think the only way you can really make the most of these platforms is focus on one of them to the exclusion of other things. But frankly, I think most of us who have lots of interests and lots of commitments and different work streams, we just can't do that.

Dave Holder [02:00:38] So no, exactly. I mean, Joe to outdoor and I was watching that last night. I love the action and Joe Robinet he well he was on the first we can't because he was on the first alone show and what a knowledgeable guy he is. Well, we had a lot of fun chatting in that. There's boot camp there. And of course he sadly I got that mistake

error on the on the on the Ellen show when he lost his thera rod but just incredible guy. Yeah. So it's nice to see him move forward in that area.

Paul Kirtley [02:01:09] Yeah. And I think that's that's a good lesson that, you know, people still critique him for that and I talk to him in reasonable depth about that when, when Joe was on this podcast quite a while ago and we had quite a frank and sort of candid discussion about that whole episode with the Farrah Rod and what it did to his psychology. But I think, again, it's you know, you can either let that ruin your career, can't you, in some ways, and just listen to the negative people. Or you can say, well, it was a mistake, I learnt from it, let's move on. And that's what you have to do both in the in the micro in these situations, but also in your life in general. We all do things that don't work out. And the question is what you do next?

Dave Holder [02:01:53] You know, it's a learning point. We've all learnt from it. Yeah, actually, yes.

Paul Kirtley [02:01:58] Absolutely. Well, Dave, this has been fascinating. I know we've kind of maybe lurched from one thing to another and back again at times, but hopefully that was a reasonably coherent conversation for for people to follow the thread through. And we very much look forward to reading your book and the insights it brings and maybe some of the questions you ask that are not yet fully answered and moving the conversation forward. And thank you for that and we look forward to it. And thank you for taking the time today. It's no mean feat to get 2 hours out of your out of your day. So I really appreciate you being here and joining me on the podcast. Thank you.

Dave Holder [02:02:39] It's great. I'm glad we could eventually get this together. Paul is a long time ago we did talk about it at the global bushcraft. So. So yeah. Excellent.

Paul Kirtley [02:02:49] Wonderful. Thank you. Well, thanks again today for his time and for sharing his experience with us. I hope you found it interesting and insightful as well as enjoyable to listen to. All the relevant links to people and books mentioned in this podcast are included in the show notes on the page dedicated to this podcast, which you can go straight to at Paul Kirtley, Echo Dot, UK Forward Slash Podcast 54 That's Forward Slash Podcast five four while you're there on my site at Paul Kirtley Skoda UK as well. If you're not already subscribed to my email updates then please join. It's free. There's no downside. You'll then be amongst the first to know about not only new podcasts, but also all the free articles and videos that I put onto the site as well as other less published online materials. There's a sign up form on pretty much every page on the website, also links to all the other podcasts, etc. if you've missed them in the past, including ones at the bottom of the show notes for this episode. So relevant links I'll add there as well. So you might want to jump into a conversation with Joe Robinet or you might want to jump into a conversation Mors Kochanski, etc. are linked to those most relevant previous episodes below there as well. And finally, a short reminder that the production of these podcasts is supported financially by the online course side of my business. Frontier, bushcraft and otherwise kept completely advertising free. If you'd like to check out my online course offerings, then please do so at online bushcraft courses dot com has online bushcraft courses dot com. Thanks for listening. I look forward to bringing you the next podcast in this series before too long and in the meantime, have fun outdoors. Take care.