DANNY LENNON: Okay, here we are, Fergus, thank you for joining me on the podcast.

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Danny, thanks for having me.

DANNY LENNON: So there's lots that I would like to dive into, but I suppose one thing that I think might be a good way to set some context for this, I'd be interested to know how do you actually describe what it is that you do – and there's probably two different scenarios here: one, the kind of quick pitch if you're at some dinner party and someone says, hey, what do you do; and then secondly, probably the deeper, more accurate internal monologue you would tell yourself of what it is you do.

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Great start. Everybody remembers the scene in pulp fiction where Harvey Keitel opens the door so the two guys, John Travolta and Quinton Tarantino open the door, Harvey Keitel is there and he says, hi I'm Mr. Wolf, I solve problems – and that's pretty much what I do now is going to teams, organizations, and helping them solve performance problems, to do a team culture performance across the board. But that's the short answer, but my pathway really was starting in sport and professional sport, as a sports scientist, as a strength coach, then as a manager, then

eventually as a high-performance director, covering all of those different areas whether it was nutrition, sleep recovery, training, strength training, speed training, mobility; and trying to figure out with each team and organization that I went to, what the limiting factor was, or what the weakness was, what the thing that we had to correct was. And so that eventually evolved into basically a skill set of helping teams and organizations figure out what the real problem was, because very often now in organizations you have this kind of shotgun approach where people are trying to do everything but maybe missing exactly what the limiting factor is, what the biggest challenge is. So that's really what I do now is help problem-solve. And also a lot of it is about empowering staff and experts that are already in the organization or in the group so that they can upscale and solve the problem with the people they have now without having to hire more and more people, because one of the disadvantages you see in many organizations are that you've got almost too many cooks spoiling the broth, to use that old phrase. So that's pretty much what I do now.

DANNY LENNON: Awesome. And we could talk endlessly about the positions you've held in elite sport and I definitely want to dig into some of those experiences, but what I also find quite interesting is your life before getting involved with elite sport and particularly some of the areas that you've had both formal training in as well as worked in. Can you maybe just given an outline for people of some of that journey that you took place before you arrived in some of the elite sport positions?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Yeah, so I never planned to work in sport, I thought I was going to be a teacher, that's what I wanted to do, I wanted to be – my father was a construction studies and a woodwork teacher, and I thought, yeah, that's a pretty good role, good profession, honorable. But I loved sport and I was fortunate to get to be able to play sport back in Ireland, to watch, be involved in it. And I stayed at university after my degree

because I was quite young at the time, I'd gone to college early, and I did a master's in manufacturing, did a PhD in computer-based optimization. But I used that time to study and read as much as I could about sport, because my plan was at 4 p.m. when school ends, I was going to go and coach, that's what I wanted to do, I wanted to coach kids. When I would have vacation time, holiday time, I would have – whatever money I would have saved, I would travel to visit coaches to learn from them, and this was just my hobby, I just loved learning about sport. I traveled all around the world to learn from anybody I could, but on one of those trips, I was at Bolton Wanderers, and they were looking for – some of their staff had just left – and they were looking for someone who understood a little bit more about sports science than maybe they did, and asked me would I be interested. So I took a career break from teaching 15 years ago or longer and haven't gone back, and that's honestly how it happened. I don't think it could happen today, but I think maybe, look, if there's a lesson for anybody it's that if you can combine your passion and your purpose, generally that your path, that's what you would be happiest doing. So I love helping people and I love learning about sport, so coaching sport was, you know, it's the perfect combination of that.

DANNY LENNON: I don't think my journey was anywhere near as exciting as that little story, but there are parallels, and it's kind of part of why I brought up that I originally trained as a secondary school science teacher in Ireland I had been working in a school for a year; and very similar to you, my kind of hobby outside of work was reading nutritional science papers; and so, I eventually kind of got into that field and left teaching and here we are, however many years later, although certainly not as exciting as Bolton Wanderers ringing me up for a position. But with that, I did find the other two areas you mentioned, master's in manufacturing and then a PhD in computer based optimization, correct?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Yeah.

DANNY LENNON: First, or you could take either one of those or maybe both, are there concepts that you took from within any of those fields that you ended up using in your, either thought process or processes or systems that you use later on in sport or that you could at least see some parallels or any of that come to mind?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Yeah, so I think if you – the question itself is very interesting because I think certain people would look back on things that have happened previously and say, no, there are not. But when I look back on it and when I think through, no education is wasted. So initially when people would have asked me that question, I would have said no. But when, like the teaching experience, as you know your ability to understand people, like it's so people, like I'll never forget coming home from my first few years teaching and I was exhausted. It's so demanding when you're working with people, because you're managing personalities, you're controlling a room, you're speaking, all of those things were incredibly valuable, eventually when I would go coaching and teaching. The advanced manufacturing was incredibly challenging because I was coming from this almost art of teaching to a very structured understanding of managing machinery, technology, all of those things, and that was a wonderful link or segue for me to try and understand how these very analytical things work, so it was a complete shift. But it also made me think and understand more about quality control, how we could schedule, how we could plan, and I tried to take many of those lessons into support. And then the exposure then to IT, to technology, to programming, again, was wonderful, because there's a wonderful learning process and understanding programming, understanding logical sequencing, understanding how to actually program or write an app for a user and have to

consider the user, it was a completely different way of thinking.

So I think when I finished all of those things, I had developed the skill sets for speaking, for teaching, for herding cats, you know, people in the classroom; I had understood scheduling and planning in a completely different way than you normally would, and then I had exposure and a great understanding of technology; and in all of those cases, it wasn't just learning what they can do, it was really learning the limitations, and that's the most important mistake that I see most others in the industry make. The big advantage that I had and I've had over the years is not just simply that the lessons I learned but knowing the limitations of all of those things. So for example, when it came to technology or programming, I see so many people who just accept that this app program or tech is going to do whatever it says it's going to do, without truly understanding the limitations and understanding where what it's not doing, and so you see in human performance, a lot of people adopting technology incorrectly, and that's one of the biggest failings. And then bridging the gap between the person and the technology and not being able to truly understand why the technology is working, but it's that area of what they call in programming understanding the use case, really understanding what the user needs to get and that interaction. So those have been outcomes that, yeah, maybe a few years ago I wouldn't have considered.

DANNY LENNON: Yeah, I think it definitely works that retrospectively, maybe when we look back, we can start to see how those things have influenced stuff we've done later as opposed to at the time saying I'm going to take this and I'm going to force into this new role I have, it probably comes more in a subconscious manner I would guess. And as you were talking there, you had kind of alluded to it, but I'd be interested to ask that when it comes to

different maybe opinions or positions or ideas you hold, are there any that you believe are either not that well talked about, well-known, or maybe not at least that maybe even run to the consensus or the typical conventional narrative within elite performance field?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: I think the biggest difference between myself and many others is that I analyze critically everything that's presented. So it's not that I'm skeptical, I want to believe, I want to buy into things, but I have a longer segue or a longer process into accepting something maybe than other people, because it's important for me to truly understand how something is going to work. So whether it's a new training methodology, whether it's a new piece of equipment, whether it's a new supplement or diet or approach, I would take a long time to study, read, and I'm notorious for going back to the original research. So if somebody comes along and says to me, we've got this wonderful new diet based on something that was written 20 years ago, you can be sure I'll go and find the original paper that was written somewhere, and if I have to get it translated from a different language, I will do that. Because I think everything in human performance now is based around sales and that's important, but I think the onus is on the practitioner to truly understand the basis on which anything they're going to introduce is based on where it comes from. So that's very, very important to me is that skill of critical thinking, and I think two of the biggest challenges that you see with younger practitioners coming through, and this is across the board, this isn't necessarily sport but even in kids, is critical thinking isn't taught as a skill in school anymore, people tend to just adopt things, believe things. You don't have to look at politics nowadays, people just take things at face value without having the time, taking emotion out of it, critically analyzing what people present. So I think critical analysis is very, very important. I think it's something that should be introduced. I think in Ireland I think actually we're fortunate I think that we

do have a very good educational system that encourages that. We're not a nation of people who just accept things readily anywhere, so I think that stands us in good stead.

And the other thing then is failure – I think that we don't encourage enough failure. We don't encourage enough problem-solving. On the other hand, we tend to encourage rote learning memory. But if you are practicing, doesn't matter whether it's in elite or in the general population, you're solving problems all of the time, you have to develop that skill set of innovation, creativity, and identifying what the problem truly is. Those are the most important skills. You need to – so it works almost like two columns that you're building through your career, there's the knowledge which you have to continue to learn, and then there's the problem-solving ability, critical thinking, the analysis, truly identifying the problem – and the better you get at those the better your skill set would be, the better your service will be.

DANNY LENNON: It seems, maybe I'm incorrect, but it would seem like, for something that is likely to have a bigger payoff in an elite sport setting, then you're going to have to accept some degree of risk with that, like the more conservative you play it, maybe the less upside you may get, or something that's going to have a large upside comes with inherent bigger risk. One question I'd be interested about is I think maybe for a lot of practitioners, that can be taking so-called risks and it'd quite a scary thing, particularly if they're working with an athlete who really cares about their performance, especially those at the higher levels – so are there any examples that you could give about risks that you take in that setting that either worked out well or didn't, it doesn't really matter, but an example of what we're talking about with being willing to take risks, being willing to be innovative, are there any that come to top of mind?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: So early on in my career, the risks would have been around training methodology and around

introducing new training concepts. There was an Olympian actually that I was working with where we probably looked at managing his hydration levels for either an 400 or an 800 (meter) because we wanted to manage his weight, and we managed it carefully but we just made sure that he wasn't overhydrated, and that was probably risky to some degree, but we did it with a lot of supervision. But in more recent years, the risk has always been around what I've chosen to do, because what's very interesting is, with elite athletes, there are so many things that are already finely tuned, so their skill level, their fitness, their mental well-being, all of those things – really what you're trying to do is to create stability in everything around them so that the natural risk that's going to be there, the pressure from the Champions League game or playing in a World Cup in a rugby final or whatever it is, really you're trying to establish stability because everything else around them is chaotic, the learning, the coach, the players. So it's actually really the most beneficial thing is trying to establish stability in their lifestyle, in their psychological well-being, in their emotional understanding, in their learning, because everything else around them is so chaotic and brings inherent risk with it. But the risk that I have taken most often, most recently is in how I present content and how I communicate with players.

So most recently, I will use creative ways to present, whether its nutritional information, or I will use nursery rhymes, or I'll use competitions with smoothies, you know, which player can come up with – and people might laugh and go, well, there's no risk in that. Trust me, we stand in front of 30 millionaires and say, we're going to have a competition to see which one of you guys can come up with the best smoothie. It's either going to bomb or there's going to be a huge success. Now, thankfully, those kind of crazy ideas or pop quizzes or whatever they might be, do work and they have a high success rate, but that to me is

risk; or when you stand in front of 30 millionaires and you're trying to get them to buy into a new sleep protocol or a new recovery strategy, that's where the risk is, and the risk is on you, it's not on them. So it's really about how do you sell it, how do you present it, and it has to be ethical. Yes, plenty of people will tell fibs or be dishonest, but anything that you present has to start with the basis that it must do no harm, and it must be correct to the best of your knowledge at that point in time.

DANNY LENNON: That's a perfect segue for a question I did want to ask you, and it's very much related to what you've just said: is there a question that you have asked athletes in the past that you have found to routinely provide you with some sort of insight or some sort of useful feedback or piece of information through their answer, are there any that you have found to be quite reliable and replicable?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Yeah, and it's basically how are you, but it's how are you and looking in their eyes and waiting for the answer, like how many times do you meet someone, shake hands, or hey, how are you doing, and you don't even wait for the – or the other person doesn't even wait for the answer? They're on to the next thing, hey, how are you, yeah, good day, I've got this to do, and they don't even – but asking how are you and I'll either generally shake hands or hold their hand, but I will not let go of their hand until I get an answer, and it's not creepy but I will shake hands and hold on to their hand until they give me an answer because it's far too easy just to either fist bump, shake hands, and move on, and just get a, yeah, I'm good. And you can see in someone's eyes whether they are okay or whether they want to tell you a little bit more. With athletes that you're working with, they want to know that you care, because at the end of the day their body is their business literally, that's what's going to make the money, you're there to help them, you're there to look after them, you're there to help them do better. And so, when they know that, they'll want to share,

but they rarely come to you and tell you, you know, this is just not in human nature; and particularly in competitive sport, people don't get used to and don't want to complain. So asking how are you or a variation of that, and genuinely looking the athlete in the eye and waiting for a genuine answer and then following up with how is the wife, how are the kids, everything good at home, or how'd you sleep last night – and following that up, so genuinely caring about the answer, that's probably the simplest but incredibly powerful as opposed to just fist bumping and high-fiving your way through the cafeteria, like, I mean, which happens regularly from day to day.

DANNY LENNON: Obviously, a lot of the people listening to this podcast are practitioners and are very much in that position where they're dealing with people on an ongoing basis either as nutritionists, dieticians, doctors, strength conditioning coaches, etc., and I think most are probably familiar with that idea at least from an academic sense or an understanding that it's not just about the competency of our knowledge, there's also there's kind of human side to it. However, the application can be a bit more difficult than it may at first appear. So with something like being able to communicate with an athlete, to be able to let them know that you're there to talk with them, to be able to allow them the space to open up about certain things, how do you kind of straddle that line between allowing them to do so without pushing it to a point of an athlete who maybe doesn't want to share or who isn't in a point in a relationship yet to be able to do that – what advice would you give to other practitioners who are trying to be that person that their client or patient can talk to without forcing the issue in a genuine way?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: So when I ask someone how are they and you wait for the answer, you're also, with young coaches I'd say to them "think of yourself as being one of the actors in CSI: Miami or CSI: New York." You're looking for a whole lot of

clues around the player as well, so if you've got a large group of people that you're working with, you'll watch hot, you know, you'll pick up clues about everybody, and you'll start to notice this particular player is doing things out of character, maybe turning up late, maybe struggling, maybe looking tired, and then you will make a conscious attempt to check in on that player. But the personality of the person you're dealing with is critical, and also understanding, being able to understand how they interact, and you'll get – you'll find generally, broadly speaking, two types of people, people who have a wonderful happy positive or negative exterior, it's quite a strong exterior, it's either welcoming or it's dismissive but it's strong and it's forceful, and they take a little bit more time to open up, but they're generally more sincere and authentic. Then you've got on the other side, a more softer interaction which people will give you more information but a lot of it is just noise, so they're the ones who are very forward or either very dismissive, one or the other, but it's fleeting and soft, it's very hard to get at – to really understand those, you have to kind of lock down and work on for a little bit longer, and then eventually they open up. The ones actually that are most concerning are those who are very solid and very abrupt because it's harder to see through those people.

So if you can imagine, you've got a linebacker in the NFL who, everything to him is okay, he's got it under control, those are the guys that you generally need to try and find quietly after a meal, hang out with for a few minutes, and after a few minutes the conversation will get to – you'll eventually figure out if there is something bothering them or there's something that they're dealing with that takes time, and it's knowing, just understanding how long you need to hang with somebody to truly get for them to open up. And it's like everything, your job really is to ask questions in order for the person to give you the answer, and one of the mistakes I would have made

early in my career was I had all the answers, I was just waiting for one thing and I was running with an answer. Over the years I've learned to ask a lot more questions, so that the answer itself becomes apparent as opposed to just thinking, I've got all of the solutions.

DANNY LENNON: One other interesting trade-off that I think a lot of practitioners have to evaluate is on one side, like we've already determined, we're there to help this person and we're there for them to feel comfortable that this person is looking out for me, that can help me with this, that they're reliable in some way; and then on the other end we know with a lot of human connection, the power of being vulnerable I suppose, or operating with some degree of honesty, but there's this I suppose resistance that I've certainly felt as a practitioner, I presume many others have, of how do you truly share that kind of vulnerable side when you're supposed to be this person who is there to help, that the other person is there to rely on in some way – is there a distinction between those things or how would you advise people navigate that kind of difference?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Yeah, it's a great question, I think it's one that really over the last few years I've only truly understood. And I've really only worked on the elite end in sport and the profession end, and the challenge that you have is that vulnerability is not something that people are used to. And the reason is it's not a good or a bad thing, it doesn't make anybody better, it's simply that it is so competitive, and it is so ruthless that vulnerabilities can be exploited if you are not in a community that you can trust. And in many cases, in pro sport, you are in communities or tribes where not everybody's pulling the same way, somebody's looking for your job, or somebody is trying to get ahead of you, somebody's trying to force you out, whatever. So in terms of your relationship with athletes, they are not predisposed to being vulnerable. So a little bit different in special operations community because guys are reliant on one

another a lot more, there are lives on the line, and pro sport is different. But that's why the most important theme for me is authenticity, because authenticity to me means demonstrating or presenting yourself as you are, strengths and limitations together. Now, the first stage is you got to know what they are yourself, like you have to be willing to be authentic and to be confident and strong in who you are, know that you're not perfect, know that you have things that you have to continuously work on, but also know that you have strengths; and by using and reinforcing authenticity, what you're doing is you're not exposing anybody's weaknesses or limitations alone, you're demonstrating and your outlining what they are good at, because when times get tough, yes, your limitations are going to be there, but it is someone else's strengths, positive qualities that are going to pull them out of that difficult moment. And if we only focus on vulnerabilities, limitations, people can sometimes spiral into this perception that everything they're doing is wrong or that they've got no redeeming qualities. Well, no you're dealing with high achievers, you have a lot of strengths and they need to recognize what the limitations are, but know that their strengths and positive qualities are what are going to pull them through this difficult moment and difficult time.

So the key term for me has always been authenticity and, as a practitioner, it's important that you're authentic with the people that you work for, and particularly make it clear and demonstrate to them that you're not infallible, you're not all-knowing, there are areas that you need to continue to work on; and by demonstrating that, you build up relationship with the people that you're working with and they will respond by being authentic too.

DANNY LENNON: And that theme obviously runs through your recent TED talk, and by the time this episode goes out, hopefully, if that's online, I will link to

that in the show notes for everyone to go and watch, and there's one particular line that you said and to kind of paraphrase, it was something about authentic people are not perfect and perfect people are not authentic or something to that...

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Exactly, yeah, because I think when you deal with high achievers, whether in sport or military, there is a perception that we have to be perfect all of the time, and obviously that's what you're striving for, you're striving to be the best possible version of yourself, but we all fail and we're going to fail, we're going to fail in the future. [inaudible 00:36:50] was a jumps coach, I'll never forget him saying one time when he was coaching his athletes, he used to say, when you're coming down, doing this next run, this next jump, you can make any mistake, but just don't make the last one that I corrected. In other words, keep getting better, keep improving, you're going to make another mistake, that's fine, and I'll correct that and we'll just keep refining it. But the idea that people are perfect and this pressure is false, it's wrong, it's impossible, so we need to recognize that you're not going to be perfect, and you'll find one of two trends with high achievers. Those who refuse to recognize what their limitations are, so that trends towards the arrogant, the overconfident which leads to complacency, which leads to just a catastrophic failure; or on the other hand, you've got people who don't recognize what their strengths are, have low self-esteem, who struggle with image, who struggle with self-perception and they struggle very often into a spiral of depression very often or struggle with understanding who they truly are. And so, it's really understanding both types and trying to bring them into the middle of this idea of recognizing that their image and their identity need to be as close as possible to each other.

DANNY LENNON: Compared to when you were first starting to work with elite athletes and maybe some of the presumptions that you had going into that

about what these athletes would care about, what mattered to them, how are those presumptions different to what you've now come to understand about what really matters to these athletes on a kind of personal level?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Yeah, so some of my perceptions would have changed but I think that sport has changed incredibly in the last 10, 15, 20 years. It's far more competitive, there's far more money involved; and the more money you have, the less it actually becomes about truly winning, the more it becomes about profit and loss. So professional organizations now are entertainment businesses, they're not performance businesses per se, they're not sports businesses; and very often, in many cases, not in all, but they are more interested in the brand, the product, the profit and loss, as opposed to maybe trophies, and the number of trophies you win does not directly correlate with profit-and-loss. If you look out and rank sporting organizations by value and by profit, it doesn't equate with the Premier League table or it doesn't equate with the NFL table. So the most profitable brands, the richest organizations are not the winningest. So those are important things too, those were important learning outcomes I guess for me; but for the athlete, and for the player, for the person, it's really about preserving the length of their career because that determines how they are going to be able to retire, because the majority of their life is going to be spent not playing the sport. And so the revelation for me was if I can look after the player, their health, their wellness and keep them in the game for longer, they'll be able to look out for themselves, their family, their loved ones better and for longer.

So it's not about sudden success, it's about sustaining success, and that's the same as well for organizations – if you're working with a coaching team, you need to build a model that's going to sustain success over a number of years, not just suddenly when a title, so like, I mean, Jim Gavin who's just retired and that

was one of the conversations with him was how do you build something that's going to sustain success and dominate, because it is relatively easy, and a lot of people find this hard to believe, but you can take over any group, drive it hard for a year or two and win a national title or an All-Ireland or whatever it might be, just get them very, very fit and, you know – but how do you, to sustain that, that is incredibly difficult, and that's what people should aspire to, and that is the most impressive thing. Those people who work in sport know that that is the most impressive thing about coaches and coaching organizations.

DANNY LENNON: At risk of this being, again, quite a broad generic question, but I'm going to throw it at you anyway, FERGUS – to you, what does it mean to be a world-class practitioner, coach, leader in that field within sport per se, what distinguishes those that you would look at and say they are world-class compared to those who are simply good or relatively competent, what are any distinguishing features?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: I think authenticity is critical. I think those who I respect and those who have stayed in the business the longest, those who have survived are authentic; and so they recognize that they're not perfect, they recognize that there are things that they have changed their mind about, that they've improved; they recognize and know that there are areas that they're not authorities on, they know that there are things that they need to get better at and they study; they are generally less critical of other people as well because they themselves have improved, know that they're not perfect; those who, I guess, are not as well recognized or as well thought of are generally those who are maybe more insecure because of the lack of knowledge, not prepared to accept that there are some things, and there's only one way of doing things. The term, it depends, is incredibly important. If you ask somebody, a practitioner, what is the best way to do something, and if they just give you an answer

straight away without asking you more questions about the specifics of what it is that you're looking for an answer to, they've not truly listened to you, and they've not truly tried to figure out exactly how the solution is going to work for you – because I can give you a solution for anything, but if I don't truly understand your context, your situation, your background, and the details, it's not going to work. So those are the things that are really important. So the best practitioners, the ones who survive the longest are the most honest, the most authentic; and when you sit down with them and you talk with them, they don't have all the answers, they'll engage with you, they'll listen to you, they'll ask you questions. So those are the ones that I have stayed in touch with the most over the years.

DANNY LENNON: I'm sure there's an extremely long list of people that you could name, and maybe if I asked this question a different day, a different answer would pop up, but at least today, when I used that term "world-class coach", what was the first name that might have popped into your mind for one reason or another?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Well, I think Dan Pfaff, who's sprint coach in Arizona, he's probably one of the longest serving coaches who's still coaching today and has coach for years. I think Mike Boyle as well is another great coach. But there are many over the years like, I mean, even Sam Allardyce is someone who I've stayed in touch with, he's been a great influence. But in terms of an actual head coach, Jim Gavin is actually the best, single best head coach I've ever been around, period, in any sport. But there are so many coaches that I have been fortunate to learn from. Like another name that people will find perhaps unusual, the two of them are two English rugby coaches Clive Woodward and Eddie Jones, both incredibly humble when you meet them in person, but that might not be the perception people might have of them in the media, but they're far more humble, far more understanding of what they don't know and

their willingness to learn than people might give them credit for, maybe they just don't show that. And that's probably another important lesson for people is, if you really want to understand someone, you do have to meet them, as opposed to just reading a book or reading a story about them. The number of times that people have said things to me dismissively about coaches who I have worked with or who I know, just based on an article they read or a rumor or a story, and I've had to correct them, that's been, yeah, that's been interesting, because that's a lesson I learned a long, long time ago, never judge anybody by something you're going to read, you got to meet them face to face.

DANNY LENNON: For anyone listening that is interested in finding more about you, your work, anything that you want to divert their attention to, where are the best places on the internet for them to go?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: I know this is probably old school at this stage, I still use Twitter most, I know that most people now use Instagram, but Twitter @Fergus_Connolly, and my website fergusconnolly.com. But yeah, I just try and share the things that I find most interesting now, and it's interesting because over the years, I would have looked more and more at the technical stuff, but now it's more about how do you apply it and how do you create good teams, good cultures, good environments to make things work because I think now we have so much specialization and we have so many experts in individual areas, but unless you can make them or facilitate them working well together and creating environments where they can be successful, it doesn't matter how good you are if you can't make it work.

DANNY LENNON: For sure, and that could be a whole conversation in itself that maybe we will have at some point. But that brings us to the final question that I always end the podcast on, and it can be outside of anything we've discussed

today, and it's simply: 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?

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Take 40 minutes, leave your phone at home and just go for a walk in fresh air regardless of the weather. I think that today we are bombarded with so much information, whether it's tech, knowledge, whatever, that just taking time now to yourself is something that's quite rare. Because even when I was younger, you had to get the bus somewhere or you didn't have a phone, you had far more quiet moments with your own thoughts and they just allowed things to settle, like sleep now is so disturbing, get as much sleep as we did before. So I think it's important to make a conscious effort to take time and go for walks, it's something that I do and a lot of people that I work with have started to copy it, but it's the first thing that I do in the morning is get up, take that time, go for a walk, just to clear my head, figure out also what I'm going to do, think it through and come back, and then I'll start looking at emails and phone calls.

DANNY LENNON: Wonderful. A great way to round this out and, with that Fergus, thank you so much for taking the time to come and talk to me and for all the conversation and for the great work that you continue to do.

FERGUS CONNOLLY: Danny, thanks for having me, genuinely honored, thank you.