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2 **Date: 27 January 2019**

3 **Participant #: 87**

4 **Interviewer: Dr. Deirdre Dixon**

5 Interviewer (Code in Blue)

6 Participant (Code in black)

7 Interviewer: ...And then what your number is?

8 #87: Yes. And my number is 87.

9 Interviewer: Ok. Great. Ok, so first we want to get some contextual data, like you know, tell me about yourself, and tell me about uhm how many siblings you have, what's your birth order, are they girls or boys, or are you an only child? And we'll start with that.

10 #87: Uhm, I'm 25 years old. I grew up in Olympia, Washington. I have one brother who is less than a year younger than me, uhm and that's it.

11 Interviewer: Ok, and.

12 #87: Sorry not very specific.

13 Interviewer: No, that's perfect. And do you, when you think about your life experiences, obviously we're looking at the people who were able to be successful, can you think of any crucible or life shaping experiences that may have affected you?

14 #87: Yes. So I went to BUD/S before in 2015 and I quit. And I think that uh, that was definitely a big part. Like the things I learned about myself five years ago uhh.

15 Interviewer: So how did that experience factor into your experience this time? Like do you, think it made you stronger or..?

16 #87: I knew a lot of how I was gonna feel during BUD/S, and I just spent years preparing for that specifically.

17 Interviewer: And then, do you think, have you thought about if your personality uhh contributed to your progression through BUD/S. Like, did that make a difference?

18 #87: I think so. I, I don't really, I'm not as emotional as other people and I think that's a big thing.

19 Interviewer: Ok. Thank you. And then, describe your background that led to you wanting to be a SEAL?

20 #87: I actually, when I went to BUD/S the first time, I didn't want to be a SEAL, I wanted to be a corpsman, my recruiter convinced me to go to BUD/S. And then uhm post failing my first time, I worked at a SEAL team as a support personnel. So it was during my time working as a support that I realized what a great job it was.

21 Interviewer: Ok. And then tell me a little bit about your childhood. So did you, would you say that you were disciplined as a kid? And then how bout your parents parenting style. For example, for example did you have, did you get spanked, did you get time outs, you know, did you, couldn't go on the computer, what was?

22 #87: I was a very disciplined child because my dad was a marine and I was raised in a strict military environment.

23 Interviewer: Ok. And then, how do you think that they parented you as far as their parenting

style?

#87: I think they did a pretty good job. I always did fine in school, I never got in trouble.

Interviewer: So what did they do if you did something bad?

#87: Oh we still had physical punishments.

Interviewer: I did too, so.

#87: Yeah, oh yeah.

Interviewer: And then, tell me about your teenage years. Did you move around a lot? Did you participate in any team sports?

#87: I've always been a runner. So even starting in high school, I was a distance runner. And I did that all the way through college.

Interviewer: So would you say, sometimes people say running is an individual sport, and some people say it's a team sport?

#87: I was an individual.

Interviewer: Ok, so you thought it was individual. And how about moving around. Did you move around at all?

#87: Not really, uhm I went to, moved out of my hometown for college, but I didn't make it all the way through college, so I uhh, but uh all of it was the same house.

Interviewer: Ok. So what have you done the last five years of your life before this BUD/S training? And, would you consider yourself impulsive. Like, do you have a lot of tattoos, or tend to go out and celebrate and binge drink? We're trying to get at the impulses that people have.

#87: Right, uhm, the last five years is just about to have been my time in the Navy, uh so I've been working. In that, I was fortunate enough to travel a lot with the teams. I deployed overseas a couple times and I've been over most of America. I would say I'm impulsive, but not in a tattoo getting sense, just, I've been, and not really risk taker either, but I have no problem you know signing up for things that other people don't want to do.

Interviewer: But, you said you weren't a risk taker? But you are.

#87: I wouldn't consider myself a risk taker like I think you're getting at. I'm not like a motorcycle driver, I'm not a tattoo getter, I'm not a binge drinker, I don't really like going out. But, when it comes to volunteering to go to places overseas, or to do jobs that other people aren't interested in. I'm more that kind of risk taker.

Interviewer: That's perfect. That's what we're getting at.

#87: I'm not one to get in bar fights, if that's what you're asking.

Interviewer: And then what would you say motivates you on a daily basis?

#87: You know, I'm not even sure anymore haha.

Interviewer: So, like what would you tell someone uhh if they were getting ready to go through BUD/S. What would you tell them? How would you tell them to stay motivated.

#87: You do, people tell you to have to have a reason. And, I think that's very true. Uh, but, uhm, it's very different for a lot of people. I think that mine, and even my reason for being here pre-hellweek is different than my reason now. And uh, it just has evolved over time.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you mind sharing that? Or is it something really personal?

#87: Sure, yeah. Pre-hellweek, I was definitely, I was more of the mindset like I want to

start building a legacy for my family, and I want to do something that I can be proud of and my kids can be proud of. And now, it's just uh excitement for the job.

47 Interviewer: That's great. What did you think was the most challenging part of BUD/S this time? And then, uhm, think about your hardest day, and what was the hardest thing for you?

48 #87: I actually think that some of the second and third phase was actually harder than first phase because I found myself tapering out motivation wise and uh getting kinda worn out. And, I always thought that I would have time to recover, but that's really not the case. You kinda keep getting the grind and you keep wondering when you're getting a break and it just never happens.

49 Interviewer: Ok.

50 #87: I think my hardest moment of BUD/S was land nav in third phase. I got really sick and I really didn't want to get rolled and I was trying to do land nav, and that was a huge struggle for me.

51 Interviewer: But you made it though?

52 #87: For sure, by the skin of my teeth.

53 Interviewer: Ok. Alright, so great. So, what at that time, motivated you to push through? And did you feel like your group, as a whole, supported you and helped you get through that tough time?

54 #87: Uhm, that's a really individual evolution. Because, uhm, you actually can't work with each other. But, at the time, I really didn't want to get rolled, because I didn't want to spend anymore time in BUD/S than I needed to. I had the option of uh going home and getting a medical roll and I chose to not do that because it was such a deterrent to me to not get rolled to the next class.

55 Interviewer: Well besides the land nav, as a whole, did you feel like you were supported by the, your classmates?

56 #87: Yes. We had a really strong class. And uh, it's occurred to other people that we were very fortunate to be in this class.

57 Interviewer: So what practices did you do, like physical, mental, spiritual, to help you get through this whole event? Not just that one thing, that land nav, but I mean the whole course?

58 #87: Uhm, I'm one of those people, they always say there's people who need like positive self talk, and then like negative self talk is a thing too, but not for very many people. I think I'm actually pretty negative self talk kinda person.

59 Interviewer: So, what do you mean like that?

60 #87: Uhh, so, I usually get like, when things I know are gonna be rough, I usually get really negative and like, pessimistic, but keep that to myself and for some reason that just, that has always worked for me haha. Like man, this is gonna be terrible haha. Here we go.

61 Interviewer: Soo, it's not really that you're, it's negative self talk, but you're like this is gonna suck. You're very realistic it sounds like.

62 #87: Yeah, I've been realistic.

63 Interviewer: Not saying I suck.

64 #87: I'm honest with myself. I know some people are always like "this is gonna be great" even though they know it's not gonna be. And then, it just hits them by surprise. I think I'm

being very honest with myself.

65 Interviewer: Ok, when you made any difficult decision you made during your BUD/S training, what went through your mind as you made that decision. Can you think of anything or give me an example?

66 #87: Uhm, what kind of decision?

67 Interviewer: I haven't been through BUD/S, so I can't tell you.

68 #87: I don't think there's really that many, there's usually uh, there's usually like clear direction, not much of it is up to us. I, I can't really say that we've had any decisions that were like, really polarizing one way or another. Uhm, yeah honestly as far as like, moments people talk about where you choose to do like the right thing or the wrong thing, maybe like integrity wise, that I've always, it's been easy, just because I really like the [undecipherable]. But, otherwise uhm.

69 Interviewer: Ok. So, what in total would you think? Why do you think you were successful in completing this? If you had to look at someone who hadn't been through, hadn't even started, what was your successful thing, that helped you?

70 #87: Uh, I feel kinda like I cheated as a fleet returnee who's been here before, because a lot of these kids come and they're just naturally like ready for this and they're like these guys specifically, just like have that gene and I knew it for long before what I was getting into and I knew how to prepare.

71 Interviewer: But, that made you stronger, right?

72 #87: Yeah, but I think it was something that I learned. I don't think I was naturally good at this. I definitely spent years thinking about what I needed to do.

73 Interviewer: I honestly didn't even know that you could come back once you left. I thought it was one and done.

74 #87: Yeah, for officers it is. For enlisted it's, and most people don't get the opportunity. It was very difficult. It was almost more difficult to get back here than it was to go through BUD/S again.

75 Interviewer: Really? Ok, but, you're glad that you made that choice?

76 #87: Yes.

77 Interviewer: But, now it's the day after graduation, so yeah. Uhm, did you notice anything different about those that didn't make it? Like what did you have that they didn't have? Or what made them quit, or leave when you didn't?

78 #87: I don't think it's super white or black, but I know that a lot of the people that didn't make it were here specifically to uhm prove something, either to themselves or to their family or friends. I remember that the first time when I spent a lot of time of months with other DORs after we had separated, and that was a big thing that a lot of people realized was that they were just here to prove something to themselves.

79 Interviewer: So they didn't make it if that's what they were here for, to prove something to themselves?

80 #87: I think so, it was a pretty common theme. Or a lot of people had like a self esteem issue and they realized that. Immediately after I quit I realized that I was here trying to prove something to myself.

81 Interviewer: For the wrong reason.

82 #87: And that's not really the right reason.

83 Interviewer: Nice. And then, how do you think this whole BUD/S experience changed you as a person?

84 #87: Well, I'm pretty physically worn out now haha. Took a year off my spine. But uh, uhm, I think my work ethic has probably improved. Being uh in the fleet you really have to be self motivated and being around such a high energy group of guys, all the time, really getting used to working at a high tempo.

85 Interviewer: So, one more. So what advice would you have to give to someone who is thinking about coming to BUD/S?

86 #87: Uh, make sure you know why.

87 Interviewer: Ok. That's perfect, thanks so much, I really appreciate it.