



From NFL to Navy SEAL: Lessons on Discipline, Leadership, and Risk

Transcript

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GLEN SMITH: Okay, well, I'm super excited about this, Glen. Thank you for giving us the privilege of chatting with you a little bit on the podcast. I don't know if it'll be a privilege on the other side — you're like, "God, what was that?"

CLINT BRUCE: I love this. I feel very fortunate to have had this kind of force-gumping kind of life that I've had, and the opportunity to steward those stories and talk about the people I've learned something from. It's a privilege. And to do it in one of the more intentional buildings I've ever been in, around an intentional practice — it's fun. Stewardship is a big deal to me, and this feels like an opportunity to steward the things I've learned. I appreciate it.

GLEN SMITH: I've enjoyed learning from you. I remember the first time I met you about ten years ago at Merrill Lynch, hearing your story — it's super inspiring. So, I hope to share a little bit of that today.

GLEN SMITH: [Introduction] Clint Bruce — former U.S. Navy SEAL officer, inducted into the Navy-Marine Corps Stadium Hall of Fame, former NFL player, entrepreneur and leadership speaker, founder of Whole Fast Harbor and Carry the Load nonprofit organizations honoring military members, veterans, and first responders. Recognized for his focus on purpose-driven leadership and resilience.

CLINT BRUCE: That dude sounds cool. I don't know who that is. He does sound awesome. Let's get him here.

GLEN SMITH: You've intentionally spent your life, it seems like, taking the harder route. You've built your whole life not choosing the easy way. Why is that?

CLINT BRUCE: My daughters could answer that for you, because they've heard the lecture so many times. I kind of have this thing — you've got to run at the hard things. When in doubt, choose the harder thing as long as it's virtuous. Because at minimum, you're going to learn a lot about yourself — that's the only time we learn about ourselves. And it's often the only time we

learn about the people alongside us. At the maximum, you're going to learn about yourself and actually do the hard thing.

CLINT BRUCE: And So, to use our time — which none of us know how much we have — doing anything other than learning about ourselves, learning about others, and trying to do hard things just seemed kind of wasteful to me. It didn't seem like stewardship. And I think when you've dealt with mortality as much as I have — and I'm not unique in this — at a very young age I came to grips very quickly with the concept of: I don't know how much time I have, I don't know how much time I have with these people doing this thing. And at the end of the day, I either stole or I stewarded the time that was given to me.

CLINT BRUCE: Success doesn't really have anything to do with it. It's just: did I steward the time? All I can control is whether I stewarded my time or stole it. I'm not perfect on that, but I feel like in retrospect I'll have stewarded it more than I've stolen. And for me, in order to steward my time, I've got to be doing hard stuff.

CLINT BRUCE: There's a story that goes with this. I won't use real names because they'll probably watch this, but when I was growing up in Garland, Texas, if you were in love with a girl, you toilet-papered her house. That's how you said "I love you" — and it rarely works. So, it was like my first special operations mission: me and Derek and Ryan snuck out of my house, crossed the neighborhood, and started TP-ing this girl's house.

CLINT BRUCE: It felt like two in the morning. It was probably 9:30 or 10. We were maybe eleven or twelve. And all of a sudden we hear dogs barking. We turn around and over the crest of the hill come the two biggest dogs I've ever seen in my entire life. They had wings and were breathing fire — probably not, but that's what I saw. I knew Ryan was fast. I didn't realize how fast Derek was until we started running. So, there's chubby little Clint — I looked like Vern from Stand by Me — and Derek's gone, Ryan's been gone for thirty seconds. And I have this moment where I go: I'm not going to outrun these dogs. There's nothing to climb, nothing to hide behind. The only thing I can do is run at them.

CLINT BRUCE: So, I stopped, turned around, and ran straight at these dogs. In my mind they were the biggest dogs that have ever existed. In retrospect — if someone had footage of this — they might've been Corgis. But in my mind, they were the Rottweilers from The Omen. And the second I started running at them, there was this clear moment where they started barking, then looked at each other like — [imitates dogs] — and just turned and ran. Because they didn't know what was happening. He's not scared anymore. He's running at us.

CLINT BRUCE: That's kind of been a metaphor ever since. Run at the hard stuff. Run at the things that scare you. Because you either dictate the terms and timing of your conflict — or sometimes scary things flinch first. That whole "run at the hard stuff" idea proved itself in that moment and has continued to prove itself on every map I've lived on.

GLEN SMITH: Makes sense. And I'm assuming one of the first hard things you did was the NFL?

CLINT BRUCE: The NFL was like the fifth hardest thing. The first hardest thing for me was still playing football at all. We were joking before the cameras on about the arc of my football career. I was so bad that my coach told me to stop wasting his and my time and go to theater. I was fifth-string fullback in eighth grade — and there were only three fullbacks on the team. My dad said, "Son, I'm not disappointed with fifth string. I am disappointed that they put it in the program." One, two, three, blank, five.

CLINT BRUCE: So, I had to make a decision. I wasn't going to be good at football — but how do I not die during football? I came up with this process that helped me keep doing a hard thing: my friends are here, I want to be part of something bigger than myself. And I tell people that not being good at football is what made me good at football. On scout team, you get three or four reps for every one rep the talented guys get. For three years I was getting four snaps for every one snap the more gifted guys were taking. And on scout team you play all these different positions — guard, everything. What I didn't realize at the time is I was amassing 10,000 repetitions in this game called football.

CLINT BRUCE: It all crescendoed halfway through my junior season, playing J.G. Pierce High School. We were up by a lot, one guy got kicked off the team, another got hurt — and my position coach will tell you to this day he didn't want to make eye contact with the head coach when he put me in. My father was up in the stands and it's on camera: everybody goes, "Richard, Clint's in!" And on camera my dad goes, "Clint's not in. Clint's never in. I come here and film y'all's kids." Then they announce a sack made by Clint Bruce. I didn't remember the play that was called — I didn't get repped on it. But I remembered looking at the guard and going, "When I play guard on scout team, if I'm going to pull, I sit back on my heels a little bit. I bet he's pulling." I shot the gap and made the sack. The game made sense to me every day since. Not being good helped me be good.

GLEN SMITH: Makes sense. And how did that transition go from finally reaching the NFL to switching over and becoming a Navy SEAL?

CLINT BRUCE: Something harder, man. That's really what it comes down to. I was very fortunate to have a great career at the Naval Academy and I'm grateful for my time there. I was a varsity player for four years at a Division I program. There's really only two reasons someone plays varsity football for four years: you're really, really good, or the team you join is not really, really good. You can Google Navy football in the 90s. But I had some amazing teammates.

CLINT BRUCE: I wanted to go to the Naval Academy because I told my dad I would. I wanted to go somewhere that was hard. I love the Army-Navy game. I always wanted to serve my nation. The thought of the NFL just hadn't really occurred to me — not because I didn't want to, I just didn't think that far. I was like, I'm going to go play ball. Statistically, I know I've got less of a chance at the NFL, but I knew I had an opportunity. And I always wanted to be a Navy SEAL.

CLINT BRUCE: I did Marcus Luttrell's podcast one time and for years I always struggled with answering when I first wanted to be a Navy SEAL, because I just couldn't remember not wanting to be one. There wasn't a genesis moment — until COVID. COVID happened, and there wasn't a lot of good that came out of it, other than I got to spend a tremendous amount of time with my kids. My oldest daughter says, "Dad, you want to watch Magnum P.I.?" I say, "Yeah, of course." She puts on the new one. I'm like, "Stop. We're not watching that. You don't remake Magnum P.I." So, I took her back to the original.

CLINT BRUCE: In the second season, there's an episode where they revealed that Thomas Magnum played football at the Naval Academy and was a SEAL. All of a sudden this memory rushed to the front of my mind — watching Magnum P.I. with my dad. Thursday nights at 8 p.m. in Little Rock, Arkansas. Chubby little Clint watching that episode and turning to my dad saying, "Hey Dad, I'm going to play football at the Naval Academy and I'm going to be a Navy SEAL." My dad said, "All right." Be careful what your kids watch. I said I was going to do it, my dad said okay, and I was never lost after that.

CLINT BRUCE: My dad had passed away before I got there, but it was still the right place for me. I joined a team that had great leaders and athletes. We ended up being probably the best

Navy football team in twenty years — went to a bowl game, first in twenty-something years, played in several all-star games. But I'd also, been selected for the SEAL community out of Annapolis, which is really hard. I was one of sixteen guys chosen for it. And then I got picked up by the Ravens.

CLINT BRUCE: For me, I'd already begun to wrestle with: I'm not going to take this billet someone's given me and not use it. I'm going to steward the trust that's been placed in me. And it was 1997, so it was Ray Lewis's second year, and I also played middle linebacker. I watched Ray at practice one time and thought — it might be easier to become a Navy SEAL than to beat out Ray Lewis. And I think I was right. So, I went home, just got married, talked to my bride — her father was a scout for the Cowboys, so he kind of knew what the NFL was like — and I told her: I've got to do this. What I knew about football is right here. I don't know how good it could be, don't know how long I could stay. But whatever I don't know about myself, I've got to go find out. What's the hardest, most virtuous thing I can do right now?

GLEN SMITH: There's a book I sometimes give to clients called *The Obstacle Is the Way* by Ryan Holiday. Whenever I'm confused about two options — do the harder thing.

CLINT BRUCE: 99% of the time, that's it. As long as it's legal and ethical, do the harder thing. That's why it's 99% — you don't rob a bank just because it's harder.

GLEN SMITH: When you thought about leaving the NFL to go be a Navy SEAL, were you inspired — or did you feel like you didn't make the cut?

CLINT BRUCE: I didn't feel that way at all. It was the harder thing. I run into guys I played with in the NFL and they've got a bunch of stories about my life. I don't have a lot of stories about theirs — and that doesn't mean the NFL wasn't awesome. It's just, I knew the story. I'd read the book. I didn't live it at full length, speed, and financials, but it's football. It's been the same since Pop Warner. Everything I love about football was really 10x'd in the military — the camaraderie, the hard things. There wasn't much to miss.

GLEN SMITH: You said you loved the violence of it — what did you mean by that?

CLINT BRUCE: I think violence is a great way to figure out if you mean what you say. It's a crucible. As a linebacker I had seventy-five or seventy-six snaps a game — seventy-six opportunities to prove to the people around me and watching me that I want this more than you say you want yours. Let's figure it out. I should probably say it differently — the purposeful physicality of it. Because you've got to do things that tell you the truth. Violence tells you the truth. The world will tell a talented man anything they want to hear. That's why I love hard things: hard things are honest things. The weights are honest. Either you can lift it or you can't. And even if you can, if you don't use the right technique, you're going to hurt yourself. These honest things demand the best of us.

GLEN SMITH: I'd love for you to share a few of your Navy SEAL experiences.

CLINT BRUCE: It's really about the people — not the missions. You could swing a bat and hit someone more accomplished than me in the special operations community. But I love the people I was around. Extraordinary people during really meaningful times.

CLINT BRUCE: We were already deployed when 9/11 happened, so we pivoted right to the Middle East and started doing what's called Maritime Interdiction Operations — hitting ships in the middle of the night. We were American pirates. There was a famous author named Jack Carr in our unit, and watching him work was like watching water roll downhill. We also had two

female Marine Corps aviators flying around the ship, and they were exceptional at their jobs. It was a really, really successful mission.

CLINT BRUCE: We're getting ready to disembark and go hit another ship. For those who don't know the military: in all but the aviation community, the enlisted is where the talent is. The enlisted is what the enemy rightly fears — the courage, creativity, valor, and initiative. If the enlisted are the backbone, the senior enlisted are the spinal cord. My chief was incredible. About 6'3", 240 pounds, been in the SEAL teams a long time. His dad was a SEAL before him. He'd actually been one of my Hell Week instructors. I always wanted to earn his trust every day.

CLINT BRUCE: I turned to him and said, "Hey Chief, the boys were excellent tonight. We've got to do something for them." He got mad. He leaned in and said: "Hey, sir — the reward for excellence is no punishment. I'm not here to be excellent. I'm here to be elite. We're not done yet."

CLINT BRUCE: All of my life made sense to me up to that moment, and really every day since. Because the way you get to the high ground is always the same — you find and follow the right people to the right places and become your version of what you love about them. When I lost my father, I started picking out qualities in people's lives that reminded me of him. What made them different was they were not done yet. They got to the excellent map, did what they said they were going to do — but they found a way to stay restless when others were resting. They found a way to reload when others were relaxing, as a form of stewardship.

GLEN SMITH: If you were going to sit down with young Clint Bruce as he's becoming a Navy sailor, what would you tell him?

CLINT BRUCE: Something very simple: shut up. What I mean is — if I could go back and tell my 23-year-old self anything, I'd tell him to be more courageous in the form of curiosity. Curiosity is courage, because the reason we don't ask questions is fear. The definition of courage is acting in the face of fear. So: ask more questions than you want to, especially the one you want to ask least, and listen longer than you think you have to.

CLINT BRUCE: I struggle with tremendous insecurity — I think there are two kinds of men. We both struggle with insecurity. Some of us are honest about it; some aren't. For me, listening is a discipline. It's a skill. Being a girl dad — three girls and a very patient bride of thirty years — it's become a skill I've had to cultivate, like going to the range.

CLINT BRUCE: I have this five-"mm-hmm" rule. Whenever my wife or daughters are talking, I can't say anything back until I've said "mm-hmm" five times. It's intensely practical. There are times I get to "mm-hmm" three and I'm thinking, "I'm so glad I didn't say anything." By the fourth I've shifted entirely — "Well, what did she say?" It's about listening more than fixing. My form of love is protection — the way I show you I love you is by fixing things. But listening has helped me understand that the fix is still there, it just looks like their definition of fixing, not mine. I wish I'd learned to ask more questions and be a better listener sooner.

CLINT BRUCE: If you walk into a Tier 1 unit or a joint interagency task force, the best operators — the most seasoned, the greybeards — they're sitting up front and asking the most questions. I've seen this on the battlefield and on the ball field. I worked with Florida State, LSU, and Ohio State all in the years they won their national championships. I remember working with Ohio State the year before they won it, and I talked to the team after the coaches left. I had this amazing conversation with guys like Mecca — profoundly wise young men. I went to Coach Day afterward and said, "I'm not predicting the future, but I'll tell you there are only two other teams where the best and youngest players asked me those kinds of questions — authentic, vulnerable questions in front of their teammates. Florida State the year they won, Derwin James

was the guy asking. And LSU, it was the Honey Badger. I don't know what's going to happen, but when your youngest and your best are curious, you're going to win. It's just a question of when."

CLINT BRUCE: Curiosity is a superpower because questions are courage reps. Every time you ask a question, you're repping that courage muscle and making it stronger. Curiosity is one of the only ways I know to strength-train for courage. I tell my daughters: every week, ask one person you don't know three questions, and ask three people you already know one question you've never asked them before.

CLINT BRUCE: Even at 52, when I'm in a room full of people I respect and admire, there's still a knot in the pit of my stomach when I have a question. Because I'd rather you think I know. I'm afraid of the answer, afraid of the work that comes with the answer, afraid of admitting I don't know, afraid of what you'll think when you find out I don't know. The absence of curiosity tells me only one of two things: you already know everything, or you don't care. And I'm too insecure to be around someone who already knows everything, and I won't be around people who don't care.

GLEN SMITH: That makes me think — when we hire new staff, sometimes they want to raise their hand and sound smart in the room. I tell them: instead of saying something you think is intelligent, ask an intelligent question. Whether you're talking to clients or anyone else, you're going to learn far more.

CLINT BRUCE: 100%. You sound smarter asking an intelligent question. If we're briefing a particular operation and the new guys don't ask any questions, I'm coming for them after the brief. I'll pull them aside and say, "You've never done this before and you have no questions?" The absence of curiosity tells me only two things: you already know everything, or you don't care. Neither of those works for me.

GLEN SMITH: When you think of elite performers — Navy SEALs, NFL, business entrepreneurs — what's that thing they have that you can identify early on?

CLINT BRUCE: I've seen two consistent things: conviction and curiosity. There are genetic predispositions for gifting, and when you see someone doing what they're physiologically built to do, that's exciting. But if you don't add discipline to that gifting, it won't last.

CLINT BRUCE: Conviction: you know absolutely why you're here. The most elite people I know are the most intentional people I know. They may be wrong, but they are not wandering. That clarity of purpose allows them to recover from mistakes faster than anyone else, because getting up is getting up, and then dusting yourself off and spinning around and finding the next target. Conviction gives you a fast reset.

CLINT BRUCE: Curiosity: they care more about winning than looking good. They're knowledge carnivores. They're hunting that one percent. Because as an apex predator, you're going to go up against another apex predator. And the outcome is often determined by one percent. Do you want to be lucky and find it, or do you want to have it already in your pocket?

GLEN SMITH: What's the difference, in your mind, between elite and elitist?

CLINT BRUCE: An elitist is always filling themselves up — another cup of themselves, self-serving, fear-driven. Elites are almost reckless with their gifts and abilities. To the average eye, they're recklessly generous. I love telling the story about Ray Lewis in 1997. In theory we're all there to beat him out, right? Room full of linebackers. And I watch him during a meeting — Marvin Lewis was our defensive coordinator — asking other linebackers what they see, what

they think. Sharing what he sees and what he thinks. He came to me: "What do you got?" I said, "I got one question: why are you telling everybody your secrets?" His answer was exactly what I hoped it would be: "Hey — everybody gets the ring, or nobody gets the ring." And then he said, "I ain't scared." Not in a chest-beating way — he said it acknowledging that the reason people don't share is fear. Elites are always pouring themselves out.

GLEN SMITH: What percentage is natural ability versus everything else?

CLINT BRUCE: I don't think anybody who's truly elite got there on natural ability alone. Physical gifts and genetic predisposition can get you to the pros. They will not keep you there. There are two kinds of guys wearing helmets on Sundays in the NFL: guys who wanted to be excellent and had the tools for it, and guys who want to stay. When you get there, other people are just as gifted as you — and some of them want to do the extra things.

CLINT BRUCE: I have a keynote called On Championing. What I've observed about championing organizations is there are always four things: passion, talent, precision, and endurance. The higher up you go, the less passion and talent matter — not because they don't matter, but because everybody has them. Passion and talent are the price of admission. What's left is precision and endurance. Precision isn't being right more — it's being wrong less. Endurance is being wrong less than your competition for longer. That's one of the greatest advantages a great wealth manager gives clients: you're wrong less, especially in down markets. That's when you see it.

CLINT BRUCE: When I was bad at football, I had to find a survival mechanism. I wrote down an equation on a three-by-five card. My mom says she still has it. Angles plus allies plus advantages equals achievements. Angles are the things you can control — understand your craft, be better, faster, smarter, stronger. Allies are making sure you run with people who mean what they say and who remind you what you said when it gets hard. Advantages are treasure and talent — and the reality is you're very rarely the source of either. You're just the steward of them.

CLINT BRUCE: I always tell my daughters: discipline is more don't than do. It's more about what you choose not to do. Saying "I can't" is actually pretty arrogant — because what you're saying is you know everything about the thing and everything about yourself. Genuine humility isn't thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself less. Talent is one of the four things, and it's real. You can't train a 4.2 forty. You can find a 4.3 and make it a 4.26 through efficiencies. But talent alone is a line of credit. If the endeavor is more than the credit line, you better have something else. The mountain makes all men and women average if you're aiming high enough.

GLEN SMITH: In thinking of those elite performers, what percentage do you think is natural ability?

CLINT BRUCE: Nobody who's truly elite is running purely on natural ability. The one thing we've all universally agreed on as a human species is time — 24/7, 365. You and I have the same amount. The person who can sacrifice and steward that finite resource is often going to win. Sacrifice is just a reallocation of time: what do I not do so I can do what matters? And it's a million little five-second decisions.

GLEN SMITH: In your experience in the NFL or the SEALs, what does elite preparation actually look like?

CLINT BRUCE: It's reduction. You can see it in what they won't put on their gear, in what they don't do. They don't go out that night. It's a million little five-second decisions. But one thing I always think about is maps. A map is five things: four borders and an X you think is right. The

borders are more important than the X. The X is based on what you know right now — it could change. But the borders keep you on the map. The borders are the line between always and never. Knowing what you're never going to do is the most important thing. Moving things from the always column to the never column — that's called sacrifice.

GLEN SMITH: When the pressure is highest, what do elite people do differently?

CLINT BRUCE: Everybody listening to this is elite at something, even if the world doesn't acknowledge it. A young mom doing what only she can do — that's an elite application of that gift. Breakfast table, boardroom, ball field, battlefield. What's consistent across all of them is this: one of the questions I get asked most is, "What did you learn going through SEAL training?" I say: nothing. What I mean is, you don't have time to learn going through that. All you have time to do is remember. That's why I love podcasts — it's an opportunity to learn from you what you had to learn the hard way, so all I have to do is remember it.

CLINT BRUCE: The most elite performers have accumulated enough knowledge and scar tissue that they're able to remember in those moments rather than learn in those moments. I told a UFC fighter once: if you're learning and I'm remembering, I'm going to win. He said, "Really?" I said, "No, it's a metaphor. You're a UFC fighter — I'd hit you with a piece of wood." But the point stands: you don't have time to learn in the acute moment. All you have time to do is remember.

GLEN SMITH: What's the biggest leadership failure you see in business?

CLINT BRUCE: Leaders have to resist the urge to act like they know everything. The best leaders I've worked for asked questions they probably should have already known the answers to. It did two things for me: it told me they needed me, and I love being needed. People will follow you if you let them know you need them. The second thing it told me is they're using their time right. We don't need the leader on the range. We need him making decisions that we can't make. Leaders are well-served to let their people know they're not perfect.

GLEN SMITH: When you think of accountability in business, how do you advise someone to have that SEAL-level accountability?

CLINT BRUCE: The mission matters most. That's why standards are really important. When you have a high standard, you're talking about the performance, not the person. You missed that tackle — you're not a bad person. It's not personal. And when someone knows you need them, they take criticism well. Most people genuinely want to be coached. The people who don't want to be coached are just people who weren't coached well along the way.

CLINT BRUCE: I was working with an NFL coach who said, "Make no mistakes." I flinched. He saw it. As we walked off the field, he asked me why. I told him: "These guys are physical geniuses. More of them are geniuses intellectually than they know — you can memorize a playbook and recall it under pressure. When you tell genius to make no mistakes, you deny yourself the creativity of genius. Barry Sanders is your running back — Barry run left, Barry run right, and you just take notes." I suggested instead: "Hey, I need you. Just make new mistakes." That's an environment where you're going to get the best of people, and they'll take criticism well because you're critiquing the performance, not the person.

GLEN SMITH: Is there a moment where you were led by somebody that just inspired you?

CLINT BRUCE: I'm really fortunate in that regard. At the Naval Academy we had world-class coaches. Our offensive coordinator was Paul Johnson, who went on to be head coach at Georgia Tech. Gary Patterson was the safety coach before going to TCU. Phil Emery was our

strength coach before becoming general manager of the Chicago Bears. We went to a school that produced Roger Staubach, Admiral Stockdale, Ross Perot. It's hard to pick out the great leadership because there was so much of it.

CLINT BRUCE: On every map I've been on, there are these very small moments — a handful of times — where you see someone who is exactly as sacrificial, clear, and capable as you want them to be. I've had that hundreds of times. That's just who I choose to follow.

GLEN SMITH: What does "never quit" actually mean in real life?

CLINT BRUCE: We've got to be careful with that phrase. The reality is we quit all the time. I was going this way to come here, there was a traffic jam on 35, so I quit going that way and started going another way. What "never quit" usually means in the common usage is this: always quit doing things that aren't going to get you where you said you were going to go. Never quit trying to get to the high and hard thing. There's a difference between being finished with something and something being final. There's no X on the map where everything is great. There's no house, spouse, car — whatever — where it's all perfect. There are X's worth going to and people worth going with. So, never quit trying to do the high and hard things. But quit every conceivable way that's making getting there harder and slower.

GLEN SMITH: When you look back at your life — what do you hope to be remembered for?

CLINT BRUCE: Each map kind of carries its own answer. On the breakfast table map: I just want to be the kind of guy my girls want to marry. I want to be worth their trust. That means being purposeful, passionate, protective, and a provider. And if the guy they bring home is those four things, I'm still going to scare him off — I'm just going to say, "Come on, two men here, one man, leave." But more broadly: he loved his wife and daughters well, he pointed people towards Jesus, and he used his time. If I get that, I'm good.

GLEN SMITH: Let's do a little rapid fire. Hardest day of Navy SEAL training?

CLINT BRUCE: It's different for everybody — there's no universal hardest day. For me, it was the first conditioning run after leaving the NFL. The instructors were driving next to me in an ambulance and the instructor leaned out and said, "Hey, sir — you are so far behind your class that we cannot effectively respond to a medical emergency up ahead. This is a safety violation." And I thought, "How much running do we do every day? Because I'm going to have to do that a lot." That was my first "I can see this is going to be really hard."

GLEN SMITH: Most important leadership trait?

CLINT BRUCE: Humility. Clarity and humility — those two.

GLEN SMITH: Morning routine?

CLINT BRUCE: I've always wanted the Bible to be read to my daughters by their dad. I say to them: this is a letter from your Father, read to you by your dad. So, every morning I read a chapter of the Bible, video it, and send it to them. For my faith it's been great, because there have been plenty of mornings I didn't want to read it — I was mad or disappointed or ashamed or something. And by 9 o'clock my daughters are asking, "Dad, you going to send us the Bible today?" So, I've got to read it. I can't tell you how many times I've read something and thought, is that new? Has that always been in there?

GLEN SMITH: Other than the Bible, is there a book that changed your life?

CLINT BRUCE: There are so many. I would say Gates of Fire by Steven Pressfield — about the Battle of Thermopylae. Ask anybody in the special operations community; they'll tell you.

Press field is incredibly gifted. I would also say Primal Intelligence by Angus Fletcher out of Ohio State. He's a neuroscientist who went into screenwriting and helped rewrite parts of special operations selection. He talks about how the absence of story is what fosters imagination, and how we need to think in both probability and possibility. If all we think in is probability, we have limited outcomes. That book I've read twice, and I'd give it to all your people.

GLEN SMITH: Last question: one rule you never break?

CLINT BRUCE: Don't steal, and don't tolerate those who do — in any form. And let your yes be your yes.

GLEN SMITH: Well, thank you so much, Clint.

CLINT BRUCE: Thank you, man. I appreciate it. This is fun.

GLEN SMITH: Thank you for joining, everybody. Hope you enjoyed it. Feel free to share this with anyone who would enjoy a conversation with NFL player and Navy SEAL Clint Bruce.

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