

Narrator: From CurtCo Media.

Bruce Wallin: Would you go on a trip if you had no idea where you were going and no sense of what was going to happen moment to moment while you were there, if that at all piques your interest, even if it doesn't, even if the thought terrifies you, you're going to want to listen to this episode of Travel That Matters. Hey, everybody, and welcome to Travel That Matters, I'm your host, Bruce Wallin, and today we are going on an extraordinary adventure with the founder of the Extraordinary Adventure Club. His name is Calum Morrison and he's a former British Royal Marine. He's an ice climber, an expedition leader he's pretty much just an all around badass. And we're going to talk to him about some of that stuff and his own adventures. But mainly today we want to talk to him about the absolutely amazing experiences that he sets up for his clients. I want to say there's a lot of talk out there about transformational travel, but if anybody can lay claim to that term, it is the Extraordinary Adventure Club. Calum's got this team of psychiatrists and survivalists and coaches, and they custom create these experiences for you, for whoever you are, that are honestly like nothing else I've ever experienced or really even heard of. And my experience with them goes back a couple of years when I was writing a story about them for Robb Report and I signed on to go on this initial retreat. And I really honestly, I didn't know anything about them. And as I would soon learn, that's pretty much the point. And it's just kind of a mysterious experience before during even after your trip. And for me at least, it all started a couple of weeks before I was leaving. All I knew is that I was going to Scotland and I got this large black envelope in the mail. And inside the envelope were some reading materials. There's a packing list and there's a train ticket from Edinburgh to some small town in the Scottish Highlands. And that was it. So I just packed what they told me to pack. I got on my flight, went to Edinburgh and caught the train. And that sense of not knowing what was next continued throughout this experience. I was never privy to the plans that Calum and his team had in store for me. They might wake me up one morning and say, okay, just put on your running shoes and shorts and we're going. And next thing I knew, I was running through some frigid stream and jumping in a lake in 40 degree temperatures. And one day they dropped me off on an island and just left me there for several hours by myself in the rain. It was definitely an adjustment. But I have to say that was one of the special things about this experience. It's that ceding control, never knowing what's going to happen next. And as we will hear from Calum, that process of giving up control and focusing on the moment on what's right in front of you, that's a critical part of an extraordinary adventure. Calum, welcome to Travel That Matters.

Calum Morrison: Hey, Bruce, thank you. Welcome everybody, from the Highlands of Scotland, where it's currently snowing outside and I've got the fire on and not yet a dram in hand, but that may come later.

Bruce Wallin: I should have also mentioned that Calum is a very humble down to earth good guy. But, you know, that's not nearly as interesting as all the badass stuff. So so I went with I went with that instead.

Calum Morrison: Thank you.

Bruce Wallin: Calum, how do you get into ice climbing? That's not something, I'm from L.A. That's not something you pick up as a teenager in L.A.

Calum Morrison: Maybe it's in the blood. I'm half half Scottish, half Norwegian. So I prefer the colder climbs to to the warm. Growing up in the Highlands of Scotland, going out from an early age, traipsing around after my father in [inaudible] that was far too big, that sort of rolled up at the sleeves and boots that are two sizes too big with extra socks following him around. So walking through the mountains from then and starting this lifelong connection with the outdoors, which has stayed with me, and so progressing from rock climbing through to ice climbing. And I haven't done it for a while now. I look at my ice axes and crampons in the office and think I should really pick those up again. But it requires a level of skill that's probably faded. So I need to be hauled up now rather than pulling anybody else.

Bruce Wallin: It's like the guitar in the corner for most people. But for you it's the ice picks.

Calum Morrison: Yeah, yeah. I've got one of those as well. I've got a guitar too, but that's seen even less use than my ice axe.

Bruce Wallin: So, okay, let's let's talk about how we go from a young ice climber to where you are today with the Extraordinary Adventure Club. You've got obviously nature, outdoors. They've been a huge part of your life. How does that play into what you do now?

Calum Morrison: You know, nature is nonjudgmental. It's it's neutral. It's an environment that's in equilibrium with itself. And once you engage with that, you can't help but kind of acquiescing into the tempo of a place like that and the permanence to an extent, you know, you're walking through hills here that are hundreds of millions of years old and actually on the West Coast, close to a couple of billion years old. And it's seen it all before. It's been there, trees that are 400 years old and helps put things into context. So I think it provides a catalyst for, a lever for change. And it helps us get to a point with the coaches, psychotherapists, guides, whoever is that we're working with, with a particular individual or small group. It allows us to get to that point far quicker when in that environment. We take people's watches, their phone, their laptop off them, so that they do connect with themselves and that there is that space to do that. And nature allows that.

Bruce Wallin: Okay, I want to talk about that more and about the specific experiences that you guys set up for your clients. But first, tell me how you ended up starting the Extraordinary Adventure Club and what led you or inspired you to this point?

Calum Morrison: You know, travel's broadening, you recognize the more you travel that there's no one universal truth. There are many. Continuing on that kind of path, I hitched across Africa when I left uni and then joined the Marines and there joined purely to find the edges of myself and then push that out, recognizing that your mind gives out long before your body does. Your body will do whatever is asked of it. And it's about strengthening your mind. What motivates people to do what they do? Why is it that they fight for others? Why is it they give up their life for somebody else? So seeing what motivates individuals and for myself to have that experience whilst living in environments in a predominately liaison style role. I was living in the Caucasus Mountains, observing the spillover of the Russian Chechen conflict into Georgia and facilitating these relationship building exercise and building rapport, recognizing that your best form of security is your relationship with the local community and nothing else. You know, what is it that motivates people? How do you affect mutually beneficial outcomes in environments where if you get it wrong, it can be quite serious. And so along with that, I was working. I had a couple of businesses and I ended up, I found myself in a multinational, running a company with about twelve hundred people and not enjoying it at all and realizing that actually the motivation for doing what I do was not the process of business, but the people and the places that I go to or have been to and my deep interest in them. So with that seed that I carried from my nineteen year old self, how did I pull the threads of my various lives together to have some kind of meaningful, purposeful engagement?

Bruce Wallin: Calum went on to start the Extraordinary Adventure Club in 2012, and today his company takes people who are at some kind of a crossroads in their lives. Maybe they just sold a company. They got a divorce. They're dealing with addiction issues, you name it. And to put it far too simply, they take them out in the wilderness to find themselves. The way it works is basically you start with what I did in the Scottish Highlands, which is what they call their four day engagement. And that's where they really get to know you, your goals, your issues. But it's after that that the real fun or the real adventure begins. Calum and his team create these custom expeditions that could be 10 days, 12 days, two weeks, and they could go to just about anywhere in the world. They've embedded their clients with anti-poaching units in Southern Africa, they've led them on treks across the Sudan by camel. They've taken them in the jungles of Ecuador where they live with an Amazonian tribe for a period of time. I mean, these trips are definitely filled with challenges, but also discoveries, unknowns. There's that again, that sense of mystery that I mentioned

that really carries throughout this whole process. And so I asked Calum about that mystery and uncertainty and how his clients learned to cede control.

Calum Morrison: Uncertainty, uncertainty allows for, you know, it's like positive agitation. It allows, again, for the degree of loosening in order to work with the individuals and our clients when they arrive. And by not telling you what's happening, it allows for us to change and iterate in that process, too. You don't need to necessarily be privy to that. It doesn't detract. It certainly, I think, can enhance and also this sort of notion of letting go of control just give 100 percent to what is right in front of you right now. Let us worry about what's coming and the changing of the tempo again in a positive way to support the work that we're doing. So that all is part of that particular engagement right from the outset. To then having, yes, four days in the Highlands of Scotland, which allows us to sort of baseline essentially what it is that we're going to do and how we're going to do it. We will very simplistically look backwards at the issues of the events that created the behaviors that are now not necessarily serving what are those and begin to unpick those and formulate a way forward or simplistically looking forwards in terms of very much a values based approach. We'll also do a fitness assessment. As you know, putting on your trainers will do a bit of cold water immersion. We'll sleep out. We'll stay in. There's a whole host of things it will do in terms of supporting the individual that we're working with, that, yes, there will be shifts that occur during those four days, but really it's to set up the ongoing and that ongoing then is at least a three month engagement of support and ongoing coaching. And during that period, we will then decide what we're going to do in a kind of experiential sense.

Bruce Wallin: So you do the four days with this team that's customized for this individual and then what's next?

Calum Morrison: So what's next is the follow on engagement. What's important for us is not just what you're doing on those four days. It's how you integrate that into your life and how this period of transition that when you leave us in the Highlands of Scotland or northern Norway or wherever we're doing that, it's not just then lost. So how do you maintain momentum? And that's key to success.

Bruce Wallin: Take me through one of these experiences, the extended six week, whatever it is, journey with one of these clients that, you know, I brought up the Sudan by camel, also, you've told me about a motorcycle trip across Africa.

Calum Morrison: Yes. Yes, that's right. Yeah. As part of the process of many things that to clients will give away and the one that you're mentioning, a particular individual coming and saying, look, I've spoken to my partner about this and they're happy with me

participating as long as there's nothing to do with Africa or motorbikes. And we took them motorbiking in Africa because that was part of the issue that needed to be addressed, or maybe finding a voice and projecting themselves or working with an actor or that they've always want to participate in the rodeo and giving them an opportunity of doing that. So there's a thread of their interest that will pull them through those moments when things are difficult or it is challenging from a developmental perspective. You know, there's four pillars of developmental work that we work with on the therapeutic, developmental, spiritual and experiential. And those those are all interconnected and all key. In that follow up is particularly the experiential that we will focus on to pull the threads of the other three. And actually it's more about what is it that we want to do and how do we want to do it? And then where is always the last thing. We never pick the destination first. We select the destination as the best way to create that change and better reflect the developmental imperative that we have with that particular person. And they never know where they're going.

Bruce Wallin: So I didn't do that full expedition with you guys. I just did the initial engagement. So for the expedition, like, when do they find out where they're going or do they?

Calum Morrison: Yeah, they usually find out when they get to the airport. There's a lot of work in the background clearly, and we give them all the instructions. But very often it's a family member or partner will give them the final envelope or they'll just have instructions to say, right, you need to be at the airport on this day, at this time with this kit. And there'll be somebody there in a red polo neck jumper to give you your final instructions. They'll then open the envelope, pull out the ticket, think, fuck me, I'm going to Guyana. You know, I don't know. I don't even know where that is or what they speak there. It almost doesn't matter, you know, whether you take people to jungle, desert, mountain, it's what happens when you're there that's important. And we like to do is to get people right out as soon as they arrive, so that they land at the airport and then within a few hours they are sitting on a camel or they're with dogs or whatever it might be. I remember one of the first dog sledding things I did, I remember with this individual had arrived up in far north of Norway and it was late. And I said, right, tomorrow morning we're going to drive to a location where you're going to meet the rest of the team that's going to support you for the next 10 days. And they were thinking, right, you know, psychotherapist, coach, whatever it's going to be there. Not, when they turned up, it was a load of dogs with wet noses and wagging tails. They just kind of look at surprise at that.

Bruce Wallin: Okay, so this is obviously not an inexpensive undertaking in any definition of the term. Who's the typical client for this?

Calum Morrison: Actually, it varies. There are three kind of groups of broadly, three groups of people who engage with us. So there are those that are proactive, engaging, who are at an inflection point in their lives, whether it's sold a business and still have an itch they can't scratch about who they are. You have key decisions in their life, want support and help with making those or just wishing to have some experiences that perhaps because of work or family, they've not been able to and really want to engage that and engage with that in a particular way that's truly transformative. And then the next group are those that are encouraged either by their family or their company or their practitioners in terms of therapists or psychotherapists to engage in that as part of a positive process of their own development. And that's probably the bulk of those that we work with. And then lastly, we work with those who are perhaps in crisis or an acute stage of their life and all ages from 18 upwards, basically both male and female.

Bruce Wallin: You brought up the simplicity of the experience and how important that is to keep things simple. But the logistics behind this must be extremely complicated for you guys. Again, if you're traveling across the Sudanese desert or going into Guyana or wherever it is, this is not an easy thing to pull off. So how do you pull that off and what happens if something goes wrong?

Calum Morrison: Yes. Firstly, I think it was Eisenhower said planning's essential plans are worthless. The skill is in the planning. I mean, plans go out the window as soon as you put them into practice, but the planning is absolutely essential. So, yes, we do a considerable amount of planning and it's more in terms of on arrival, a number of key points in the experience and clearly on departure. But we also like to keep it loose so that we can change as required. You know, whatever is working, we'll keep doing that. Whatever isn't, we'll bin it. And because those that we're with don't necessarily know what's coming next, they don't see that. So we just want to support them in finding the edges themselves and stretching that out and keeping them at a particular place without pushing through. Because if you push through, then people shut down. So it's not like we're working to a set schedule. The schedule is determined, by the way, that the individuals engaging with the experience and that's the key skill, I think, is being able to do that and being able to watch and and monitor and adjust and continually shape the experiences. We're going for maximum benefit rather than it just being like a holiday its not a holiday. We're not a holiday company. We're not an adventure travel business. You know, our focus is on personal development. It just so happens that we use experiential adventure travel as a key tool in that.

Bruce Wallin: So these challenges, whether it's physical, whether, you know, pushing someone to the limit, you told me something once about

pushing someone to the limit. And then once they've reached their capacity, you push them a little more and then a little more. And what you learn from that, how have you seen this effect, change in your client? You know, have you seen this transition where, you know, someone comes in as one person and then goes out of your experience as another person?

Calum Morrison: Yes, absolutely. I mean, that's at the root of why we do what we do and why people come to us. We do see changes in them being capable of doing things that they never thought possible. But they're so busy doing that particular experience to even realize that they were actually doing that until afterwards. Like the rodeo, you know, somebody who had lost all of their confidence in public, had a very public facing career and used to have to walk their dog at three o'clock in the morning because of all the paparazzi and gradually withdrawn and withdrawn, withdrawn. Part of the work we were doing was to bring them out, knowing that they're interested in horses and riding and participating in a rodeo was going to be something that they were going to be engaged in. And what they ended up doing was we had them racing in a barrel race in Brazil. They did it and so focused on enjoying this particular experience, not realizing that they're doing in front of a half thousand people. It was only after and the after that and they came second actually was quite extraordinary. So they came second.

Bruce Wallin: So you are rodeo trainer as well.

Calum Morrison: Well, me, I mean, we got we got the previous rodeo king and queen to do all of that for them. I'm pretty useless on a horse. For them, the sort of ringmaster interview them afterwards. So they're speaking then to all sizes of people in this arena, just completely forgetting that actually a few months ago they couldn't even get outside of their house or the one about the motorbiking. The individual there did a bit of training with some of the BMW Off-Road guys down in southern Africa. We rode mostly off road, but just to ensure that we're all on the same level, doing a Off-Road Rider training program just outside Cape Town and there before we then went on to do this huge off road experience where we ended up in Victoria Falls most of it off road, going through four countries and living off your bike, basically a bottle of whisky and a spare pair of pants, and the rest were motorbike spares and oil. And it was an interesting thing about what is it that you take with you and what is it that you leave behind? But I remember we were doing this training and part of the, when you come to an obstacle, where you're moving through an obstacle on a bike is there's a drill about look up, stand up and open up. And, so it's look up, because you look to your exit point, you look at where you're going, not at the obstacle. Clearly, if you look at the obstacle, you end up in it. You stand up to lower center of gravity and kind of face what's coming and you open up. So you loose on the bike so it can move underneath you. But also counterintuitively

in in mud and sand is that you give yourself a bit of power. So look up, stand up, open up. We're doing this kind of drill then on the steep bank. And I remember is really sandy myself and the instructor was standing at the bottom and this particular client was hammering up in the hazard. The obstacle was this. It was like an hourglass constriction of bushes, really thick scrub through this sort of very sandy pathway. And that was it was a narrow opening you had to go through. So you really needed to look at your exit. And so he's hammering up this and he's smashing into the bushes, you know, once, twice, three times. And we're at the bottom just looking at him and he's back down and then doing it again and on about the fifth time he hit into these bushes and he stood up and he's covered in dust and mud and he's scratched on his face. He had this bit of twig, sticking out with visor. And he turned around and he said, I've been doing this all my fucking life. I've been doing this all my life. I didn't realize it until now, but I've just been seeing obstacles and going into them. I've never looked past that particular point and I never looked to where I was going. I was just always focused on the obstacle and it's taken me, you know, I've only just realized it now and it's taken me to get bruised and battered and scratched to really feel what that's like. And I realize that that is what I've been doing. So that's what being out in nature and engaging in those experiences is key because you can physically represent what's going on.

Bruce Wallin: Well, that's great, too, because like you said, you can have a plan and then you just throw it out, because I'm sure that wasn't even one of the areas that you were looking to, to learn a life lesson. You were just trying to train them for the expedition. And here he comes away from this training exercise with a moment. We're going to take a quick break and we will be right back.

[Ad Break]

Bruce Wallin: So tell me a little bit about the client experience in Ecuador. You went into the jungle, am I right? And you lived with a Amazonian tribe. You camping in these various communities, are there residences that they stay in?

Calum Morrison: Well, it's a bit of a mix. We're camping. We're doing a mix of camping. We're sleeping in some of the houses that they, have stayed with the shaman in his house. There are a couple of initiatives that they have in terms of trying to support or find other ways of supporting the community. So there's a lodge that they've built and run themselves, but primarily it's about being with the community. And in fact, we stayed with one recently that never had outsiders to stay, that clearly they met those outside the community, but never had anyone staying with them previously.

Bruce Wallin: Are you experiencing that with the clients or the client is with you as this community hosts you for the first time?

Calum Morrison: Yes. So the client is with us as we're being hosted for the first time. And once you go into these villages and they, of course, are interested in you there as interested in you as we are in them, in the way that they live and their environment and their connection to it. And I think that's the things that people who are really grounded in where they're from and entirely understand, and they're attuned to that environment in a way that perhaps we're not and have lost the ability to be. And so spending time with those who are so in tune with where they're from and what's going on around them is utterly fascinating. And we're hugely privileged to be able to do that. And what I love is that early in the morning we get up and we take this wiusa tea, which is this black leafed tea, which is then boiled on overnight in these huge pots on this sort of three log fire. And we get up at four in the morning because it's the coolest part of the day and sit there. And I was invited the first time that I went to drink this tea and not really knowing what was coming. I was there in sort of shorts and flip flops and a shirt going to somebody's house, there's pots bubbling away, this black tea. And they said, oh, here have some of this. So a huge pot, and I'm dipping in and and sipping it like I'm having tea at my grandmother's house. And actually, they're sort of no, no, you need to take more. So I realized quickly that actually it's like chugging this stuff like you're drinking yards of ale. And the idea being as you drink this, it hits a point in your belly where you realize that actually you're just going to throw and projectile vomit as if you've drunk 15 pints of beer on a night out when you're a student and sort of make it to the outskirts of the for the edges of the hut and projectile vomit into the into the undergrowth along with everybody else who're doing it loudly as it's coming out of your nose and mouth. And I've, of course, splattered myself from my knees down. So next time I do that I wore wellies . But, you know, this whole process of sort of cleansing oneself and you feel, because it is highly caffeinated, you feel absolutely buzzing and really sharp. And this is when all of the important decisions are taken for the community taken at that time of the day. So whether it's community work, marriage proposal, any big decisions are taken then. And so you do that. And every morning this happens, every morning you kind of get a call or somebody will wake you up and you walk through and you sit and you pass this gourd around and you drink till you vomit and then carry on with the day.

Bruce Wallin: Whether it's riding a motorcycle through southern Africa or, yes, throwing up outside your tent in the jungles of Ecuador, these experiences have the ability to form bonds. It's with family members, with friends, even with complete strangers. And that's really the beauty of travel. I mean, I know from my experience in Scotland with the Extraordinary Adventure Club, I mean, we were doing everything together. We were running through streams. We were jumping in the lakes. We were eating our meals together. And we became great friends in those few days. So I asked him about that, about these

shared experiences and the bonds that they form with their clients.

Calum Morrison: Yes. Yeah, we do. And as you will perhaps remember from experience in Scotland, you know, we all sit around the table and we all eat together and we all we're all exercising together. We're all in the water together. But there aren't those boundaries that exist because they can't be because we're living together and we're working. And it's you know, we we deal in trust and vulnerability. And it's a very human centered engagement. So we are sharing those experiences and we're we're in it as well. And, you know, it's the first time that I'm meeting those people or that I'm vomiting and the clients vomiting along beside me, and that drinking tea or we're eating whatever one's eating or we're paddling on in the canoe or carrying what needs to be carried. So, yeah, you do form very strong bonds with these shared stories. So going forward, it does create a particular engagement. And I think it supports also the work that we do because you then see individuals and and apart of them that's not necessarily present in their everyday and then with us too. So we're vulnerable then it gives permission for them to be. That's where the sort of magic happens. I have people talk to me about frictionless travel. I don't know if it's something that you have heard described. You know, you can move through airports and have nothing hold you up between leaving your home and arriving at your destination. For me, the whole point of travel, unless you're doing business, is to have friction is for things to occur, because that's when the magic happens and that's when you have these experiences. We did one trip in Sudan where we're traveling. We're in the bayou to desert to north of Khartoum. We're crossing the desert and all planning goes out the window when it becomes apparent that the Sudanese military has decided that they're going to do a live firing exercise with jets, helicopters, tanks and armored vehicles and self-propelled guns in the area that we're going through, these explosions start coming in. And have you ever tried to get a camel to gallop? Fucking hell.

Bruce Wallin: Fortunately, I have not had to do that.

Calum Morrison: It's where one has these experiences that shape that, that you remember, that are spoken of, that see how you react to that moment. It's not sterile or sanitized.

Bruce Wallin: You know, after this motorcycle trip through southern Africa, after the the dogsledding trip, whatever it is, do you stay in contact with these clients after these extended experiences?

Calum Morrison: Yeah, we continue to work with them and be connected with them. I'm still very much in touch with the first person I ever worked with. And you have these experiences and you share the hardship you know, we're doing it with them. We're not standing on the banks telling them to get in the cold water or driving alongside in a car when they're biking or whatever is or trekking in the jungle. You

know, we're with them. We're part of that team. We're part of that group. They become part of our family, our tribe and us with them. And so to an extent, they're written into the pages of my life and my colleagues lives and us with them. So you do form a connection. And also it takes time to change behavior. So it doesn't just happen within, it can to an extent, within four days, but over that three months, six months, year, it is an iterative process and you can go through periods of having very big shifts and then just very small ones. So it very much depends.

Bruce Wallin: I talk about transformational travel, but no one talks about what happens when you get back from that transformational travel, right? So, you know, you may have transformed into the most perfect human being alive on your wonderful trip, but when you get back, everybody else is still the same. I actually had that when I got back from the Scottish Highlands and I really I mean, I really did have some realizations about my relationships, my physical well-being, everything. And I came back and guess what? My teenagers were still a pain in the ass. They did. They did not change. There was a difficult transition back. But then, you know, I think with time it you realize that it's an extended period. Right? And it's a process. And so tell me a little bit about that, like coming back. And clearly you've been through. I shouldn't even compare what I did to what you know, you're coming back home from war zones. I mean, like, how do you make that transition back? And then how does that work with clients?

Calum Morrison: resI think you and I were talking about it. I was in Libya in 2011 there, and I was three and a half months in in Misrata. And we're kind of surrounded for that period and under siege and shelling in that sort of thing that was going on. So I'm living in this environment, so relatively high intensity, and thankfully, you know, everything's fine and I'm then leaving. So I've been there for that time, not seeing my family and etc get on a small boat. And there's some relief actually with getting on there because shells are being lobbed in, usually at night, but sometimes during the day. And they've been sort of increase in that tempo at the time that I was leaving. So my last kind of, as I step onto this boat with a number of Libyans who're with me to head to Malta and despair over the horizon, the last thing I see of Libya is, you know, some shell smoke plumes as they're shelling just the outskirts of town, so I think thank goodness for that as we're pulling out of the harbor. Yeah. You know, trying to get this, I'm willing it on to go a bit faster than it's actually going because it's the port that they were trying to hit. So we then head off into the Med to head to Malta. And my relief was short-lived because we headed into one of the worst storms that part of the Med experienced for some years. And I really thought the boat was going to sink as this huge slabs of water cracking across the decks. We're all spewing. I'm normally pretty good on a boat, but I wasn't then, and I don't think the fear of ending up in the depths did any good for that. And also the fact when I looked at the captain, he looked was a sheet

as well. So that didn't instill any confidence. So anyway, we then finally sort of roll in towards Malta and make it in the early morning roll into Valletta Harbour. And we're all standing on the on the gunnel trying to get a bit of fresh air with a bit of vomit down the front of your jacket type thing. And and as we slide into Valletta Harbour, the first vessel that we see is a Disney cruise ship with great big fuck off Mickey Mouse ears on it and a six foot Goofy hanging off the stern. These Libyans look at me and I look at them and sort of shrug. I'm not even going to attempt to describe what a Disney cruise is all about. We then pull in just behind that to the quayside and we start to tie up. But we we're halted from getting off because there are explosions going off everywhere. There are Israeli soldiers running around. There are trucks and vehicles. There are zombies wandering about and being blown up and en route and things. And Brad Pitt's filming World War Z on the day that we're pulling in. So this is kind of discombobulation that's going on. And then the lady who appears to take our passports and things to do, the initial pieces obviously just come from the beach. So she's in the yellow bikini, I recall. It's just so disconnected from where we've been as well and eventually we sort of get processed through and press up in the center of Saint Julian, I think if you've been to Malta, but it's like the party's central. So we're all looking forward to kind of going out, but actually just completely feeling, again, disconnected, outsiders. I was dying for a pint of Guinness. So I go to a bar, I have a pint of Guinness, but that's it. That's all I have. And all of us, we don't really say anything. And I just go back to my hotel room because I just can't make this kind of transition into living in that way, having had a very different existence. About 12 hours after that, I'm back home in a small town in the north of Scotland. We've run out of tea having just made it home. And my wife sent me to Tesco to get tea. And I'm standing in the aisle and I can't decide. I've got to remember, I had like Earl Grey and English Breakfast. This is very British. I realize, as I'm telling story, Earl Grey or English Breakfast. And I can't make a decision. I have to phone my wife to say, what do I get? Just completely and utterly removed from and and recognizing that actually it's not for anybody else to make the step to me. It's for me to reconcile that with myself and for me to take that transition and make that transition and for me to close the gap. You know, I can talk about it as much as I can or want to. But if you haven't necessarily experienced it, very difficult to. So then people aren't going to understand, you know, you hear that refrain, oh, they don't know what it's like or, you know, you've got no idea what's going on out there. Well, of course people don't, because the reality is entirely different to the one that you're experiencing. And if you think that other people are going to make that step towards you, you're always going to be isolated and an outsider. So it's up to you to take that and take that step and close the gap and for you to do the work on oneself.

Bruce Wallin: Well, obviously, you still have plenty of work to do and

hopefully some of that work will be done on future adventures with the Extraordinary Adventure Club. So, Calum, it's been a real pleasure having you on Travel that Matters .

Calum Morrison: Thank you very much for having me on the show and see you soon .

Narrator: And now for the Wallin Wrap Up.

Bruce Wallin: All right, I want to tell you a little story. I was in Bali a couple of years ago and I decided, like so many people who go to Bali, I decided to do the sunrise hike up the volcano, Mount Batur. And I was staying at Mandapa, the Ritz Carlton Reserve property in Ubud. Which side note, that's one of the most stunningly beautiful resorts I've ever seen. Anyways, we left Mandapa at three a.m. I think it was about a two hour drive out to the volcano, to the trail. We start hiking. It's pitch dark, we have our headlamps on and we're going up this trail and it's dark and it's quiet and spooky and all these things. And we're so excited to be scaling a volcano in the dark. And all of a sudden we hear this like, the whining sound of a moped or dirt bike engine and then another and another. And all of a sudden we're getting passed by these like whining dirt bikes flying past us. And we realize that there's a bunch of people who are just going up to the top of this thing. They're not even hiking. They're just taking these dirt bikes. And we get up to the top and we're one of the first hiking groups up there. But there's already a fair amount of people, soon enough before the sun even comes up. It's like a giant party up there. There's Russians passing along vodka and sausages. There's a group of Canadians circling and some guy with a guitar singing 90s pop music. And here we thought we were having this very special kind of spiritual experience on top of this volcano. And it was anything but, obviously. But, you know, truthfully, once the sun came up, it really, everyone kind of shut up. And observed the spectacle of it all. And it was it was spectacular. I mean, it was absolutely beautiful. But the best part came after that. So we had this great guide. And after the sun came up and everyone had snapped their Instagram photos and and people, you know, people started going back down the hill, back on their dirt bikes or by foot or whatever it was. And he said, hey, do you want to go a different way down? And he said he says it's better. It's more, it's like it's prettier, it's less people. I said, yeah, that sounds great. So we went a different way down. And it was longer. It was harder. It was a harder hike. But within a few minutes, there was no one else there. It felt like we were walking on a dragon's spine through some, like mystical land of clouds and views of ocean and volcanoes. And it was absolutely stunning and it was pure solitude. It was amazing that we just took a right instead of a left, and we had this place to ourselves. So the point of that story is that sometimes the best travel experiences require a little effort, right? They're not always handed to you. You have to work and you have to work to do something different, to do

something that other people aren't doing to kind of get away from the crowd and not to say that there's anything wrong with wonderful experiences like sipping a margarita on the beach in Cabo. I love that, too. But sometimes it's nice to, like, try to do something different that other people aren't doing. And Extraordinary Adventure Club epitomizes that. My experience with them was not easy. It was like a constant push and pull of emotional and physical tests. But in the end, it was one of the most rewarding and meaningful travel experiences in my life. And it doesn't have to be with them. It can be wherever you are, however you're traveling. You know, just that idea of making a little extra effort, pushing yourself a little further harder and the rewards can be astronomical. I'd like to thank Calum Morrison for joining us today on Travel that Matters. If anyone you know would benefit from an extraordinary adventure, please pass along this episode to them or visit Curtco.com for more information. This episode was produced for Curtco Media by A.J. Moseley. Darra Stone. Music by Joey Salvia. Mastering by Steve Riekeberg. I'm Bruce Wallin, and we'll see you next time.

Narrator: Curtco Media, media for your mind.