

# Mike Bates Podcast Transcript

[00:00:00] **Mike Bates:** We had huge weather, like bordering on storm star weather, massive 30, 40 foot waves, breaking waves, surf. 40 foot and just sat on the waterline in these boats at 24 foot long

[00:00:27] in the human. How do you measure such an astonishing moment in history?

[00:00:34] **Andy Murray:** Hello, I'm Andy Murray and you're listening to the Big Quest Podcast. In a high stakes, unpredictable world, every day is ripe with blue ocean adventures just waiting to be discovered. You need the mindset, the methods, and the motivation to lead with confidence into the unknown.

[00:00:51] Come along with me as we talk to today's leaders known for simplifying challenges, outsmarting variables, and inspiring greatness.

[00:01:03] Hello Mike, and first congratulations on what an amazing journey and accomplishment you've done. So it's great to have you back.

[00:01:12] **Mike Bates:** It's great to be alive under we said we'd do this. We said we'd do this again, right when we spoke before. Yeah. In the buildup, we're here. And that's amazing to me. So thank you for sharing the story.

[00:01:21] **Andy Murray:** Yeah. Two years ago what a great conversation we had. And at that time you were, starting the planning process. You were right in the middle of, of training and, putting pieces together. Hadn't even gotten the boat yet. There were so many things going. But I guess my first big question is, when you look back at that moment from where you sit today and what you've experienced and you could go whisper in your ear back two years ago to that same moment, what would you tell yourself that you wish you could have told yourself in terms of did it turn out as you expected?

[00:01:51] Did you over prepare, under prepare was there anything you could tell yourself that would be really, now that you've gone through this and see the world a little differently?

[00:02:01] **Mike Bates:** That's a great question. That's a big question to start with. Do you know what, I'm gonna give you an answer that I don't want to come across as arrogant.

[00:02:08] But I would whisper into my own and say, keep doing what you're doing and don't change anything because, I, I think when I reflect on the row one, you can't over prepare for anything. I don't believe you can over. I think preparation's key. I'm sure we'll unpack that because that was the difference I think between, me coming in as the fastest British person ever to do that race and the three soloists who are still out there right now, who set up before me, actually, which is,

[00:02:34] **Andy Murray:** you've gotta be, hold on a second.

[00:02:35] Let me just get that right. There's still people in the race. We, you've been back now for how long? Two

[00:02:40] **Mike Bates:** weeks. No more. 27th of January. So I wanna say five weeks back on land. Wow. But there's still three six always started. The Thai whiskey went to challenge three is still out there. And my, my honest view on that, Andy is it's about preparation, man.

[00:02:54] So I think, going back to your question, if I could whisper my ear, I'd say have no regrets. Yep. But what you're doing, believe in yourself and. The rest of it will just happen cuz you can't control anything out there. Man. That was something I learned very quickly. You're not in charge of the ocean. nature's in charge.

[00:03:12] **Andy Murray:** We'll get into that, into the journey because I was really curious on your run up to that before you actually, day one out there on the ocean. But some people think when you say prepare and you did prepare, I I followed you through Instagram. It was crazy the work you were doing, but.

[00:03:28] Like any type of big quest that you're on. It did have constraints. You didn't just 100% prepare. I You were starting a business at the same time being a father and husband and all those things that go with that. So you did live within some set of constraints, right? That that had to really focus how you prepared and how much time you had to prepare.

[00:03:50] **Mike Bates:** Yeah, I that made it all the more challenging, didn't it? Because if you self-fund something like this, that's the other, the big thing here, this is a three and a half year campaign, this, yeah. And I'm grateful to people like you and you stepped million and supported it without those people.

[00:04:03] But this was the magical thing, right? Yeah. So without those people, this thing wouldn't have happened. It would've been so much easier to self-fund

it. Buy a boat, just train, take two years off work. Cuz some people do, right? Like they have. But for me, the actual success of this row isn't the row itself.

[00:04:20] It's about the people who have come along for the journey. It's the impact it's had on the hospital and the amount of money we've raised, which is just staggering. And it's the thousands of people around the world who've been inspired by it. Yeah. And I think, yeah, we live within these constraints, but I honestly believe you can do whatever you wanna do in life.

[00:04:38] You've just gotta be prepared to believe in yourself, and you've gotta put the work in. If you do both those, There really are no constraints. Only your own imagination. That's what

[00:04:48] **Andy Murray:** I was trying to, get at is that a lot of people hold themselves back because of the constraints. Oh, I have to quit my job, I have to do this, I have to, I don't have enough money.

[00:04:57] But it's actually the constraints that drive out the creativity, the collaboration, the, allows you to be humble and lean on others that are outside your.

[00:05:07] **Mike Bates:** Hundred percent. I I left a 20 year career serving in the military, in the ministry defense to do this. Unfortunately they didn't support my plans to do it, so left.

[00:05:15] Yeah. But I also believe that you've gotta take risks in life. Sometimes you've gotta back yourself. Yeah. The worst thing I believe would be to look back from, let's say the end of. And have regrets because it's too late to change it. Yeah. I often look forward a little bit when I'm trying to consider these goals.

[00:05:33] I look forward and I think, how am I gonna feel in my eighties, nineties? Yeah. If I don't take this decision. Yeah. I don't want any regrets, man. So I'm prepared to take the risk.

[00:05:43] **Andy Murray:** Yeah. I use this quote a lot from Henry Thoreau is. Most men live lives a quiet desperation and go to their grave with the music still inside them.

[00:05:51] And that's what that, when you, so I, I don't want to be that guy to look back and still have the music that's been unplayed. And congrats on you and learning how to get the music out now then standing back, that first day out

on the ocean when you realize you've crossed the Rubicon you are now, it's one thing to commit and prepare, I What was that like that first day when there was really no turning back?

[00:06:14] **Mike Bates:** I was the last person to leave the marina, so they needed someone who was prepared to go last. I was so sure of my preparation that I was happy to be that person. No one wanted to do it because it's a lonely place and you sign paperwork actually with Atlantic campaigns that says, unless your life's in imminent danger, you won't be.

[00:06:33] Once you step on that boat, and there's an image of me on Instagram actually that almost a second before I get on, there's like thousand yards there. The realization of what I'm about to do, and I equate it to, and we'll get into this as well, like the challenges, but you, I was locking myself into a, an nautical solitary confinement for an unknown period of time.

[00:06:54] That is tough to do and it takes real strength. The preparation gives you that confidence. I think had I not prepared the way I did there's no way I could have stepped onto that boat full of confidence. And I did. I got on their confidence, but it was very difficult, mate. Very difficult.

[00:07:11] Yeah. It's not normal environment for humans to exist. This the ocean and it's absolutely not normal to do it on. Yeah. Yeah,

[00:07:19] **Andy Murray:** no doubt. We'll get into the mental bits of it. I guess one of the things I knew you were trying to communicate through all the postings, which your team did a great job keeping everybody up to date.

[00:07:28] Was, but I kept seeing these words and described of look, these waves don't look like this. In reality, it's far different than what you're seeing. And, ex express that a little bit of the difference there between what you would see on a video versus what you actually experience.

[00:07:45] **Mike Bates:** Yeah, you can't, you can't really articulate it because the scale of the ocean it's our most furious. And we had, and this is interesting, they'd indexed the race before we went and started and said it was gonna be a slow year. They were predicting solar rowers to take between 16 and 70 days. And then two weeks in the week between Christmas,

[00:08:25] Wow. And it's scary, man. It's scary. Scary to do it with someone or a team, but on your own, Yeah. It was scary. It. Describe the scale of it. It was just ridiculous.

[00:08:41] **Andy Murray:** I've got a 24 foot pontoon boat, and just even going out of the Gulf, when you get into four foot swells, you don't want to be there.

[00:08:48] And I can't even imagine a 24 foot rowboat with, 10 foot swells. 20 foot swells.

[00:08:54] **Mike Bates:** Oh, way bigger. Way bigger. I The sea state itself was never less than two meters. So 6, 7, 8 foot. Yeah. But on top of that you swell. So that's the sea state. That's the waves. Yeah. And then you add the swell.

[00:09:06] We had huge weather systems to the north, pushing a lot of cross. And that was the other bad thing about this year on the tough thing. Most of it was coming from the side. We had a team of America who capsized, couldn't ride the boat, had to get rescue. Shipped off to Canada. We had two snaps, rudders, carbon rudders snaps through caps sizes.

[00:09:24] I got knocked down three times, like a partial caps size. It was brutal, man. Wow. And going back to one of my first points there, I think at that point you have to accept you are not in control. Yeah. And all you can do is your very best. Your very best. You have to cross your fingers and that's it.

[00:09:40] That's life, man. You're not really in control of this. Yeah. You think you. Just do your best. Yeah. Every day. And then cross your fingers.

[00:09:48] **Andy Murray:** Was there ever a moment where you thought my life could be in jeopardy?

[00:09:53] **Mike Bates:** Yeah, a lot of times. A lot of, yeah. You have an absolute sense and when, I'm sure when people listen to this, and I'm mindful when I'm talking about this stuff, that people might think, oh, he's exaggerating, or, it's not.

[00:10:07] I'm not in that business of exaggeration. You know me, I'm an honest guy, and you absolutely are aware of your own mortality when you are at night in the pitch black. I remember putting some reflective solas tape around the spoon of the awe, which is about maybe spot away from the handle, right?

[00:10:25] I said to said well, am am I putting it there? He said, you'll be able to see the end. Literally pitch black when the moon disappears, it's pitch black. When the moon comes out, it's like someone's put the house lights on and it's, wow, it's

[00:10:40] **Andy Murray:** amazing. And you're rowing in a ferocious storm pitch black. I think that's, yeah, that, that is, I don't even have words to describe what that would feel like.

[00:10:49] From a. It's just, this leads to me speechless in terms of trying to imagine it. I think I wanna move off of that, or I'm going to sit here and just be like, in terror.

[00:10:57] **Mike Bates:** Yeah. I, it's a terrifying thing. And, sorry, just to pause on that real quick I honestly think, and a few people have said this to me, there must be some trauma associated with it because, Yeah.

[00:11:06] For one, I remember, and I didn't realize it until someone said this recently, but when we experienced trauma, we tend to disassociate. Yeah. To what's happening. You hear this, people who've been abused or they see it happening to themselves. For a lot of the row I remember thinking, it's almost like I'm watching myself do it.

[00:11:23] Yeah. And that I think was me experiencing some level of trauma Yeah. With what I was experiencing. And I remember looking down on myself, watching myself roll this ocean thinking, man, I can't believe you're doing this. Yeah. So it absolutely is traumatic. Yeah. And we need to recognize that and accept it.

[00:11:38] And it's gonna take a long time to get over it. Yeah.

[00:11:40] **Andy Murray:** The process, all of that, and let the, I'm sure that over time this is still gonna come back and, relive some of those moments. You're a guy that was, is very decisive in what you do. You choose a goal and you go for it, and you're really clear about it and you stick to it.

[00:11:53] But on this journey you started with an outcome to win the race. And you're really clear about that outcome. You wanted to win the race as a desired outcome, but something happened and you changed. You changed that desired goal that outcome you were after to something else, which I thought was highly unusual.

[00:12:11] I took quite a note of that for you, cuz you're a guy that just, you know, bulldog, this is what I'm gonna do. What happened? Take me to that moment when you decided to change the outcome and what you wanted that outcome to be.

[00:12:26] **Mike Bates:** So I set off, I didn't tell a lot of people, I told you, but I didn't tell a lot of people that I wanted to win the race.

[00:12:31] But people who know me, like you know me, know that's the guy that I know. Yeah, and I'd set off with the idea that I was just gonna try and beat everybody. And of course, that's just my ego, right? And I had a huge crash on day six. There was three really dark days. I had day six, day 17, day 38, emotional, horrible days.

[00:12:52] And I only saw wildlife twice. And I saw dolphins twice. And on two of those three days at my darkest, And I'm not a spiritual man. I'm not a religious man, but I'm absolutely a man of faith now because of this. Something happened and dolphins appeared, and it's only when you've experienced that connection between yourself and someone else or yourself and wildlife.

[00:13:16] Yeah. You get a different sense of the world and it was all like when they swam off, I said it. It's almost like I took my ego with him and I was like, it was a realization that you're not here to race. You're here to do your best and you're here to race yourself. And so then it became, it didn't stop being about high performance.

[00:13:34] It didn't stop being about me doing the very best I could, and the result of that could have been winning the race. It became about me. Yeah. And I think that's the lesson for everybody out there. Far too often. We compare ourselves with the people. You won't, what other people have got. You should be racing yourself.

[00:13:51] Yeah. Each and every day. Because that's a game you can't lose. That's, and then the games. The stateless game, the corporate game making game, they're all games. You're gonna lose. You can't win those games. No. But when you're fighting against yourself, you're competing against yourself.

[00:14:04] How's the game? You can't lose, man.

[00:14:05] **Andy Murray:** Yeah. I love how you put that. And you had some other lessons. One of the things I've been tracking with you is that the lessons learned on the ocean. Take us through that. That was one, I think there was four or five. That came to you, that just from our audience, take us through those lessons and what brought those lessons on, if you can.

[00:14:24] **Mike Bates:** The big one, I think the one to talk about really is that human connections and everything. Yeah. As a solo rower, I made the point

there, it's a bit like going into nordco, soldier confinement, but if you're in northern confinement, if you're in soldier confinement in prison, you'd at least be fed three times a day by a guard.

[00:14:40] You'd see. On the ocean. We don't see anybody. I didn't see anybody. So that is not a normal place for a human to exist. And yeah, I unraveled emotionally very quickly, as did everybody on the ocean. And you realize very quickly and very profoundly that the connection between you and other human beings is actually what all that matters in.

[00:15:00] The money, the status, all those games you play in, they don't matter. They don't matter at all. Andy, what matters is loving people, being loved by people, and accepting that love. And that was something that, again, I learned that I'm not very good at accepting love from others. Yeah. Rough, tough, marine.

[00:15:18] I go do this and go do that. But actually finding the softer mic, the real mic underneath. And accept that love from people was probably the biggest lesson,

[00:15:27] **Andy Murray:** and that's what's interesting about that. Mike, just to interrupt real quick, but you came to that. Fairly early, and I think it just maybe speaks to the power of it because it was, what, four or five days in when this human connection thing hit and it not just hit you, but it's like a common thing that hits all rowers out there at some level.

[00:15:46] Especially solo rowers. I would've thought that would've been something that would've evolved to near the. That's when you start feeling it. But I'm just, I was surprised and encouraged quite honestly, that four or five days and you don't have that human connection. That's how powerful that is.

[00:16:02] It's not something that, sneaks up on you after 30 days, 40 days, right?

[00:16:06] **Mike Bates:** No, I said to my family I'd call them like twice a week. Because, I didn't know what I was talking about and I was saying look, I wanna experience the solitude or no. I called him twice a day every.

[00:16:16] And I cried and wilded down the phone twice a day every day. And you need that, you need people to hear you, you need to hear people who love you. Talking back. One of the other lessons, which was a big one for me was,



don't look past the next wave. I think far too many of us when we set goals, look far too into the distance and we're chasing the outcome.

[00:16:36] And actually what's really important is doing what you can do today. Yeah. So what can I do this? What can I do this hour this week to move me one step closer to my goals rather than being focused on the outcome? And I made a big mistake about a week out when I tried to predict how long it'd take me to get to Antigua.

[00:16:54] Yeah. First of the mistake was that I thought my brain would work. And after 40 days of sleep deprivation, I literally couldn't divide 24 by six. I couldn't my whole cognition had gone. He gave me a little glimpse actually to what it might be like, you. Joking aside, where it might be like, to suffer from dementia, you know what?

[00:17:10] You might, your mind does start to go. It was a scary thing. And I've tried to predict and I was looking too far into the future. And then Mother Nature gave me a big slap on the face again and changed the wind direction, changed the waves, changed the current, and

[00:17:22] **Andy Murray:** Oh, that would've been disheartening.

[00:17:24] **Mike Bates:** Yeah. Oh, it killed me, man. It broke me, but it made me go back to what's important. Yeah. The next wave, the one after. What can I do right now? What can I do today? What can I do tomorrow? Not a week's time, two weeks' time? So I think that's a great lesson for anybody following any goal. Don't get too carried away with the distance and the outcome.

[00:17:45] Do the important stuff right now.

[00:17:47] **Andy Murray:** Yeah. Wow. That's great. I love that. Especially if you can't see past the next wave. You're a water. I wouldn't be able to see past the crest. So that's incredible. We'll get to some more of the lessons. One of the things that surprised me when you got off the boat and I was watching you live on a.

[00:18:04] I was ex assuming that much physical energy in activity, you would be like super buff. This guy's gonna be ripped coming out, rowing that. But it took more out of you and it's explain what happened physically, because I didn't understand that you were fairly weak and was in a tough spot physically.

[00:18:22] **Mike Bates:** Yeah. I It's worthwhile saying that I'd eaten all of my snack rations I'd, I was eating. Anywhere between 5,000, 6,000 calories a day. I still lost seven kilos in five weeks. I would've lost more of it taking me longer. I was just rowing myself to death basically. Yeah. And there, and I was rowing between 14 and 17 hours a day with very little breaks in between and trying to snatch some sleep on a night, but that didn't really work.

[00:18:46] The reason for that was, again, as a solo rower, things went wrong when I wasn't on the. Because boat speed drops, you have less control over the elements. And so I was scared and anxious and stressed around not rowing. And I remember being on the phone to my weather router or my wife, and I'd be staring at the oars feeling guilty I wasn't rowing.

[00:19:06] And this was my 15 minutes off. And I, I'd rode nonstop for five hours. I still felt guilty for my, and so that, that was what took it out of me. Yeah. The ocean breaks you. It does not build you up. It breaks you down. And that resilience, that physical resilience then is in the preparation because even though I was broken, I could still stand up, I could still put my arms with my head, I could still hold my wife and kids.

[00:19:29] Yeah. And

[00:19:31] **Andy Murray:** but you were under a lot of effort to do that. That was not as easy as it probably looked from the camera watching.

[00:19:36] **Mike Bates:** Anyone who sees on YouTube will see me staggering around, like I've had thought so much to. Just, it's just so unnatural. I like that I didn't stand up for 46.

[00:19:44] Excuse, like I didn't stand up

[00:19:47] **Andy Murray:** or eat right. Eating was, I

[00:19:49] **Mike Bates:** didn't have any hot meals. Really, like rarely. Occasionally as a treat. Yeah, just brutal man. But I and that's not to say that's the only way to do it. I think this is something I wanna get across for anyone considering doing something like this, that was the authentic way that I ruined ocean.

[00:20:06] And 46 days, 6,010 minutes was my ocean. That's the perfect time for me. Yeah. You may do it different. There's still three people in the ocean doing it their way. Yeah. There's, it's the right way for you, so you don't need to

get. As broken as I was, but then, but you rode your ocean, so it's what do you want?

[00:20:27] For me, I wanted no regrets. Yeah. That was the big thing I kept saying to myself on every day, no regrets today. No regrets today. And that meant you don't sunbake for an hour. You're rowing again. You're rowing again. No regrets.

[00:20:39] **Andy Murray:** Yeah. Wow. That gets you to one of, one of your other lessons, right?

[00:20:42] About rowing your old ocean.

[00:20:45] **Mike Bates:** Yeah. Yeah. You've gotta be, it's gotta be authentic, right? Yeah. And too many people can compare themselves to others. Also what society expects of them. And I think we need to be brave enough to be able to just be ourselves. I've been this morning doing some breath work in a room full of people.

[00:21:01] I dunno if you've ever done transformational breath work, Andy, but it's powerful stuff. It's warrior work. You're in tears, you're in some kind of semi hallucinated trance. That for me is, Me just expressing being me for that hour. Yeah. And I'm sure if some of our mates from the Marines saw me doing that, they'd be laughing their heads off.

[00:21:19] But you know what, I'm not bothered. Cause it's just, and the sooner we stop worrying about what everyone else thinks and just get on with our own lives and live it the way wanna live it, that's when you find true freedom, man. Yeah.

[00:21:31] **Andy Murray:** I've heard a lot about the breath work. I haven't done it yet.

[00:21:34] I've read a lot about it. And I need to try it, because I hear it's just

[00:21:37] **Mike Bates:** transformation. I think we carry a lot of trauma around. And one of the reasons I did it was that I wanted to offload some trauma that had been carrying around from my childhood before I went on the ocean, because he was gonna come and find me there.

[00:21:50] Yeah. I found me. Came to find me. Yeah. But I think it's a process for me. It's about just being Mike. Yeah. And I think we put this suit of armor

on. We put this shield, this mask on for others all the time. Certainly I did it. Over 20 years as a command known running cover agent around the world or whatever you have to present to be a certain type of person.

[00:22:12] But underneath I'm just a big softie. So to get that out there now and just be proud of that. Yeah. And certainly that's my next is to try and help particularly men accept. Vulnerability is real strength. Yeah.

[00:22:25] **Andy Murray:** I watched you go through that journey on the ocean and what you're talking about and even before, and it seems and correct me if I'm wrong about this, but I sense a new passion in you to perhaps speak to young men.

[00:22:38] **Mike Bates:** Yeah, not many in general, but actually my passion mate is middle-aged man because the statistics are quite clear, the sweet spot. Men kill themselves. It's between the age of 50 and 54 and it's the midlife transition. Okay? It's where we are leaving that first half of life, which tends to be striving and financial mating corporate success into the next half of life, which tends to be if we do it right, I believe.

[00:23:05] More moral and fulfillment and giving others, seeing the world in a slightly different way. And I think a lot of men can't make that transition very well. They don't, because we're not good at opening up, we're not good at being vulnerable, we're not good at accepting that we're shameful about certain things because we present them as.

[00:23:23] Weak. Yeah. And when bands viewed as weak, then they're not successful and they feel shit. It's this vicious circle that a lot of men are in. And yeah, my passion now is to try and use my experiences to help men between the age of 35 and 55 live the next 45 years better than the first cause. I think we can't do that.

[00:23:42] **Andy Murray:** I think that's great. And that and the clarity on how you're gonna pursue that came on the ocean. Is that where that Yeah. Yeah.

[00:23:49] **Mike Bates:** Yeah. It's a connection thing. Yeah. Look, this is not, this is, people have been talking about this for long time, but it's only until you experience it yourself.

[00:23:56] And you long for that connection. Cause you just, you need it as a human. It's not in here it's somewhere within your spirit, your physical being. And I think men don't connect well with all men or all women, to be fair. Yeah.

And I think we need to give men permission to. To show some weakness for a change and Oh yeah.

[00:24:16] You know what? I'm struggling here man. Yeah. I'm not sure what to do. Yeah. Can someone please help me? Yeah. Because the more men do that and let's basically mate, better men make better husbands, better fathers, better uncles, better leaders. Yeah. All society benefits. But I think we've just created a society where men and young men as well feel they need to be a certain way.

[00:24:37] They don't need to be the.

[00:24:39] **Andy Murray:** Yeah. And really a lot of men don't know how to be in the world. There's just so many signals and they get the signal from the noise that really matters. And I think 55 might be a little, I think if you stretch that out to 58 you'd still be okay on that message.

[00:24:52] I know I was 58 stepping off of the corporate treadmill and trying something completely different. And it was terrify. It was terrifying. Yeah. How was

[00:25:00] **Mike Bates:** that for you, man? Tell

[00:25:01] **Andy Murray:** me about that. It was it was Terri. You're going from a high pressure every week scheduled for weeks out.

[00:25:06] You know what the grind is. It's a retail's a tough business. And then to just go from that to zero and, for a year, it was just really difficult to do that. And what happens, I look at it. As a watery lake analogy, if you spend that many years traveling as fast as you can from A to B across the water, and that water's choppy, and then you stop all of a sudden.

[00:25:31] You you are looking down and wondering what's down there, right? You can see to the bottom for the first time in probably 15, 20 years, if or more. And you never really look down and do that because the water's too choppy, right? You're just going so fast, you don't have to look.

[00:25:46] But when you slow it down and you stop and you look deep and you start to wonder, what have I built in my life underneath there that's in that water that I've never took the time to do? And it, I would say it took me a year. Of deep reflective thinking in that, but I could never have done it in the grind I was in to go find those stories, those challenges, the things that weren't dealt with that you just keep powering through and you know you do.

[00:26:11] And so I think many men my age too, it 58, it just turned 60, but. Have gone through that experience when they step out of that corporate job for the first time and realize they haven't been looking deep, when that water gets still enough that you can actually see deep because it's always so murky technology.

[00:26:31] **Mike Bates:** I'm

[00:26:32] **Andy Murray:** with you a hundred

[00:26:32] **Mike Bates:** percent. But we're gonna make it happen, man. I've committed personally to getting a hundred men in the. Okay. This year that's the start. That's the launch of the next 45. If we can get a hundred guys in the field and we can have an impact on them over a couple of days, I think we'll build a movement and let's see where it goes,

[00:26:47] **Andy Murray:** man.

[00:26:47] I'd love to be a part of that and help you with that, if any way I can. Especially if you figure it out in the UK and can come to the US and do that. But that is not unique to the uk. That challenge is wide.

[00:26:59] **Mike Bates:** This is the global issue, right? Yeah. A hundred percent title thing. So let's do it.

[00:27:03] And I think going back to the role a little bit, I think that's one of the greatest things about it, is it gives you a chance to. Because you're only thinking about yourself in that moment. You get to see the world in a slight different place. You stepped off the treadmill at 58. Yep. And you've got to see through that clear water.

[00:27:21] An ocean road gives you that. Yeah. Because I'm not gonna work every morning. I'm not my kids out before school. I don't have to deal with whatever my family wants me to do. All I've gotta do is roll this. Yeah. So it gives you time to start to think and I think that's where you start to realize, what's really important in life.

[00:27:38] And if we can help people do that, if we help them see to the bottom end it. I love that analogy. Then

[00:27:43] **Andy Murray:** That was good. I figured you were going through that because I just knew what it was like for me to get that alone time for a year or so to think and work through and say, who am I what am I about?

[00:27:54] Am I listening to voices or am I listening to what was really down here? And that had to happen to you because you, your mind when it gets really free and really, all of those pressures go away. Things start to come to your head that you probably hadn't thought about in years, I would assume.

[00:28:12] You're, and you've gotta choose to deal with it, right? You can't run from it. There's nowhere to go.

[00:28:19] **Mike Bates:** No, you're on the boat. There's no way to hide. There's a clarity to thing. There's a clarity to life, I think. Yeah, people, and it wasn't because, I was near the end of life, but you do hear people say that, don't you?

[00:28:28] When pushed up against the wall and they're about to meet the makeup, life becomes quite clear. Yeah. I think perhaps it's the same but in a slightly less. Intense way. I think an ocean road gives you, or only big expedition alone. Yeah. I think it would've been different. Hadn't done it in a pair with someone else to bounce ideas off.

[00:28:48] I think it would've been very different. I don't think I'd have got the same clarity. Clarity for me. No. But on my own, absolutely. The world present itself in a way. Even this and like even the connection to nature in our environment that you feel I could. The boat. There was one time I just, the boat fell off.

[00:29:08] Yeah. And that's how in tune was with everything. Yeah. The boats fell off what is it? What is it? Turned out it was just a piece of seaweed this big. On my dagger board, that was all it was. I had a look under the boat. I was like, there it is. Took it off. It felt good again. So you start to become really in tune with your environment.

[00:29:24] And again, that's just, it's magical man.

[00:29:27] **Andy Murray:** You know what's really you're putting a real life experience to what I had read about like this. Polynesian islands where these guys would get in these canoes and navigate and find their way where there was no navigational instruments, but they felt the water, the ocean.

[00:29:40] It sounds like that, that you can relate to that, like Yes, that can happen.

[00:29:45] **Mike Bates:** Yeah. I didn't use a watch, my, my day was governed by sunrise and sunset and that changed the further west I went. That was, I lived. The environment and live by nature. And again, the simplicity of that, it just means you.

[00:30:00] You don't need most of the things you think you need. You don't need it. Yeah. And this is not to say, you know what, you go live in a tents or in the woods and blah, blah, blah. But it's about having that clarity on matters most, right? What's the most important thing here? So when I get a choice between a business meeting over there, or going to see my children play sport over there, I choose the children every time.

[00:30:24] Yeah. Now I, like most of us made, we've made the other decision when we're younger. So you're not sure, you don't, you're not clear, you're not looking at the bottom right now. And so you're like, I need to go away to work. Need to go away to work. No. You don't watch your kids' place full off.

[00:30:37] **Andy Murray:** One of the other things that that you had to compromise a lot is sleep. And I read a lot about sleep, the importance of sleep for good physical performance, getting a good eight, eight hour sleep. You were deprived of that the whole time, right? So how was the lack of sleep affected you or did have you now adapted that or you only need four hours sleep and that's all you care about?

[00:30:56] I. Is that changed? Or tell me about the sleep side. Cause I understand the breathing bit, but the sleep I'm not sure how that worked for you.

[00:31:04] **Mike Bates:** Oh mate. I mean look, this is one of the most important things as well. Like you can't, I spoke to a sleep doctor before I left cuz I wanted to cover that piece off.

[00:31:11] I had three potential rowing routines that was gonna go do, and each one had a minimum of four and a half hour sleep a night. Cause he said you can't get less than that. If you get less than that with what you're doing, you won't be able to function. I didn't know any of those. The first day I rode for nine hours straight, then rode one hour on 30 minutes off or through the night, did it again, and again.



[00:31:34] That's why I crashed on day six. Sleep was the number one factor for me feeling okay or feeling absolutely awful. Not just physically, but like I said mentally, I couldn't do simple rhythmic emotionally. Rowing tears screaming at my face all day for no reason. Just the luck of sleep. So

[00:31:57] **Andy Murray:** how do you think sleep affects these people that say they only get four hours sleep high performing corporate execs going I just have a hard time with that.

[00:32:04] Is that can't be good for you.

[00:32:05] **Mike Bates:** The sleep constant sleep quality, there's two different things here. Yeah. Said quantity, you might get four hours. You might get eight hours a night, you might get 12. It's the quality that counts. And so you must get, you some amount of REM sleep, shortwave sleep to actually recover properly.

[00:32:20] I, when I track it, I wear a whoop, yeah. I've noticed that my nervous system has taken an absolute battery, and I think that's because the lack of sleep. So my heart rate variability is really quite low at the moment. And that's not just the exertion on the os that. I think two things. The lack of sleep and no recovery for 46 days, and a constant omnipresent feeling of anxiety and stress.

[00:32:46] Yeah. That fight or flight, sympathetic nervous system being in dominant and sleep nourishes the brain like REM sleep actually nourishes us and if we don't get it, yeah, you can't process and you just want pieces and I fault pieces, man, and every, and everyone will. You can't fight that. Yeah, you can't.

[00:33:03] That's a common. Yeah, you can't prepare for it. You can't fight yet. We're all gonna get done by sleep.

[00:33:09] **Andy Murray:** Mike, a little different subject. How does this affect your family, Sarah, the boys did they go through any transformation as, or that you've, were willing to share has affected them in a, any kind of significant way?

[00:33:21] **Mike Bates:** I can't really say much for the boys. They're 12 and 13 now. You don't get a lot out of them. I'm hopeful. Typical boys. I'm hopeful. Yeah. I'm hopeful in the future that they will reflect on this and be proud of it. Oh yeah. I'm sure at the moment they just think they're embarrassing. Dad, who the teachers keep talking about cuz it's in the paper.

[00:33:38] But I'm hopeful they're gonna be proud of it. My wife, look, Sarah, she worked for you. I fell in love with her all over again on the ocean to a whole new level. Because look, I went away and rowed an ocean. That's difficult in itself. She stayed back here. Yeah. Two children, full-time, high level corporate job.

[00:33:56] Yeah. Four cats a dog. And when I rang up twice a day, every day screaming and crying down the phone, she never wants, and this is a testament to who she is cuz I couldn't do this. She never wants Said you chose to do. It's your fault. What about me? Never once. She just let me do it. Wow. Lemme see. That's remarkable.

[00:34:16] And so I see her. I always knew she was amazing. I married But I see, but no, that's remarkable. Who she's, I see who she is more deeply now, and she's a very special person.

[00:34:27] **Andy Murray:** That's remarkable. And it's so important to have a spouse connection like that, that you can really count on each other through those kind of times.

[00:34:34] And so I'm so happy to hear that. And it is a remarkable epiphany and performance on her part to do that. I was worried about what that might be like. Because, obviously those who would know Sarah, just she just pushes through and gets things done and handles things as they come.

[00:34:49] So a tough cookie to do that. But even a tough cookie, this is tough, right? And so to be that kind of person through that for you is a blessing on your part. For sure. I totally understand that. Mike, what? I've got a couple of students I don't have students. I've worked with the University of Arkansas.

[00:35:04] They have students of course, but they like to ask questions of guests that we get on the different times. And two of them are students, Abigail Davis and Alex Alexis Hodney. And they had asked some questions that they'd love for me to ask you if that's okay. You don't mind doing that?

[00:35:23] So from a Abigail, she's asking for so many, the thought of physical or mental pain can be very daunting and could form roadblocks in their plans. However, you mentioned that you were aware that you would battle asleep deprivation salt sores and other physical pain. How did you prepare yourself mentally to go into this challenge to get past the physical?

[00:35:45] **Mike Bates:** That's a good question. When I talk about achieving any goal, I think the first thing you have to start with is the motivation, the why you're doing it. And that motivation needs to be deep. It needs to be intrinsic. I think where people fall foul here is, and they can't overcome pain and suffering more broadly is when they have an extrinsic motivation and they're just doing it to please others.

[00:36:06] You know my story, I was raising money for the hospital that saved my son. That's right. So there, there was no amount of pain that's gonna be worse than a parent holding their hand of a poly baby on life support right now. So for me, in the darkest hours, those kind of feelings and those kind of thoughts, were gonna get me through it.

[00:36:26] Interestingly though, motivation changed on the boat. It started off me being motivated by raising money for charity. Yeah, but actually again, we are back to human connection. The one thing I thought about every day, all. I was getting to antique to see my family again. That was it. Yeah. And so I was telling myself stories all the time.

[00:36:45] Loads of positive self-talk, this extra hours for you that Merry Christmas. I'm gonna roll up three hours for you today for my family and wow the last 48 hours when all the boats went on, parachute anchor. And the head safety officer said to me, Mike, you need to go and post anchor arrest. I said, Hey resting mate, because my family on that rock and I'm gonna go see him.

[00:37:04] And I rodee a 22 hour. To see, and you need motivation and with great motivation you can do anything. Pain's not even a thing. When you're talking about the people you. Yeah.

[00:37:14] **Andy Murray:** Wow. I love that. I love that she asked a second question. You'll like this as an advocate for the American Heart Association on a national level, I've seen many different ways to fundraise for a cause.

[00:37:27] However, this one is very unique. Why did you approach why did you choose to take this drastic approach compared to a more simple type of fundraising? I have to laugh if the word draft

[00:37:40] **Mike Bates:** hit up. Yeah, no, she's quite right. It was quite interesting. But I think the reason mate, is I wanted to raise a tangible amount of money that could make a difference.

[00:37:49] And there's lots of people and, all credit to them going out and running the London Marathon. Yeah. Leads, marathon, whatever. And they might raise 300 pound, 400 pound, 5,000 pounds. Like we've just raised over 180,000 pounds. It's over two.

[00:38:02] **Andy Murray:** Okay. That's a big difference.

[00:38:03] **Mike Bates:** You're gonna go and raise that on your own in lockdown, by the way, when no businesses Yeah, offer, you could sell well apart with money like that to support could cause us it better be something that people go, you gonna do what?

[00:38:16] Yeah, you're gonna row an ocean on your own. That's not impossible. That gets people inspired. Yeah. And that's why I chose to do something big.

[00:38:24] **Andy Murray:** It, it did me and it still has. So from Alexis Hodney she asked questions. I've already asked you like what was the hardest part of the journey? And, but the one that she's asking here similarly, if there's one thing you wish you had known at the beginning of your career, what would it be?

[00:38:39] Because she asked previously what did wish she had known. My very first question about looking back two years ago. Her follow on question to that is what do you wish you would've known at the beginning of your

[00:38:48] **Mike Bates:** career? I've reflected back on my career and I talk about this when I speak, is That's a great que that's a deep question.

[00:38:53] I love that. Yeah. I think it's that what you're doing right now matters. Because it all adds up. So I wouldn't change anything again because I don't believe in regrets. But there's no way I'd be sat on a podcast talking to you haven't become the fastest British person through that race, had I.

[00:39:08] Given everything in Afghanistan in 2002 for the wrong Marines, I wouldn't have got a job in the mod running cover agents and gathering intelligence against into terrorists and not, had I not done that to my best of my ability, I probably wouldn't have had the confidence to start my own business in lockdown what I would say to anyone who's young and setting out on a journey is, again, don't look past the next wave. Yeah. The job you're doing right now, the course you're taking right now in Arkansas University, you give it a hundred percent because it.

[00:39:34] **Andy Murray:** I, that's one of my life motto as well. And it's in this area.

[00:39:37] Do your best and nothing's wasted. There is no such thing as a perfect circumstance, a perfect job. A f perfect first, career, job, or whatever, cuz it all could change, but, Do your very best and pay attention to the people in your life because your next job may come through a connection of an administrator assistant that you were kind to and talked to and paid attention to.

[00:40:00] Had an uncle that was over here and. All of a sudden your life changed because you were paying attention to people. And I just feel like that's how life really unfolds. It's much more of a mosaic than a puzzle. And just take those pieces from the inside out and see where they go. And you're a living mosaic man.

[00:40:15] I You would probably not looked at your career and lined up all those things. That's happened to you with a perfect plan at 21. I just, that's your life didn't work out that

[00:40:23] **Mike Bates:** way. No, but I have another thing that I say as well. It's on your point there. That movement creates opportunity.

[00:40:30] Yeah. When we're moving forward with a goal, with a purpose, we know where we want to be and we're being good for people, opportunities present themselves and if you, the only way you can guarantee to not opportunities is when you're doing nothing. So get out there, create some movement, and guess what?

[00:40:47] It'll work out. Yeah. Just be the best person you can be. Try your best. Be good to the people. Life will be exactly as you want it to be. And pay

[00:40:55] **Andy Murray:** attention for that dolphin that might show. Or that bird that might land, right? Because, the universe the creator could be looking after us and we not even know it.

[00:41:03] And yeah. I love it, Mike. So we've heard what's next? How can people get in touch with you if they wanna follow you? And I know you're doing corporate events now, speaking engagements, you're probably gonna be getting that book out at some point, but I know there are gonna be people that are interested in your story and wanna stay connected with you.

[00:41:19] How do they.

[00:41:21] **Mike Bates:** Yes. So the best place is if you had some Instagram, Mike Bates underscore official on LinkedIn. Mike Bates, Facebook, my Bates, mike bates.uk. If you wanna get any updates, I have just signed a book deal with a major publisher, global publisher. That book's coming out next year. Fantastic. Life.

[00:41:38] So yeah, loads of exciting things, but all built around the mission. Talk about purpose again, of helping people. Yeah, that's what. I just wanna say to you, and real quick, thank you for being there from the beginning. And for supporting this campaign and for sharing my story, the world needs more people like you, my friends.

[00:41:56] So thank you. Thank

[00:41:57] **Andy Murray:** you very much, Mike. It's been a pleasure. We'll have links in the show notes to all the links Mike just mentioned, so please go check him out. Follow Mike. Just an incredible journey, an incredible guy. Incredible. Thanks Mike for being a role model for all of us. I know I've been inspired on so many different levels, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually you've hit all the buck, all the buckets for me, so thank you again my friend.

[00:42:22] Thanks for listening to the Big Quest podcast. If you like this episode, make sure to subscribe and leave a comment, and if you wanna share it, we're available on Apple, Spotify, Google, and anywhere you listen to audio. If you're leading change in your company and you wanna know more about developing the mindset, methods, and motivation needed to deliver

[00:42:39] **Mike Bates:** big outcome, I'd

[00:42:41] **Andy Murray:** love to talk with you.

[00:42:42] You can reach me@bequest.com. Until next time, I'm Andy Murray reminding you to think big and quest on.