**John Ferguson**

[00:00:00] **Adam Hoffberg:** [00:00:00] Hi everyone, and welcome to our next episode of the Rocky Mountain MIRECC short takes on suicide prevention podcast. I'm your host, Adam Hoffberg. Well, folks, I'm really excited that we have John Ferguson on for today's episode. John is a veteran and a yoga instructor, and I want to let him introduce himself.

So welcome, John.

**John Ferguson:** [00:00:22] Thank you, Adam. I appreciate you having me here. it's an honor. And as you said, I am a veteran and one of the things that I really want to do that I've been trying to do for the past three years is to help my fellow veterans finding a path and a way out of PTS and dealing with all the anger.

This started for me when I joined the Marine Corps in 1990, I ended up retiring in 2010 I did two tours in Iraq and one tour in Afghanistan. And I know firsthand of what PTS does and what it can do to us. The hard part is trying to find our way out. my way [00:01:00] out was through yoga, all things I never thought I'd get into yoga.

But it has led me to finding a way to reach out, extend my hand to my, my fellow veterans in the area. And the results have been nothing short of amazing. As you heard in the beginning, we started with the Tibetan bowls. And really theTibetan bowls have set it up to where the veterans can finally relax and release, which is a huge step.

So my path is for the past three years, is teaching yoga to veterans for free.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:01:36] Well, that's so amazing. And again, I want to thank you for being on the show today and sharing this with us because, I know for myself, and I'm sure for many of our listeners. this approach to healing after post traumatic stress may be somewhat novel or they may not know about it.

So, maybe we could begin, you know, with a little bit of background on what this approach looks like.

[00:02:00] **John Ferguson:** [00:02:00] The, when I was, when I retired 2010, I spent about four years in the fleet darkness. I felt alone. I felt anger. I didn't understand what was going on. And not only I was suffering, but my family was suffering.

So I finally figured I had to get out of it. So it's really all kicked off with a friend of mine. He said, you should take a yoga class. And my first reaction is the typical reaction I hear even from the veterans. Now, my reaction was, no, I'm angry and you're going to twist me into a pretzel . Not a great combination.

After the talk about it, and I finally got over myself and I realized. Something has got to be better than nothing because the path that I'm on right now is not going to end very well. So I mustered up all these prides that I could, I decided to go into a yoga class, and it was in that yoga class I experienced was called yoga Neidra and it's, it's really at the end of the class where you're [00:03:00] trying to shut down your brain.

And just for a second, it wasn't a long time, it was about the second or two, and I actually had my mind focusing on one thing. And it was like a ton of bricks that hit me of saying, Oh my goodness, I've got this power with inside me that I can slow my brain down. Because typically veterans go to alcohol or drugs or whatever it is, because we just want the mind to slow down.

But I found out through meditation that it can be done. So I took it a step further and I incorporated the Tibetan singing bowls. So the program really got built in my local VA of taking the bowls in and I would ask the veterans what they thought and how they felt about it. And then over the next couple of years we developed a program to where you could meditate and you, for one time in your life, you will focus in on one thing and one thing [00:04:00] only.

So when you're able to focus the mind and relax the body. Then you start getting into one of my favorite things, it's called neuroplasticity and neuroplasticity is where the brain rewires itself. So a lot of doctors told me my medical conditions are permanent, is nothing they can do about it. And my instantaneous reaction is, I'm going to find out what the answer is to this.

You're not going to help me. That's fine. I will find it out myself through yoga. Meditation. I have found a way to start healing myself from my past, at first to take that idea. And in a monster concept, it is very hard to actually think that you can do this without any form of medication. so I, I believe it's meditation, not medication.

It's going to really help us get to the next step. So that's the approach that we've been taking for the past three [00:05:00] years and the results. Has been astronomical. I've got Vietnam Vets, I've got Afghans Vets. I've got Iraq Vets that are coming in, in droves to listen to the bowls and be taught how to meditate to slow the breakdown.

So I been loving where I am right now. I'm happy on this path. And, I wake up every morning going, I'm going to help a veteran today, and that's why I'm here.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:05:24] Wonderful and you know, as much as possible, I hope this podcast can be a vehicle to help you get that message out. Cause it, it is so important.

And I mean, I guess, you know, there's a lot of sort of complimentary integrated approaches to healing. And I'm just so curious about these bowls, these singing bowls that, you know, you were able to share with us and our listeners at the very beginning of the meditation. can you tell us a little bit about the bowls themselves, sort of the path or history of, Tibetan singing bowls and, you mentioned that it allows the body to sort of calm [00:06:00] down and get into that state where you can then heal.

And I wondering if you could just. Talk us through like what, what's actually going on? When your body hears these sounds,

**John Ferguson:** [00:06:10] What's happening is that as you walk throughout the day, let's just say you're walking down the sidewalk and you hear a loud noise and they react to it, or you hear somebody talking behind you and we're constantly reacting to the sound because these sounds have, as we were on patrols or wherever we were, these were threatening noises.

So when I incorporate the Tibet singing bowls, they are an individual sound. So one goal represents one sound, but when they started to play together, they harmonize and they start to come up to a frequency where all of a sudden you have the brain. It's like a moth to a flame. Your brain just has to go and listen to the bowl because you don't only just hear them, you could feel the vibration.

And in the [00:07:00] beginning for me, that was a, a weird concept. I'm going to feel the vibration. But even when we were young and you listen to very loud, we used to get a contract. You could hear the music, the sound waves coming at you. So with the Tibetan bowls, you're doing the same thing, but you're focusing the mind.

So each bowl, like I said, has a certain tone. But really when they're all played in harmony, they create a new sound. And the brain just absolutely learns to shut down. You can't focus in on your past, the patrols and the rockets and the mortar attacks and whatever you were dealing with, your brain literally just can't stop thinking about the bowls.

And then after a while you'll notice that there is nothing else. You are just listening to bowls. And most of the time I teach about typically about 50, 55 minutes with the Tibet bowls. [00:08:00] And to actually have people sitting down for 55 minutes in a chair, not moving is an amazing concept, but to have them coming out happy and smiling because they realize that they were able to let go release, is an amazing thing.

And they come out with smiles on their faces. And it really is a rewarding experience because I know that they're working their way back, become healthy again.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:08:27] Yeah, that's, that's fascinating. so you mentioned this program began at your local VA and could you tell us a little bit about how you got up, got that off the ground and what that actually looks like?

**John Ferguson:** [00:08:40] Course I was, I was, I went to see a therapist at the local VA and I was there as a patient. And she asked, you know, we talked about it and she asked me, you know, can we set up another appointment for a month from now? And I had, well, I'm going down to take my yoga teacher training [00:09:00] course, and she said, wow, you're going to be teaching yoga.

I said, yes, I'm going to be a yoga teacher. She said, well, I've got some veterans that are interested in yoga. I said, well, great. I'm going to be a yoga teacher looking for some students. So we started working together. I went down to, and I did my teacher training and came back and while at my teacher training, one of the instructors uses to the Tibetan bowl and they just struck it once and I was drawn to it like this.

This is amazing. My mind stopped thinking about the patrols and rockets and all the nonsense that we think about constantly. It was just the one thing that I said, that's the answer I've got to incorporate that. So I took the verbal picture of yoga. You do that, they teach you in teacher training, and I incorporated that with singing bowls to create this program.

So when I came back, there was a group of veterans that were very interested in it. So I sat down with them and we, [00:10:00] we've slowly started with doing this class. So basically what it is, is a veteran comes down to be the conference room that we use. I set up the bowls, they sit down and then I start to teach you how to tighten the body and release the muscles.

Because most of us are stuck in the sympathetic nervous system are we are in locked in fight or flight. And the way that people can tell if they're locked into flight is that they have back pain, a lot of muscular back pain and two, they don't sleep very well. They probably are awake between two to four in the morning.

We don't know how to get back to sleep. So slowly but surely, I've been adding tools into the toolbox of these veterans to understand how to deal with anxiety, how to do with anger. Why do we have anger? Where does that anger comes from, and we start to work towards healing. Now, one of the things that I've really talked to my veterans about is when we were kids, [00:11:00] we were told, calm down, but we were never taught.

How to calm down. So what I'm doing is teaching these veterans on how to calm down. So when you do go into a crowded area or you feel an anxiety attack, it's coming. I give them a three minute drill to go through so they can get to a safe place. They don't have to worry about having a meltdown in front of everybody, and then over time, it's, they're not going to worry about having a melt down in front of everybody.

They're able to get beyond that. And then they start to not have fights with their spouse, start to able to read the life. And then ultimately we get to the point where they're just happy all the time. And that's when you know, you really getting somewhere. One of the veterans tell you, I feel better. I'm happy.

These are emotions that some of them have been blocking out for 50 years, ever since the Vietnam, and now that they're starting to experience that [00:12:00] they've had this power inside of them. One of the questions I get a lot is why didn't I notice about about this before somebody should have taught me on how to control and slow myself down.

So that's one of the powerful things that we have been doing, through the classes that we've been given.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:12:17] Awesome. Yeah. You touched on a couple things that I wanted to circle back with. One is just this idea that. This isn't just for post traumatic stress. This is, this is kind of cross cutting. This is, this is something that can help with sleep, with anxiety, with feeling down.

and it seems to be an interesting way that it's, it's approaching this, like you said, it's not medication and it's doing something with the way that we. Calm our body. And I just, I find that fascinating because you're right, we always want to calm down. We're told to calm down. And having the right set of tools to actually be able to do that [00:13:00] is, I mean, that's life changing and, you know, is there, is there a story that you might be able to share of someone who's been a part of your groups that has really, exemplified this technique.

**John Ferguson:** [00:13:13] Well, yes. One of my veterans, Vietnam that, a lot of trauma. Do you have a lot of trauma? And we were meditating and in the beginning I was getting about a 30 minute class. So we started it and he started meditating and all of a sudden he, in his mind, he saw that he was in Tibet and he went to this big building, monastery.

And he was talking with some local Tibetans. So that that session ended, and you know, we picked it up. A week later, we came back and he picked up the same vision a week later in the next session that would happen. So he was at Tibet. He's talking to his guru, and he was learning about different things. [00:14:00] And then he's, and then we came out of that session.

That was the second week. The third week we came back, picked it up again, and he all of a sudden said, he went back to Tibet. He's talking to his guru, and then all of a sudden, whoosh, they're in Vietnam and in Vietnam, he saw prisoner of war there and he wanted to help his prisoner of war. And the prisoner of war was saying, no, leave me alone.

I don't want anything to do with you. Just go away. And he, we, so at that, there is the third that. 30 minute session ended and he approached me. He said, you know, I'm having this reoccurring vision, and he, we talked about it, we went to lunch. I said, you know, we need to sit down and talk. So we started talking and he was very emotional because he was really worried about this POW and, and I told him at, he told me the full story, if you know what that prisoner of war is, you.

You're [00:15:00] holding yourself in Vietnam. You're not forgiving yourself. You are holding yourself back and now at the time to address it, go back and see if you can complete the circle. So he agreed. So we went in for the fourth week and amazingly he picked up the vision again, and this time his guru that was with him into bed.

Went with him to Vietnam. So we had a theater to support you with him. And he went to the police, found the prisoner of war, and he started talking to the prison of war. And the prisoner of war, said, I don't, I don't need anything. All I want you to do is take care of my family back in America. And he hugged us.

He hugged the POW while he was meditating. And it came out of it at the end of that fourth session, and he was in tears. But he finally, he looked at me and he said, I have finally let go. You were right. That prisoner of war was me holding [00:16:00] myself in Vietnam, and now that I know what I have to do is I just have to take care of my family here.

So it was a, it was a powerful event for me to know that through the Tibetan bowls through, see it through meditation, he was able to go back through his worst day. And stop holding himself prisoner and let that go. So it told me that it was really the first time I heard that these veterans are having these amazing stories.

And since then I, I, I continually hear more and more stories for when they find a safe place. They know that I'm watching over them the whole entire time. They're able to go back to their worst memories and they start to work on those memories. So I know when they're really making progress is when they are able to go back to their childhood and remember these happy events.

Because most [00:17:00] of the time if somebody asked me a positive thought, I couldn't come up with one. Nothing was positive, I was angry about everything. But when you're meditating and you're finally going back and you're releasing some of that negative energy and your anger. And all of a sudden the wall becomes a whole lot better of a place.

So when he told me that he had that did four different times, I knew that this one, we were onto something. This is what this was going to be a huge help. And the best part is there's zero side effects. There's no. Drug interactions there, you're just sitting there and you're allowing the mind to heal itself.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:17:38] Incredible. Yeah. It's incredible to me that, you know, the sounds, these vibrations, this resonance can truly help people overcome their life challenges. And I'm just, you know, I'm in awe and also intrigued and, you know, again, I really appreciate you sharing that story.

**John Ferguson:** [00:17:58] One thing that comes to mind [00:18:00] about this whole entire process, and I'm going through is when we, in the military, everybody talks about physical health.

You know, you have to run faster, more pushups, more pull-ups, whatever it is, in case you go off to combat, you have to do your thing. You have to be ready for it. But one of the things that we never did was we never tried mental health. So if I, if I would walk up to a veterans going, what's physical health?

Because I get the answer of, you know, line pushups and that kind of thing. And then I've asked them, okay, what's your vision of mental health? One of the first things I hear is, Oh, you're going to the funny farm. You're going to see the wizard, your loony-tuny, you're not there. But if you really stop and think about it, physical health, I need to keep the body healthy, but also.

We need to keep the, the thing that drives the body, the mind. We need to keep that healthy. And when you using meditation to allow the mind to calm down, relax, focus, [00:19:00] we can start taking the taboo feel of mental health and to push pushes towards, I'm going to make my mind stronger, then I can make my body stronger.

And as a whole being, I'm going to be a better person. So I really try to work at taking the stigma off mental health of, Oh, I'm having a bad day, or I'm just depressed, that that's not what mental health should be considered mental health, is I'm going to try to make my mind, healthy as I would my body through physical health.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:19:33] Hmm. Yeah. And clearly this, this idea is taking hold and many people are sort of embracing it. And I remember when. we met, we met back at the VA DOD suicide prevention conference over in Nashville in 2019 and I remember kind of meeting you in person and hearing about how this is sort of gathering momentum and [00:20:00] that you were actually even running some classes during the conference.

Is that right?

**John Ferguson:** [00:20:05] That's correct. I was lucky enough to be invited to the conference. as, as just an any, a veteran, but as a veteran that teaches yoga, and they wanted me to come so I could sort of offer this to other people. And I was, I was deeply honored as a of the fellow instructors there wanting to learn about really what's going on, because like I said, the beginning, when you think about yoga, it's skinny women tihjt pants doing things that most people can't do.

But yoga really is ultimately in the end of the day. The physical part is just a the box. So that way you can sit down and not have any pain because somewhere on your body somewhere right now, something hurts. But if we get to the point where we stretch your body out and nothing hurts, then the real work starts to begin of allowing the mind to the relax.

So while I was at the conference, I met a lot of [00:21:00] great people and they were very interested in this, and they want this program to expand. and that's what I'm in the process of really trying to do is to offer this nationwide to people. but it was just opening eyes of other people because even the workers that were there, the VA employees, they're stressed out.

They need some help because even the caretakers,in the VA forgetting second hand PTS just by hearing our stories, they can tell that we're angry and upset. So coming to the conference was a, a blessing. But the one thing that I really was, I was sort of surprised that in the conference is everybody really wants to stop the suicide rate.

There were only lower it, but nobody knows how to do this. We've got cognitive behavioral therapy. We've got group sessions. We've got a lot of key answers that are helping, but in my opinion, the next step is meditation, showing veterans [00:22:00] how to meditate. So when I start talking about this was other veterans, one of the first thing that they say, you know, I'm going to, I'd like to introduce you to yoga.

And I get, Oh, that's, you know, they, I get a litany of answers to that. But when I tell them, hold on, I was a 20 year Marine, I did three combat tours. I spaced what you face with PTS. I still live with it. And I want to show you how I've come to a better place in my life. And then all of a sudden, all the stigma of.

You know, you don't know what you're talking about. You haven't been there. That gets eliminated. Can we get down to how to start fixing ourselves? So when, when we have veterans or veterans talks, it's a lot easier because I know what they, what they've been through. They know what I've been through, and we just have a deeper bond than most doctors to a patient does.

So it allows me to talk to them and they open up with [00:23:00] deeper meaning story. So it is, it's it really. The conference was a great launching point and I think that this is over time, it's going to start reaching other veterans in the other part of America so they can experience this also.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:23:16] Yeah, it's, it's wonderful stuff.

And I'm so glad you mentioned this, like helping, break down that initial sort of hesitance or, or obstacle that, helping people just understand what really it is that you're doing and how yoga is an approach. And, and like you said, it's not just about a. Twisting your body into a pretzel. And, and, and that, you know, you can do this in a way that even a veteran who may have sustained an injury or has, you know, a physical impairment can still participate.

And I, and I'm wondering if you could just say a little bit more about how you make sure your program is adapted to, to work with veterans of all shapes, sizes, and abilities.

**John Ferguson:** [00:23:57] You use the perfect form of adaptive. So [00:24:00] when I went to teacher training, they told me the basics about yoga, and that was fantastic.

And then I took another step. I went back to school and I took an adaptive yoga, and that really allowed me to work with somebody who's in a wheelchair, or I can have a professional athlete in the same classroom. So we need a wheelchair and a pro athlete, and they'll both get something out of it because I can put somebody in a chair.

I can adapt anything to, whether it's missing a limb or if it's they don't have balance or whatever it is, no matter what ailments or challenges that people are presented with, it can be adaptive. So when yoga starts to become to the point where what will you be less behind then? Then they really start to get interested.

Even my current class, I give her a free class on Wednesday night and I let a veteran and a spouse coming come together. And one of the beautiful things is I see husbands and wives or spouses together [00:25:00] and they're giggling about things and they're laughing again. They're making a bond again, and I've got a couple, he's 86 and she's 84 and they really are understanding how to enjoy moving around again.

Yes, they have some challenges. I just put them in a chair and allow them to move along with us, but to see the smiling faces at the end and knowing that no matter what challenge we have physically, it can be overcome then. Then I get the whole package going of all the veterans are welcome and you don't have to be put off because I'm going to be doing these crazy poses.

The poses are not really the goal. The idea is stretch yourself out. Get limber so I can have you lay down for 30 minutes and shut your brain down. and then the last part is just the 30 minute of slowing down. It's called yoga. Neidra and Neidra [00:26:00] is, is Sanskrit for sleep. That's all it is. At the end of class, you allow yourself after you're stretching to go to the next step of shutting the brain down.

And that's really where I have extracted the yoga Neidra. And I have, I teach a free class on Monday to Fridays at my local VA clinic, and that's where it is 45 minutes to an hour, somewhere in there. just the yoga Neidra, we're not, we do sit in the chair. We're not trying to stretch out anymore, but we are addressing, the biggest problem that we have is the mind.

So the beautiful thing about yoga is it can be adapted for any body type, any challenge, any physical issue that you have. It can be worked around. So I hope when people start to look for a yoga studio and they're going to move forward with this idea that they'll ask the teacher, do you have adaptive yoga pose training?

[00:27:00] And because I have whatever issues may be, I have this, or I have that. And if the teacher can accommodate you and allow you to participate in the regular class, that's the kind of teacher that you want. And also the last part is ask for a teacher to make sure that they're teaching yoga Neidra at the end.

Because like I said, the yoga Neidra really is the key for shutting the brain down.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:27:24] Yeah, such an important, sort of philosophical approach. You know, again, I think many people may typically think of yoga as basically a workout program or a stir, you know, and it's more than that. It's like you said, I, I'm really kind of taking that in that you're stretching the body to get it comfortable enough so that you can then, comfortably sit or lie down through the meditation phase of the practice.

**John Ferguson:** [00:27:50] Oh, one of the things that we've veterans face is anger and, and a lot of my veterans tell me anger as, but yet I 100% [00:28:00] agree. I feel that cause it's, it's anger is, is very easy emotion. And they say, well, why do we have anger? Anger is an emotion that doesn't take a lot of energy to produce. It's always there.

I can get angry about anything. But when we start thinking about other emotions of forgiveness, happiness, that takes some work because we have to associate positive thought with them. So for us, when we go on patrols or whatever it may be, anger was there because you had to utilize that energy to get you through the worst.

So we're stuck literally in our primal state. We didn't need positive emotions to get us through the fifth patrol. We didn't need to happiness or any of that. We just needed to get point a. Point B. We did a good job. Did we accomplish the mission good. So all of a sudden we come back to America [00:29:00] and these emotions are not something that we can really attach with anymore, but we can easily attach with anger.

Anger is a very easy emotion. It's right underneath the skin and it can come out anytime. But to come over anger. Is, it was a very hard challenge for me. So I read one time a book. If anytime that you have a negative thought, you must oppose it with a positive thought and wow. I sat there for many minutes thinking, okay, I'd like that.

That'd be nice if I can get rid of negative in my life. And then I thought, wow, I don't have a positive thought. So it really took me a very long time. So I finally found one positive thought and I, I know in my mind I'm like, that's beautiful. And it helped me that day and I actually felt better, but the next day I couldn't remember, couldn't remember my thoughts.

So I had to go back and find another one. And then I realized I did this a [00:30:00] couple times. So I started writing these down because I needed a little help to getting a positive thought in my mind because I was surrounded by negative. The negative was built by my own. Interactions with the world of how I interpreted things were going on because I was stuck in that person's nervous system.

I was in that fight or flight. So I started writing it down and over time I had come up with 29 pages of positive thoughts. I call it the power of positives. And so I introduced this to my veterans and they said, this is great. You know, I can extract an idea and I could start to work with it. Really get something, something to my life.

That's some of it. And then over time, these past three years, I've been talking with veterans and they've been sharing their experiences and their feelings and its lead up to the point where I wrote a book. And the book is about my journey to find my path that happens by healing. [00:31:00] And now that I've got the book finished, it is.

I just am able to hand it to a veterans say, here, I understand what you're going through and there's a lot of issues that we don't want to talk about, even with their doctors. You know, angry all the time. Why? Why do I react this way? Why am I doing this? Why do I not connect with my spouse anymore? Why am I angry at my kids?

Why can't I go out a side of my house? We isolate ourselves in our house because nobody can get to it. We don't want to talk to people because we can't associate with them because they don't understand what we've been through. So through the book, I have been able to, I just started jotting down notes.

So this is what I feel today, or this is how I came over this and now that it's almost finished is I look back and go, Oh, I can see how I've gotten from point a to point B and I want to reach my hand out to every veteran that's struggling. And say, I [00:32:00] understand here, read this, get on this path, and I'll be glad to help you in any which way.

One of the things that I'm the most proud of with this program is today I've had four veterans come up to me and say, I have not committed suicide because of your class. And if I know that four people are still on this planet because I am, I reached out my hand and I'm helping them find their happy place.

I know that this is effective and it's powerful.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:32:27] John, that's just tremendous. And again, thank you so much. I feel like, one of the things that, that I really liked was the way you said it helped, some of the veterans reconnect with their spouses and, and their partners, and just kindling that, that sort of, connection.

just amazing. and also I imagine within the class a, the veterans can connect with each other as well.

**John Ferguson:** [00:32:49] In the beginning I had, you know, five and ten now I'm up to maybe 23 and it's amazing because I'm [00:33:00] not really too many people were talking, you know, Hey, I was in the army, that kind of thing.

It was very superficial. Now it's a brotherhood and the brother and sister we, it doesn't matter where you're surfing, it doesn't matter what you did, combat, not combat, you are male, female, gender, race, creed, color. It just doesn't matter. You, you face trauma, you're hurting, and we understand what you're going through.

So now people come in a half an hour before the class just so they can catch up with their friends, or they say, you know, what are you doing Friday? And then they spend evenings together. So all of a sudden you have this network of likeminded people that are facing the same problems and they're close to you.

So now we've got something that they can come to and socialize. Joke around and, and get a good laugh in class. And one of the things that I do in class and I really enjoy is, you know, all the branches always pick on each other. You know, the army [00:34:00] and Navy, the Marines, we, you know, you always poke to each other, but it always in jests, and we always laugh about it because we know that one way we're back with our buddies in the service.

We were safe. So when we're in this room together, we are safe because we are together. So it allows people to not just open up physically and mentally, but we're reaching out and making new friends. And we know we've got more people around us that are also facing the same issues. So all of a sudden we remove that.

I'm isolated. Nobody knows what I feel like. Then they move on and they're a whole lot happier with life.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:34:40] Excellent. And so, you know, the logical next step and as you're talking about it is like, how do we get this out to more people? You know, this is working, I'm working with my veterans, so what are sort of some, some ways they are helping scale this up and get the word out

**John Ferguson:** [00:34:55] Currently, the book, like I said, it's almost complete and I've got a website, [00:35:00] that's going to be out and it's going to be able to answer some questions. I'm going to attach with a book, a recording of the yoga Neidra. So let me give it a 30 minute session. So people in the beginning that really can't sit down, maybe they've got some injuries that don't allow them to sit down for a very long time.

We'll start with 30 and then we'll work up to a 45 minute session and then we move on to the 60 minute session. And I'm also going to include a recording that helps people go to sleep. And in the book, what it does is it takes a first individual and say, okay, here's my story. This is what I've gone through.

And these are the symptoms that I have. And the reason that I explained it that way is because nine times out of 10 the veteran says you have the same exact thing as I do. Wow. Okay. And how do you get to the next point? And then the next thing is I'm trying to do is I'm working with the VA to expand the program.

Ultimately, what I love to do is have fellow [00:36:00] veterans from other hospitals. I would teach them how to do this. The Tibetan singing bowl. And then allow them to go back to their hospital and start to form their own groups and start working on meditation. So I think that this is a quite a big deal. Like I said, for the past three years, the results have been amazing.

and I think I'm just getting to the point where I can start to offer this nationwide, reaching out to my fellow veterans and saying, one, you're not alone. 2 I understand. And three, let me show you how I've gotten from point a to point B.

**Adam Hoffberg:** [00:36:39] Awesome. Yeah. Well, like I said at the beginning, anything we can do with this podcast to help get that word out.

And again, I thank you so much for sharing this, this knowledge and this experience and, you know, sharing your story to hopefully help other veterans. And wondering if you wanted to leave us with any parting thoughts [00:37:00] before we wind down this session with another round of the Tibetan singing bowls so that we can all experience this firsthand.

**John Ferguson:** [00:37:09] I'm glad to, what I'm going to do is I'm going to give you what's called a three minute centering. So when I was in like my yoga class, learning how to become a yoga teacher. There's the people there always told me to center and I didn't understand what they wanted from. So I decided to Marine go fashion.

I use an acronym. So I took the word center and I used the letter C E N T E R and it allows for a quick timeout for veterans. So it's about three minutes and it takes you through on how to calm the mind down. And the beautiful thing is. You can do this anywhere. You can be standing in line and something a loud noise happens.

Then you start to work yourself up and it allows you to slow yourself down. So through this process, and I'm just about to take you through, [00:38:00] it will allow you to control yourself, control your emotions, slow down the anxiety. And if you listen to the words and you just allow yourself to focus in on the sound of the bowl and allowing your muscles to relax.

It'll show you what, how to slow down, and it's very portable and it'll help you out and everything. One of the biggest tools that I give my veterans, and they tell you all the time that they use this because it just allows them to calm down and not have any problems with people around. So I'll go ahead and start playing that three minutes now for you.