

INTRO: This is part two of my interview with Dani Dirks. If you have not yet heard [part one](#), please go back and listen to that one first. That is [episode #187](#). If you have already heard [part one](#), then please enjoy the conclusion of my interview with Dani Dirks.

Matt Bowles: We have definitely been to some of the most epic parties in the world, for sure, all around the globe. And I have to ask you now about Carnival in Rio, because I have been to Carnival in Rio. I actually went before you went to Carnival in Rio and then you went. We have both been there. But for people that have never been to Carnival in Rio, how would you describe it?

Dani Dirks: It's not a once in a lifetime opportunity because once you go, you want to go back. You will find a way to go back. It is the most insane street party that you have ever experienced in your life. People are just so into it. And the Brazilians are like such, like amazing humans. There are these bands just playing through the streets and you have the band. I don't even know the names of these things anymore, but I call them the Band Groupies. And they're just lined up around the band, protecting them from the crowd. And as one of the band groupies, if you can get on the little chain, you just get to listen to the music and dance and you're drinking in the street.

Straight up, just have a bottle of alcohol that you carry with you the whole day and you just make it last the whole day while you're dancing through the streets, but you're going through some of the most dangerous areas, I would say, of Rio, but on these Blocos, these parties, but for that one day, they're so safe. The worst that's going to happen is your wallet is going to get stuck, stolen or something. But you always wear, like, a little fanny pack under your clothes. You do all the safety things. You never take out your phone. So besides that, it felt safe. It was so fun. Literally, we're climbing on top of statues in the middle of the park or roundabouts or on bridges, and you're just dancing and listening to music, and you're making out with everybody.

Matt Bowles: Like, it is so, so great. I felt like the Carnival celebrations in Rio there was more gender bending than I have seen any place else probably in the world or at any particular event or whatever. I would be super curious about your observations and thoughts that.

Dani Dirks: Oh, 100%. One of the guys in my group, I had bought all of these, like, super sparkly bras to wear, and. And guys that I was going with were putting on my sparkly bras and just walking out into the streets in them, like, wearing hot pants and sparkly bras. Like, there are guys in the parade next to me who were in tutus and makeup. It's so fluid, and it didn't feel like anybody really cared where it was. Like, straight guys are making out with gay guys. Gay guys are making out with straight girls. One of my problems, I made out with a really hot gay guy, and I was like, oh, I'm going to follow up on that. And my friends were like, mm, he's gay. And I was like, God dang. Like, not excited about that.

But it was one of those experiences where it felt inclusive for everybody. And that was one of the most exciting things about Rio and about that party. And I think even as you're going through the Bloco and some of the, like, most dangerous neighborhoods, everybody's a part of it and everybody's participating. I don't think there's many festivals that you go to that are actually inclusive for all. And this. Anybody can, like, get into line. Anybody can listen to the music, anybody can participate. And that is really the beautiful thing about Carnival is it's a party for all.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, it's really spectacular. And I think pretty much everyone that I've ever interviewed on this show or talked to that's been there has said that there is no party in the world like Carnival in Rio.

Dani Dirks: No, there's not. In terms of what is going on, the Blocos. It is just so expansive because it is entire city of Rio. And then you watch the actual float parade and the float competition. Oh, my God. Like, these areas of Rio spend the entire year. Everybody of the community donates and like everybody in the community participates in bringing these floats to life. And they're insane. I have never seen anything, nothing. Macy's Day Parade has nothing on these floats. I was in awe and as like an artist, I just couldn't believe the amount of creativity and time that people put into these floats.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, it's completely insane when you go to that main event at the Sambadrome and there's 90,000 people that do not leave the stands. It's totally sold out. And they're packed in from 10 o'clock at night until 7:30 in the morning. And these floats go through and each one of them is accompanied by what they call a samba school, which is like a 5,000-person dance troupe that is wearing the most ornate, meticulous, extraordinary costumes you've ever seen. And there's 5,000 people and they are doing these incredibly elaborate performances and storytelling through dance and multi-story floats that they've been building these things and working and training to do this performance for literally 364 days since the end of the last one. And now you have these 5,000 people that have 90 minutes in their costumes and with their float to tell this story and put on this performance. And then they get judged and you're just watching them and you are just in absolute awe.

Dani Dirks: Yeah, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Built even, or the way that people moved and danced, the way costumes would move even. And they were planned so that from the stadium you could see the change in the colors and dynamics and everything. Just like it's built for all eyes too. And the way that they take that into context, the engineering in these things is absolutely insane.

Matt Bowles: Totally amazing. Now I have been back to Brazil a few different times. I've now gone to a few different places in Brazil, but I've still seen only a fraction of Brazil because it's such a huge country and, and there's so many extraordinary places in it. You though have actually been to a place that I have not been. You have spent time in Floripa. Can you talk about Florianopolis, where it is, what it's like and what some of your highlights were from that trip?

Dani Dirks: Oh my God. Floripa. It's like on the southeast coast of Brazil and it is the most beautiful little surf island really. It's like got a huge surfer culture, amazing surf breaks. It's actually one of the first places I ever surfed. But it is such a beautiful island. There are very different parts of the island, so there's very spiritual communities. It was the first place I ever did ayahuasca, which was amazing, it was by these shamans, who are like these Catholic shamans. And so, you have all of the religions. And then you have like a giant Jesus on the cross above you as you're going into your ayahuasca journey is very weird, but very cool. And then you have some of the most amazing food like I've ever had there, great restaurants.

And then you have this resort area that has these day clubs, these pools that have DJs all day, and some of the best day parties. And then there's like these little cute nightclubs that pop up on the beach that are like in these old beach buildings. Beach parties, middle of the night. And it's just like such a diverse thing for a nomad. It's such a great place to be because there's so much diversity in what you can experience, but you still get that laid back, super chill island life. And probably one of my favorite things I ever did, I think it was like, Sunday nights, there's a place that does samba, but it's one on one. Dancing, you just go and there's a band and you just go dance. You just enjoy yourself. And you can show up and you get some beers and you just dance, have some, like, little kachasa and hang out. And it was so much fun. Like, such a cool little island to be a part of. Definitely. When I go back to Brazil, we'll be going back there.

Matt Bowles: Didn't you also jump out of a plane?

Dani Dirks: Oh, yeah, I forgot about that. I did jump out of a plane there, actually. It was amazing. Yeah. So, one of my friends had decided he wanted to start doing his sky diving experience and try to get his certification so he could dive alone.

Matt Bowles: Is that our mutual friend Mirsha?

Dani Dirks: Yeah. Wait, you know Mirsha?

Matt Bowles: I love Mirsha. No, Mirsha and I have hung out in a number of remarkable places. I have a video of Mirsha with me at one of the top 50 restaurants in the world in Moscow. The restaurant is called White Rabbit. And I have a video of Mirsha doing a blowjob shot with no hands. Perfect form. No hands at the end of a meal at a top 50 restaurant in the world. It's one of the most amazing videos.

Dani Dirks: I love that man. So great. That is so amazing.

Matt Bowles: Do you recall he was getting his skydiving license? So that's what reminded me. And he's an hp, of course. And so that would make sense that he was there.

Dani Dirks: Yeah. So, he's the one that inspired us to go. He was like, I'm going to go skydiving. Does anyone want to come? And me and a bunch of other hpers, we just all decided we've never been skydiving. Let's go. So, yeah, it was my first time. It was so weird, like, jumping out of the little tiny plane because it takes forever to circle its way into the sky. And you're literally just sitting in this back of a plane, no seats, no nothing. You're just, like, on metal. And then they're like, okay, hang over this tire wing thing. And you're like, this is a really small plane. If I go on this side, are we sure we're not going to crash? They're like, no, you're fine. You're fine. And then they're like, okay, go, jump. And you just, like, literally fall out of a plane and wait for them to pull the thing. It was an exhilarating experience. But I have to say, the initial five to ten seconds of falling, great falling, so much fun. But then they pull the thing, and you have, like, the whole, like, harness on you. You're very uncomfortable for the next, however long it takes you to get to the ground. I'm like, can we just keep falling a little further?

Matt Bowles: All right. I've got to ask you about another island that you have been to. You've been to a lot of islands. Another island that you have been to that I have not been to. You went to see Komodo dragons.

Dani Dirks: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk about that trip?

Dani Dirks: Oh, my God, that trip was insane. Yeah. So, it was my friend's 40th birthday, and Indonesia during the pandemic was not the Indonesia before the pandemic or now. It was so quiet. So, you can go do these amazing experiences that I would more say, like, once in a lifetime experiences people want to do. And one, you get, like, major discounts on them because you're, like, the only people doing them. Two, you're in these places that are usually so crowded and there's no one. My friends and I booked this live aboard for three days, and it was just us on the ship. Like, we booked out the whole ship, and it was a dive trip live aboard around Komodo Island. So, we went to some of the most amazing dive spots. We went to this wall where the current is so strong on both sides of the wall that you have to follow your guide. Or if you go to the side, it can kick you out middle of the ocean, like, you're going to die. It's crazy. But, like, you go down and we saw sharks, we saw turtles, we saw eels, everything.

And then after all of these amazing dive experiences, the second day we go to Komodo Island. Actually, two islands that they'll take you to. There's one that's very touristy island. One is like the actual Komodo island that you go to. And we did this walk around the island trying to find them. The first Komodo dragon we find is this little tiny baby one. And it's like running from us and it's just like galloping in this little like lizardy legs down the way. And like, of course you kind of want to chase after it. You're like, oh, I just saw a Komodo dragon, I want to chase it. And then they're like, if it bites you, you will die or you will lose a limb. Bad things will happen. And then my friends are in the background like, did you hear about the French guy who died like a month ago being eaten by a Komodo dragon? I'm like, is that true? And they're like, I don't know, but I feel like it is. So, like, so you're like on this little quest on this island trying to find these dragons. Well, everyone's telling you about how if they find you, they'll eat you and you'll die. And they're really fast, right? So, then we're like, well, we want to see a big one.

So, we get to the beach and can I just tell you, like, Komodo dragons, like once they eat it takes them a very long time to digest. They're cold-blooded creatures. So, they like eat once a week or once a month, some ridiculous amount of time. They're not very big eaters, so they'll eat like, you know, a goat and then they won't eat again for a month. So, we just go to this beach and we find this Komodo dragon, like massive, probably 2 to 3 meters. Like it was a very big Komodo dragon, but it's just sitting there and it's eyeing us. And we're a group of 12 people, 13 people, and we're just taking pictures with this dragon. We're hanging out behind it. The couple people in the little group are like, are you sure that you want to like take a picture behind that thing? The guides are like, yeah, it's okay, it's fine, fine.

So, you stand next to it and you try to take a photo with it and all of a sudden it lifts its eye up and then it moves. Is it going to eat me, is it going to eat me? And then all of a sudden, you hear screams, and you look to the other side, and there's this crowd of tourists chasing a Komodo dragon down the beach, trying to take pictures with it, while one of the tourists is, like, running away from the, like, Komodo dragon. Is the Komodo dragon chasing this person? Is it running away from these people? Is this other person too close? Is someone going to get eaten? Or like. So, we just stopped taking pictures with our dragon. Just went over there so that we could try to see the drama that was about to unfold.

Matt Bowles: Wow. I have not yet taken the trip to Komodo Island. I have only been to Bali for about a month or so, and I've been to Jakarta very briefly. So, my time in Indonesia has been very minimal, I would say, overall. So, I definitely need to get back there and see more of it. Very cool that you were able to spend the entire pandemic there, though, and have a lot of these other Indonesian experiences. I know that one of the things you got into during the pandemic was free diving. And I want to ask you a little bit about some of your free diving experiences. And can we just start with the fact that you had an experience in Sri Lanka diving with sperm whales? Can you talk about that?

Dani Dirks: Oh, my God. It was the experience of a lifetime. I have to say, the weirdest thing about this trip was during New Year's, I had just gotten a new job, and I was like, I'm going to create a manifestation board of all the things I want to do now that I can start traveling again, that I have this great job, what do I want to do? I want to go dive with sperm whales and Sri Lanka. And I put this on the manifestation board. And like, three months later, my best friends in Bali, they own Apnea Bali. Amazing freediving school up in Ahmed, they randomly messaged and they're like, hey, we're planning this trip to Sri Lanka. We're going to go free dive with sperm whales. Do you want to go?

And I was like, I feel like I heard of that before. Why did I know about this thing? And then I thought about . I was like, way this is on my manifestation board, like, yes, I want to go. I had not left Indonesia in two and a

half years. Going to be my first trip out of the country. And what better opportunity than to check one thing off my list that I want to do dive with whales. And so, yeah, I went to North. It was northeast Sri Lanka. And basically, like, you get on these Boats, like every morning you're on a boat at 7:30 in the morning and you go out and they just drive around and there's a bunch of boats who are like, looking out for whales, right? And it's a big area in which the whales like, kind of transit through and there's a lot of whales.

So, there's pilot whales, there's blue whales, there's sperm whales. We saw these whales that look like blue whales that we think might have been these almost extinct, extinct whales. And so, you see the sperm whale and they stop the boat, you jump off into the water and you just swim to the whale and then you swim around it. And the whole goal is to be as smooth as possible so you don't freak out the whale. And so, what was amazing is we saw, I think in one day, probably 20 sperm whales.

Matt Bowles: Wow.

Dani Dirks: There was one day we went and it was pods of sperm whales. So, there is one time we jumped in the water, there were four sperm whales. There's three swimming. And as we're swimming with them, one just comes up from underneath us and just pops into the group. It was insane. They're not majestic creatures. They look like blobs with tails. They're not the prettiest mammal in the world. But the way that they move through the water, because it looks like they're not moving, but you're jumping in the water and we're like overhand swimming. We're like moving as fast, we got fins on. We're just crying as hard as we can to keep up with them. And it looks like they're doing nothing. And they're just like zooming away from you, right? And it's just this like a little tiny tail on the end of a blob that is just like, crazy. And then they would go down under the water if you freaked them out too much.

So, like, if a lot of boats showed up because. Cause there could be 10 boats of people swimming with these whales. And if a boat swam too quickly up to them, then it would go under. And what was so funny was, like, one time it goes under and it poops and we're all just in the middle of its like, whale poop. And it just smells. It feels weird, it looks weird. But we get up from the water and we're all like high fiving and we're like, yeah, it just pooped on us. Oh my God. Can you believe it? We're so fucking excited. And like we're screaming and yelling with joy because we just like, how often can you say you got pooped on by a well, let's be honest.

And then come to find out that the sperm whales, most of them will always poop in order to go down because their size is so big that they let go of the gas in order to sink. So, it allows them to sink. And the reason they're called sperm wells is because they have this thing called a spermaceti in their brain, which is like an oil. And basically, what happens is when they want to go up, it liquidifies and it allows them to go up. And when they want to go down, it solidifies and allows them to sink. And like, that was the coolest thing I've ever heard of, the way a body could have just a storage of oil that changes consistency based on whether you want to float or sink. So cool.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. And then I know you also went on a free diving retreat in Phuket, Thailand. Can you share a little bit about that? But also, just a little context maybe for people that aren't really familiar with free diving and just talk about what it's like, what some of the scene's skills are that you developed and some of the experiences that you're able to have once you worked on your freediving skills.

Dani Dirks: Freediving is a lot about just holding your breath and it's about mindfulness, but in a way of like, how do I truly clear my mind and truly relax my body? Because with free diving, there's many disciplines.

Most of it has to do with breath holds, but the big discipline is line diving. So, you drop a line in the middle of the ocean and. And you see how deep you can dive down the line in very many different ways. But it's all about, how does my body use oxygen? How long can my body use the oxygen that I currently have stored based on my singular breath? Also, how long can I handle the discomfort of needing to breathe so naturally?

As humans, we do have a mammalian. It's called like the mammalian dive complex, something like that. But it's where basically, as we dive down, our lungs shrink in size and it's a natural occurrence. Our ancestors were obviously able to dive because our bodies now do that naturally. And so, our lungs get smaller and smaller in order to push the oxygen out, use less oxygen, and then we have to be used to the feeling of our bodies know not to breathe underwater just naturally, like they're not going to try to take a breath. But that feeling like you need to take a breath, that's what you have to work through as a free diver. And so, it's such an exercise in mindfulness, of pushing through discomfort.

I was training with one of the world's best free divers. His name's Adam Stern. He was running this freediving retreat, and the best advice he gave me was, if it's uncomfortable, you're not doing it right. He's like, you should stop. Because, like, it's one of those things where you never want to hate it. You never want to train your brain to think that you're uncomfortable or that you're scared or that you're anxious. And I think that it's such a good metaphor for life. You do things that are uncomfortable, right? But you learn to find peace within the discomfort. And I think that's. As a nomad, that's something we've done, is we find joy in that discomfort, in that moving around and that trying new things. Freediving is a lot like that of where it's like, hey, this shouldn't be uncomfortable. It is a feeling, but it shouldn't ever be an uncomfortable feeling. You shouldn't be panicked about it because you realize, I can hold my breath for four minutes.

And I know at the end of those four minutes, I still have 80% of my oxygen levels. Like, if you have a little ox pulse oximeter thing on you, I still have 80% of my oxygen left or something like that. You're not going to die holding your breath that long. Like, you can hold it so much longer. It's just dealing with the discomfort and, like, the convulsions that happen from CO2 buildup. But, yeah, so then I went to this freediving camp to try to be able to dive into deeper. And I went because a friend was going, and she's like, hey, you should go. And another friend was like, hey, there's no room, but we'll put you first on the wait list. Like, if you come to Bangkok and if you end up in it, I'll let you know. And so, I just signed up, like, literally a week before the freediving retreat happened.

And I went and I learned a lot about myself. One, freediving on three hours of sleep, not going to happen. Working nights and trying to free dive in the morning was not a good idea. Two, freediving, you have to actually be in pretty good shape. Like, it's not just about holding your breath. You can only hold your breath better if you're actually in really good shape, because it's about how much oxygen does your muscles use. And then two, it was humbling to go and be like, hey, I've dove 30 meters before. Like, I'll totally be great at this. I'm going to go to this thing and then go and be on the line with people who are diving 60 meters, who have dived 100 meters, and during that week not be able to even hit your personal best, or not be able to hold my breath remotely as long as I thought I could.

Matt Bowles: I want to ask you now for some reflections on some of the choices that you've made in life and the way that you live and the way that you roll. And I guess maybe the place to start is just to sort of ask you about how you make choices and make lifestyle or life decisions. For example, we started off this podcast talking about your spontaneity and how you have the flexibility, you have the location independence to do this, and you make a choice to say yes when certain opportunities present

themselves. So, you just gave the example of the freediving opportunity. This was an experience. You just got an opportunity to do it. Somebody said they were going.

It sounded like something that was inspiring to you, so you just said yes and you just went spontaneously. You just came here to the Portuguese wine country because you and I were talking in two weeks. Notice it sounded cool. You came. Then we were talking about going to Africa later this year and doing this cool stuff and it sounded cool. So, you just made an on-the-spot decision. I mean, within an hour, within the conversation, you're like, yeah, I'll do that for four months later this year and go to Africa. Done. Like, where do I pay my money and sign up? And within a day it's booked. Can you talk a little bit about your decision-making process for those types of life decisions and the philosophy around sort of how you roll?

Dani Dirks: Yeah, I think one big thing is knowing what you value is really important and coming at decisions based on how it aligns with your values. I think the other thing was understanding financially, can I, do it? And just always having that tally in the back of my head of like, can I financially afford to do this? Or does it align with my financial goals at this time? And then the other thing is just I believe that the universe is constantly giving us opportunities to grow and expand and opportunities to live our best lives. And that when you say yes, more things come from yes. And so, if it is a yes that aligns with your values, if it's a yes, that's full body and you're like, 100% I'm doing this. It feels good. It feels right. In that moment, you say, yes, I'm going to do it. I also have a very big thing about the universe giving me signs.

And so, if I get signs of three things that align, it's a hundred percent I need to do it with going to Sri Lanka was crazy because my friend mentioned this trip. Then I looked at my visa for Bali, and my visa expired the day that the trip was supposed to leave. And then I messaged in [Hacker Paradise](#) group to be like, hey, I'm thinking about going to Sri Lanka. Anyone going to be here? 5h peers just so happen to be planning separate trips to Sri Lanka at the same time. So, it's like all of the things were aligning to be there. And then sometimes I make a decision that's very spontaneous, like coming to Portugal. Very spontaneous. I knew for the first few days, like, even for my birthday, that I was probably going to be alone and have dinner by myself on my birthday. Literally just randomly messaging with Megan, and she's like, I'm thinking of coming to Portugal. And I was like, wait, what? And she's like, yeah, Like, I need to come. Like, I was like, do you want to come for my birthday book dinner at this restaurant? And she's like, yeah, I'll be there. William's going to be there. Our friend. And then she's like, Taylor's thinking of coming too.

And I was like, great. I'm not going to end up having my birthday alone. I have now four friends, really close friends in Lisbon to, like, celebrate birthday, go wine tasting, do all these things. I think a lot of the time I make a decision sometimes spontaneously, and then the universe just gives me hints to say, hey, it was the right decision. I do oftentimes go back and be like, what did I just do? Like, I'm not going to lie. I'm not confident all the time about my decisions. You can ask any of my friends where it'll be like, I will go over for, like, a week of, was this right? Should I do this? Is this the thing I should be doing? But then the universe just throws me something that's like, hey, don't question it. Here's a little gift to your mind.

So, yeah, that's kind of how I end up spontaneously doing things. Because I just want to live my life, to have a story to tell at the end of it. And if I say no to things that could be really exciting, where would I be? If I had not said yes to Portugal, I wouldn't be here playing my music live for people. I wouldn't be able to have booked this trip to Africa. Like, I wouldn't have bought my first NFT and, like, understood all these things about, like, crypto that I would have never understood before. And so, like, every opportunity you say yes to gives you an exponential number of opportunities besides that.

Matt Bowles: That's so amazing. You are so inspiring to me. I love the way that you roll, and it's just so freaking awesome. Let me ask you this. When you think now back about all of the experiences that you've had from saying yes to these opportunities and then having all these amazing experiences, when you think back about the personal growth and who you are today versus back before you started traveling and all that kind of stuff, how do you think all this travel has impacted you?

Dani Dirks: I think everything that you learn traveling, you learn from the people that you meet while traveling. And I think that every person I've had such an impact in my life. I don't think that without traveling, I would be where I am right now in my career. I don't think without traveling that I would even be where I am in my own personal growth. I think learning to reflect a lot, traveling, you spend a lot of time with other people, but you do end up spending a lot of time alone, especially on planes, trains, cars. There's so much alone reflection time, and it's really learning how to be with yourself and be with others.

And also, in a world where you're constantly facing change, you also constantly have the opportunity to be someone else in every place you go. And so, every time you're in a new place, you're constantly questioning of, who is this person I want to be? And it gives you that opportunity to keep asking that question. And so, I think you grow so much faster as a nomad than you do as someone staying in one place. Because if you're living, I would say, if living back in Northern California, before I started traveling, every couple of months, I didn't just sit down and be like, who is the person that I want to be? What is that next step in my life? How do I want to change? How do I want to present myself? How do I want to treat myself in this next place? How do I want this next relationship to play out?

That's not something that you do on the regular, I think, every day in everyday suburbia. But as a nomad, that is something that we are so gifted to have the opportunity to do. Every new place, I get to say, who do I want to be when I land in this next destination? And I get to be that, and I get to try that. And if I fuck up the next place I could be like, guess what? I fucked up. I didn't make the goals I wanted. I didn't. Wasn't the person I wanted to be. I get to do that tomorrow. I get to do that in the next location. It's an amazing opportunity to grow always.

Matt Bowles: That's awesome. What are your thoughts and tips for making this lifestyle sustainable over the long term? So, you have been doing this now for over five years and you are still so enthusiastic and so excited and you get so much joy and fulfillment from this lifestyle. Can you talk about what some of the pillars are that you nurture and pay attention to that allow you to sustain this lifestyle with excitement and joy over so many years?

Dani Dirks: Yeah. I think big things are the importance of community, building a community, finding community. I find when I lose that, that's when I start to burn out more quickly, is when I'm not fully in touch with the community around me. I think having routines that you can find in every place, whether that is a yoga routine or finding the gym before you land in the next location, knowing what that is, is really important. And I think it's something that I've learned in the last few weeks. I've been calling my last, basically this summer I've been calling revenge travel. Because I've been stuck on an island for two and a half years and now, I'm like, oh, I'm taking every opportunity to travel. I'm here now, I'm in Jordan next week, I'm in Greece the following week, and then I'm in London, then Copenhagen, then London and then Puerto Rico.

So, I'm traveling so quickly and I'm feeling it and I'm realizing that very much that to sustain this lifestyle, as much as we have the flexibility to do everything, knowing when it is time to slow down and being okay with

the slowdown and knowing what that slowdown is for you, it might just be enjoying a month in each location. It might be needing to be three months in each location. It might be needing to spend a year before you move to the next place. But it's knowing what you can handle and what brings you joy. And as my grandma told me once with a relationship, when it's not fun anymore, just end it. And that's kind of what I find with travel too. Of like, if I'm finding myself stressed out or I'm finding myself not feeling a place anymore, then I'm not afraid to leave or to change my plans or to stay even. Bali wasn't a place that I planned on being for almost three years, I had planned to leave Bali in February of 2020. And then I saw things happening. I'm just going to stay here.

And I allowed myself to just settle into that and be okay with that and realize that that was the right place without feeling this anxiety of, why am I not moving? Why haven't I changed? It's like, no, this is right for now and I can start traveling again in the future. And now I've been traveling nonstop. And when you offered that opportunity of like, hey, do you want to join this remote year trip? It's like, I do want to keep traveling, but I don't want to have to keep deciding where I'm going. I don't want to have to keep booking new places because it is like a second job on top of a full-time job if you're trying to move everywhere constantly because you have to plan ahead. I've been in Lisbon 10 days. I haven't seen everything. And I have to be okay with that. I have to be okay with going okay. I saw two things this time, and I did wine tasting, I had a restaurant. That's all I wanted to accomplish on this trip. And I'll come back and go to Sintra and like these other places the next time I come to Portugal. Like, it doesn't have to always be all at once. If this is your lifestyle, you know, you'll go back to the places you love. You'll go back and try the things that you want to try. Like, you don't have to force it if it's not working.

Matt Bowles: Totally agree with that. I think that's really important. It's a very different mentality than a tourist mentality. I've been back to Lisbon now probably, I don't know, five times or so. I usually stay for a month or so each time that I come. And I'm continuing to do new things because I didn't have to cram them all into my first trip. I knew I would be back. And I am back. And I always have new additional things to do when I go back to a place. I been to Cape Town multiple times as well, right. And for multiple months, but I still haven't done everything. And next time when you and I go back, I'll do some things that I haven't done before as well as some things that I love doing from the previous time. So, I think that's really important is to just sort of keep your lifestyle in a way that is sustainable for you, where you're experiencing the local place to a degree. But you're also attending to all of your other things that are super important for you.

Dani, before we wrap this up and move into *The Lightning Round*, would you be down to play one more of your original songs for the Maverick show audience?

Dani Dirks: Yes, I will happily play another piece for sure.

Matt Bowles: Do you want to give any context or preface to the next song?

Dani Dirks: Yeah. So, this one's another song about relationships. I wrote this one a few years ago as well. It's definitely something, too, that I'm realizing the older I get about, like, being in a conscious relationship and communication and stuff is like, you can't be in a relationship where you're constantly promising each other things, things that you're not giving. And it's like a relationship isn't just about communication, but it is really about the actions that you take. And, you know, I had heard from an ex, and it was like, I would give you everything. I would give you the moon and more to be with you. And it's like, but would you really? That's such a phrase that's so commonly used. But what would you really give in this relationship? What is it really worth to you? And is that just a lie? Are you just saying that to keep me around? And I felt like I've

been in a few relationships, you know, I was actually in a very tumultuous, probably would be considered very verbally abusive relationship where it was, you go back into it because they're like, but wait, I will give you this or I will do this. Like, I will change. And so, this song kind of sprung out of a couple different relationships that were where there were promises that were constantly made but never really fully lived up to.

Matt Bowles: All right, here's Dani Dirks performing *The Moon and More* on The Maverick Show.

Dani Dirks: Said, you give me the moon and more. I said that's not what I've been looking for oh, the moon's too big for me to hold and I'd rather have a heart that beats true and bold. They said, you give me the stars in the sky. Well, I'm getting tired of your child tell lies. All the stars are too hot for me to carry and I'd rather have a man that I could marry and we're growing up and getting old. And your car put dreams won't make this house a home and if broken promises were dollar bills, we'd be millionaires and I'd rather have the truth than all your riches. I'd rather have nothing at all than your foe's ambition, so I'd rather have the truth. I'd rather have nothing at all than you. And you said the ocean's yours for the taking but we both know the sea strong willed non-breaking. So, I let yourself off into the present and I give up loving you before your journey ends. And I'll give up loving you before your journey ends. Cause you're growing up and getting old and your God for dreams won't make this house a home and if broken promises were dollar bills, we'd be millionaires. And I'd rather have the truth I'd rather have nothing at all than you. I'd rather have the truth. I'd rather have nothing at all than you. And so, you said you'd give me the moon and more and I said that's not what I've been looking for. The moon's too big for me to hold and I would rather have a heart that's true and bold I'd rather have a heart that's true and bold. I'd rather have a heart that be true and bold. And we're growing up and getting old and your cardboard dreams won't make this house and if broken promises were dollar bills, we'd be, we'd be, we'd be millionaires and I'd rather have the truth than all your itches. I'd rather have the truth than all your false ambitions I'd rather have the truth I'd rather have nothing at all than you. I'd rather have nothing at all.

Matt Bowles: That was so amazing. Thank you.

Dani Dirks: Thank you for letting me play on your show.

Matt Bowles: Anytime. You are very welcome. Can you share a little bit about your project? [This is Everyday Love](#) as well as what you're going to start doing with your [YouTube](#) channel and all that kind of stuff for folks who want to learn a little bit more about your music.

Dani Dirks: Yeah. So, I started [This is Everyday Love](#) about a year ago and sort of put it on the back burner while I was looking for new work. And now that I've been sort of in this place that I have the time to be writing music and performing and playing again, I'm really focusing on it and I want to actually build this into a real project. So, [This is Everyday Love](#) is this project that's based around, especially now, there's so much negativity in the media, negativity in the news, negativity on [YouTube](#), like all these things. I really just want to be writing beautiful music and writing a love song to the world. And so, [This is Everyday Love](#) is this project where I want people from around the world to be submitting their love stories and kind of writing them into songs. So, like, you can go to the site, you could submit your story and I'll select stories and write them into songs.

And the goal would be eventually to be traveling around the world and meeting people and letting them tell their story and then writing these songs and performing them and, you know, some of the most beautiful

locations in the world. Really sharing my love of travel and love of music with other people's love stories. And these love stories can be everything. They don't have to necessarily be a love story about a lost love or like your significant other, but it could be like a love story to your child or a love story to a place or to a thing or to an experience. Because I think that the world needs more love stories and we need to share more of these, like, really positive things. You know, if you have a love story that isn't positive, honestly, my best songs are like the most depressing ones, so submit that too. I want to hear it all and I want to share those stories with the world.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. So, we are going to link up thisiseverydaylove.com is the website. We're going to link it up in [the show notes](#). We're also going to link up your [YouTube](#) channel in [the show notes](#). And if folks go to follow you on [YouTube](#), what can they expect over the next year?

Dani Dirks: My goal for my [YouTube](#) is like, right now there's two songs from last year on it. But now I have this vision of everywhere I travel, I want to bring my guitar and start recording music in those locations. So, you know, really focusing on each place, writing a song that's really inspired by that location and recording it. So, I think in South Africa, I might have you help me record a piece on top of Table Mountain. That would be top skulls and then just being able to really collaborate with other local artists, other nomads who are musicians and really just be performing a lot of original pieces in these very original, beautiful locations.

Matt Bowles: Well, it's going to be amazing. You and I have already committed to a minimum of six countries together this year. Portugal, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal and Ghana. Those are definitively happening.

Dani Dirks: Uganda throughout the apes.

Matt Bowles: That's right. We're going to go gorilla trekking in Uganda. So, there's that. So now we have seven countries for sure. So definitely songs from a minimum of those seven countries which I will be experiencing with you, which will be amazing.

Dani Dirks: And holding me accountable.

Matt Bowles: Yes. So, we're going to link up the [YouTube](#) channel so you can follow along on that. And by the way folks, if anyone is interested in joining me and Dani on this four-month remote year trip through these African countries, we will link up in [the show notes](#) as well. How you can do that and get a little bit of a discount as well, a little credit for using the link in [the show notes](#) and then you could join the trip and hang out with the two of us and you know, have these experiences as well. So, all that will be in [the show notes](#).

Dani, at this point, are you ready to move in to *The Lightning Round*?

Dani Dirks: I may need more wine, but take.

Matt Bowles: A sip of that wine and let's do it. All right. What is one book that has impacted you over the years you'd most recommend people check out?

Dani Dirks: [Positive Intelligence](#). It's about how our brains have two sides. We have a sage brain, which is like this positive sort of side of our brain and we have a saboteur side of our brain which is very negative side of our brain. And that so much of our lives we live in the saboteur side of our brain. And there's all these different types of saboteurs that keep us from excelling and being our best selves. And they're the

things that are those immediate negative thoughts and those ways that we get anxiety and we dwell. And I was really struggling with a lot of like ADHD and indecision and inability to decide which path forward I wanted to go. Coming from software development and design and trying to decide if I go towards product. And I started reading this book and I did this program. There's an app that's part of the book as well and it teaches you how to move from that saboteur to that sage and how to become more mindful.

And in that I've learned like how to step back in each morning, train my brain to just flip into a mode of positive thinking, positive work. I think it was one of the reasons why I got the new job that I got. All of these things are just like instead of letting your brain tell you it's not good enough or being very restless or perfectionism, it then just switches it into this brain that's like you're fucking kick ass. You got this. And then you just do everything so easily. Like as soon as your brains in that positive mode, it's just so easy to think of things. I think that's why after a couple glasses of wine it's easy to talk because your brain's automatically in that positive mode.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. Dani, what is one travel hack that you use that you could recommend to people?

Dani Dirks: I'd probably say tendering in a location before you get there probably two weeks in advance and like meeting locals and then just asking them what's your favorite thing to do or connecting. And be like, hey, when I get there, what would be the coolest thing to do in your city? Let's go do it. And like plan the date. Like schedule the day in. Schedule the plan. Like make it happen. Because then you're immediately meeting someone local on the ground and you're already getting to do something fun. And you know, sometimes they'll pick you up from the airport. So that's probably one of my favorite hacks, especially if I'm landing in a city by myself.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. All right, Dani, if you could have dinner with any one person who's currently alive today that you've never met, who would you choose?

Dani Dirks: I would probably probably say Stevie Nicks because one, probably one of my top all-time favorite artists, like love Fleetwood Mac. When I'm feeling low, I just throw on a little Fleetwood Mac and feel better. But two seems like a really sick person to hang out with. And how cool would it be to eat dinner and then just have a jam session with Stevie? We just sing and write music and hang out and like chill. And she can take me through her closet because I love her like witchy goth style, even though I like love also sparkles. So yeah, I would say probably like Stevie Nicks would be top peeps.

Matt Bowles: That would be an amazing dinner, Dani, knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Dani?

Dani Dirks: There's this quote that I love from this poet. Can't remember his name, but it's have fun. Have lots of fun. Have the type of fun that incites riots of envy. And that is what I would tell 18-year-old self is just enjoy life and don't stress about it. I would also tell her that just create a little bit more routine in her life. She could probably be a little healthier. College Dani was not the best. So, like, I would probably tell her to chill out a little bit on the drinking and eating Taco Bell. But like, honestly, I wouldn't change anything. I think everything that has happened in my life has led up to where I am now. And I feel like every day, day every week I have these moments where I'm just sitting and I can't believe this is my life.

Even this weekend, there's multiple times where we're sitting, chatting, and you believe this is our lives. We get to sit here, six of us from, like, very different places, very different backgrounds, having these amazing conversations, having these stories. I feel like if I changed anything, I wouldn't be having the experiences that I'm having today. And so, I wouldn't change it. Like, I wouldn't want to, like, butterfly affect it, where it's like I go back and tell myself something, and then all of a sudden, I'm not living this life.

Matt Bowles: Awesome answer. All right, Dani, of all the places you've been, what are your top three favorite travel destinations you would most recommend other people should check out?

Dani Dirks: I think number one is Cape Town. I think that's the place that I go back to all the time without fail. I could probably spend the rest of my life in Cape Town. Three to six months out of the year. I would say Cape Town. I would say everyone wants to visit Bali. I would say skip Bali and visit Indonesia, because Indonesia is spectacular. But Bali has just become a tourist destination. Go to other places, go to Lombok, go to Sumba, go to Sumbawa, go to Java. Visit these other places and just skip Bali. Go visit Indonesia. Go meet real Indonesians. Enjoy the plethora of cultures and experiences that you can have on all of the other islands.

The other place recently that I've been, and I do think they need tourism right now. Like, I think there's a lot of problems right now in terms of money within the country is Sri Lanka. Honestly, Sri Lanka was one of the most beautiful countries I've been in terms of people. The Sri Lankans have been through so much in terms of political crisis. There's been, like, the bombings there. There's been so many problems right now. There are huge political issues, a lot of protests. There's an energy shortage, there's rolling blackouts. And yet the people that I've met there are so happy. They're trying every day to, like, maintain their joyfulness, maintain their livelihoods. It's beautiful. In the north, you can go dive with whales. In the southeast, you can go surfing every single day. East coast, west coast, amazing surfing. I surfed every single day. Food is great. Curries, rotis, delicious food, beautiful outdoors. The tea plantations are beautiful. You can take the train across the country. It's just a place that is just filled with beauty. I don't think enough people go. Go there and go try it out. I would definitely recommend trying there.

Matt Bowles: Totally agreed. Sri Lanka is an absolutely spectacular and amazing place. I highly encourage people to go as well. All right, Dani, last question. What are your top three bucket list destinations? These are places you've never been highest on your list you most want to see.

Dani Dirks: I really want to go to Borneo. Like, I think that's somewhere I'm really interested. That's bucket list. Orangutans, tribes, everything. Like, really just go deep. Borneo, Papua New Guinea. I think there's a lot of really deep historic cultural pieces that you can experience there that I really want to go. I would say diving with Wales and Tonga I hear is absolutely spectacular. I'd really love to do that. I really want to go to New Zealand. That's like, one of my top lists. I'd love to, like, live there for a short amount of time. Like surfing, mountains, skiing. The accents are great, very cool. Love their film scene. Like, I would definitely love to go to New Zealand as well. That's top of my list also.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. I as well need to get to those places. So maybe we'll plan a trip together at some point. You know, do some spontaneous travel planning as we just did for the rest of this year. So, Dani, this has been amazing. I want you to let folks know at this point how they can find you, follow you on social media, learn more about your music and the stuff that you're up to. How do you want people to come into your world?

Dani Dirks: So happy to have people follow me on [Instagram](#). I do not post enough there. That might be another goal that I should have because I've seen so many photos and then I just get very intimidated about posting them. So, follow me, *dani.derps* Because I'm very derpy on [Instagram](#), but better would be follow my [YouTube](#). There will be a link in the summary of the podcast and I don't have any followers yet. I started it and haven't been trying to get followers, So I need 100 just to get my own URL. So, follow me there, interact with me there. I'll be posting a lot of music. So, yeah, [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) or yeah, just DM me on [Instagram](#) and we can connect, we can meet up, we can hang out. Yeah, follow my stories that are mostly where I'm at. My actual posts never catch up to where I actually am living.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. We are going to link all that up in [the show notes](#). So, you can just go to one place at [themaverickshow.com](#) and go to [the show notes](#) for this episode and there you will find the link to Dani's [YouTube](#) channel, the link to [This is Everyday Love](#) so you can follow and learn more about that project that she's doing, as well as her [Instagram](#) and all the other stuff we talked about on this episode will be linked up there as well. We'll link up the Remote Year program that Dani and I are both doing if you want to join on that and go to Africa with us for four months. We'll also link up [Hacker Paradise](#) where Dani and I met. If you want to learn about the incredible opportunities to join a [Hacker Paradise](#) trip for two weeks, four weeks, six weeks a year, whatever you want to do. We'll link that up in [the show notes](#) as well and all the other stuff that we talked about will be in one place at [themaverickshow.com](#).

Dani, this was amazing. I always find that when I hang out with you it just lifts my spirits. You are one of the most inspiring travelers that I know. I love how you roll, how you just do what you do in life and whenever I'm able to be along for part of that ride, it is just inspiring and uplifting to me. So, thank you for coming on the show and hanging out.

Dani Dirks: Yeah, thank you for having me. I always feel the same about you. Like I'm always so excited when we end up in the same place at the same time. But thank you so much for having me and letting me share my music and thoughts with the world.

Matt Bowles: You're amazing and you can come on *The Maverick Show* anytime. Thank you for being here and good night, everybody.

Dani Dirks: Good night.