



- DANNY LENNON: Dominic, welcome back to the podcast.
- DOMINIC MUNNELLY: I know, five years on.
- DANNY LENNON: Yes, I was actually going to open with that, you actually reminded me with a post yesterday that it's been five years...
- DOMINIC MUNNELLY: Almost to the day.
- DANNY LENNON: Yeah, it's crazy actually, yeah.
- DOMINIC MUNNELLY: It's mad, yeah.
- DANNY LENNON: Since your first appearance on the podcast, and you also mentioned that there were a few things you had said in that episode, predictions of sorts that have seemed to be played out fairly well over the last couple of years. Just for people who maybe either didn't listen to the episode or probably can't remember, it's been so long, maybe just recap over a couple of those things that listening back you thought was pretty interesting.
- DOMINIC MUNNELLY: Yeah, I suppose there's a few things I kind of cringed at initially and one of them was at the very start where I had said something along the lines of, if people weren't willing to make certain adjustments to their diet, that would be,

in air quotes, a deal breaker for me. I really hung my head in shame at that point because I suppose I feel like I've evolved in my thinking where I understand on the nutrition side of things now that just basic compliance to the absolute basics is so, so difficult that to get people to make grand gestures of change is a sure sign that you're definitely not on a sustainable path. So that was probably one. There's kind of a few things I would probably reframe a little bit, but I probably got right the prediction of the demise of certain aspects of CrossFit, that CrossFit started to evolve into its own thing, that like a lot of CrossFit's have now deaffiliated. Only last week, one of the largest owners of CrossFit boxes in the world, like you can own more than one CrossFit box, I think he owns like eight or 10 of them, has deaffiliated, so that means they basically don't pay their affiliation fee and they no longer are branded across the gym. So that's become way more common these days and maybe certain CrossFit gyms are kind of considering that. And also, I think a lot of CrossFit, I probably got right, the way in which CrossFit was being programmed, so I think what we see now far less of is the use of, for example, the snatch in a CrossFit, general like Metcon, like I can see it even here in Basin CrossFit gym and CrossFit Green here in Sandyford, I couldn't, I cannot remember the last time I saw snatch in a Metcon. And it just, so it's like to try it – I think what a lot of CrossFit gyms have realized is that there are certain things are just pretty high risk that, if you put them in, like you're basically robbing apples from your own appplecart that a lot of your members will just leave.

I also kind of touched on that whole idea of the way in which, I suppose, five years ago, we would have treated carbohydrates as an evil, that like you have to restrict, everybody knows you just cut out carbs to lose fat; whereas I was promoting the idea that like, look, your overall calorie needs are what's most important, and that your carbohydrate intake is dependent on your activity, I think most people come around

to that idea now. There's one or two other things, like the importance of mobility that a lot of people really need to have that as a foundation, and certainly that for me, since five years ago, like myself and my wife have written a book in that time as well called Move, Train, Nourish, and that became one of the cornerstones of our book, kind of a mobility, a basic mobility assessment that I think a lot of people should do on a fairly regular basis to kind of make sure that the quality of movement is maintained.

DANNY LENNON:

I think one of the big things that's probably happened in the last five years, at least in this country, and I think probably more globally, is the growth of the wellness movement. A lot more people are getting interested in this concept of what is wellness or health and these types of lifestyles, and I think on, again, kind of an accurate reflection of what we might think of that is kind of the core philosophy of your book of like what is actually healthy life and how to live that.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah.

DANNY LENNON:

But we also have this other side, there's probably a lot of positives to this wellness movement, but also maybe a lot of misinterpretations of what that actually is. So I'm just interested to hear your thoughts on this movement of more people being interested in the idea of wellness, what that has come to look like, and then how that matches up or doesn't with what you really think of as a view of what true wellness or health actually is.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, so I suppose, for me, the whole idea of wellness – I suppose, we presented in our book that it had our kind of three main major tenants, one was to learn how to move well and one was to learn how to train well, and then the third one was to be able to nourish both your body and your mind. So those were the kind of three basic parts of ours, so as a basic then understanding beyond that would be my idea

of wellness is your ability to be able to go about your day and not have to worry about your health. So again, we don't have to live in the extremes because we do understand and we know that where competition starts is where health ends, so the more competitive we become about anything, the less well we are. I think where the negative aspects of wellness creep in is when any form of product or service is being used in – sorry, if they're trying to market or advertise that product, because all advertising really is, is the kind of the music of capitalism. So any company, like I saw recently, somebody was selling a kettle and presented it in an almost like a wellness type fashion, like this will make you to a better person because you're using our kettle and you are like, right, that's how far we've gone really, that we can use aspects of wellness to sell like a basic product like a kettle. And I think that's where we kind of get into difficulty, and I would also then question that if we keep pushing the envelope on wellness does that lead to narcissism, and I think that's what's happened. And I think it leads to sort of this desire of optimization the whole time that we are in a work situation where we are trying to optimize everything to be better at work and then we leave work and then we become overly perfectionate about what we're doing then in the gym, and then we're outside the gym, we're trying to optimize everything to get better at those two tasks.

So as the French philosopher Simone Weil had once said, the hallmark of needs is that they have limits, is that there isn't this infinite thing we're kind of going for the whole time, we can't be pushing up and up and up the whole time, it should be a point where we reach where we're saying “like, I'm fine here, I don't need to get X amount fitter” and she was talking about how she needs to increase her conditioning a little bit more. And I said, well, in order to do that, like to take your conditioning up by 10%, you do realize what you're choosing now, like that's going to have a knock-on effect on your strength, that's going to have a knock-on effect

on your mobility, are you okay about making that trade-off, because at your current level, a 10% increase in your conditioning in my opinion is not worth it – because that's a massive jump for somebody who's already quite conditioned, whereas what's wrong with being like, okay with wherever you are.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, and I think health in particular is one of the most obvious examples of a graph where we see diminishing returns, so you can improve and improve and improve, and then you just see it just dip down again, that inverted U-shape that, like you say, if you keep pushing towards some sort of ideal in your mind, paradoxically, it's actually probably pulling you away from actually the healthiest spot you could be, so to speak.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah.

DANNY LENNON:

I think there's definitely a trap, certainly within nutrition and trends to eat healthy and all that type of stuff that we see within those movements for sure.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, it's a difficult one to get right but I think it's now more than ever very pressing that we kind of, we find good guideposts somehow, to do this well as opposed to fanaticism, because otherwise we were going to be led further down the path which we got led down I think from the 70s, and the whole person development movement that, like really what we see is the negative aspects in the fitness industry are the bastard child of the personal development movement from the 70s, 80s, and 90s, that's all we've gotten from it. I was the person that was going to Tony Robbins' seminars years ago on doing fire walks and walking on hot coals. But upon reflection, all I did was, I was already a narcissist. I just became a bigger narcissist as a result of that, because I was now given an excuse for more self-navel-gazing and checking that I'm doing things right and becoming the best version of myself and optimizing. And all I

did was isolate myself more, that's all I got from that.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, that's fascinating, because the last time we were actually chatting a few weeks back, we had brought up David Brooks' book, *The Second Mountain*, which obviously you've read and I'm a big fan of as well, and that same idea of particularly through those decades 70s, 80s, and so on, we're seeing this focus on individualism and away from collectivism, and you had talked about how not only had you seen that and you gave an example there, but also recently a realization of that and a movement back towards that and how that has definite impacts on your life. And I'm just wondering how you tie that into that view of an overall healthy life, so to speak, of that idea of whether you want to call it community or this idea that there is something beyond self-actualization I guess, if that makes any sense.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, well, I think you're kind of talking about that whole idea of like rootedness as they would say, like a small Simone Weil would have said in her book that back in 1943 I think it was, and that whole idea that she presented which was that she would say that we don't feel like we're rooted if there is a total lack of participation within our community, and I think that's what a lot of people can kind of fall into if they're given free rein to focus on themselves purely. And I think that's really, really easy to do if you follow social media and you're told again the same messages over and over again which is that you just don't want it bad enough and you just got to work harder and no days off, all of the negative aspects, but I think that it kind of pushes you down that path, and I think with the demise of religion – and I know there's a lot of negative aspects to religion – there's less ethics in society and kind of ways in which we can kind of steer ourselves. So without that sort of direction that we would have been given in the past, certainly, that's all being brought down because of the personal development movement as well because you're

just told to kind of keep looking for the answers within yourself is that people are willing then to latch on to anything, and that's not always a positive thing, because then we see the rise in hate, we see the rise in depression and suicide and loneliness. The American general surgeon has put loneliness on pedestal just as high as heart disease in America right now. Do we have to go back to like Robert Putnam's book in 1980s which was Bowling Alone where he talks about the demise of people going bowling in their local community; and he then wrote another book called Our Kids which again kind of told of the demise of the overall community and how we raise each other up to a higher level. And we're seeing this more and more in a lot of different people's writings of that rise in loneliness and how it affects us in society and why else are we seeing huge rates of depression, anxiety, and it has to be that.

And for me, I suppose, when I first kind of touched upon that was – what's his name, the British guy who wrote that book, he's talking about how he had depression and then...

DANNY LENNON:

Johann Hari?

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

That's right, yeah. And for me, that was, yeah, Johann Hari, yeah, and...

DANNY LENNON:

Lost Connections maybe?

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Lost Connections, that was the one I was thinking of, and that was for me kind of an opening where I went, wow, yeah, never thought of it like that. And I think what you're starting to see is more and more really, really smart people right on the same sort of topic, so we need to be very careful that have we turned self-care and wellness into narcissism and selfishness.

DANNY LENNON:

One of the things that you told me recently was how you would see or you'd probably be doing it for quite a period of time, but also the inclusion over the last number of years of more

of these community endeavors. And I'm wondering, given that this is quite clearly something that has an impact on the idea of a healthy or a content life, whatever that is, and that your day-to-day job is helping people, is there a way to broach this subject or, I'm wondering is it possible, or do you include that type of discussion with them, how does that factor in practically of how you would even go about that, is that possible to do?

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

No, it's not impossible. I think it's really possible. I think that we're aiming too low, you're not aiming for that at all. I think one of the things I would often finish the session with is what summarize what I've done with the clients in the session, like here's what we did, here's what we achieved today; and again, that can vary enormously from group to group or client to client, and I would strongly encourage them to not leave their best work in the gym. Go do something with this extra energy that you have now, go do something with this extra clarity of what you have. Otherwise, what's the meaning, like why are you bothering going to the gym at all if you're not actually going to do anything with it. Like otherwise it exists within this vacuum that it's just you doing you, and like – and again, that's what we often see within social media is it all seems like these selfish tasks as opposed to where is the selfness, but don't worry they'll co-opt that now in a while because we're already seeing this how we're even using nature and in the environment that's with co-opting that already. I predicted that probably a couple of years ago as well, that – I remember I was up doing a trail run recently, and I met this couple, and you could clearly see they were only there for the photo because there's a particular place I go and it has this tower and it looks really iconic, and there's a spiral staircase that runs around the outside of the tower, and all they wanted to do is take that photo at that tower because I just knew by the way they're dressed and the way they moved. And I was like, there's no way you guys are doing a full walk here, and I think



that's where we got to be careful that we don't co-opt then the environmental sort of stuff on time in nature as this other aspect of wellness that we can just monetize for our own gain. We just do it for the sake of doing it, not because you want to get rewarded for it. Maybe actually there's another part to that as well.

I think maybe as a coach that what I think a lot of coaches get wrong is that there's no disconnect between work and life, that everything they're doing outside of work is related to work, or is this for me, it doesn't really feel, like I know it's also teaching sports, but it doesn't really feel the same. So I think there should be parts where when you leave work, like that's it, there's no more work, like go away, have a separate life outside of work, don't hang around with your members all the time. I think that's really a bad thing to do for a lot of coaches because I think you just get burnt out really fast doing that, if there's no disconnection there.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah. How would you or what words would you have for someone who tends to fall into the trap of thinking or maybe they're just worried about doing that because they feel this guilt over not doing as much work as they could? And that's a very easy trap to fall into for some of the reasons we touched on earlier of people telling you how to become like "successful".

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

I don't think there's only – I honestly don't think there's any deep work in what people do then, because if there was, then show me it, show me the work you've produced that is considered. I did a post there I was thinking about recently and it was, I wanted to try and convey the idea of the value in learning a skill over sweat, that when – I'm in a CrossFit gym and I and we all love, you know, I'm an ex, kind of competitive crossfitters, we all love hard workouts where you have your heart rate up and you are sweating. There's nothing wrong with that, absolutely zero, but there's a balance. And again, like I said about there's limits to

needs, but I wanted to kind of convey the idea that in learning a skill, like I made the example of a handstand or any aspects of gymnastics, it takes a really long time to get very, very good at the basics of even holding a basic handset or doing a muscle-up, not sloppy stuff no, like really good lines; whereas it's very easy to go in and just do more burpees, like it's a really low level sort of thing that you can do. But what have we got at the end of the year then? Whereas in mastery, like it's, you know, there's no real happiness in having to learn something and become a master at something. It constantly feels like it's frustrating and you're never getting anywhere and the level of progress is really slow, but I can go and do 10 burpees and get – like at the end of the year, you can be better at burpees or you can have a freestanding handstand hold or muscle-up. I definitely know what I want.

So I think we put too much value in in doing very, very small work as coaches, as opposed to maybe think a little bit deeper and produce something, every now and again, that shows that you're thinking deeply about a topic. And I think that's what a lot of coaches don't do, they don't – they say they're so busy, but if you actually sit them down and go, okay, take me to an actual day here, like show me, like a common thing I often hear is coaches spending the weekend programming. I'm like, you have a family, like what are you doing spending your weekend programming. My programming is done three weeks already. My program is already done for until the end of this month, it's already posted. I think there's a lot of aspects of us as coaches where we make very, very poor use of the time we have and we pretend we're really busy but we're not really. You just need bigger bills and that'll show me how busy you are. Just have these bills, have bigger obligations, then we'll really see how busy you are. Because again, for all these, as they, you know, as we touched on earlier, if all these influencers were as successful as they suggest they are, really simple answer, show

me your VAT return and show me your house, because if you're that's successful, you have a house and you'd be doing a VAT return.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, there's a difference between, I suppose, busyness and effectiveness as well, and in a lot of ways that's probably not there.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

You regularly produce bodies of work that show you've sat down and you've considered a topic, and you've fleshed out your ideas on these things, whereas a lot of people spend their time just rehashing information all the time. I suppose, one of the most undervalued things we can do in the industry – I suppose, there's two things – is one is that please use good grammar and spelling when you're posting stuff. That's a good idea, okay? And then the second thing is actually reading, actually sitting down and reading a book and making notes on what you're reading, and go, yeah, that's a really good idea, and what do we think about that idea. And being okay, but picking up those notes and rereading them, and then going, well, how can I apply this to my clients, am I being as empathetic as I can with my client, am I giving them permission to do less – because if I am giving them permission to do less in a session, maybe they'd show up a little bit more often, maybe they wouldn't be canceling on me so often. So there's many aspects I think that we get wrong as coaches that we can learn and you're not going to learn that from another coaching manual, you're not going to also learn that from a course that's given by probably a coach, you're probably going to learn it from a philosopher, you're probably going to learn it from somebody completely unrelated to your field. That's where you going to learn it. You're not going to learn it, you know, like I listen to podcasts and write notes from such a wide variety of areas, but I'm really, really terrible at listening to a lot of coaches now because I just find it's all the same information. Nobody's presenting anything different, it's all the same stuff over

and over again, and there's very little that really piques my interest at all.

DANNY LENNON:

But I think one of the big things you said was the idea of even just taking a moment to reflect on some of those questions as you made notes.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, absolutely.

DANNY LENNON:

Which is often – or think people forget about that because, as you strive to consume more and more, how do I cram in more information, how do I get through as many audiobooks and podcasts and articles as much as possible, and that's all great if you then designate some time to actually reflect on what did I take from that.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

And why is it as well when people do produce very deep work as kind of a borrowing like a Cal Newport phrase, they're of deep work; like if you look at a Ryan Holiday, for example, and look at how prolific he is, why is he living remotely to do his deep work, you can't do deep work in an attention economy, you can't. We can't if the phone is switched on the whole time and you're switching tasks the whole time, that's not deep work. So I think, as coaches, we need to be prepared to do a little bit more deep work and it could be on any particular area, it doesn't really matter. It doesn't matter if your interest is in physics and you're going, I'm just going to take an interest in this, because if that allows you to take a step away from what your normal day is like, then maybe that's what you need. And if that's you learning to play the guitar or if it's meeting up with your friend, like oh that touches on a good point – there's a guy who joined my online program recently and he said, just taking what you said into consideration, he said, I didn't do that that day yesterday, it was like a normal training day and we would split it up into mobility piece and the strength component which normally have four parts to it, and then a conditioning piece, that's normally how we would program for most days. So he said, I didn't do. And he said, so what I did was I met up with a friend of mine,

haven't seen in two years, and we went for a walk. I was like hallelujah.

So when you said earlier how am I encouraging people to make those changes, that's probably a good example of it, where I'm facilitating the opportunity where people are making better decisions for themselves as opposed to feeling like I do not want you to stick to the program, that's not what I'm looking for, I'm looking for you to actually apply some autoregulation and I mean really apply it to make better decisions for yourself on a daily basis so you're able to look at that day and go, I'm not going to do that today, I'm going to go and do a bit of mobility work, and I'm going to go for a walk, and I'm going to call that friend up. Because that's what, I suppose, getting back to your original question, that's what wellness is. Wellness is saying yes to that beer or that glass wine or that coffee with the friend as opposed to going, well, now sorry, did you even see my schedule. My schedule says 3 o'clock today I have to do squats. Really? Wow okay. Good luck keeping that up in five years' time, and certainly that person in five years' time isn't going to be a good friend because they're just going to become a bigger narcissist as a result of their idea that that's how to lead a healthy life.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah. But I do want to ask a nutrition specific question, I guess. And I think one of the things that I think you've done particularly well is talking about, to people in in food based terms of how to actually make some of these changes, and I think one of the things that happens in the industry quite often now is an over-reliance on knowing that we need a calorie deficit for example and knowing things about protein intakes, and all these things are true, but when you're actually coaching a person, aren't the barriers to actually helping them, it's actually how do we take that knowledge and put that into food based terms or how do we communicate certain ideas to them to allow them to make progress. And I know that you've done a particularly good job of that, you've

made a particularly good point about getting people to realize the inherent value of cooking, for example, and things of this nature. So I'm just again wondering for practitioners listening who are kind of lost of how do I take some of the theoretical knowledge I have and put that into terms or how do I communicate that to my clients that's actually going to be useful, is there any places you get them to start, anywhere you'd point them towards, any ideas you'd get them to keep in mind?

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, I suppose, that was the area that my wife kind of covered a lot when we were writing our book, as she's a behavioral change expert, she's done work in Harvard on that, and obviously she's a chef, she's a qualified chef too. So she kept kind of coming back to this idea that – and I don't think I said this five years ago, because I don't think we were kind of working on as much, but that whole idea that we know the nutrient value of everything but the taste of nothing. And that's I think the area of nutrition where we need to avoid that idea that, like what you said about like I know I need to get my protein in these specific times or the nuances, but the practicalities are like you need to actually learn how to cook, and that's something that I think she does a far better job than I do in terms of teaching people how to make meals that look nice that still strike the balance of having a good balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, we've never had to change our message on to employ a keto diet or not a keto diet, we've always kind of come back to the idea that, like, if you can't see yourself doing this in six months' time, then it's not a sustainable way in which to do it, plus if the nutrition choices that you are making are pissing other people off, then you've probably picked the wrong choice as well. So all of the choices you make in your nutrition should allow you to have integration within your life, not isolation, so it shouldn't force you to become more isolated in order to make those positive – what you deem to be positive changes.

So, like that's something that was I was chatting to somebody about recently and they wanted to kind of go down a rabbit hole of nutrition and, for me, I kept going back to, like we just need to see you doing the basics, we don't need to kind of go down like to specifics yet, you need to show me that you're doing the basics. Plus I said nutrition doesn't seem to be the big hole for you, it's this other thing over here, it's like your total lack of conditioning; Or that, as I've touched on before, people want to address the nuances of nutrition without sorting out the three S's first. And the three S's are, number one, have you got your sleep on track; number two, are you managing stress well; and number three, how are you on social connection. Of those three things, and I'm not all three have to be locked down, but if there's massive holes in those three areas, then I don't understand why we need to worry about how many grams of protein you got in today, because it really doesn't matter that much, because those are the three areas that will have a far, far bigger impact on your overall feeling of how good you feel.

DANNY LENNON:

Right. And ironically, if any of those three is majorly disrupted trying to implement any nutrition interventions even the best in the world usually doesn't happen, at least what I've seen. If one of the others has a major hole in it, there's going to be – it's just almost impossible to get your nutrition perfect because of these other major influences that impact how you're likely to eat and your behaviors.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

And we don't, like, I would say to my clients, we don't want your nutrition to be perfect, and your training shouldn't be perfect either. It should allow for undulation that any professional athlete would allow for. There has to be ups and downs. If we are not factoring that in and we're thinking everything needs to be perfect the whole time, like that is a [inaudible 00:32:54] ready to fall down hard, and that's maybe why we tend to see this sort

of, you know, these big crashes that people have, like complete like burnout crashes where people are just, they are holding stuff together with duct tape and super glue for so long that it just takes one or other little thing, and then it's a complete another breakdown.

DANNY LENNON:

Right, yeah, it's interesting because when you think of what people are trying to do with training, even if they're competitive, you're trying to cause a certain adaptation; and then with your nutrition, if it's for, again, a competitive goal, you're trying to give yourself a certain degree of nutrients that support that. But within that there's a massive variation of what that looks like. It has to be nowhere near perfect, and to achieve either of one of those two things, so it gives you all this room for the other values around food, around that social dynamic, taste and so on, and giving yourself a bit of breathing room.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, and again, it kind of comes back to, I suppose, what we said earlier, the greater the change that you feel is necessary to get started, the less likely it is going to be sustainable. And that maybe when it comes to food, we shouldn't be worrying so much as to what's on the plate, but who's sitting across on the other side of the table. And again, I know people will listen to this and they will kind of go, oh my god, turn this off, give me the hard stuff. But honest to god guys, this matters so, so much. And again, that is definitely not something I would have presented five years ago because – I can guarantee, my wife was telling me this five years ago, but me being the pigheaded idiot, probably yeah, I wasn't taking it in.

DANNY LENNON:

You and me both. With that idea of all these things that have evolved over time that you've kind of learned and changed on, if you could pick one thing compared to say towards the start of your coaching career that you wish you'd learned earlier, what would you pick?



DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Oh God, probably empathy is probably number one, like just basically in meeting, not going into the training session with a set plan maybe is the first thing, because then if I'm not going in with a plan, I can actually listen to the person. And has listening become the most compassionate thing that we can actually do in today's society, and I think it is, it's one of the best tools. And look, I am, by no means, got this nailed down at all. So I'm really – I really struggle with that as well, not to interject and have an opinion on something, but I think that's something I've probably improved on, be it tiny, tiny bit. I think empathy is a huge one. And being able to – if a client, I had in today and she says, I didn't sleep well last night and I'm just not firing on all cylinders; and I said, yeah, I said, like compared to six months ago, you're not firing on all cylinders is being still able to do a pull-up today. So you have to kind of remember like that's, you know, you still have to give yourself a pat on the back for showing up, because again, if we present the barrier to entry as being really, really high the whole time, which the fitness industry does an exceptional good job of doing, that we present this idea that unless you're leased, unless you're 100% committed, then why even bother, because even the advertising around how to attract new clients is presented in the way. I'm looking for 10 guys in the – who started that by the way? You could see it everywhere worldwide, I see it everywhere. I was in Australia visiting my brother and I saw ads like that.

So I think if we're not going into those situations with even a minor amount of empathy and understanding as to where the person is, and I get reminded that on a regular basis – a client this morning has Parkinson's, is in his late 60s; I get reminded when I deal with my client later on who has MS; I get reminded of a client who's gone through a divorce. There's so many examples of that where we need to kind of be a little bit more conscious of what's going on in another person's life as

opposed to, as John Kiley would say, start writing the program with a pen and start writing it with a pencil. So be okay about scrapping what you had written down. And you might have it as a general outline, that's fine, but be okay but just modifying a little bit according to person that's standing in front of you. And again, not saying, I have this figured out at all guys, I work bloody hard on this, and I don't get it right all the time.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah. Do you feel there are certain skills or characteristics or traits that are currently undervalued in the health and fitness industry – and you may have alluded some already, but what first comes to mind when you hear that question?

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

I suppose, the one I touched on earlier was empathy. I think undervalued skills would be, let's think about doing coaches not courses. So I think we spend too much time kind of focusing on, like I'll wait until there's a course in X, and then I'll do that, and then I'll have that course under my belt as opposed to just call a coach. I'm sure if you got a message, an email from somebody, and wanted some basic guideline on where to start and what to do, you would be more than happy to respond to that. Correct me if I am wrong.

DANNY LENNON:

No, I would be happy to open the floodgates now.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, I know. And I would be the same, that like if you had somebody who's maybe starting out in the career, had a couple questions, and they outlined it well to ask some general kind of questions, that's absolutely fine, but I think we need to get in touch with coaches, create conversation and dialogue with them, know who the really important people are within the industry in a number of different areas, not just in training, know who the expert in that is, know the expert in mobility is, know who the expert in nutrition is – you're obviously that expert, know whoever it is. Have those people

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in your bank account so you can go to them and ask questions when stuff comes up.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, and I think just from experience, that's what I found of having before the podcast or even I think Sigma existed, was the first time me and you met, and I randomly contacted you, you didn't know who I was and said, hey, I'm just getting started, I read a lot of your stuff, would you be interested in coffee and you said –

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

I remember that. We met in Starbucks in Stillorgan not far from here.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah. So exactly what you just said, there's proof that you are telling the truth that you would agree to help out, but that was probably more valuable than if I'd spent that time going through a particular course, and the courses can be of course very useful, but there's a time and a place for both for sure. Yeah, and I'd far prefer it to be interesting than I have before, you know, that that's what presents, people present themselves oftentimes on social media is being like this everything is great and it's wonderful, but it's just not interesting. Maybe

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, I think we can become course junkies. I was that course junkie doing personal development courses in my 20s, proudly telling everybody I did all these courses, and it didn't change anything for me. What did change for me is that I think in our learning we start off in science, then we move to psychology, and we end up in philosophy, and I think that that kind of evolution is now becoming more and more apparent, because you can see it in what we touched on earlier is that we start in nutrition, we go down rabbit holes, and we know exactly what we should be doing, and then we kind of go, but like it's so hard to get people to change. You go, okay, right, so we need to go and listen to what the guys have said about behavior change and how do we make decisions and then we start reading Thinking, Fast and Slow by Kahneman. And then you go, okay, here's

what we learned in there. But then you end up in philosophy. So I think we should kind of see that, maybe jump ahead a little bit and go, okay, maybe I should start to read, and I'm not saying you need to go back and start reading Socrates or Plato, like there's plenty of modern philosophers like Slavoj Zizek is fantastic, some of the French philosophers in the 70s are excellent as well. I think Svend Brinkmann is excellent also, there's loads, Alain de Botton. And again, some of these people might be seen as pop philosophers, some people would call them, but I guarantee you there's going to be something you'll learn from each one of them that you will definitely be able to use as practical philosophy, whereas I don't think you're going to learn a heck of a lot more by learning is there a better way to squat once you have the basics down.

Yeah, and I'd far prefer it to be interesting than a happy fool that that's what people present themselves oftentimes on social media as being like this everything is great and it's wonderful, but it's just not interesting. Maybe you should put content. I'm not saying my content is for everybody either, but I do my damndest to try and give people information the whole time and just present ideas in regards to how we train people. And our philosophy is really simple is we want repetition without repetition because people are going to train with us a lot, they need to change a lot. So again, that kind of comes from the whole area of skill acquisition. We want people to be able to find little things they can PR on a regular basis, and we tend not to focus so much on the strength side of the things, there could be improvements in mobility that they're celebrating, there can be improvement in conditioning. Find something that they can celebrate on a fairly regular basis. There's a point where strong is strong enough in their strength training where we're not encouraging people to go beyond certain levels of getting, you know, there's a 47-year-old man who already currently deadlifts 140 kilos and weighs 80, do they really need a double

bodyweight deadlift, is it really that important, and is that trade-off we're making in bringing the deadlift up by another kilos worth the 20% decrease they're going to get in their mobility as a result of that, and the 50% increase in risk – I don't know. So I think maybe we should sit down, have a Jerry Maguire moment where we go and write something that is your – you saw Jerry Maguire at the start where he writes almost his thesis. I mean, he gets fired as a result of having some morals.

DANNY LENNON:

Right, yeah. I think you mentioned John Kiley a couple of times and he talks about this inherent importance of sitting down and just taking a chunk of time to wrestle with certain ideas. So you've taken in information from other places from maybe divergent fields and just sitting and thinking for long enough to actually wrestle with them and work out what you think about them as opposed to again just like drifting along, however, reflecting or thinking about it and it's the kind of same idea that you've alluded to of having to think about, well, what is my actual philosophy on stuff, what have I taken bits and pieces from and put them together into something I can believe and stand over, and that takes some like dedicated time of just thinking which is much less common.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

It's really hard.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, it's difficult...

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

It is difficult.

DANNY LENNON:

And that's the thing, even I find it difficult, everyone finds it difficult, but that's really where the value is.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, we had to do that when we wrote our book, like, you're basically putting down on paper something that would feel like it would be true 10 years from now, and that's hard, because again, I'm not – we didn't pitch our book at the elite, we pitched our book at the

person that was the basic average person on the street. The average person on the street is overweight and out of shape, so we wanted something that they could pick up in 10 years, now I could stand over and go, I'm actually pretty happy with what I've written there. And I think writing down your training philosophy, maybe that is what's the most undervalued – I didn't write that down, but maybe that's it, that what's the most undervalued thing in the industry is your ability to sit down and go what do I think is true, what do I really know in training is true, and write that down. It isn't – like that's five lines – it's not that, you know, it's hard to come up with those five lines, but it won't be long.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah that would be a fantastic exercise I think for a lot of coaches to say, if you are asked to explain in five lines what is your coaching philosophy, what would you say...

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

And don't make it a sales pitch.

DANNY LENNON:

Right.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Don't make it a sales pitch.

DANNY LENNON:

Make it authentic.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yes. What do I believe is truth...

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, it would be interesting if anyone listening does go and do that, I'd love to hear feedback on that, that'd be awesome. We better start wrapping up. So before I get to our final question, let people know where they can find you on the internet, social media, where they can get the book, all that type of stuff.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Yeah, our website, I suppose, is [www.dominic.ie](http://www.dominic.ie) or [thisistheway.ie](http://thisistheway.ie). And then our book is Move Train Nourish, The Sustainable Way to a Healthier You that I co-wrote with my wife, Grainne Parker. And then on social media, it's just my name is pretty much everywhere, and I would strongly

encourage other coaches out there, steal everything. Take it all. It's not my information anyway. It's stuff I've taken from everywhere else. And then share it with the people out there. If you have some good ideas that you'd like to share with it, then yeah, pass it along.

DANNY LENNON:

Awesome. I'll link up to that in the show notes for everyone listening. And with that, Dominic, that brings us to the final question that we of course always end the podcast on, and I'll throw it to you again because I'm sure the answer probably would have changed. If you could advise people to do one thing each day that would have a positive impact on any area of their life, what would that one thing be?

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

I'd say carve about moments of silence when you're not doing anything. Yeah, it probably would be that, just have moments where you're like, you have a moment to think what – to figure things out, it could be going for a walk where you don't have your phone with you, maybe connect with friends you haven't met in a while because it's very easy to convince yourself that you're just so busy doing things. And I kind of get reminded of the John Muir quote which is longest is the life that contains the largest amount of time of facing enjoyment. So we could spend our time optimizing our nutrition and training and what are we left at the end of it if we're not kind of using it outside the gym? And just a small point on that to finish with, I'm probably an example of how I probably got a decent balance, because I'm 43, I'm still in alright shape, and I'm not living like a monk. I'm not having tonight – not have a whiskey with my mates. I'm not, not having that ice cream when the ice cream is being offered to me. I'm not having to give up an awful lot for – because people tend to think that like, oh there must be so much discipline, and I don't really see it at all, but I'm really consistent. I am really, really, like way, way more consistent than probably think I am.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, it's not an accident.

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DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

No, it's not an accident. It's just showing up, and I expect on a weekly basis the way I am training for one of those sessions to be pretty good. And sometimes if there's a lot going on in life, I don't expect any of those sessions to be other than just punch the clock, because that's all that's needed on those weeks. So yeah, probably spend more time with your friends and people you really care about and try and carve out a moment in each day, it could be walking to the gym, it could be whatever it is where you have time to figure things out that you know are true.

DANNY LENNON:

Awesome. With that, we'll leave it there, and thanks for doing this.

DOMINIC MUNNELLY:

Thank you.