



Episode 517: Jimmy Rex on Putting a Stop to Sex Trafficking & What to Watch For

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com and wellnesse.com. That's wellness with an E on the end. And this episode tackles a tough topic, but I think a very, very important one in today's world. And that is the topic of sex trafficking. I am here with Jimmy Rex, who is an incredible person who chooses to live his life in a way where not one moment goes to waste. And for him, this means actively being on the ground, helping rescue people from sex trafficking, among many, many, many other things.

He's currently, for instance, an active real estate agent with one of the most sought out coaching programs in the country about real estate. And he's also a very popular speaker. He has his own podcast called "The Jimmy Rex Show" that shows extraordinary people, living extraordinary lives. And he also spends time trying to make a difference in the world, including as an undercover operative for various organizations that rescue people from sex trafficking, including numerous very dangerous trips to other countries to save young children and teenagers.

And we talk about this today, how he's worked on 12 different operations to rescue people, how this is a widespread problem in many U.S. cities and worldwide, and how often, when they land in a new place, they are able to find people being trafficked within just a couple of hours. Why sex trafficking doesn't always look like you think it would, and what to watch for. Why these organizations spend six times as much on aftercare than rescues, and how they support people after they're rescued. And things like how to teach your kids to be aware of the risk, what to look out for in your own kids and in their friends, important boundaries to help your kids put in place so they will be less at risk, tech guidelines to be aware of. How, especially children, are targeted through technology and social media. Some travel tips related to staying safe, especially in other countries. Important conversations to have with your kids around this topic, and steps we can all take to help this problem worldwide, as well as some really fascinating side tangents about Jimmy and what he does in the world. So like I said, tough topic, but I think an important one. And I think that you will learn a lot. I know I did and didn't realize quite how widespread and horrific this problem is. So on that note, let's join Jimmy.

Katie: Jimmy, welcome. Thanks for being here.

Jimmy: Hey, I appreciate you having me on, thank you.

Katie: Well, I'm excited to chat today about a topic that I think a lot of people maybe prefer not to think about, but one that I think is really, really important. And that is the topic of childhood sex trafficking. And I know that's an intense one. And we're gonna go a lot of different directions with this. But first and foremost, I would love to hear how you got into this work in the first place.

Jimmy: Yeah, so our mutual friend, Paul Hutchinson. I was at a networking meeting about six years ago and I heard him speaking. He had just got back from doing his first undercover operation that he had gone on. And as I was listening to him tell the story, it just touched me in a way that I knew I had to be a part of this. I knew this was going to be something I was gonna be involved with for the rest of my life. And so, I just made it a mission of mine to somehow be able to create enough value to be a part of this group that was going and doing this. And, you know, six, eight months later, I found myself on my first op. And since then, I've been able to be on 12 different operations. But I really just knew when I heard it, I had to do something about it. And so just made sure that I could do everything I could to provide value.

Katie: And I know this is a thing that people here may be talked about in the media or see occasional mainstream news references to. But I feel like it, hopefully, isn't close to home for a lot of people so often it's an easy thing to kind of ignore, but can you talk about how big of a problem this is worldwide and why this was so important to you?

Jimmy: Yeah, I mean, I don't know exact numbers or anything like that, but I can tell you this, anytime we went to a new city, if we went looking for it, most of the time within 45 minutes to an hour, we could find people willing to sell us kids for sex when we were undercover. And so that tells you, you know, in many of these cities, I've been to before on vacation and never crossed my mind, never thought twice about it. But the second we went looking for it, it was that easy to find. And so, I do know that in most places around the country, it's not out in the open, it's not something you would ever see or think about, but it's going on all the time.

Katie: So truly, this is a thing that could very much be happening and likely is in many of our own communities?

Jimmy: Yeah. I mean, it was literally, I mean, within a couple of hours, for sure, we could find people willing to sell as children that were already doing it.

Katie: Wow. And is that...? I know in the research I've done, a lot of this is happening technologically now and the increased access to technology is making this happen. And there are ways that that's happening kind of underground, even online, is that what you guys are seeing as well?

Jimmy: Yeah. We didn't really do much with the online stuff, but I mean, when you think about, you know, in order to, A, traffic a kid, or to be the person on the other end of that, going to look for children to have sex with, you have to have access to children. And so in the past, a lot of times, all that, you know, you would hear about was some family member or maybe a teacher or something like that, somebody that was close to those kids. Well now, because of the internet, we know there's just a lot more accessibility for those people looking to do those things. And so they can both traffic and find children easier through the internet. And so, obviously, it's become a very prevalent place where that happens.

Katie: So when you say you've gone on 12 different operations, what does that look like? Are you guys able to actually rescue some of the kids from these situations?

Jimmy: Yeah. So I've been on 12 ops that were involved with rescuing children. So we go down to different areas where we know something's going on, or we've been tipped off that there might be a problem. And we would go down undercover. And our job is to go into the worst places in those cities and find the worst people and try to find those that are trafficking children. And so we're using, you know, all of our abilities to basically try to find the kids and the people willing to sell us the kids.

And so on all 12 of those ops, a few of them, you know, didn't end up getting the kids. Something happened, somebody got tipped off, or whatever it might have been, but the majority of them went very successful. And

overall, I think I've been able to be a part of now rescuing over 150 children and having over 45, 50 guys and women arrested. And so, yeah, we would literally just go undercover, we would go into these towns. We'd fly in and start doing our thing that we do in order to find them. And like I said, sometimes it would take us a few days to kind of get it all set up, sometimes it'd be very quick, but that's kind of what it looked like.

Katie: And I'll admit, it's somewhat unfathomable to me that this is happening and especially on such a large scale. Like, I truly can't even comprehend when I read these stats. Are these like parents and caregivers that are participating in this, are these children being kidnapped, or what are you guys usually finding?

Jimmy: Yeah. So we see a little bit of everything. So it doesn't usually look like you would think. So we have seen children behind cages and bars. That's, in Haiti, that was, you know, the reality of the situation one time. That's not usually what you see though. So typically, what's going on is a lot of these children are trafficked either by somebody they know, by a family member, by a friend, by a teacher. I'll give you one example. We were in a city in Latin America, and it was a seventh or eighth-grade school teacher.

She used her position to lure these girls that she was teaching. For example, so she would tell them, "Hey, you know, I've got an extra \$20 if you'll go to this party. We're gonna have a party. It should be fun." Lure them into the party. Next thing they know, they're being raped. And the teacher tells them, "If you tell anybody, tell your parents, then I'm gonna tell them that you went and had sex with these men. And then we'll tell everybody what you've done." And then basically it's a shame thing.

And then they, you know... And we know this because some of the times when we were able to find these traffickers, we would be able to tap their phones. And the Mexican police or the Latin police, whoever we were working with, would listen in on the conversations. And these girls would be begging not to have to go, but they would go still. And so a lot of them were even living at home and being trafficked out of their own house. A lot of them, you got a neighbor or a family member or somebody like that's doing it.

A lot of times, the women or the girls, you know, they weren't even... sometimes they didn't even know the depth of the how bad it was, what was happening to them. They knew that, you know, they were being trafficked out, but they didn't fully understand. They were too young to really comprehend what was going on. So you really see a little bit of everything, but usually, it's somebody in those kinds of situations. A lot of times, runaways or girls that, you know, had a trouble in the house, they would go live with a family member or a friend, and next thing you know, they're living with the traffickers or whatever that might look like. And so, we saw all of that.

One of the first things that we do, anytime we're gonna go into a city, a new city, and go undercover, we have to make sure first that they have all the aftercare set up so that if we do a rescue and we find these young girls, that they have aftercare set up to help them or to take care of them. And so we wouldn't even ever go

do an op without that setup. And part of the reason for that is if we rescue the girls and there's no aftercare, there's no way to help them, it's actually worse for them a lot of times. And so, you know, we work together with those organizations.

And so, one of the first questions that they always figure out, or one of the first things they figure out is, "Okay. Was this person living at home? Were they missing? If they were missing, were they reported missing?" Because that's usually a sign whether the parents were involved or not. And so, you know, we really did a lot of work on the back end to make sure that was all taken care of. That's a really big part of it is just to make sure that their situation is safe at home. And if not, they wouldn't go back to that situation.

Katie: That was gonna be my follow-up question is what does aftercare look like? Because I can only imagine that there's probably a lot that needs to go into this from the mental health side, from the physical health side to the logistical side of making sure they have a safe place to be after. What all goes into that?

Jimmy: Yeah. Just like you just said, all of that, you know, a lot of therapists, a lot of caretakers, a lot of people. And then also figuring out what the girls wanted with their lives. Trying to connect them to the right people that could help them if they wanted to go to school, if they wanted to have a certain career. Someone wanted to, you know, bake or get into hair cutting or whatever that might be. Give them something where they had a chance to learn and grow and not have to go back to a bad situation.

But that's... Yeah, aftercare involved all the above. And by the time, you know, I worked a lot with a group called... well, I worked with a lot of different groups, but Child Liberation Foundation and Operation Underground Railroad. I know, you know, for those organizations, they spend a lot more money. I heard once, I can't verify this, but I heard one time they spend six times more money per child on aftercare that they do on the actual rescues themselves.

Katie: Wow. Well, that seems super, super important. What kind of age range do you typically see when these people are rescued? I'm a little scared to ask, but I would assume it's mostly like teenagers and young adults, or do you see kind of across the board?

Jimmy: Usually 12 to 14, 15 is kind of what most of them are. You know, I think the youngest I saw was 12. I think the oldest that we... We rescued some that weren't underage, but you know, still being exploited or whatever. But the majority were that 12 to 17, 12 to 16 range.

Katie: And is there a process for dealing with the people who are doing the trafficking? Like, are there in these different countries and especially in the U.S., like, is there actually a process of them being brought to justice or what does that look like?

Jimmy: Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And we never worked in the U.S. The U.S. has, you know, a lot of enforcement agencies. I know there's some organizations that work together with those law enforcement agencies. But you gotta remember, a lot of these countries we go to, they don't have the money or the means to do it. And so they have reached out to us to help them. They desperately want our help. You know, for example, after I did a couple of ops in Mexico, they were so grateful to us that they ended up awarding me and my group of friends that were together with me, you know, diplomat status and some really cool awards and things like that because they're so grateful. Because, you know, one of the negative things you hear about this is like, "Oh, the Americans just wanna go G.I. Joe or whatever." And it's really not true at all. They were so grateful to have us there to be able to work with them.

And what the Americans are able to do is so much more effective because we look like the people that are going down there for the trafficking in the first place. And so we're able to just get a lot more information. I remember one op we did, you know, it took us about 24 hours. The head of the federal police in that country said, "You guys have gotten us more information in 24 hours than we gotten in 14 months." We had all their names, their social medias, their phone numbers, you know, everything we needed for these guys. And so for us, the opportunity to go down there and do that, it's just much more effective, much more efficient for them. But yeah, it's a process of making sure you're working together with each authority on every single op. You're working very closely hand in hand.

Katie: And I feel like from here, there's kind of a two-prong approach I wanna go into. The first being, for all the parents listening, most people listening are parents, what can we be aware of, signs to look for, hopefully not in our own children for anyone listening, but in maybe other children that we're interacting with, our kids' friends, just in general, that can be kind of warning signs for things like abuse and kidnapping and sex trafficking?

Jimmy: Yeah. I think it's really important to teach your kids if they're uncomfortable with something, to let you know. I know when I was a kid, I had like a weird uncle and nothing ever happened, but I just felt uncomfortable with him. He always wanted to kiss me on the lips like when he was saying hi and bye, and I was able to get out of it. But, you know, I remember my parents being like, "Be nice or whatever." And it's like, no, don't. Like, if you feel uncomfortable with something, that's a sign that maybe you should stay away from that person. Or if you have, like, a neighbor that's a little bit creepy, there's probably something to that. So don't...

I remember just as a kid, you know, parents, a lot of times, they don't want their kids to come off rude, but I think it's important to let your kids know if you don't wanna talk to somebody or you don't wanna be nice to somebody that's an adult, that's good. Like, let me know and you don't have to. You don't have to be friendly to everybody, even if it's your grandparent or your uncle or whoever it might be. I think that's one important thing for parents. And then just look for things. Like, it's not okay for parents to be friends with kids. It's not okay for parents to be overly friendly with kids. Or, sorry, strangers, you know. To be... So if somebody's trying

to like... Usually, if they're gonna do something, still to this day, I think most of the time, the traffickers know the kids. And so pay attention to that.

If the teacher is contacting the student outside of church or school, probably not okay. If there's things that they want them to keep from you as a parent, not okay. And so I think it's important to just have open communication with your kids and just let them know, "Hey, I'm never gonna get mad at you. But if there's ever an adult wanting to meet up or talk or whatever, I just wanna know what's going on and I'll make sure, you know, to be a part of it. Just have a very open dialogue with your kids. Because usually it looks like an adult that's just trying to be nice and they'll make you seem like you're the crazy one.

But you know, I think kids, especially if kids are just uncomfortable around somebody, pay attention to their energy. If you have a neighbor that the kid's always hiding from or doesn't wanna talk to or kind of clamps up around, that might be a sign that, you know, they don't wanna be around that neighbor or something might be going on there. And so I think that's the most important thing as far as with people you know. As far as people you don't know, I think, again, just teaching your kids to be able to say, you know, to be able to say no, to yell if they're in trouble, to be careful where they're going, to just pay attention, you know, all the main things that you would already tell your kid as a parent.

Katie: Yeah. And I think that boundary one, especially around physical touch is really, really important. To just echo what you said of even at a young age, you know, not forcing our kids to hug a relative if they don't want to. And teach them from the moment that they understand that your body is yours to make decisions about, period. And I support your decisions about that. If you don't wanna...you will not be forced to hug or kiss any relative, including me. Like, this is your body, your autonomy, and I'm your biggest supporter in that.

And that's also really great advice about just watching adult relationships and making sure we're a part of them with other adults outside the family. Because certainly, like, of course, there can be mentorship situations or teachers who are great with the kids, but there's no reason parents can't be involved in those relationships as well.

What about the social media side? Because this is an area that when I was at those ages, didn't exist. So this was something I didn't have to navigate as a teenager. And now, as parents, we're navigating with our kids very often from a younger age. And I've read at least that quite a bit of the targeting that happens goes on through social media or through online channels.

Jimmy: Yeah. So, this is one of those things that parents might not be very aware of at all, but it is very easy to contact kids or teenage kids through social media apps for these people. So I'll give you an example. We were on vacation undercover. Well, I should say, our group was undercover. There was, with us, one of the guys

that came down undercover, his wife and cousin came to be on vacation in the city. So before the ops started, they were hanging out. Well, one of the cousin was on her social media on Facebook, I believe, or Instagram.

And she had just posted that she was in this particular beach city hanging out and got contacted by this guy on there that said, "Oh. Hey, we have this party going on. It's at the club, this, this. You guys should come." Well, we saw it later and it was one of the traffickers that we were working with undercover in that city had contacted her to come to this party. I mean, she was, I think 19 or 20, so she wasn't underage, but still, he didn't know that. And who knows if that would've turned into a trafficking situation. So a lot of times, people will post their pictures and they'll put the landmark that they're by.

Well, these traffickers can search by a landmark, they can search by city. They can see, you know, where these people are and then they contact them in real-time and say, "Oh. Hey, we got this party," or, "Hey, we got this event going on." And so I just think it's important that they become aware. Because a lot of times, especially teenage kids and teenage girls, they might be going on a vacation and they harmlessly are posting about where they're at in real-time and showing that and it just kind of opens that door. Especially if you're out of the country, what I recommend to people to do is post everything three or four days later. So wait till you leave the place you're at.

If you wanna do a video on your Instagram story, instead of posting that story in real-time, you know, wait three days, make the video, and then post everything a few days later. I know that's not as fun as doing it in real-time, but especially in another country, I just think that's really important to not let people know where you're at. A lot of times, these are small cities, they're beach towns, you know, you're in some Southeast Asia place or something or, you know, Latin country, or South America, or wherever it might be. Because it is a very real thing. And also, it just opens the door even for people...

You know, and parents as well, by the way. If you're posting and you're way out of the country or you're very far away from home and you have teenage kids at home, well, probably not a good idea to post in real-time either because now if anybody's been watching you and your kids, they know you guys are away, they could maybe try to make their move on your kid at that time while you're out. And so I think it's really important to just be aware of that. I know we wanna show the world everything we're doing, but if you have, you know, teenage kids, especially your younger kids, I just think it's good time to put, you know, put some space in between where you are so that nobody can...

I have a close family that I am very good friends with called the Bucket List Family. And you might have heard of them before. I've gone on several trips with them, with Garrett and Jess and their family. And they always wait three or four or five days to post from where they actually are so people don't know where they're at. They can't come and, you know, who knows what they might try to do or whatever. And so, I learned that from Garrett firsthand. But you know, it's a pretty good idea to just post a few days later.

Katie: Yeah. That's such a simple tip, but such an important one. And it's one I've inadvertently done just because of having kind of an online platform. I would end up meeting up with people if I posted where I actually was, which was actually great, because I love meeting up with my readers, but it made me realize like, wow, it's so easy for people to figure out and put the pieces together and there's this likelihood of people being in the same place. But when we think of it through this lens, especially for kids, that is a simple tip. It makes a whole lot of sense. I know kids are so used to posting everything and sharing their whole life on social media, but that's such an important tip.

Jimmy: Yeah. I mean, I do the same thing. When I go, you know, I go to a lot of sporting events, and I post that in real-time. I don't have little kids at home either and stuff like that so it's not as big of a deal. But yeah, it's just one of those little things. Also, just in general, in social media, pay attention to who your kids are communicating with. If they're teenagers, if they're on the apps, I think it's just important to have a good relationship with them and not get mad at them if you ever see them talking to adults because they're gonna hide it from you in that case. And so I think if you can really come from a place of understanding and curiosity and love with them, and just let them know like, "Hey, I just wanna make sure that you are protected."

I just tell them, "I just wanna make sure you're protected. You never know. I'll never get mad at you, but if you know adults ever reach out to you, I'd love to know." I was, you know, talking to somebody pretty recently and she had mentioned, she's older now, but she had mentioned when she was 16 and 17, she had 37 to 39-year-old guys, you know, that she was going on dates with as a 16-year-old, 15-year-old. And you're like, "Geez, where were the parents on this?" You know? But it's really important to know who your kids are talking to. And so I just think the more you can create that comfortability with them where they're gonna be honest and open with you and you don't get mad at them for it, I think you're gonna be able to provide a space where they'll actually share it with you.

Katie: Yeah. And the importance of just having those open conversations. And like I said, social media didn't exist when I was a teenager, but I had guys in person who are much, much, much older try to make contact and talk to me. And like that felt weird at the time. And, like, I didn't have a good context necessarily for, like, what do I do about this? And so I think having those conversations with your kids really early and making sure, like you said, that they hear over and over, like, "I will never be mad at you. I will always be your advocate. And these are important. Even if you just have a suspicion or an inkling or something just feels weird, we can talk about it, anything, and you will not ever get in trouble for that." Just to create kinda that safety net.

And I think the other part of this, so like I think the parents being aware with our own kids is super, super important. But like you've explained, this is a worldwide problem, unfortunately. It seems to be an increasing problem still in today's society. And I know, like, for instance, me as a mom of six kids, I can't go do sting operations very easily in other countries, but what are some ways that we can get involved and help support the education, support the fight against this for other people's kids and in other places?

Jimmy: Yeah. You know, I think one of the most important things you can do is to start with your own self, your family, the people that you influence. Paul always has this saying. He says, "Jimmy, I'm gonna teach you a lesson about the circle of influence." He says, "If it's within the circle that you can influence it, then you have the right to worry about it. If it's not within that circle, you have two choices. You either don't worry about it or you make a bigger circle so that you can influence more and you can eventually do something about it."

So as far as, like, yeah, you're not gonna be able to go undercover and do those kind of things. What you can do is to help support the organizations like Child Liberation Foundation that, you know, goes and does this kind of stuff. You can support them by sharing their stories, by sharing their social medias, by sharing their posts, liking it, commenting it, just letting the word get out there. Also what you're doing right now, right? Doing this podcast. And one of the things that, you know, I'm careful to share when I tell people how to share this is you don't wanna share it in a way that's untrue or crazy.

You'll notice I never give stats or numbers I don't know. I don't wanna throw things out there. Because what I think what happened with this movement a little bit over the last year or two is the people that are really evil, I think that they tried to lump in this issue with QAnon and some of these other crazy theories that are out there. And so what it did is it kind of minimized all of it, right? It was like, "Oh, it's just a bunch of crazy people." But it's like, "No. I've seen firsthand. I know the problem that's out there. I don't know the extent to exactly how huge it is, but it's big and it's a problem."

But because so many people started sounding crazy with the way they shared it and sharing numbers and stats that maybe weren't true, they were able to lump it in and just be like, "Yeah, that's all just part of the crazy right wing conspiracy." And so I'm very careful not to share things that aren't true. I wanna make sure that people know this is a real thing. This is happening. It doesn't mean that Tom Hanks is eating children. It means that, you know, that there's a pedophile. And we know Ghislaine Maxwell trial going on right now. This is a real thing. It's been happening.

But careful how you share it. I share it in a way where it's like, "Look, this is probably happening right in your backyard." It doesn't matter if the elites of the world are doing it in the sense that that's not necessarily what you need to be sharing. What you need to be sharing is, like, look, straight up on the ground, how can I be affecting my neighborhood, my city, and kind of worry about the things you can actually influence? That's the best thing I'm trying to get out of this is you're not gonna be able to do anything if the world leaders are all doing this.

Like, there's not much you can do or say about that. What you could do is, in your community, help educate people, help people see the problem that's out there. And then just help them be, you know, again, be good neighbors. The strongest neighborhoods where this isn't happening is where there is strong neighborhoods, they're helping each other, they care about each other. They're willing to talk to each other. And so, I think that to me is the best way to do it. And then, obviously, again, just spreading the awareness and things like that.

Katie: And I'll make sure, I know that there are also many online resources, including the organizations you mentioned. I'll make sure those are linked to the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. so you guys can read and find some of these actual facts to share and know what to watch for and in your own community. I also fully agree with you that having strong communities in our local area is a part of the solution. And also, I've talked about it in so many podcast episodes, it's important for health, it's important for mental health, it's important for longevity.

Like, there's a reason blue zones have strong communities and that's because they're vital to us as human animals. But this is also just another example of why that's so important. And especially for our kids. I know this is an area that's been tough for a lot of people the last couple of years since the community's been more difficult with a lot of the restrictions that have gone on, but one that's very, very important to nurture.

And so I'll make sure all those links are included in the show notes. I'd love to also talk a little bit more about you personally so people can understand the work that you're doing and also why this is, you know, so important to you and how you work to improve the world in a whole lot of different areas. And I have some notes in my show notes, one being, if you were gonna give a TED Talk, it would be about kind of the idea of your book, which is "You End Up Where You're Heading." So I would love to hear you talk about that a little bit because I think this is also really relevant to parents.

Jimmy: Yeah, yeah. So several years ago, again, I kind of had this moment where I was trying to figure out what my life was gonna be about, what the purpose of my life was going to be. And I felt very strongly ultimately about my purpose, and it's to help people live an extraordinary life, to spread love and goodness through having a playful spirit, and showing how to do that. And so one of the things that... I'll tell you a quick story too. The hat that I'm wearing, it's a logo for my company. It's called "We Are The They."

And how that came about is I came back from one of these ops. It was actually one of the most dangerous ones we'd ever been on. And, you know, I was telling my girlfriend at the time, she picked me up at the airport, and we were talking all about the op and how scary it was and how cool it was because we got the rescue and we took these horrible guys down. And I'm telling her all about it and she pulls over and she goes, "Hey, I gotta be honest. I don't want you to go do this anymore." And I was like, "What do you mean? I just rescued these kids. Like, this is my life's purpose here. You know, it's gonna be a big part of it."

And she says, "Well, I know, but it's just such a bad environment." It's just really scary. It's dangerous." And she said, "Why can't they just go do it?" And without thinking, I said, "Well, there is no they, we are the they." And as soon as I said it, I was like 'Oh, shit, that's...' And, you know, and I knew... And so that became the model for my life is "We are the they." And so that, you know, again, together with the book, I just try to help people. I coach men how to become the best version of themselves. It's a group called "We Are The They."

And basically, we just, through being men of integrity, through being honest about what, you know, I noticed over the years, the people that would reach out to me the most, they wanted community and they wanted a safe place where they could open up and have people love them through growth and trying to become the best version of themselves. And so that's where I started that. The book essentially follows what is called the hero's journey, which is the path that we all go on.

And I think it's important in life to remember that getting to where we're trying to get, it's not a simple path. It's not an easy path. But that journey, that hero's journey that we go on. And basically, if you've never thought about what you want your life to look like, you're just gonna end up where you're heading. You're just gonna go wherever the wind kind of takes you. Whatever person wants you to be a part of their story, they'll add you in as a piece. And usually, you'll spend your life building their dream or their thing.

And so if you know what you want, if you get crystal clear on where you're trying to go and what you're trying to do... You know, you asked me at the very beginning of this, how did you get into this? And ultimately, it's as easy as I just decided I was going to do this. I made that decision. I had a why huge and then I figured out how to make that happen. And so that's that way with everything in life. I just kind of, you know, through the book and through my coaching program, encourage people to figure out exactly what they want in life and then go about figuring out why that's what they want and then figuring out how to go about doing it.

Katie: Yeah. I think that's so important. I haven't had a chance to read it yet, but I'm definitely going to check out your book. I also have a note in my show notes that you have an honorary doctorate degree from 13 universities in Mexico. And I feel like I need to hear more about this.

Jimmy: Yeah, that was part of... So we did a lot of these ops early on. We were in Mexico. We were able to rescue a lot of kids down there and they were so grateful to us for doing this. Like I said, they didn't have the ability, the means to do it. And so, several years ago, they flew up, probably 30, 35 officials from Mexico flew up, and we did a special ceremony at the Capitol building here in Utah with the Attorney General of Utah. They gave us honorary doctorate degrees.

So I have this group of buddies from high school. There's eight of us that are all best friends. And two of them became doctors. One's an orthopedist surgeon and one's a plastic surgeon. And I made the joke to them. I said, "Gosh, guys, who would've ever thought that three of us would become doctors, you know?" And they didn't think that was very funny since they put 15 years of school into it. But it was just kind of an honor that we got to have, just something kind of cool and something kind of interesting I put in my bio.

Katie: I also have a note that you've been to 84 countries. And I would love to hear just a few of the top ones that you would recommend the most.

Jimmy: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So in fact, what happened, I'll tell the story of why I started doing that. So in 2014, I had a buddy, his name was Eric Hill. And he had a goal, he was gonna go to every single country in the shortest amount of time ever. And he'd gotten to I think over 50 of them in less than 6 or 7 months. And he was doing this global odyssey. And he ended up passing away. He was paragliding and had an accident and died. And I remember there was this, kind of, this hashtag that went around, #livelikeEric.

And what that meant to me was this guy was truly living his life. He was doing all these amazing things and going and just living his life. And I remembered I hadn't been out of the country in years. I'd been just working my butt off all the time. And I said to myself, I said, you know, "If I died tomorrow, like, the tragedy that that would be." And so I just made it a goal. I just said, "I'm just gonna go see the world." And so I started traveling, went on several trips with friends, with groups of friends, with, you know, somebody I was dating, and then went on several by myself too.

And what I discovered is just this world, when you figure out, like, how beautiful the world is, when you truly can appreciate the world for everything it is, you have a much stronger desire to save it, a much stronger desire to do good in the world, I think. And so for me, I really encourage everybody, drop a lot of prejudices and you're able to really see people and understand that we're all part of the same human family. But to pick a few, I would say, you know, Ireland and Scotland and Iceland are amazing. Everyone in their lives should do an African safari.

You know, I remember sleeping out in the middle of the bush in Zimbabwe and waking up there's lions 200-feet away and there's monkeys swinging in the trees above us. And a honey badger literally crawled right up to my leg. And I remember sitting on this berm overlooking this kind of this hill and into kind of like a marsh and there was hippos and in the distance, there's giraffes and rhinos. And it's just the most surreal thing that... You start to go visit all these people. What really is cool is going and visiting the local people in all these places, you know? And you start to just really have a love for humanity. It really drops any prejudices you have.

I know I went a couple of years ago to Egypt with a friend of mine. And he grew up there and his family still lives there. And we spent a few days with them after we went and saw the pyramids and all that. And this family was, you know, a Muslim family. And I am in Utah. We don't have very many minorities, just being honest with you. You kind of fear what you don't know and so you're always just a little bit afraid of those people. And so going over there though and feeling their love to me. And they brought me into their homes and fed us and the most amazing meals and just the way they treated us and honored us was really special.

And I realized, you know, all these things you're afraid of in life, once you get near them, you no longer are. And, you know, Brené Brown talks about this all the time, leaning into people. Same thing with animals. In fact, I'm a huge shark guy. I love sharks. I love to swim with sharks. I've swum with 15 different species of sharks, including bull sharks, tiger sharks, all this without a cage. And when you have a tiger shark coming at

you, right? I was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. It's 15-feet long. It's this big... It looks like a miniature bus coming at you, but you feel its energy toward you. And instead of being afraid, you're just in amazement and wonder.

This thing lives here in this body of water and it's coming up and it's just curious, and it's looking at you and you're looking at it. There's no cage. It's just this exchange of energy and love and it really changes your view towards most things. And so, part of what I teach, you know, the men in my coaching program is we go do scary things because we have these irrational fears from what we're told to believe from society. You know, the news media needs you to be in fear so that they can, you know, sell. I mean, you know, fear sells and all these different things. And so what we try to do is by traveling and by going and experiencing all this, it's such a beautiful world out there. And I think that's the beauty of traveling.

Katie: I agree with you. I've thought with my own kids is, like, I know I can look back and realize some of the tougher times of my life helped me become the person I am today. And yet I don't wanna intentionally create a difficult life for my kids. And travel's kind of the perfect solution because there's a lot of inherent difficulty that comes along with travel. And like you said, you gain a whole new perspective on humanity and on the world and how we're all so much more connected and similar than we often grow up when we grow up in a homogenous area. And so travel's definitely a core value for us as well. Although you have traveled to many, many more places, which is awesome and inspiring.

Jimmy: Yeah. You do a lot of problem-solving when you travel, to your point, you know, is trying to figure things out on the go and you can't speak the language and you gotta figure out stuff and you just do. You just end up figuring it out. But I love that idea as a parent to, you know, help your kids grow.

Katie: And then lastly, on my notes, I have a note that you're the President of the Chris Farley Fan Club. And I feel like that needs some explanation as well.

Jimmy: Yeah. So me and my friends, when we were in high school, I was a Sophomore in high school when Chris Farley passed away, and we were just such big fans. I mean, I wanted to be Chris Farley. Most guys, you know, most kids probably wanted to be an athlete or wanted to be one of the movie stars that was getting all the girls. I wanted to be Chris Farley. I just thought he was the best ever. And so me and my friends, the day he passed away, which is December 18th, actually it was just yesterday, was two days ago, sorry, it was Chris Farley Day. December 18th was the day he passed away. So we would get together every year and watch all his movies.

And then one year... You know, I was always just Googling Chris Farley looking into things. And I remember one year, back in maybe 2002 or 2003, I Googled Chris Farley and there was a foundation set up by his brother, Tom, where they were raising money to help, you know, keep kids off drugs. So I reached out to him

and we started a relationship. And then about a year later, two years later, Chris Farley got a star on Hollywood and we got invited out to come to it. And Tom said, "Hey, I mean, you guys are basically the fan club. Why don't you come on out and come to the star ceremony?"

And so we came out, went to the event. It was very private. I think there was maybe 70 people. I mean, we're talking it's Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, David Spade, Tom Arnold, Gary Busey, the guys from Paramount, his family, and us. And it was very intimate. And got to the star ceremony, went to the after-party, and hung out with everybody. It was kind of a celebration, but also kind of somber. You know, I remember Adam Sandler just being super sad and... But then and we, yeah, became the unofficial official Chris Farley Fan Club that day. And so I became the president of that.

We did an event a couple of years later here in Utah where, you know, his brothers came in and we did this giant party to raise money for the foundation. And we had, like, pizza and it was the meat lovers pizza in the trunk pizza section. We had the chicken wings. There was the Tommy likey, Tommy Want Wingy chicken wings. And had standup comedians come and played all his movies. And so I stay in touch pretty regularly with his brothers to this day, had them on my podcast last year. We talk about it all the time. And just a special little connection I think to this man that I never met but have been able to create a lot of, you know, the joy that I had as a kid through life was through him. So I've kind of honored him that way.

Katie: What a cool story.

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And as we get toward the end of time, another question I love to ask is if there's a book or a number of books that have had a profound impact on your life, and if so, what they are and why?

Jimmy: Yeah. I mean, I'm a huge reader. And so I used to read 50 to 100 books a year for a long time. That was probably before I started my podcast. That's what I would do. Now I, you know, study a lot of podcasts and podcast guests so I can get people on my podcast. But I still read quite a bit. And I would say, if I could pick one book that every man should read is called "The Way of the Superior Man" by David Deida. David has personally been a coach of mine as well, but he is, I mean, that book, just nails, how to show up as a man.

But that's one book that had a huge profound change on my life. So many, but "Think and Grow Rich," you know, "The Four Agreements," those are all books that I try to read at least once every year or two. And then anything by Brene Brown is special and teaches you how to love humanity a little bit better. And so, yeah, those are some of my favorites.

Katie: And I know that beyond a book, you've done so much in the world we didn't even get to talk about today, including a lot of work in real estate and so much more. So where can people find you online and keep learning about all the things you're doing?

Jimmy: Yeah. The best place to find me, my Instagram is @mrjimmyrex, and I post everything that I'm doing on there. Anytime I'm speaking, anytime I have events, my new podcasts that come out, any, you know, parties that I'm hosting or throwing any charity events for this charity or others that I'm doing, I share on there. And so just follow me on @mrjimmyrex. That's probably the best way. And feel free to reach out anytime if I can help in any way. I'm very good at getting back to people in my DMs. I do all that myself and so happy to help anybody if, you know, if there's a need that I can support you.

Katie: Thank you so much. And like I said, I'll make sure we link to all of the different things we've talked about, especially the organizations that people can support if they can't actively go do work in this area, as well as to all of your places that you live online. But Jimmy, thanks so much for taking the time to be here today. You have such a fascinating story and all of the adventures of your life. And I'm so grateful for you educating about this and for the work that you've done directly to help with this problem worldwide.

Jimmy: Well, thank you. It's something that, you know, once you get into it and you start doing it, you realize how special it is, how special to be able to help these people that are in this situation. I mean, we actually have gone in and seen the girls being, you know, in those positions and we've been able to have the rescues. And it'll change you and it changes you forever. And so it's special to me. It's special to be able to share about it and help other people become aware. And so if I can ever do anything else to help spread awareness, I'm always available. And thank you again for having me on.

Katie: Thank you so much for being here. And thanks as always to all of you who are listening for sharing your time, your energy, and your attention with us today. We're both so grateful that you did. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama" podcast.

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