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Transcript

Speaker 1

It's time for the outspoken cyclist your weekly conversation about bicycles, cyclists, trails, travel, advocacy, the bike industry, and much, much more. You can subscribe to our weekly podcast at outspokencyclist.com or through your favorite podcasting app to listen anytime. Now here's your host, Diane. Thanks.

Speaker 2

Hello and welcome to the outspoken cyclist. I'm your host, Diane Jenks. Thanks for tuning in today. She really wanted to wear skirts and get her nails done. But Alison Tetrick, while remaining ever the fashionable girl, is a feisty competitor in all sorts of ways. Starting out as a tennis player in high school, she played in college on a full ride where she studied biochemistry. She worked in drug discovery, research for Amgen and then with all her energy and competitive urges. Was egged on to bike racing by her grandfather Paul Tetrick, who found his passion for bike racing in his 60s and raced well into his 80s. Allison's trajectory toward success on the bike was almost instantaneous, as you will hear in our conversation. But it wasn't all unicorns and roses. As strong and capable as Allie is, she tells us about some of the things that will take a person down physically, mentally and emotionally, and learning to deal with them, asking for help. Realizing you can't always do everything on your own will shape you in new and perhaps much better ways. Our conversation runs the gamut from her early successes on the bike to the work she's doing now to get more young girls into the sport and her honesty, humility and frankness are refreshing. Hi, Allison. Welcome to the outspoken cyclist. Thanks for being my guest today. How are?

Speaker 3

You I am doing fantastic. Much better talking to you. It's a it's a.

Speaker 2

Beautiful morning it is. Ohh well, it's sunny here, but it's still cold. It's cold. Cold. I know you're in Petaluma. One of our favorite places we visited a few years ago and we had fun out there. It's really a cool place. So let's talk a little bit about you. Your background is really interesting. All you grew up riding horses. You studied biochemistry, you played tennis. And of course, we're gonna talk about bike racing, so. Let's begin at the beginning where you grew up and how you went from cowgirl to bike racer.

Speaker 3

That's a great story. I don't get sick of telling it. I grew up here in California. So total California girl, my parents had a cattle ranch down in Santa Barbara County in a town called Los Alamos. So have you ever seen the movie sideways? We don't have to talk about Merlot. Good. OK. I don't know your feelings on Merlot, but they now have a cattle ranch up in Redding, CA. Go towards Shasta. So total cowgirl at heart and. I ended up playing tennis in college. It just was a something to do, like sports. I didn't really grow up playing organized sports because we lived pretty isolated on this ranch, but once I went to high school, I picked up tennis and was able to get a full ride and play in NCAA tennis and studied biochemistry, got an amazing career doing. Chemistry research and drug discovery at Amgen in Cambridge, MA. But once I graduated and I wasn't playing tennis anymore, I still had this, like, very competitive edge like I wanted to, like, keep doing something, but it wasn't tennis. You know, there was work and so running and then turned into my grandfather, giving me a good old like elbow in the rib cage, picking up my hands and telling me. That I could be the best in the world at bikes. And I I was like, that is so dorky. Right. Those neon colors. The tight clothing. Like I'm like, I like skirts and getting my nails done. So I you know, so I was like, that's ridiculous. And but my grandfather, Paul Tetrick, he raced until into his eighties, 85, and he was a. That and. A veteran. And so he didn't start bike racing until his 60s. So for anyone listening, it's never too late to start anything and he loved it so much and so he told me I should try bike racing. So I did first triathlon because I I like to run and hate swimming. But you know? But I surprised him. I bought a bike off of eBay. And I I showed up in in Colorado, where he lived and. He, of course, signed me up for, like, the Mount Evans Hill climb as.

Speaker 2

You do? Of course he did, of course.

Speaker 3

But once I started bike racing within a couple of months, I got a professional contract with Tipco, which is the team that's actually still kind of around in in give or take. And I was racing for the national team in Europe after three months of racing. Bike it was a very quick trajectory, one I still haven't quite recovered from, because as you know, bike racing requires a lot of skill. I'm not sure I have the technical skill, but I had the engine so I was lining up for these races in Europe, scared to clip in. Still going like all right, so the gun goes off. But that's how I started and it became just a beautiful, like, love language between my grandfather, like my grandfather and I because he. He was. He's a serious guy, you know. He had a hard life, you know, he's married to my grandmother for over 60 years. And all of that. But he was didn't always show his emotions very well. But bike racing became, I would call him. After every race before race, and it became just something we did together and it was very special for me. But once I found bike racing, it's a challenging sport, as you know. But it was like the science side of me fell in love with it because tennis requires skill too, and horseback riding and all of that. But

cycling is like, I felt this direct relationship of the more time. I put into riding my bike and focusing on my training like the better my results were and then also something about riding a bike, reminding me of my childhood growing up on a ranch, you get a clip in once you learn how. To clip in and. Take off into the sunset, right? Like it's quite roomy.

Speaker 2

It is romantic and it's interesting you say that my husband and I fell in love on a tandem and we still ride a tandem to. This day. So I have some questions about your mishaps. If you want to call them that and they're not pretty. In fact, you actually have had a TBI, you were hit by a truck. And yet you keep getting back on the bike. So tell me a little bit about what happened and how you manage to get back on the bike. There is something else we are going to talk about later in, in our conversation that is specific to women, but I this is for everybody. I think everybody who crashes has that moment. That can I get back on the horse as we.

Speaker 3

Say yeah, so the I'm sure I had. I had a lot of crashes before because that's bike racing, not if you crash but when, which is unfortunate, but it's a part of the sport. What's a little romance with a little Trump without a little? Trauma right now, but.

Speaker 2

One way or another.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 3

In 2010, we just came back from winning, winning, winning the Jared Italia Don. So I was raised for Team USA and and we won the overall Giro, which was huge and I was doing a race up in Oregon called Cascade Cycling Classic and I. He was sitting second overall in GC. I'm feeling pretty confident I'm finally going like I'm a professional. I've got this. We talked about it earlier, but now I know how to clip in, right, so I'm good. It's important.

Speaker 2

Right, it's clipping out. You know, that's the that's the that's the real test.

Speaker 3

I've got some good stories on that, but yes.

Speaker 2

I think we all do.

Speaker 3

So I I was involved in a big crash. I saw it happening. I thought I could exit it and I didn't. And so I ended up crashing at 45 miles an hour to 0. No sliding, no blood. So I shattered my pelvis and my brain. I was life flighted out and seizures and all of that for a couple days. And I think I was just so fixated on the broken bone. Because I can't walk, I'm in a wheelchair. And this is a little bit before people were talking about traumatic brain injuries and concussions as the common knowledge. And so I was so fixated on getting back on the bike, I probably ignored a lot of the other symptoms I was having that were surrounding that TBI. Arguably, I came back super fast like I was just so laser focused on winning, getting back qualifying for the Olympics like let's. You know? And then I was at the Pan American Games for Team USA in 2011 and I had a fluky just warm up crash on my time trail bike, and then it was just lights out where I couldn't read. I got really depressed, went through divorce. You know, there's just a lot of things going on at that time. And so when you're talking about coming back, I would like to give a note of warning to not come back too fast because I learned that lesson. I was so laser focus or fixated on my identity as a cyclist, and the bike was everything and all I needed to do was get back on that bike. And I forgot about everything else about me and how to take care of myself. So my first note of warning is give yourself grace. And I learned that in the second time. So having a concussion on top of the TBI was really bad. And to come back that time, I was really angry, to be honest. And like I was ***** and I didn't. I was depressed. And All in all, the stuff that's normally in your brain just was, like, exasperated. And I wanted to come back, but then I had to realize that I needed to come back slower, give myself grace, and also make sure that the bike wasn't my only identity because you just gave me a lovely intro, which is really sweet, but sometimes we forget like every other part of us that we are where wives, sisters, daughters, biochemists, Cowgirls, whatever. We are. We're. We're, we're friends, you know, and all these things. And. And I just was like I'm a cyclist and I must get back on. And so the second time I had to come back to the bike on my terms. And for me, and not for external validation or for my identity. And so when I came back. It was in a much more graceful state, not graceful, that I'm graceful, but giving myself grace and others that I didn't have to be perfect on the bike, and I didn't have to exceed all expectations. But I needed to make sure I was coming back for the right reasons and to understand that that time that I gave myself was also a gift.

Speaker 2

So I have a question and not being an elite athlete myself, but watching women especially. We seem to be harder on ourselves than men are. For some reason, and maybe that's just a perception that I have, but do you think that women have expectations of themselves greater than men do?

Speaker 3

I do. Actually. I think we in society holds us up to a higher standard and especially ourselves. We're like we're our own worst critic. Right and. Also, when I was dealing with these symptoms, when you're talking about a traumatic brain injury. I'm telling people or trying to explain how I feel and it's like, oh, you just might be on your period or. Ohh. Of course, you're just being a girl. Right. And. And so then I just said, OK, fine, I guess it's all my problem, right? It's like my fault. It's my fault for feeling this way. It's my fault for, for even crashing in the 1st place, right? Like I blame myself. And I do think that women we tend to do that because that's what we're taught. And that's, you know, you have to not only be a mom, a wife, you have to also have to make money. And not too much money. You know, it's all those things from the Barbie movie. It's like, totally true. Right. OK, yeah, but no, no. But, you know, like the.

Speaker 2

I get what you're saying. I do get what you're saying. You feel like you have to. Go above and beyond.

Speaker 3

Yeah, you have to earn your seat or you have to, like, earn this and you don't feel like you deserve it. And my personality tends to also just take it very personally. Like, it's up to me and only me to solve this. When you're talking about something like mental health and a traumatic brain injury like, you cannot solve that all on your own, you do need. Help. And then when we ask for help, I think especially as women, you ask for help, that's a very vulnerable place to be. And then I always refer to as like blood in the water because it just like can also bring around the wrong people that are like going to try to help you because they sense that vulnerability, fear and where you are.

Speaker 2

Ohh that's interesting.

Speaker 3

Sorry, I got dark. I got dark.

Speaker 2

There. Yeah, that's OK, though. That's OK though. One of the reasons I found you was because of some of your amazing willingness to. You. Talk about this kind of stuff and and we'll be talking about some other stuff. So who helped you most was it? Therapy or physical changes? What helped you most, and are you still dealing with some of these problems?

Speaker 3

Yes, I'm still dealing with some of these problems. When people ask how long it took me to recover, how long did it take you to recover? I'm like. What day is it? Like, let me tell you my symptoms. Yeah. Yeah. It's something that you just deal with every single day.

OK? And. And it'll change. Some days, you're gonna feel amazing. And some days you're gonna feel horrible. And you'll. I call it symptomatic, you know, maybe a motorcycle passes me when I'm riding. It's too loud and my head starts ringing. And then I'm. Just like whoa. Or I have a panic attack or, you know, like things happen. But I think what helped me the most was honestly, my neuropsychologist. So I ended up going to grad school to study neuropsychology for this reason. And I and. He did. Because the therapist is amazing, but I needed to understand, like how my brain was working and I needed to retrain even, like my eye to track on a page. And the neuropsychologist was the first person that I sat across the table from, and it made the cover bicycling magazine. But he wouldn't let me ride my bike. And I was. I'm saying ****
*** again. I was passed off. I was like, I wanna ride my bike. He's like, why? And I like didn't have an answer. Diane, like I didn't have an answer. I just like cuz I am Allison. I ride bikes like I need to ride bikes. And so that's where that that came from. Is is. Then I finally came in and I look over at him and I rode my bike. There was like 2 miles from my house and I rode my bike over. And and he was like, so every day, every week, he'd ask me, why do you want to ride your bike? And then I just finally, like, went over. There and. I said cause that swear word bike owes me something I want to do this for me and then he and I. Then I felt horrible. Right woman thing here going. I can't believe I just said that. And I swore in front of this man and and I feel selfish. And why did I say that?

Speaker 2

You say?

Speaker 3

That way. And then he looks at me and he goes, Ali. That's like, the most sane thing you've said in months. He's like, alright, you're doing it for you. So I think the big key is is. Neuropsychologists. Medical attention, you know, medical professionals, your loved ones. But I do think it's really important to have accountability partners that aren't your partner or your family, because that can be really difficult if your husband or your best friend is saying, oh, please don't ride your bike, Diane, like you don't. You don't feel well. You're like, screw you. I'm gonna go ride my bike. You just don't understand. So I think having accountability.

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 3

Partner that is outside of your close friends. So or family is important and then also tracking it. Because I think sometimes in this recovery process you get so bogged down into like, I'm not getting better, I'm not getting better. And so if you track it, I'll wake up and be like, oh, it's amazing. I'm perfectly healed. Oh, that's horrible, you know? So if you track it, you can see the pattern of how you're feeling and then you can be like, now

I can ride X amount of hours. And I feel good or, you know, you can track it. And there's good days and bad days. So that's my main advice there.

Speaker 2

Let's take a short break. We're speaking with Ali Alison Tetrick. She's a pretty remarkable athlete and human being, and you're listening to the outspoken cyclist. We'll. Be right back. We are back on the outspoken cyclist. We're speaking with Allison Tetrick, bike racer cowgirl neuroscientist. A whole bunch of other things tennis player. Do you still play tennis at all?

Speaker 3

Yeah, I just took it back up again. Yeah, we just played.

Speaker 2

Good.

Speaker 3

Last night, yeah.

Speaker 2

Good for you. All right, we've been speaking about Ellie's brain injury but and I think everything you said was just so interesting, especially the accountability part of it. And having somebody outside of your regular circle of people. To. Make you accountable, more accountable and that you can actually talk to and not have not have expectations of what you're gonna hear back because a lot of times you'll say something and you know what? Somebody's gonna respond with and that feels good in a way or not, but at least it's something you can depend on. And so having something that you may not expect. Can probably make it better, but I want to talk about something that else that's very female. Oriented, I think every woman has who rides a bike, has experienced problems riding their riding their. Bikes. And you actually had probably one of the more extreme problems and had to have surgery or chose to have surgery. Explain. What happened to you? With the saddles, I mean saddles are so personal and so tough and there are hundreds if not thousands of them on the market and you could spend \$100,000 trying to figure out what the, what the right saddle is to keep you from having really serious problems. What happened to you?

Speaker 3

Oh goodness. So, I mean, I I raced professionally for a long time. I I technically still do, but we'll tour for over 10 years and when you race for teams. You have a sponsor and a team that tells you what saddles are rides so early. Part of my career it's just like you will ride this saddle and then the next year you will ride this saddle and you basically you do bike fits. You understand. But this time I mean no one I'm like out this hurts, I'm uncomfortable and they say cycling's hard. You need to suffer. Get used to it.

Speaker 2

I suck it up. Right.

Speaker 3

I was like, OK, you know, I'm young and I was like, yeah, let's. Do that and I'm like, oh, and then they just kept telling me just to deal with it. Cycling's hard, it's painful. Get used to it. And that happened for years and years, and it was causing a lot of chronic inflammation. I ride my bike a lot and then also racing your pelvis is tilted forward. And I have a broken pelvis. Remember? It shattered. I got bone spurs in there like I totally shattered my Pelvis. So I'm just like, constantly uncomfortable chronic inflammation is coming and like, it can't go. Cramps, like we're putting frozen peas down our bibs, like after stage races. We're like trying anything. And we're so uncomfortable. But for me, the chronic inflammation got so bad. I was riding out here for my group ride and I'm like, adjusting myself. Like to get comfortable. Like, I had to sit crooked. I'm sitting on like a bone spur and. Then I'm. Switching and. It was 2015 and I just like had it. I was like, I can't, like, I can't even ride a bike and it's my job. I love doing it, but I'm so uncomfortable. I'm so mad. And so I I. Called my coach at the time and he's he's awesome. But I said OK. I'm so embarrassed. Diane. I'm so. Embarrassed, like and.

Speaker 2

That's part of the problem right there.

Speaker 3

Like the girls, like the women on my team. Like we talked about it. And you know, maybe. We even like. You know, we we talk about it very openly, right? But outside of that bubble, I I was very uncomfortable even to like my partner or my family. Right? Like, it's just a very uncomfortable thing to discuss. And I the pain level and the threshold, I have a very high pain threshold and I could not sit on a bike anymore. I'm sitting like completely on like my thigh. I'm switching like side to side and right time trialing on like who knows what. And so I got. I called my coach and I said OK, this is a problem. I'm really embarrassed. I have to tell you this. And he goes OK. So go get this surgery and when they do the stitches, make sure that the stitches are here. So it doesn't. And I was like what?

Speaker

What?

Speaker 2

Already, your coach already knew about this and his solution or her solution was a labiaplasty.

Speaker 3

Yep, labiaplasty. And he told me exactly where to put this. Like, tell the surgeon, like, the stitches need to go a little differently because you're gonna get back on the bike and blah, blah was like. Ohh then the rage, the rage in my soul. I was like, wait, you knew he was like, yeah, I was like. OK, fine. So I do it and you know, and and it was, it really helped. But I had talked about it so frequently in the peloton, so I realized all these women that had it and all these women that were curious. And so I just, you know, basically in the locker room, not that we have that in the peloton minus like. Perry or Bay or something. But you know, we're talking about all the time. So I'm getting. I'm learning about it. And so I got a DM from a woman that was an editor at Marie Claire. I believe her glamour. And she wanted to do an article, how labiaplasty wasn't just for vanity reasons that like women in sports needed it. And I wasn't ready for that yet. Like that was just embarrassing and too much. So I said no, I thank you for your interest, but no. And then I got another DM from a woman that worked at specialized and she said heard you had a problem. Do you wanna talk? Said sure. So I get on this Skype. This is how long. Ago it was Skype, yeah. I get on a Skype call with her and some engineers that specialized. And they go. No, our you know, our athletes would tell us if we had a problem, there's no problem. I was like, oh, there's a problem.

Speaker 2

Oh, that's interesting. They would actually think that knowledge, they didn't know that women. OK, moving on, let me hear the.

Speaker 3

Rest the next day, they said. Ohh, let's develop a saddle. We have a problem. Said Oh yes we do.

Speaker 2

Specialized. Giving them credit has done a lot for women cycling in terms of saddle design and research. I'm not sure it solved the problem for everybody, but it it's going to be an ongoing problem. I mean, men have problems, different problems, erectile dysfunction was a big issue. I don't know what else was going on, but that was huge 20 years ago there were big, you know, articles long, articles about it. Never, never until recently have there been conversations about women's issues.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I will give them. I mean, Ivan was specialized ever since Full disclosure, but we've been working on that project for a really long time. I wasn't racing for them, but they listened to me. They reached out, listened to me, and I'm talking within 24 hours. We're like, let's like, see what we can do. And I think it's just somebody needed to be a little loud in a squeaky wheel. And I had never thought that would be me in this situation. Because it's very embarrassing and personal.

Speaker 2

It is very. Personal and I can see how it can be very embarrassing, but what's more embarrassing is your inability to fulfill your obligation as a cyclist.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 3

Or just love of the sport. Like I think sometimes, like as a professional, I have to keep riding. I think that's why the damage got so bad because it happens in a stage race. I'm gonna keep riding. I'm just gonna sit on my, like, half of my **** cheek or like, my pubic bone versus like sitting on your soft tissue because I'm just gonna make it work. Other people.

Speaker

Right.

Speaker 3

Then in women, just maybe take a day off or you don't wear leggings anymore because it doesn't look good or like you figure it out.

Speaker 2

So I guess one of the questions I have, I don't know, I have so. Many. I don't ride those that that number of miles. I have my own issues, but that's not one of them. What would you see the incidence of? This kind of disfigure it's it's disfiguring, this disfiguration is.

Speaker

Yes.

Speaker 3

I I think what we've discovered is it's the key issue is chronic inflammation. So it's just a bunch of micro like microtrauma. I mean some people can have blunt trauma where it just will balloon up because maybe you crash in a saddle or something like will hit your crotch area and you can you can get like a hematoma or something like that, those are.

Speaker 2

OK.

Speaker 3

Less common I I have heard of it. It's only happened to me once, but the rest, I think was just like chronic swelling, like chronic inflammation, chronic swelling, and then it the tissue becomes this fibrous scar tissue. So much so when I got the labiaplasty, my

plastic surgeon thought I'd cancer because she had never seen tissue down there like that. And I. Was like, that's gross, but.

Speaker 2

Wow. OK.

Speaker 3

I can't believe we're talking about this. Ohh well yeah, but.

Speaker 2

No, that is why. We're talking, I think that people want to know. If, first of all, are they crazy? If they're having problems, what they can do about it other than get off the bike. If you love riding, you don't want to get off your bike. That was clear that you both first of all you were being paid to ride, but you also.

Speaker 3

Loved it. I love riding my bike, so there's that chronic inflammation and so basically the swelling stops, like going away. And women are built different than men. Obviously in that area especially. And so when you you're doing a heat map and you know this from your bike fitting. So you can do like a heat map to see where the pressure points are on the saddle. And this is where men were complaining about numbness. And then this is where the erectile dysfunction like articles came out.

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 3

And so they're putting me on a heat map and and they say, OK, look, you're fine. Like this cut out has has solved the problem, which they thought it had with men. And I'm like, but I still hurt. And I said no, it's like still painful. And what's happening is there's like, edema and, like, you know, so you're you're getting, like, pinched, like lack of blood flow. And then you're also getting blood flow pooling. So there's like two different types of swelling that's going on. One is lack of blood flow one. Too much. And So what we had to come up with is which we first launched in the mimic saddle and then now I I ride a mirror, which is similar concept where you take out the channel where there's a hole and you're providing a soft tissue support in the middle of the saddle. So I'm still getting my structural support on my hip bones, even though that nice. And bone spur. So I like a nice soft but structural support. Like I want to feel stable on the bike. I need a soft nose for when you tilt your pelvis forward. But then you need something in the middle where as a woman's anatomy and turns out for men down too. It's a game changer. Is that you fill that Channel with. I will be frank. I called a vagina trampoline.

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 3

In there, where it's just like it's its soft tissue support. And so because that was hard for you to see on a pressure map where the blood is pooling. So one part is like I said is getting pinched and the other part is getting an abnormal amount of blood flow which is causing a.

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 3

Lot of inflammation both ways.

Speaker 2

So wow, I'm full of questions and I can't even figure out what the first one is. So has OK. Here's the right one. Has the mirror saddle solved? Problem.

Speaker 3

First mimic and then into the mirror. For me, I am so comfortable no more damage has like no increased damage. I feel stable. I still I'm a very fluid rider so I can move around. I like to move around on the on the saddle a bit. Some. Are more stable and for me it has been an. Absolute game changer and one of my most proud accomplishments of my career in life. But for those listening, if you're happy with your saddle, you don't need to. Go change it right? Also, bike fits are really important so.

Speaker

I'm.

Speaker 2

Really surprised when women come in and say ohh riding jeans and I feel fine all the time and I'm like Oh my gosh, how does how do you do that? And then there are people like you and you know, I guess if I rode that much, I mean the longest ride. He ever did was 90, some odd miles in Iowa in 100°. Heat and I ended up with the UTI you. Know that was. That was bad enough. Gloria Lou in her article, and we're going to reference the article on the website called this a silent epidemic. And clearly that is the problem. People weren't talking about it. And now they are. And even though that article is a year old, I just discovered it. So. How long ago did you have this surgery?

Speaker 3

I had the surgery in 2015.

Speaker 2

So it's been 10 years.

Speaker 3

MHM.

Speaker 2

And you're doing good.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I am. I I would probably go back when I was after being done racing because I was so swollen. Uh, she couldn't. I mean, they're just they get so vascular down there. So it's really hard to to move around. Remove some of that scar tissue when it was so exasperated. But I'm doing great and I'm comfortable on the bike and I'm really proud. Of that difference that we made this whole team from Andy Pruett and Stephanie Kaplan from specialized and into this silent epidemic cause we no one talked about it. And Gloria fun story, we talked about my brain. Injury. I was on the cover of bicycling first time for my brain injury and that was in 2000. 17 I believe 18 it came out. And so when Gloria reached out to me about this article, she did a very. Raw, But real portrayal of all the issues I went through, traumatic brain injury. So when she reached out for this story, I knew I could trust her with it. And to be Frank, Diane, I didn't even read the article for probably six months cuz I was too terrified so.

Speaker 2

Great. She did a great job with the article and I think bringing. The issue to light has hopefully made a difference for a lot of people. The question is, has he who hasn't read it? Who needs to know about it and just what? What we go through, what we're willing to put up with. It's pretty remarkable. When you think. About it.

Speaker 3

It is, it is, and I. It's also, though frustrating, because I don't know. I have this buzzword or not buzzword, but it makes my skin a little crawl is that that's suffering part, you know, like cycling like you. Gotta suffer. Yeah, I know. Right. And and I'm like, you know, we're riding bikes like, so you got some like lactic acid in your legs, your lungs are burning. It's hard you crash. But I mean, there's so much like harder things in life. But for somebody to tell me that I can't, like, I just need to suffer through being uncomfortable on the bike is just ***** like.

Speaker 2

It is, it is. So I have a personal question.

Speaker 3

MMM.

Speaker 2

Bike were you having issues off the bike too before you had before you had the surgery? I think.

Speaker 3

Like riding a horse was uncomfortable just because of everything going on down there and then off the bike. I think it was a lot to do with just self-confidence and being embarrassed. So you know or just yeah, being really insecure and uncomfortable like in jeans or, you know, you said somebody wrote in jeans. Like how? That's just how.

Speaker 2

How it's like we had a we. Had a this guy was a. He was an eye, an ophthalmologist, I think. And he was just learning to be a triathlete and he came in and was saying, well, so are you on for a fitting? Are you uncomfortable? And he goes yes. And we're like, well, are you wearing underwear? Cause that's the first thing you ask for a new rider. You shouldn't be wearing it. He goes. No, I'm wearing a jock strap and we're like, oh, you know, it's like I'm just. You can imagine what that must feel like to a guy. I I mean. Yeah, it's great support in the pool, but not not on the bike, you know? So I understand what you're saying. My question was more about your personal life was did it affect other areas of your personal life like your? Or. Intimate.

Speaker 3

Life. I'm a pretty monogamous person, so I think I I felt I.

Speaker 2

But you haven't had a partner?

Speaker 3

Yeah. Yeah. And I think I was. Very transparent about my insecurity there and I was accepted with love and grace so but I.

Speaker 2

I meant more in terms of discomfort.

Speaker 3

Oh, I didn't have an. Issue that way.

Speaker 2

That's awesome.

Speaker 3

Very awesome, believe me.

Speaker 2

That is very awesome. Yeah, because that would have been the first thing I would have thought of. Oh, wait, but there's none of that. OK, cool. All right, so.

Speaker 3

I'm blessed.

Speaker 2

That's OK. Nobody's going to see the the video that we've got going here. It's all. Gonna be audio. We can do all kinds of stupid things on this video and we do. We do. OK well. So what's next? What are you doing now? What kind of cool things are you doing?

Speaker 3

Now, well, I just came back from Patagonia in Chile. So I did.

Speaker 2

You were in Chile. We couldn't talk till you got back, right?

Speaker 3

Yeah, it does 2 weeks doing fireflies Patagonia. Next up I go to sea Otter which is really exciting. Big Bike party for those. That haven't heard of it. It's amazing. I'll go to unbound. I'm going to do the 100 mile for this cause called more women more miles, so hopefully pace and get a good group of gals together to. Conquer their 1st century or first gravel century or gravel race make it very approachable. If anyone wants to buy a bandana, just look up Allie Tetrick, bandanas that all goes get more girls on bikes. But yeah, so unbound SBT we're headed to Scotland. My husband and I to do a gravel race in Scotland. Never been so we got big things coming.

Speaker 2

I have a question for you about gravel racing and and just about racing in general. How little bike racing there is in the US Rd. racing. There's nothing left. There are no. MHM. Big teams or no big stage races, nothing you think might change that because a lot of what we talked about or we'll talk have talked about is women's racing and how good it is right now, but it's. Not so good here.

Speaker 3

Ohh I know it's I cover women cycling on the Move podcast so I I host the move with Lance Armstrong and Laurie Holden and I Love women's bike racing so much. Of course I used to do it and they're all still my friends and competitors, but it's so cool. But I think here in the US we need to like perhaps gravel racing has helped because it's becoming a little more mainstream. Something that that's very popular here, possibly because it's less expensive to put on if you're not closing big city roads for these Rd.

races. I'm a roadie at heart for being called the Queen of Gravel. I am a roadie, roadie at heart. I ride my road bike 99% of the time. I love Rd. racing so I think it's about making it. There's just a huge. Influx of interest in just women's sports in general right now, and I think that we it's we're at a very pivotal time here in the US to make cycling less niche and to make it more like mainstream because as you know so many people ride bikes, but bike racing somehow like exists on a different planet and then especially women's racing, right, so. You know about the tour, you know about this, but like, how do we bring it here? And you see the tour Colorado is might come back. So that's kind of interesting. All that, but there's just a way that we need to make it more like less niche and and make it where maybe it's like increasing fandom where we we have those riders to follow and love and cheer on, and then you become more. Connected with the sport, there's that option, I think. It's easy for me because I know these women and and also I will always be a fan, but it it's creating that hero and that place where it becomes more of a mainstream sport to at least spectate or join.

Speaker 2

So what do you say to the fact that there's research showing? That. 50% of the parents are not teaching their children to ride.

Speaker 3

Oh, I had not seen.

Speaker 2

That right, so that's out of UVA. Yeah, there's uh, Dr. Ralph buehler. Does that kind of research. And he found that 50% of the parents are not teaching them to right, they're not teaching. Them to swim either so.

Speaker 3

It's gonna ask about swimming next, cause that would. That's like on the. Same thing. Yeah. Those two things I think are like.

Speaker 2

The the. Their life, I can't think of the word I I want, but they're important to being a young kid and a human being. You know? How are you not learning to ride a bicycle? And I think it a lot of it is the fear that parents have of letting their kids out of their sight, which is kind of weird and silly, but. I I guess I get it. I don't know. But that I think that's going to make a big difference if we are losing a whole generation of young riders.

Speaker 3

Which is shocking to me though, considering like the climate impact that just, you know, green commuting can do too. I mean, like, if your kids can ride their bike to school and they're not taking a bus or you don't have to drive them, or I mean, and then that that

maybe just go then to to a bigger problem is more cycling friendly streets and communities.

Speaker

Yes.

Speaker 3

Not for like putting on road races, but can your child go from point A to point B on a bike and you are OK with that, like Petaluma has an amazing infrastructure with bike paths and things like that, but not all cities are like that. So.

Speaker 2

We don't all live in cities and and it is improving in some places, but it's just interesting to me. I know that also one of the other barriers, the cost of cycling is not inexpensive. Good bikes are not cheap, so that often may be a deterrent too. Especially today with the way things are in tariffs and everything else. So we'll just have to see how that plays out. But I just wondered what you thought about that. If you if you knew that statistic.

Speaker 3

It's a scary statistic, and I mean, I talked about my bandanas earlier. It was just our COVID project. Instead of making sourdough, we designed bandanas, and we decided to do scholarships for Nika and especially here in Norcal High School Cycling league. And they have a program called Grit, which is girls riding together. And I go and camp with the girls and and I want to be honestly.

Speaker 2

OK.

Speaker 3

And I was like. I don't know if I would want my child to race bikes because look at what I've been through. Like, you know what about tennis? That seems safer, right? I know they're at. A. Country Club. But once I went to these programs in another amazing program like Little Bellas, this is like elementary level. I I get I get to go hang out with them and.

Speaker

Great.

Speaker 3

It's. Just it wasn't about racing. And it's just to me about getting young women, especially since my touch point. But it's like getting young women into sports and keeping them in sports because most women start sports. You know, as you do as a in

your childhood, and then they leave the sport around that you know, 12 to 14 years old. Imagine what's happening there, going through puberty, body changes, societal expectations. But then there's this great study by Ernst and Young that shows like it's like 89% of executives female. Executives played sports, you know, passed this puberty age. So for me, it's like, not that I want these women. I'm giving these scholarships for these, like, underrepresented communities to get into cycling. And. But it's more just to keep them in sports and give them that confidence and that skill set to succeed later in life because sports changed my life. And it wasn't always bikes. It doesn't have to be bikes. For me, it's my passion and my life. But it's just sports and what that can do to a young woman's life if they stay in sports. And that's a really cool study I have to send you because it's and Deloitte. Also did another one. On that. But it's just this level. All of the confidence and skill set that sports can bring women throughout their lives and to then give them success in their later careers. It doesn't have to be as a professional athlete, and I think that's really important. So anything I can do to get young women on bikes and keep them on bikes or in any sport in general I think is super important.

Speaker 2

I agree. So tell my listeners how they. Follow you.

Speaker 3

Ohh boy, I am on Instagram at AM Tetrick. AM TETRICK and you can just Alison, Tetrick, ALISONTETRICK and check out the bandanas Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. Just DM me if you need anything. I'm here. Yeah.

Speaker 2

Well, I really appreciate talking with you. It's been fun and informative and interesting, and you have lots of energy. I love it.

Speaker 3

I thought I was calm today.

Speaker 2

I you know what? Been there, I know. Exactly what you're saying? Well. Thank you again and I hope we get to talk again.

Speaker 3

Sign me up. Thank you so much for your time and your honesty. I appreciate it.

Speaker 2

My thanks to Allie for speaking with me today. She's a real treasure and I enjoyed our conversation immensely, taking the bull by the horns, so to speak, by charging in and learning about what was happening to her. Finding the support team she needed and making better choices has certainly led to a more sane and happy. Allison. You can

follow her on her journey at AAM Tetrick, TETRICK on social media. Check out her bandanas. There's a link on the outspokencyclist.com and help support more girls and women on bikes. We will also have a link to Gloria Lewis article cycling's silent epidemic on the outspoken cyclist too, and if you find yourself at either unbound or sea Otter, look her up. She'll be there. My thanks to you for listening. I'd like to let you know that there is now expanded content for most episodes on my brand new sub stack page. I've realized that a lot of things come up after my conversations and I thought I'd explore them in writing. If you like what you are reading, please subscribe. And if you really like what you are. Meeting. Please consider a paid subscription to help support the expanded effort. Remember that you can find every episode of our podcast on our website, outspokencyclist.com. Each is accompanied by photos, links and a written transcript of the show. Next time, I'll be speaking with Sarah Barnes, another podcaster and journalist who specializes in micro mobility. Especially autonomous vehicles and urban geography, we'll explain that also. Ex pro racer Levi Lighthammer will also be joining me to talk about his grand Fondo, as well as his ideas about how to reboot Rd. riding here in the US. I am all ears on that one. Until then, I hope you have a great day. Please stay safe, stay well, and remember there is a. Always time for a ride. Bye bye.

Speaker 1

Thanks for joining us today on the outspoken cyclist with Diane Jenks. We welcome your thoughts and contributions on our Facebook page or visit outspokencyclist.com to leave a comment on any episode. We'll be back next week with new guests, topics, conversations and news in the world of cycling. Subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast app and you'll never miss an episode. The outspoken cyclist is a copyrighted production of DBL promotions with the assistance of WJC U FM Cleveland, a service of John Carroll University. Thanks again for listening. Ride safely and we'll see you next week.