

David
Hey. Picabo. How are you today?

Picabo
Hi. Good. David, how are you?

David
I'm. I'm great. As I mentioned earlier, I just came back from PT, and my legs are really wobbly.

Picabo
Right. That means you did a good job.

David
Yeah, I got some legs on.

Picabo
That's always a fun sensation.

David
First off, we just finished watching the Olympics, which are awesome. I love the Olympics. And you having competed in a couple of them and gold and a silver medal. What was it like that moment when you decided to transition out of that career into something else? What was that like for you?

Picabo
First of all, it's a sequence of moments that kind of start to add together and become, oh, it's time. Right. So there's not like this one. You wake up in the morning and you go, hey, I think I'm done. I'm going to retire. So there's like kind of this process that you go through as you consider all the things that are out there, like for me, for example, retiring in the Olympics in front of, hometown and American crowd.

Picabo
Really, honestly, there was no better way for me to to finish my career and put everything aside. Once you're done, boom. You're done. You're done. Make the decision. I think that it's definitely different for everybody. I think most professional athletes, if given the opportunity, will compete until their bodies tell them they can't compete anymore. And at that point they're done.

Picabo

And that's a lot of what happened. For me, my body was kind of like, you keep asking for 100%. I got 7580 to give you. This is getting kind of sketchy. And then I think the other thing that starts to happen that happened to me was you start feeling like life's passing you by. You're you're missing out on things that happened with your family, or you're squeezing them into a busy schedule.

Picabo

And as you get older and you mature, you just kind of realize there's more to life than sport. And then you, you know, the timing lines up. For me, it was a big event to go. Yeah. You know, cherry on top. I'm done.

David

Yeah. Good for you. I mean, a lot of people just sort of stay in the game longer than they should.

Picabo

Oh, absolutely. For sure. I think a lot of people stay in the game and who's to judge longer than they should. Right. That's kind of a, you know, a judgmental statement in my opinion. It's like they stay in the game as long as they can physically stay in the game, and things line up for them to be there.

Picabo

Right? There's it's not for any one of us to tell them when they're done. It's a very, very personal thing and with a lot of athletes, you know, people have to remember we're not in an era just yet. It's starting to become more of the mentality. But athletes really, honestly have like the best of two thirds of their life left to live when they retire from their sport, no matter who they are and what sport they're in and how successful they've been.

Picabo

Everybody has like this second mountain that they have to climb, and some of them don't even know that second mountain is out there until they're done. And then, yeah, they stick their face in the service and everything looks for in a different. And so they prolong that as long as possible. I think the way that the programs are starting to structure themselves now, particularly national governing bodies, is by putting policies and, you know, new initiatives in place that allow athletes to start building on that two thirds of their life left to live platform while they're competing, so that it isn't such a big scary transition when they retire.

David

You know, you've had some pretty horrific injuries. I mean, I want to make light of that, like really severe. How do those affect you today?

Picabo

Oh, how do they affect me today? All the time. Now, I kind of have to discern in the morning when I get up, does that hurt because I'm old, or does that hurt because I injured it at some point during my career? But honestly, like, depends on how hard I push. You know, if I'm really wanting to push and go be a real go getter physically, my body will tell me about it.

Picabo

But I think for what I have done to myself physically, I think I'm lucky. You know, I'm prolonging knee replacements for as long as I can because I know I need those. And that's just from multiple injuries to my my knees and those joint lines. Just the meniscus breaks down after a while and then the whole thing starts to kind of go, so, I have to be careful.

Picabo

I have to take care of myself. It gives me a really good excuse to go have self-care and and go do Pilates. Or my new favorite thing.

David

Right on. I want to get to the meat of what I want to talk about today. So in your sport, like a lot of sports, you train as a group, but you compete as an individual. And then when you win, you're in this singular position alone at the top. There's nobody else there with you. And I see this is really somewhat similar to people who rise to a CEO position in a company or leadership in an organization.

David

There's very little support around them. They're just not there on their own. What advice would you give to people in that position?

Picabo

Interesting. I think the first piece of advice I'd like to give that worked for me was I look at it like it's the tip of the spear, right? It's like when it comes time for competition, it's me in the course. I've got my team and we've done our prep, but there's only room for so much here at the, the tip of the spear.

Picabo

Right. I'm also not going to be there forever. Like you said, you, when you have your podium moment and you go back to the hotel and you're a member of a team and you're living like a family on the road, and so you just keep climbing to the tip of the spear and then back off of it every day.

Picabo

And no one ever stays right there. And so it's really important, I think, to build. And when you step off here, your tip of the spear create an environment that you want to be in. And I know that's difficult when you don't always like the people that you're around, but that's also a frame of mind and a that's something that if you really want to succeed and you want to reach your goals, it's going to be mandatory for you to create a positive environment around yourself.

Picabo

Otherwise, you're not going to be able to thrive. So I had a tough time. I'll be honest, when I first got on the ski teams, I was a tomboy from triumph, Idaho, and I used to work and things out with guys, and guys seem to hang on to stuff a lot less, a lot, a lot smaller period of time than girls.

Picabo

Girls like to hold grudges. So that was kind of new. I struggled when I first got on the team to blend in, because I didn't really fit in so well because I thought more like a boy than I did a girl. I think in a lot of ways, and it took me a minute to kind of figure it out.

Picabo

It took me a minute to kind of meet my teammates where they were at. On the real girly side. And then it also took me kind of encouraging them to let go of some of the nonsense and, and let's really focus on what we need to do to beat all of the Europeans. And that's where the collective team atmosphere came in, and just really tried to do my part to propagate that healthy landscape.

Picabo

So that's what I would encourage. So if you can't do it right within your team or within in-house, I like to call it, then you've got to have them right outside the door. They got to be the people who you step outside the door and, you know, go have a drink with or go mountain biking with or, you know, go do something where you can be active and talk about what's going on in your lives.

Picabo

That's what I would say. But really, honestly accept that that's what you worked for and that that's what you've earned. And when you are on the tip of the spear, spend time enjoying being there because you deserve being there, right? So really embrace it. Really embrace the fact that you that you pull that off. And yeah, you can have empathy and compassion for the people you beat to get there.

Picabo

That's that's fine, I did I had a lot of it. That's why I was so friendly with everybody, because I was like, okay, we're all really good, right? Okay, cool. Now it's time for me to go to the tip of the spear. I'll catch you guys on the back side. And that's kind of a mentality that I created within the scene, so that I felt better about being on the tip of the spear and being able to be like, yeah, I earned this.

Picabo

And you know, it doesn't totally matter who's standing in the audience cheering for me. I'd like there be more people. But, you know, this was my journey.

David

This is super similar to what you're describing to somebody who's running a corporation, running an organization. And what I wonder is in your particular sport, there are very few. I mean, you can tell me how many people have won a gold medal in a skiing speed event like 2025?

Picabo

Well, yeah. So I think I was like 17 was when I was the 17th, I believe, to win my gold. Lindsay was the first woman ever to win a downhill gold, and that was back in just 2010. And Whistler. So it's a small group and something that actually one of my children likes to point out to me often, just a little secret squirrel group that we do belong to.

Picabo

Yeah, it is small numbers. It's a special group.

David

Do you find that within this group? And I'm thinking gold medal skiing, speed events, small group. Also people who lead corporations of some magnitude. Very small group. Do you hang out? Do you? Are you in contact those people or are they just sort of in their own world? And then you've got your support group underneath you.

Picabo

Are you talking now or are you talking? Yeah, just.

David

Competing is probably a little different headspace, but like, how is it now?

Picabo

some of the people who are my fiercest competitors are my best friends.

David

Right?

Picabo

There was this mutual push, this mutual desire, this mutual passion that goes unspoken because it's obvious, right? We're doing what we're doing. Everybody is battling for, you know, three steps. But essentially that one up there in the middle. And the rest of the time we're living the same kind of lives. But yeah, there was an intensity that was, you know, unspoken.

Picabo

Therefore it makes it super easy to kind of pick up and have a conversation with somebody that you had that intensity with at some point and really feel like the only thing that's passed by is like your kids growing up and you know, you're moving or big things that have happened in your life. But when it comes to that fundamental relationship, it's still very much so there.

Picabo

You know, I think it's why orthopedic surgeons can all get together and speak what seems to us like another language, because they are in this Nishi small world and they're all, doing the same thing. And that intensity is there, that respect is there, that camaraderie is there. So, yeah. very much so. Keep in touch. And thanks to, like, technology makes it a lot easier to to be in touch and keep track of everybody and what's going on.

Picabo

you know, help people through different decisions and choices they're making in their lives or even in one case, say yes. You may name your daughter after me, which really floored me. yeah.

David

wow. yeah, I think about Chris Everett and and Martina, like, they're your best friends, right? Yeah. Roger. And, who's his opponent? the Spanish tennis. Nadal. Nadal? Yeah. They're like buddies, right? Yeah. It's interesting.

Picabo

So one of the things I wanted to point out, is during my career and this is something you and I've, I think spoken about before, as you get to a place where you have a level of success and the easiest people to drive with and to and to talk with and to really kind of be, have a kinship with are people who have had a similar level of success.

David
Right.

Picabo

It really makes it easier to just have conversations. There's different jokes that you can say based on levels of success. You know, everybody wants to make fun of the football players when they put, you know, they put those three Super Bowl win rings on and go like boom and do like that's such a small group, such a tiny little crew.

Picabo

Right. And that's just it's overwhelming. So you react in a way that's like what's up when you kind of do something a little bit silly sometimes, but you know, it's how it feels. The magnitude is, is that big around it. And you do you do kind of sometimes not like you have no idea how you're going to respond to something like that, right?

Picabo

I dreamt of winning the Olympics my whole life and thought, oh, I'm going to keep it together, and I'm going to sing the national anthem, and I'm going to be, you know, this strong American female. And I was crying my eyes out just trying to get the words out. And, you know, with weak knees standing on the podium when, when the moment happened.

Picabo

So you never know. But it is exciting. All right.

David

But yeah. Yeah. so when faced with an opportunity to excel, some people unlike yourself, feel feel overwhelmed by the pressure to perform. And how do you like that's, you know, the majority of the human race.

Picabo
Yeah.

David

You can and I know that, you know, sometimes you work with young people, you work with other, you know, other people. How do you help them embrace that?

Picabo

there's several techniques that you can use to try and, you know, get somebody out of that space. the big thing is, is changing it from, the past and the now to the future and really trying to visualize the outcome that you want. and not leave any time or space or air for fear, doubt or a negative visualization.

Picabo

To have room to live, you got to snuff that all out with visualizing yourself succeeding, feeling yourself feel what it will feel like to cross the finish line and see you won by your name. Feel that and then make that a reality. And ultimately, that's what I tell people is focus on all the stuff that's going to make that happen, and make sure there's no room for all the stuff that isn't going to help that happen.

Picabo

Now, that doesn't mean that you, you know, that you be irresponsible and not consider the things that you've gone through in your past that have led to maybe a, you know, an outcome you don't want. You can be careful about that. Like, oh, last year we raced here and that term was really hard. Let me make sure to set up an approach.

Picabo

That thing differently this year so that I don't end up, you know, fighting hard at the bottom of this turn and coming closer to that fence than I want to. Those kind of adjustments, for sure. You're making. but really visualize yourself and feel within that visualization yourself succeeding at the level you want to succeed. And then there is no room for anything else.

Picabo

You're you're off and running, and then you'll end up being around people who are doing the same thing with their lives.

David

So that that's interesting. And which brings me to my next question. Is that some people worry that achieving something, achieving some greatness, succeeding in a project, you know, whatever it is that that might distance them from their current team, their current relationships, their lifestyle. And so this is a change. This and some people are, you know, they sort of forecast that out there.

David

Like, okay, if I do this, this is going to change for me. Maybe change I'm not that comfortable with. How do you approach that?

Picabo

That's a tough forum and that does happen a lot. I do believe that that inhibits a lot of people from being way more successful than they could have been otherwise. I had a teammate at one point in my career. I just kind of put her on the spot, you know? I was like, what's going on? You clearly are a good enough skier to be finishing in the top three on the World Cup.

Picabo

What's going on? And she looked right at me and she said, I'm afraid of who I'll be when I succeed. And I it's the first time I really had to kind of look at it since I was, you know, first on the scene when I want my first World Championship medal. And the first question everybody asked me was, how did you get your name like it had been since then when I had to, you know, feet to the fire, figure out what kind of person I was going to be.

Picabo

And a national everybody knows me stage. But this was a teammate who had been like building her way up and was looking at like that on that switch and, and going to be somebody that, you know, becomes either a household name it, you become somebody. Everybody feels they have the right to judge. And then yeah, there's that. What's it going to do to me and my teammates?

Picabo

What's going to do to me and my friends? What's it going to do to me and my friends that I used to race with that did never make it? This far. And now I'm going even further. So everybody just wants to belong. So that's a that's a fear that I think a lot of people have. And you weigh it out, how much more do you want, what you set out for, how much hungrier are you for achieving your dreams than being liked and being in the in the crew and and having your buddies?

Picabo

And that's a crossroads. And when you get there, you have to make a decision, right? Who's coming with you? Who isn't? I advise a lot of the kids I work with, too, when they do their journaling. One of the things I encourage them to do is journal about your teammates, journal about your coaches, journal about the people that are in your world on a daily basis.

Picabo

And how do they help you? How do they hinder you? Do they give you energy? Do they pull energy from you? It's all part of the recipe for success is how you relate to the people that are around you while you're getting ready to do your thing. And, that's something that's really important, I think, and, can help a lot when it comes to being go time.

Picabo

Like, could you stay away from or who do you go be around based on whether it's going to be a give or take of, of your energy exchange?

David

I think that, very well said that, you know, none of us who've had any success, we didn't get here on our own. We got here because all these people helped us and that we're we're really our you know, our lives are really in the hands of others. And, you know, to the extent that we can encourage them to help us is incredibly important.

David

And I and I find that, especially with people who are, you know, in, in business or something, they are you're not going to meet a CEO of a corporation who's not incredibly charming, and able to get people to rally around them to help them out. And I think it may be a little different in sports, but I'm guessing if you're a total jerk, nobody's to help you.

Picabo

Yeah. No, it's very, very similar. And a lot of the athletes that do have the most success are the biggest characters and do have a lot of charisma and are just looking for that opportunity to kind of be real, be them, be authentic and be accepted for that. Ultimately. And, you know, it's obvious there are some people who are built to stand out way more.

David

So.

Picabo

Than other people. And there's there's, you know, some people that aren't, but that pizzazz and that appreciation is there with with everyone, you know, like watching the the men's basketball team and her coaching and then have, LeBron and, and Steph pull together like they did. I mean, just kind of there's so much that all of them had to get over in order to get to that beautiful moment or two that we got to see, during Paris.

Picabo

It is magic. Right. And those are, those are magical personalities that that ended up turning kind of towards one another and creating this, this intensity and this brightness and this inspiration and and love, if you will. I mean, it was it was really, really cool. It's very powerful to see. And and that can happen. it takes a lot of effort, I guarantee you.

Picabo

There was a lot of communication. There was a lot of, meeting somebody half way that went on for those guys to get to that spot. And I would have to say it potentially had to do a little bit with Kerr and his history with, the Bulls and the way that they went about pulling a powerhouse team like that together.

Picabo

And, you know, it does. It takes it takes a team. Some people need more support and a bigger entourage. So people just need like 1 or 2 people that are just constantly foundationally there cheering. But yeah, you you need to put together a support group and a support net for yourself. And, you know, call it whatever you want, entourage, support group, whatever.

Picabo

everybody needs to be told that they're okay. And believe it or not. Winning a gold medal doesn't just kind of pull that off like I was talking about earlier. It's the tip of the spear. It's somewhere that you get to and you experience. And then the heat at the moment, there it is. But now it's just an item that sits in my drawer in my office.

Picabo

And, you know, I get to marvel at it a little bit when I bust it out. But it's not like that. That feeling of being on the tip of the spear, like, is propelling me on a daily basis. I have to make a conscious effort to go, oh yeah, I did do that. And I do have you know that in my back.

Picabo

I do have that experience in my tool belt. but it's not it's not happening all the time. You have to recreate it. You have to recreate the magic. And that's what being around people who were there when that happened helps you to do that. And if those people can be the your family and the people that you're around all the time, you can kind of keep the intensity up and keep recreating the magic.

David

So we had we had very different upbringings, and for a whole lot of reasons. And like my mom, came out of the depression and it was all about not standing out, right? It was all about diminishing. And I did, you know, well on tests and stuff, and I had various different ideas on things. And she was like, nah, you just want to sort of like average out, right?

David

don't don't stand up. don't be authentic. And it's, you know, truthfully, it's take 40 years to get over that. but, so that's another thing. So some like for you, it is exactly the opposite. Right. but my guess is there are you come across people like this? what do you say?

Picabo

first you got to unpack it. Go all the way back, unpack it, figure out what your relationship is with, you know, with all the different use that exists in, in, in your life, and then, and then repack it in a way that you want to. I mean, honestly, it's it's literally like moving from one house to the next.

Picabo

You have to go through it all. You have to look at everything you have. You have to decide whether or not it's working for you or not. And if it isn't, you've got to get rid of it. And but you got to lean into it and touch it and smell it and get close to it and be like, how does you know?

Picabo

How does this work for me? I mean, I, I know now I've got a couple I got a six year old, a 12 year old, a 17 year old that I want to come in and help me run the show sometimes, and it's just hysterical. And I'm like, yeah, no, you guys need to chill back out. I got this and and, you make your life what you what you want it to be.

Picabo

And, you have to you have to be real and honest and look at the stuff that has made a huge impact on you. And again, where are you shining your magnifying glass? Where's your microscope? You know, I can shine it on, on a different situation in a

different way. Like my dad used to take me to the top of the mountain, give me a couple bucks and tell me, keep up, or I'll see you at the car or.

Picabo

And there's times when I look at that like, yeah, that was the greatest thing he could have ever done. I was like, keeping up no matter what. And I learned how to ride a flat ski and ski amazingly. But when I look at the mental side of it, I'm like as afraid to even stop to go to the bathroom.

Picabo

And, you know, and I didn't want to ski the rest of the day by myself. So it was kind of traumatizing a little bit in a way, to be like, I don't know how my dad's going to leave me if I don't keep up, right? But I flipped it in my head always as being something that benefited me because I learned how to ski so fast.

Picabo

So, you know, you unpack it, be honest with you, with yourself about how it serves you or doesn't serve you, and then build you a recipe that you need for success. I keep coming back to this one, but it's really essential that the ingredients that everybody utilizes on a daily basis, whether you're applying it to your family or your relationship or to work, or to being a professional athlete and trying to win a gold medal, you're creating a recipe for success that works for you like 90% of the time.

Picabo

And then there's these different ingredients that you pull in here and there in order to make it useful for whatever the environment is that you're currently in. You know, like take skiing, for example. We go out on the hill and we go skiing and, you know, a place like here where there's so much acreage to ski, we're going to run across all different kinds of snow conditions, all different kinds of runs, different preparations of those runs.

Picabo

Some are powder, some are crud, some are mobile, some are nice buffed groomers. And we go out there and we have fun dancing around amongst all of that throughout the day. And we've got to be prepared for all of it. So we've got a stance that we like on our skis that makes us confident and strong. It gets us in the front seat and then we adjust how far forward our hands are.

Picabo

based on the terrain we adjust to, what kind of turn we're making, whether we focus on our hips or our feet or our shoulders. All those elements are all adjustable, but

you've got a main recipe to use for success. It's the same thing in life, and I think that that's one of the things I've taken from sport is what did I utilize the most, whether it's positive self-talk, visualization, healthy thinking, good equipment, training, hard, whatever it is, I've got this recipe for success that I rely on, and then I adjust the rest.

Picabo

And I've brought that into my parenting and I've brought that into my life. And now do I get it right all the time? No. I'm constantly adjusting ingredients, for sure, but you got to build some sort of a platform to be able to go back to an average year. You know, your headquarters, if you will.

David

So let's think about goals. So, you yeah, your goal setting blows my mind. You were what you were like 12 or 14. You said, I'm going to win a gold medal.

Picabo

Yeah. It was ten the first time I actually start. I think I was ten and a 10 or 11. And then yeah, it was the Sarajevo games in 84 and I was 12 one. I was like, I was almost 13. And that's when I was like, oh, that's that's where this can lead me, because I grew up without television.

Picabo

So I didn't know even really what I was shooting for when I was shooting for it. And then I started to kind of get inklings. And then when I saw Sarajevo, I was like, oh, got it. Bam, okay, that's the top in the sport. That's me. That's where I want to go. And then I think I had also either seen them just before or just after the Sarajevo Games.

Picabo

I saw the US alpine team because they came to Sun Valley to train. And I remember just being like, that was, you know, that was my visualization. That was me. It was these beautiful girls with strong muscles in awesome outfits, cleaning house on everybody around the world, and ski racing. so sign me up. Where do I sign the bottom line?

Picabo

I was, I was in right, and so yeah, I just kept believing it. I kept, focusing on it and I kept visualizing. I would draw the Olympic rings and the steam on the wind, on the mirrors or windows, or on the frost on the windows or mirrors on the windows of the bus. I would draw on a piece of paper, a podium, and myself standing on the podium with the Olympic rings above me and the number one, it like I was constantly putting

it out there, constantly putting it out there, I, I, I went away and I want to win, I want to win, I want to win.

Picabo

And it's so funny because I had such a, a bead on that target that it really, in some ways allowed me to enjoy the ride a lot because I knew where I was headed and I wasn't going to let anything stop me. And so I was focused in on enjoying the journey.

David

so let's calibrate this back to a mortal. so, yeah, yeah, you had two things. You had incredible drive and your ability to visualize, but you also had remarkable physical abilities. that. Yeah, let's be real about that.

Picabo

Okay? Okay.

David

So if we sort of dial this back and we think about goals and achievable goals, how do you know when the thing that you're thinking about is out of like, how do you calibrate that? Like, this is my how do you chunk that into something that's achievable on a regular basis?

Picabo

Oh good question. So for me, I've always been really, strategic about placing my goals. And I, kind of like golf. It's like you've got 18 holes. Great. You look at the whole course, you size it all up, you kind of plan the kind of game you'd like to play, and then, well, and then you work yourself all the way back to right where you are, which is, you know, on the tee, but in the tee box with your with your ball teed up, ready to rock and roll.

Picabo

And right there, right then and now that shot is the most important thing. And you focus in on making sure that goes exactly how you want it to be. Best case scenario. And then once you make the the hit, then you size up again, okay. Based on where that landed, here's, you know, here are some of my next options as I as I go through.

Picabo

And that's basically how you set up your goal setting. And the more momentum you can get by reaching those, those goals, the better chances you have of just keep setting new ones further out there at the end of the 18. Right? It's like, oh, well, maybe

I'll play nine more after that. And, you know, and you start setting your goals higher based on your efficiency in reaching these ones.

Picabo

Now. And that was kind of just this machine that I got going. It's the way that I'm wired. I'll honestly admit it. It's the way that I'm wired. And when I get focused in on something, it's, you know, I target in on it and and I get it done. I was really task oriented when I was younger, and part of that was my upbringing.

Picabo

My father had a list of chores for my brother and I had to get after doing when we got home from school every day. That would blow kids out today. Absolutely blow their minds at the stuff that I had to do to earn the right to be able to run off and play. And kids today just come in the house, throw their backpack on the floor and sit down and pile up in their device.

Picabo

And they're they're there. And I mean, it was my dad used, the yellow legal pads to make the lists for the chores that we had to do. So I've been that way my whole life. And I think it's a it's a good way to set things up, as long as you're not too uptight with yourself about whether or not.

Picabo

Here's one of the valuable lessons I learned is, and I learned this from men, is oftentimes we have the same size list. Men and women. Men are just better at being like, I think I'm going to move all five of those items to tomorrow's list, because something came up today that I want to take. I'm going mountain biking with my friends, or there's a fun factor that came up, or a more important factor that came up, and they're able to make that adjustment.

Picabo

But the fun one is the one that I really encourage people to go for when it's when that spontaneity hits you, especially if you have this kind of type of driven personality you like. This is, you know, be spontaneous, go for that ride. take a break and go have fun and slide a couple of list items to tomorrow's list.

Picabo

But the goal setting is a way to just kind of build a foundation on yourself, perpetually on your way to going. And with that foundation leads to a perpetual belief that you can accomplish your goals and get where you're headed and sizing it up emotionally.

You say, well, is the risk and reward balanced? Is the effort and reward balanced?

Picabo

And I always say, if the love of what you do exceeds the effort of doing and success is inevitable.

David

I love that, I think that was going to my next question is like at some point, as you know, I like the golf course metaphor. So you're doing like one hit, one hole at a time and you want to get to the end, but maybe halfway through you realize, Maybe I should reevaluate going to the end.

David

Maybe there's something else. And, and I and I think about, like, the way when you change your career, you reevaluate. You was like, oh, okay. body's only 75% performance. Elite level. I really 100%. So we need to recalibrate what the goal is. So I think there's a lot of wisdom in a lot of people say, well, I never give up.

David

I think that's insane. I think giving up, you just sort of see what the landscape is, how view changes. But what's going on out there is change and then have tenacity, but be wise enough to know when to. All right. This isn't gonna work for me.

Picabo

Yeah, it's that's a tough one. for all of us when we end up there. I ended up there a couple times in my career. Was like, okay, you know, I should retire in 89 and after the World Championships. And then I was like, yeah, no, I'm gonna go all the way. And went a whole nother decade. But,

Picabo

I think that keeping track along the way, which is this journaling that I encourage anyone that I work with, I encourage to do allows you to go back and have a look at where you were emotionally, where you were mentally, where your motivation has been and what the recipe was around you during that time, and then try and recreate that if it's changed too much or, you know, just use that as, as perspective to be able to create whatever the recipe is now to help you be successful and you're not going to be inspired by the same stuff all the time.

Picabo

You're not going to have the same things going on in your life that you used to, and different things are going to motivate you. You know, you see some athletes who have babies and they're more powerhouse athlete than they ever were before. And there's just something that happens in them, a switch that gets thrown when they have a child and they want to, compete for that child.

Picabo

I don't know what that is because I didn't have babies till I was done, but, I think keeping better track along the way will also help you recognize when it is time to make that change. When something does call you more, and you say, I'm going to charge after this. And, and then there's the, the interesting thing of, well, am I nervous about too much time passing me by?

Picabo

I saw my stepping away because I'm of fear, and I want to set up my life and not, like, fall through the cracks when I get down the road. Do I want my body to be more active and mobile so that the rest of my life isn't really difficult because I've hurt myself so much? does this just not feed me anymore?

Picabo

Am I not fulfilled by this anymore? There's a lot of people who get to that place in their life, and a lot of them who are really successful at business and stuff, realize, what have I done to really make a difference? What have I done to pay it forward? What I've what have I left a lasting legacy other than maybe a great one with my family, but on a on a broader scale, there's a lot of a lot of people who had that in their lives.

Picabo

And if you're paying attention along the way and you know what you like, you're probably going to be able to land on something that's going to be fulfilling and walking away won't seem like such a disaster. It won't seem like such a difficult choice. It'll seem like, oh yeah, this is how it was meant to be all along.

Picabo

I mean, for me, I could have walked away at any time because honestly, I, I kind of reset recalibrated my goals as I went along. I never wanted to be. I never wanted to reach half the goals that I reached. I just I had they were ancillary benefits along the way of getting to the one that I really wanted was an Olympic gold.

David

I think is very wise. this I love this journaling and having a, a record of this is who I was at this point. This is what I was thinking about. Let's look back and see. I, I have some of that. And it's always when I look back it's so embarrassing. I think to myself, oh, what a dumb dumb you were.

Picabo

but it was so authentic at the time. It was so very authentically you. Right. And and if you don't go back and dig down into the authentic you, you can't recreate the passion for it. You know, it's what I tell athletes when they get injured and they have to go back to the drawing board and start all over again.

Picabo

I tell them, listen, I advise them, you step down every rung of the ladder on the way up. Just go re familiarize yourself with that territory around the ladder. And if you've got a journal that talks about and, everything the the food you liked, the music you're listening to, how much sleep are you getting? Who are you hanging out with?

Picabo

Where do you live? What kind of car are you driving? How much are you training? How tired are you about your training? Are you stretching? Are you doing all the dumb little things that are going to get you where you want to go, which are, you know, teeny little exercises, mobility stuff? As you get older, you have maintenance as far as your physical and emotional well-being go.

Picabo

Are you doing all of those things? Check all that, check it all, reassess your your recipe and make sure that you got a dive back into you. You were there all along. You're the only common denominator in all of it. So how often are you checking back in with yourself and going, am I honoring those denominators?

David

I think this is, I'm I'm thinking as a young athlete. yes, absolutely. And I'm thinking, you know, somebody in their mid 50s, having success out in the world. If they did this, there will there will come a point where something they will, their business gets sold, maybe they sell it. Okay, great. you know, maybe they get kicked out, they get aged out, something happens.

David

There's a disruption. But if you have this record of this is really who I am or who I was, at least at that point, becomes self because that's a that's why I started the

conversation with like, what did it feel like, like you retired on national television. Like it was a big deal. Like I'm done and everybody's like, really?

David

Okay. Like that was that was a hard stop. But and that does happen to some people. But oftentimes there's a little bit of like, you know, work up to it, but it's still super disorienting. I think one of the things I see with people is a friend of mine. Father is, a very successful attorney, and he retired from his law firm and just spiraled into depression.

David

Like, who am I? What am I doing? So sense of purpose, his, his community, all of that. He he had this idea like he's going to go play golf for the rest of his life. Well, that's like after two weeks of that, it's like, who am I? Where am I going? Yeah, but if you've got this, this becomes such a super valuable resource.

Picabo

Yeah, it's a real foundation for a place to start, if nothing else. You know, if life's going that caddy wampus and you're changing it up that much, you feel like you're flapping in the wind, it at least gives you a place to start. It's a place that, you know, and that's that's what I've had to do recently is, you know, my boys are starting to get older.

Picabo

And so I'm thinking about what am I going to do when they're gone so that I don't sit around waiting for the phone to ring. And, I've had to go, you know, I've had to go back in and and dig deep and unpack it and look at it. And, you know, six months ago, for you to ask me what makes me happy, what do I want to spend my time doing?

Picabo

I my answer was a lot more juggled than it is now, and it's starting to kind of get a little more concise. And, and I'm starting to to figure it out. But it's taking a lot of time, honestly, to be able to say to myself, you know what? Answer that question. What brings me joy? My raising my kids and doing a good job at making sure they turn out to be okay is my joy.

Picabo

And so when it comes right down to me, me and my joy, right? Like, if you think about my kids, good. Look at it. Like, okay, I'm the CEO of my family and they're my business. And, you know, I got five years of running the business still until it's running itself. And then what? What am I into? What do I like?

Picabo

Yeah, I'm happy to go back to my journals. I'm happy to go back to having conversations with, you know, with friends about what did we dream about, what did we used to lay in the grass and watch the clouds go by talking about, and that's how you really kind of know it's the place to start. If nothing else, it's been helpful for me.

David

I want to talk about failure. and,

Picabo

Slippery slope now.

David

With this, Oh, sorry.

Picabo

I couldn't I couldn't resist.

David

Well, so, you were good. you didn't win every time. Occasionally you fell down. Occasionally you blew it. How do you let go when something fails and, you know, you got to get back. You got to get back at it. Yeah.

Picabo

It's tough. It's interesting. I'm going to use. I'm going to use, my kids sports as a little just to, like, paint a picture. They play lacrosse and especially at some of the anger levels, there are so many goals scored on the goalies. Like so many. And sometimes I get to just sitting and watching the goalies and think the resilience that those players have is so superior to any one else on that field.

Picabo

And so they're the ones that I watch and that I talk to, and I get around and and try and check out what kind of mentality they have, because their ability to mess up messes, save and turn right around and, and get themselves back in the game to be able to be ready for another shot is is staggering.

Picabo

And it was speeding it up watching them in fast motion, right? So many shots, so many misses. And then boom, right back in the game. It allowed me a real fast track of being able to go, okay, what are they doing? They're just turning it around and focusing on the next thing. Phil and Steve Mayer said one time when if you don't want to be out training anymore, just get through the day and know that tomorrow, tomorrow's a new day and get through this one as fast as you can.

Picabo

It basically is just keep moving. Just keep moving forward. Just keep pushing forward and trying not to let yourself do your. In the military, they call it a debriefing. But do your little like sit down roundtable discussion of oh how did that go and why write that you got time for that later. So like in ski racing, you have a minute and a half to run a course.

Picabo

You don't have any time during that minute and a half to go back and go, oh, will that turn if I did just come in a little straighter on that one, I, you know, no, no, that's in your video session later or that's on your chairlift ride because you're getting ready to run it again. But it's not for when you're skiing the next gate or the next gate down the course.

Picabo

Right. You've got to pick your time where you break it all down, figure out how it went, change a couple of variables, and then go at it again.

David

And so what I what I hear you saying is, be present. you know, look at what you've done, for better or worse, analyze. But then don't ruminate. Just let it go, okay? You have to know the day.

Picabo

Yeah, well, and you focus on what you have control over when you have control over it. So you get organized to be like, okay, well, when I have control over setting up right for that left footed follow a gate I'm going to and that is in the middle of my next run. Boom. And and then you're, you know, you've got a plan for that.

Picabo

Follow a left footed gate and you'll execute it when you get there.

David

yeah, I, I find that some people, it's very hard for them to let go. I, in, in my previous career as a photographer and the, the nuttiest people that I ever photographed were relief pictures in baseball. So they spend the whole game in the bullpen, kind of in their own nutty world over there. And then they get called in and they have one job.

David

You got to throw three pitches and get this guy out. And, if they if they like the if they fail, right, and they don't get the guy out there, they, they, you know, whatever their mission was, they fail on that. They will ruminate about that for decades. All right.

Picabo

Yep. Now there's a set, isn't there, saying that says human beings are the only species on the planet. They're well punished ourselves, repeated repeatedly for the same mistake.

David

Right?

Picabo

Right. Yeah. I think that that's that that we for sure have that mentality. It's one of the things when I'm talking to young kids about, they're winning and losing. There's a couple things I say, one is, is you can only spend as much time ruminating on a loss as you would on celebrating a victory. So you got to keep that in check and keep that in balance.

Picabo

And what it ends up doing is decreasing the amount of time you ruminate and increasing the amount of time you celebrate. And so you find a balance in there. And so that was my job with that one. you know, when with a lot of people when they asked, that was how I that's how I did it. And that's how I encourage a lot of people to do it.

Picabo

And, you learn more about yourself when you fail than when you succeed, like, so much more. And I think part of it does does happen because you do ruminate so much. But I think it's a really important that's even a journal piece is like, you know, how long did this one buy me out? Was I grumpy all the way through to the next day?

Picabo

Was I not okay until I, like, beat somebody who had beat me? And that was part of my rumination and like, let's be real about it, all right? But you can journal about how long you've been. That process takes you and what you're doing inside of it. I remember asking my sports psych guy, Sean, one time after Lillehammer.

Picabo

I won the last training run, and, the downhill was the next day and I couldn't stop visualizing myself racing my run, winning a medal and doing interviews with the press. And I was like, rehearsing my day. And I felt like I. I wasn't being, who I wanted to be. I was worried that that was like to, selfish.

Picabo

I was worried that that was too, like, boasting or bragging. I was I was worried about how that was going to be seen or thought of even in in myself. Because I wasn't sharing with anybody that that's what was happening. And I called them and I said, I need to talk to you. And it's going to sound like a really funny question, but I said, I can't stop picturing it all happening tomorrow the way I want it to happen.

Picabo

And he kind of giggled a little bit, and he said to me, you know, please don't stop. Like it's an absolute positive thing. He said, if it is starting to kind of worry you and turn even the slightest negative, put a timeline on it and only do it for 30 minutes, then take a break for however long when it creeps in again, set your timer again and each time it creeps in, try and reduce the amount of time that you're fixating on it so that it stops, you know, rushing you.

Picabo

Because if you if you have this adrenaline rush every half an hour all night long, you're not going to compete very well tomorrow, you gotta find a way to calm down. Right. But that was the perspective that I had to come from. It come, come to it from, because that's what was happening with me. And it wasn't a bad thing.

Picabo

It was actually a really good thing. I just needed to kind of round the edges off of it a little bit and make it a little less intense. But yeah, if you want something, man, fixate on how you're going to go about getting it and but keep track of when it turns right. There's a good in a bad pain when you're doing your rehab and you know, when you push too far, you got to stop.

Picabo

Well, it's the same kind of thing when you're, you know, when you're revving up for the celebration of of success, you got to keep it in check for sure. But it's kind of like positive reinforcement and and praise. Is there really too much of that ever or are we in such a deficit all the time that you really we can't we could never over praise one another.

David

I think that we have such a built in negativity bias. That's how humans are. And I think that's, whatever you can do to push against that. and you go too far with that. I mean. You can become delusional. but that's something else. I generally no, I don't think so.

Picabo

I don't think so either. I think it'd be kind of like taking some of those supplements that no matter how many you take, your system's gonna be all right with eliminating them and handle that. Yeah, I think it's. I think love and love and encouragement and praise is something that. Right. that the world needs more of. And everybody needs to feel more comfortable, to be able to express it to one another.

Picabo

And part of that is, is expressing it freely without expecting something in return. And part of that is receiving it freely without believing that there's some ulterior motive attached to it.

David

Well, that's a quote.

Picabo

Equally as challenging, right?

David

This is great. There's our sound bite. I want to ask you something that's, particular to me and a lot of people I know, which is beginning a sport later in life, especially perhaps women. I think women have a I'm just going to say maybe a harder time with this starting something. Maybe they don't have a background in athletics and they're, you know, they're 100 on what, over 40 or something over, you know, over 30.

David

And they're going to start something. it's, you know, I can speak from experience, really humbling and hard. what do you tell how do you encourage people who are in

that, who want to do something like that, but they don't really have a background from it? It feels awkward and weird, and they're not going to be good at it.

David
And.

Picabo
perspective is the biggest thing and the most important thing, I think when it comes to learning something new at a, at an older age, and one of the, one of the quick little questions you can ask yourself is, is, you know, when did most of the people who do this sport all the time start doing it?

Picabo
And the answer is probably going to be pretty young, right? A lot of people fall in love with the sport they fall in love with, and they do it their whole life and they love it. Right? A lot of people who ski, for example, learn how to ski when they're younger. So be really strategic about who you ask to teach you how to do something new and really turn to the experts.

Picabo
I can honestly say just because I'm a fast ski racer doesn't necessarily mean that I know how to coach well. Like, I don't know if I would do great at coaching a team full of athletes. Could I meet each one of them where they're at? I don't know, maybe. I'm not sure, but I like going out and I like skiing with people and trying to help them do their thing.

Picabo
but there are professionals that spend their time learning how to teach someone how to do something from scratch from the beginning, as if you were a baby or a toddler, and recognize in that moment that part of the process is almost the most important part, because you're showing up to do something you know nothing about, and you have this humongous backpack full of life experience that you bring to the show that you have to carry in and sit down and then realize that almost none of what's in that backpack is going to be applicable to what you're doing now.

Picabo
And that's the beautiful part of it. That's the magic in it is being a kid again, being that free to get right down to the basics and be willing to let go of a lot of the stuff that you brought to the table and say, hey, this is a brand new experience. Let me get all the way into it and have a have a ski instructor or somebody who's teaching you,

teach you as if you were a baby or a toddler in elementary school, just starting it, just doing it for the first time and enjoy being that much of a rookie at something.

Picabo

Laugh at yourself. That's one of the things I've found the most therapeutic, and learning to do something new as I'm older because yeah, my body hurts and I'm only going to be capable of so much, right? Pickleball is so much fun and I love playing. And it's this cross between tennis and and and ping pong. And I just, I think it's so much fun.

Picabo

And the coolest part about it for me is that I can laugh at myself and my inabilities and how I forget to say, there's one rule where you have to let the ball bounce one time after a serve, and I always forget in rushing and hit the ball, I laugh at myself playing it. It's fun right? So embrace being a rookie.

Picabo

Embrace being a noob. you know, feel grateful that you have the opportunity. Your body works well enough to do it and laugh at yourself like you were when you were a kid. How did you get through it when you were a kid? Were you uptight every time you made a mistake when you were a kid? Or was that acceptable and okay because you were a kid and you're learning something, and first of all, you're winning and going and trying to do something new.

Picabo

Second of all, you've set yourself up to really have a beautiful kind of walk down memory lane of being a kid and learning how to do something again. And baby steps, baby steps, baby steps and repetition, repetition, repetition. Just like when you were little and learning it.

David

I want to ask you, sort of again, go back, you know, your injuries and stuff. I know that you're really involved with with your body, with it, you know, keeping yourself in the best shape that you can. What? What's your recipe for success today? As, you know, I'm a mid 50 former elite athlete. what do you do?

Picabo

so the first thing that I do is I, I try to keep listening to my body. Right? I figure as long as I'm listening to it, it'll keep talking to me, because I'll be making a little changes that I have to do along the way. I like to meditate and and feel myself kind of float out into, you know, this peaceful realm and, tune into my body that way.

Picabo

I like to breathe. I think that breath work is extremely, fundamental and oftentimes overlooked by so many people and can be a really quick solution to a lot of emotional stuff that goes on. It can also just get you totally centered and prepared for tip top success as well. I was breathing was a big thing.

Picabo

I thought I knew how to how to breathe. But then I met, I met a, doctor from back east who is actually, making a business out of teaching people how to how to breathe, because he's seen so much success through his practice and wellness of his patients with it. So he's just launched a new site called *présidence*, which is, a great approach to it, adding music to it, which sound is becoming a sound and vibration is something that people are becoming aware of.

Picabo

I think all of it is, is essential. and then the I always have somebody to talk to, that one's really, really important. some people like it to be a therapist and everything's real. you know, private. But some people just have really good friends that they can talk to honestly about what's going on and having groups.

Picabo

For me, it's having groups. I grew up on a team. Even though we won and lost separately, we prepared as a team, and that's something that's still important to me. And so I've always liked working out with either a couple people or groups. And so my latest find is Pilates, and I have literally fell head over heels into Pilates because one, there's a community of people that like, I look forward to going and seeing them and knowing which days they're going to be in for which class, and I get to ask them how their week was or whatever.

Picabo

So that's been a really fun community to join. The other thing about Pilates is, is it it allows me to on a real micro level, stay tuned into me because some of the exercise, well, most of the exercises put you in such a a compromising position that you're utilizing some of the smallest muscle bellies and the smallest connective tissue you have in your body in order to pull a range of motion off.

Picabo

And if you do have an injury or or a dysfunction, there somewhere a lot is is going to show it real quickly. And there's no there's no ego attached to it for me of like, which

spring am I on and how many reps can I do? And you know, am I able to do the hardest thing class has to offer?

Picabo

No, I really don't care. It's all about doing good form and being able to do the exercises so that I strengthen the parts of my body that need to be strengthened, and the overall stability that I've recognized across the board from picking up a laundry basket. Skiing with Pilates has been phenomenal because, like I said, all those little connective tissues are all awake and working and functioning.

Picabo

And the other thing that that I do a bunch of that is really mandatory is stretching. And by stretching, I don't mean just like, you know, sit down and bending forward and touching my toes. I mean, like manipulating my tibial plateau anteriorly and anterior and posterior so that you're shifting the bottom of of your leg and separating all of that connective tissue, you know, at the, at the top of the tib fib with the anterior tibialis and the gastritis and your calf and all that, and then all the way to the bottom of the quad where that all attaches.

Picabo

And really making sure that your joint lines move and are either you're pushing on them and rubbing on them to make them become aware of you, or you're putting them through some really specific, isolated range of motion. And I'm talking from your fingertips in your toes, all the way through your whole body, every vertebra in your back and neck, your, you know, your shoulders, your hips, all your stabilizing joint lines for sure, really tuning in and paying attention to all of them, whether it's breathing, meditating, doing little stretches or doing Pilates access Pilates exercises where you know you're you're stressing the joint line, but in a way that gives you a stability

Picabo

more so than strength. And I think that's the base to everything that is allowing me to even dream about skiing as much as I do, and go to the gym and lift as much in the weight room as I can, or ride my bike for as long as I can and not have not be so sore, clean my house and and not be able to not move for three days.

Picabo

Pilates is given me the base for for life that I hadn't found in anything else.

David

Amazing. Picabo. You're so awesome. I'm so happy. I know you're. Thank you.

Picabo
I feel the same way.

David
Thank you. this is wonderful. Is there if somebody wants to reach out to you, in some way, what would they do?

Picabo
well, I have an Instagram, and my business manager's phone number is on there. and then I'm also in the in the process of starting a website right now where people can have more access to me because like I said, my kids are getting older. And so I'm starting to think about how I can get back in the saddle of making a difference with what I've been blessed with for success in my life.

Picabo
And, so yeah, I'll be posting it up on my Instagram soon as I get my website created.

David
Super! I look forward to that. Thank you. Have a wonderful day. and I've really enjoyed this conversation.

Picabo
Okay, well. And I did too. Thanks, David. Congrats on all your success.

David
same with you.

Picabo
I train hard, we've got a ski this winter.