



Episode 8: What to do when you're nervous

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

nervousness, nervous, dog, lizard brain, feel, ring, moment, run, agility, backpack, serve, people, pretty, failure, thoughts, experience, competition, sensations, stepping, fear

This is the agility challenge podcast with Daisy peel, you're listening to Episode Eight. Welcome to the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host Daisy peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk or lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do lists seems so long that you don't even know where to get started, then this podcast is for you. For more podcast episodes, training, content and coaching from me, head to [www dot the agility challenge.com](http://www.theagilitychallenge.com), where members get access to monthly training and handling challenges, in addition to league play, and a whole lot more. Let's dive in with today's episode.

Hey there, everybody, welcome to this episode. This is episode eight. And I want to talk this week about something that's pretty tightly related to what we talked about in episode seven, which was all about why are you afraid. And what I want to talk about in this episode is nervousness it's pretty tightly related to fear for a lot of us. When you are about to try something new, whether it's a new handling move, or maybe like me, you're running a young or inexperienced dog, or maybe everything is new for you, because you're still a novice handler, it's pretty likely that you're going to experience nervousness, you're going to feel nervous. Whenever you're about to put yourself in a situation where you feel like you're opening yourself up to failure, or humiliation, you may feel nervous, feeling nervous is normal. And like a lot of the other things I've talked about feeling nervous isn't really a problem. Unless you use it as a reason to avoid taking action or moving forward, just just being nervous itself is not a problem. So remember that backpack that I talked about in episode seven, I talked about that mental backpack.



And it's a visual that I gave you it's it's a visual of a little backpack, just a little cute little backpack that you pack all of your fear and anxieties into and then you sling that backpack on your back. Well, nervousness is another one of those things that are one of those emotions or feelings that you can pack in that backpack and take with you into the ring or wherever you might experience some nervousness or fear of failure, whether it's public speaking, or maybe you're just trying something new. Maybe it is dog agility related, but you can stick it in that backpack and carry it with you. And if you can get to the point where you're embracing, feeling nervous, and maybe even seeking it out like a thrill seeker or a failure seeker kind of like I talked about in the last episode, then you're going to see that the possibilities in your training and your handling and your competitive skills are going to really open up. And I think it's important to point out that all of this stuff is a process, I talk a lot about growth mindset, challenge mindset, and learning to approach failure and nervousness situations that might cause you some failure and nervousness with excitement. This is all a process. And you shouldn't look at it as well, this is just something I'm going to get good at. And then I'm never going to have a problem with this. Again, it's it's that you're going to get good at dealing with it over and over and over again, you're going to get to the point where you say, Oh, I'm feeling nervous. I've done this before, here's how I deal with it. It's not that you'll never feel nervous. Again, it's just that when you do feel nervous, you can deal with it more effectively. So you're not always going to be able to just embrace feeling nervous, you're not always going to just love failure. I don't think it's the case that you are going to get so good at embracing this tough stuff that is no longer there. It's just that when you have days that you are feeling these things, it's a little easier to deal with. And I think at least for me, I always have days where I just feel overwhelmed with that stuff. And on my best day, I can just totally pack it in my backpack and move along with it. Actually on my best day I pack it in my backpack and it's like putting on a rocket pack. Not only am I carrying this stuff around in my little backpack on my back, but it's motivating me and pushing me forward. But that's on my best days. There are plenty of days where that backpack



feels really heavy. And there's fear of failure, fear of humiliation and nervousness. So it's definitely a process. It's just that you are going to get better at dealing with it. Not that it's just going to go away and you'll never feel nervous again. It's just that you're going to get better at carrying that stuff with you. And again, like I said on Some days, it's going to be like strapping on a rocket pack, where not only are you good at carrying that stuff, but that stuff actually energizes you and motivates you and you feel a sense of impending failure. And you think, oh, yeah, this is it, I'm writing, I'm here, I'm, if I'm feeling like I might fail, then I'm in the sweet spot, and I'm gonna grow my abilities. So yeah, let's go for it. It's kind of like, when you go to the gym, and you lift weights, the weights are never going to feel weightless. It's just that you get better at lifting the weights. And typically, as soon as the weights feel easy to lift, you don't stop going to the gym, you pick up heavier weights. So you're sort of always working at lifting weights that feel like they're really heavy. And it's a little bit of a struggle, because you know that if you lift weights that feel heavy, you're gonna get stronger, and then they don't feel so heavy. And then again, you pile on more weight. So looking for opportunities for failure and looking for opportunities to experience nervousness and deal with nervousness not only benefits you personally, but it's also a great benefit to the community around you, which I'm going to talk about a little bit later. In this episode, I want to talk about how to deal with feeling nervous, and how you can make your experience of feeling nervous or experience of nervousness easier again, not that it's gonna go away just that you can make the experience a little easier to deal with. And I also want to look at why feeling nervous itself isn't a problem, but letting it stop you from putting yourself out there is. So what happens when you avoid or resist nervousness, rather than welcoming it. What a couple of things are that happen when you experience nervousness, how to make being nervous easier. One of the biggest drawbacks of letting nervousness limit you in dog sports right now, and it goes beyond you personally, it affects the community around you as well. And then finally, why we need to seek opportunities for failure and nervousness. So I'm just getting back from a couple weeks on the road in Florida. It's February, so I



took some time to load up my dogs and take my van, my semi converted camper van south. I just ran my two young dogs. My older dog Chihuahua is recovering from a toe injury that she sustained way back last summer. Toe injuries are really hard to recover from takes a long time. And so it was really just 220 month old dogs and me. She still was with me, but it was just I was just running the youngsters. I think we maybe had two clear rounds over the total of the two weekend competitions. So there was a lot of failure in terms of clear rounds and results, even though there were plenty of little moments of success. So at one of the competitions I was at I overheard a competitor talking to another competitor, she came out of the ring. She was talking pretty loud, it's pretty easy to hear. It's not like I had to sidle up to be part of the conversation. But she was kind of exclaiming about how nervous she was. This was after her run, how nervous she was, and how humiliating the run was cheap said the word. I'm that was so humiliating. Now, I have to say, most of my runs with my youngsters were just a complete circus. Just I mean, by the time I actually left a day early because my young girl came into season and I don't think that helped my young male. But by the time I finally packed it in and decided to come home, it was almost like they have you ever done agility before guys have you? Have you ever actually been trained to do anything, it just was a complete circus. But I have to say I didn't feel humiliated. And I didn't feel nervous about any of it. I didn't feel nervous going into the ring. And I didn't feel humiliated coming out of the ring. But it's important to say that I've been doing agility for a long, long time. And I have definitely had plenty of times where I felt a huge rush of nerves going into the ring. And a huge rush of oh my gosh, that was so embarrassing. I feel so humiliated when I walked out of the ring. And it's just sort of my cheeks get really red and I just feel kind of angry and frustrated and, and humiliated. It goes away, but I've definitely been there. So like I said before, it's a process, learning how to overcome this and and get beyond it and nobody's perfect. But on the whole because I've worked at it and I've had the experience of dealing with those feelings over and over and over again. I'm a ton better when it comes to feeling nervous and at this point, most of the time, the physical



experience that I have that I would have previously described as nervousness I would no longer describe as being nervous, I just would describe it as being aroused. I feel amped up, excited. And it's a thrill, those pre run jitters are a thrill.

So because I've talked to a lot of people over the years about nerves, I want to share some thoughts and insights on nervousness in particular. So that if you're about to do something that makes you nervous, putting yourself out there in front of others, maybe it's your first competition, maybe it's your first national competition, I know we've got a national event coming up and a couple more later this year, then this episode is probably going to hit home for you at several points. Because if you can get beyond the hump of sort of being paralyzed with nervousness, and if you can learn to just roll with the nervousness, and even better learn to embrace feeling nervous, and you don't let nervousness stop you from doing something, then your experience, particularly your competitive experience is just going to really be amazing, it's going to be like in The Wizard of Oz, when Dorothy goes from Kansas to the Wizard of Oz. And things go from being in black and white to color, it's going to be totally different ballgame for you. And you're really going to get even more hooked on it than you maybe are already. So I've been to a lot of big competitions in my life, from national championships to World Championships. And for a long time, like I said, Before, I did get nervous, or maybe super duper excited, it's kind of hard for me to know the difference sometimes. And I've also taught a lot of clinics and seminars all over the world where I stand in front of groups of people that are largely complete strangers to me. And I haven't had all those experiences, I don't really get nervous at this point, even though I have to say sometimes it feels kind of like a weird out of body experience. And I just have no idea what part of my brain is stepping up to the plate to serve up all of the dog agility training and handling information that seems to be stored in there and running it competitions is kind of a similar experience. And maybe if you've been around a long time, you've had this experience as well. Some



people call it being in flow, where I feel like my mind just goes blank, and I have the anxiety and the excitement beforehand. But then I get to that moment where I'm stepping into the ring or I'm stepping in front of group of people. And it just kind of my mind goes blank. And here we go. And I roll with it. And it's like I'm riding on a roller coaster. And it's amazing. Also used to teach high school several years ago, and I have to tell you, that's a tough crowd sometimes. So standing in front of a group of dog agility handlers, whether it's me competing or me teaching is nothing compared to standing in front of a group of high school students. So it can be a little strange to me when I teach for a group of dog agility handlers who maybe don't know who I am. And maybe it is nervousness, but honestly, I'm pretty used to it at this point. And some of you who are listening right now are watching. Probably thinking the same thing. If you're an instructor or a presenter, or a coach or a longtime competitor, or you've been in the finals at Nationals for a few years a few times, you're thinking the same thing. Maybe you get nervous if you even call it that anymore. But you're so used to it, that you're you're just accustomed to it, you recognize it and you kind of shrug and move on with it instead of trying to avoid it or resist it. And that's kind of where we want to get to is moving with those feelings instead of spending energy and time resisting them or avoiding them. In a previous episode, I asked you to do a thought dump about what we what being afraid, feels like. So I wanted you to sit down for five or 10 minutes and just describe what being afraid feels like to you. And similarly, I think it's worth it to take five or 10 minutes to either dictate on your on an app on your phone or something or write on a piece of paper or type. What being nervous feels like and for me, it's really similar to feeling afraid. It feels like my heart is racing. My skin is tingling. Sometimes I actually get goosebumps on my arms. It feels like I have to go the bathroom. Even if I've literally just gone to the bathroom. I feel antsy I feel jumpy, I often feel like I can't be still I need to move or pace around. And it's possible that that's how you would describe feeling nervous as well. But take the time and and really sit down and think about what does it really feel like what's the physical experience of feeling nervous? And my guess is that all of you who are listening have felt



nervous or fearful at some point. Today we're talking about feeling nervous in particular, which is kind of a maybe a level below, fearful. But if you felt those feelings if you felt nervous, and you struggled to get away from it, or to avoid it, usually it just makes it worse. So, and this has been, this is advice that I've been given over the years, just fake it till you make it. That's never worked for me. So if I try and pretend that I'm not having any of those physical sensations, it makes it worse because then I'm just focusing on it from trying to pretend it's not happening, I'm just focusing on it anyways. And what usually happens to myself and to most people, is that instead of belly breathing, you start breathing up really up high in your chest, so your throat gets kind of tight. And your, your whole abdomen might get kind of tight. Sometimes if I'm really nervous, I actually start trembling and kind of all those little muscles start shaking. I'm trying to brace myself against all of that tightening up, I could feel it happening, and I just don't want it to happen. And so it just gets tighter and tighter and tighter. And it's pretty normal and actually useful before I have a run and agility run to let my body kind of coil up like a spring and get all that energy coil up so that I can unleash it on the course. But if I take something that's already kind of a coiling up or a tightening up feeling, and I resist it, then I'm going to make things even tighter. And that's a problem. Because if I want to be able to move around the course efficiently, then I want to have the spring of my body coiled up and ready to let go. And to move as fluidly and freely as I can. And if I'm all tense and coiled up and just thinking oh my gosh, oh my gosh, I'm so nervous. I'm so nervous. Physically, I'm just not going to be able to move as freely as I can. And you probably have had this experience as well, where you watch your videos and you can see that you're nervous. Well, how is it that you can see that you're nervous? Are you actually experiencing the nervousness again? What are the physical attributes that you can observe? When you see somebody and you think, Oh, they look really nervous? Well, one of the things that I usually see when I watch somebody's videos, and they you know, they maybe want some handling advice is that they look really nervous. And of course, they can't move as fluidly, fluidly and freely as they probably could if they were feeling a little more relaxed



and open. They we tend to tighten up and we don't take a full stride with our legs, we tend to move from the knees down, we take these mincing little steps we don't we're just not swinging our legs openly and freely. So the first tip that I want to offer up to you is that when you feel that coiling up that tightening in your body, when you feel what you might describe as nervousness, fear or anxiety. What I want you to do in that moment is and it sounds really hokey, but it definitely helps. I want you to just you can say it out loud if nobody's around or in your head if people are I want you to welcome it. Just say just greet it. Hello nervousness. Hello jittery feeling. Hello shallow breathing. Teller. Thank you for showing up. I wondered when you were going to show up. Thanks for showing up. And then just let it ride on in. Encourage it. Welcome it. Here you are. You're you are you are nervousness right there. I wondered when you would come in here you are. And then remember that you can control how you feel about these things. Your thoughts about objective circumstances like my heart is racing, trigger emotions, which trigger actions and yield results which validate your thoughts. So what you think about your heart racing is going to trigger emotions and different thoughts are going to trigger different emotions which will trigger different actions which will yield different results. It's just this whole chain of events. So instead of thinking oh my gosh, here's nervousness again. I hate this feeling. I just I want to get away from it. I wish it wasn't here. Just welcome it. Colette, come on in. Thanks for showing up. Be grateful for it. Just have that moment. Here's the nervousness. It's familiar. Welcome, friend. And again, sounds cheesy. But it does change your thinking about those physical sensations, which will change your feelings about it. So welcoming nervousness and being grateful for it being being there and showing up can sound counterintuitive, but it's pretty freeing, really. And as soon as you stop resisting those sensations and embrace them and welcome them, you'll really find that your perspective is

changed pretty quickly. For example. And this may be true for you as well. If you think about it, there are things that I can only do on course if I have those physical responses going on if I feel a little bit



jittery and a little bit antsy. I feel like I need to go to the bathroom. I can get to places on a course when I'm nervous that I could never get to if I wasn't aroused, or nervous or coiled up and ready to spring. And it's tough for me to get that aroused if I'm at home training by myself. Now, of course, if I'm nervous, and I'm coiled up, and I'm super tense about everything, that's not helpful. But if I'm, if I'm recognizing and observing, oh, here's, here's those jittery feelings, here's the, my skin is tangling, here's that feeling of my bladder is about to betray me, this is the feeling that I get, when I'm up on my toes, and I'm just really ready to sprint, I know that I'm gonna be able to get get places a little better and move a little faster than I could if I was at home. And actually, that was a problem for me for a little while, because when I did get on board with welcoming nervousness, and bringing it along for the ride, instead of resisting it and getting up on my toes, I found I, I would overshoot the mark, I would be walking a course thinking I'm never gonna get there, I'm kind of nervous about this, I just don't know. And then when I went to run the course, I'd take those deep breaths, say, welcome nervousness, I'd strap on my backpack with my nervousness and my any fears or whatever in it. And I'd go out on the course, and I would make mistakes, that were completely the opposite of what I thought would happen, instead of not getting places, I would get places too early, and then have to wait. And then that would cause a problem. So it did take me a little while to adjust my timing, and realize that I actually could be faster than I thought, get places earlier than I thought once I wasn't completely just cramped up with nervousness. So that may be something that you experience as well. It's kind of a pendulum that swings pretty wildly at first. So one of the things that can really make us nervous, especially at competitions, is a feeling of isolation. When we walk into the ring, we feel pretty alone. It's not the same as in class where you're pretty actively supported by your classmates and your instructor. When you walk into a competition ring, you're alone, the judge is not usually talking to you, the ring stewards are there but they're trying their best to be not noticed. And so you walk into the ring, and you feel alone, and you feel watched, people are watching you. And so you can immediately feel isolated from the rest



of the group, you've maybe had to leave your group of friends, and you go into that ring by yourself and it gets real quiet real quick. Now, there's some things you can do to alleviate this, like, have a brief conversation with somebody just before you go into the ring. And it's kind of interesting how that will work. You know, everybody thinks that we all need to be left alone, right before we go into the ring. And for some of us, that's true. But people will actively avoid talking to you just before you go in the ring. And it's out of respect, right so that you can gather your thoughts and get ready to go. But that moment where people are actively avoiding you before you go into the ring can really make that feeling of isolation more pronounced, before you go in the ring. So you suddenly everybody's ignoring you, because they're doing it to be respectful. But that moment where you are about to go into the ring, you suddenly feel alone and isolated from the rest of the group. And your primitive brain, your lizard brain says Danger, danger, danger, you're all alone. And we're right about to engage in this activity. That's kind of like a caveman hunt, where we're getting ready to run and chase and kill the rabbit with our dog and jump over the jumps and get to the kill or the finish line of the course where we can kill the bunny with the dog. So we're on a stage performing. And we are suddenly by ourselves. And our lizard brain says this is dangerous. And I don't care how often people say, Well, I just want to have fun with my dog. People say that all the time at competitions, they say it out loud. And no matter what they say, no matter if they say I just want to have fun with my dog, I call baloney on that. Because you can just have fun with your dog at home, alone in your backyard for a lot less effort and a lot less time and a lot less money. So stepping into the ring at a show or competition is 100% more than I just want to have fun with my dog. And if you're not used to being on a stage performing, whether it's in the arts or sports or public speaking or music performance or whatever, then there's going to be that feeling of Danger, danger, danger that hits you that's just not going to hit you in your backyard in the same way. Now, of course you're not really in danger, you're not going to get eaten. There's not a bear chasing you. You're not going to be abandoned by your friends. You're not going to starve to death. But your lizard brain



does not understand that and that feeling of isolation that you get Just before you walk into the ring, isolated in a fishbowl because everybody's watching, or at least that's what our lizard brain tells us. It can induce a little bit of panic at that moment. But once you realize that your lizard brain is just misfiring, it's just confused. If you can take a moment to observe that, then you can relax and breathe a little deeper. Kind of like if a friend jumped out of a bush and scared you, you tense up for that moment, you jump and you may even scream, but then a moment later, you laugh it off, or you start smacking your friend around or whatever, it it gets diffused pretty quickly. So there's that element to it, where we we feel isolated when we step into the ring. But we have to have that moment with ourselves where we tell our lizard brain, Hey, kiddo, we're not actually alone, our friends are going to be there at the end of the run, to either celebrate or commiserate with us. And even if we feel like everybody's watching us, the truth of it is that pretty much everybody standing around the ring they might be watching, but the definitely not judging. They're watching what we're doing and applying it to their own internal drama, because that's what we do when we're watching typically. So the second thing that I want to offer up is that trying to make nervousness go away, is just not a good use of your energy or your time, or your brain. Just let the nervousness be there, pack it into that little mental backpack, put the backpack on and just take it with you just let it be there. I'm I'm going to shake a little bit, I'm going to be a little bit jumpy, my heart is going to be racing. And honestly for me, I hope so I, it would be so disappointing to just not feel those exciting sensations, I would feel alive and ready to run with those sensations. And without them I would worry and feel like Man, why am I here? This is a lot of money and a lot of time and I got up really early and I feel nothing. So you can walk to the line and feel shaky and jittery and have your heart racing and feel like you have to go the bathroom again. And describe that as ready to race and excited and filled with joy. Or you can go to the ring and feel all those same sensations and describe it as terror or panic or fear or nervousness. So some of it is how you frame it. Some of it is having had the experience often enough that you know that you're not going to die. And you can say to



your lizard brain, Hey, babe, calm down, you're not going to die. We've done this before, it's going to be fine. And the important thing is that it's important to recognize what would the Ron feel like if you felt nothing, if nothing was there, if you weren't excited at all about it. And also to just take a moment and observe and recognize what's going on. You don't need to spend 10 minutes, ringside doing a thought dump, you don't have to do that. Just take a moment, observe your body and observe how your body's ready. You're alive, you're awake, and you're ready. You don't want to feel sleepy going into the ring. Recognize that you're not about to be left behind by your tribe, you're not going to be abandoned. And your lizard brain is just having a moment, you're not in any real danger. But you are physically coiling up and getting ready to spring into action to let all that energy go into the ring. Your body's there for you. And it's getting ready to play, you're getting ready to play sport. And I honestly I want my dogs to look the same. I wanted to look coiled up like a spring, I wanted to be just about shaking with excitement and ready to go into the ring and just go attack this course. So taking that moment and recognizing that you can just carry that nervousness you can take that feeling with you in that backpack is an important moment to have welcome it, encourage it and give thanks to it. Because like I mentioned before, there are things that I just cannot do without those sensations. And I get worried if I don't have those sensations. And I would be willing to bet that if you take a moment to think about it, you you're going to think the same and I'd be a little concerned if I wasn't feeling that way I want to feel ready to go.

Now if you're a coach or an instructor, it can be really easy or top competitor, it can be really easy to get caught up in what others are thinking about you when you're heading into the ring where you're going to be all by yourself. You're heading to the front of the room where you're teaching where you're going to be by yourself. But as soon as we get into our own heads, we just get more nervous and more wrapped up in our own internal experience instead of focusing on our dog or focusing on our



mechanics or focusing on our timing or focusing on our students or any of those extra mental things that really need our focus, other than just getting wrapped up in what's going on in our heads. So, if you can stay focused on those that you're supposed to be serving at those moments, like when you're about to walk into the ring, you're there to serve your dog, you cannot be thinking about the outcome at that moment, even if you really, really want to really want to win, you really, really, really want to clean run, you really want to score, you have to stay focused in that moment on who and what you are there to serve. And in that moment, if you're walking into the ring, you're there to serve your dog. If you're there to teach, you're there to serve your students. So you have to think about why you're there, whether it's in the ring, or you're getting ready to go into the ring, or you're up in front of that group teaching. And if you go prepare to serve, rather than being wrapped up in your internal experience, it's going to make the experience better for you. And also, for those who you're there to serve. Because your dog does not care if you're nervous. As long as you're there for your dog, your student does not care if you're nervous, as long as you can help them, your dog and your student, they really don't care what's going on inside your head. They care about what's going on for them. And if you can serve in that moment and set aside whatever internal experience you're having. So that you can give clear signals, clear instruction, then you can serve those others that you are there for in that moment. So, you know, like I said, most of us in those situations as students, we're just there for ourselves. If I go to a seminar, I'm there for me, I don't care if the seminar presenter is nervous. At that moment, I don't care what their internal experience is, I'm too busy having my own internal experience. What I do care about as a student is what an instructor can do for me. And so as an instructor, what I need to care about is what I can do for that student, my internal experience is sort of irrelevant at that moment. Now, our dogs may not be having those exact thoughts, I don't know. But I'm pretty sure the same idea applies. We can't really be there for our dogs as handlers and guide them, or cue them or handle them. If we're so wrapped up in our internal experience that we can't observe and respond to what's going on



externally, the dogs busy caring about whether they're going to get a cookie at the end of the run, or whether they're going to be dumped and left alone in the ring. Because if you're there in body, but not in spirit, because you're all wrapped up in your internal experience, your dog is going to feel pretty isolated in that ring. So your dogs worried about being isolated, your dogs worried about being abandoned, maybe in the same primitive lizard brain way that our lizard brains are having those moments. But we have higher brains, and we can say to our lizard brain, okay, look, we're not being chased by a bear, we're not going to be abandoned at this moment. It's fine if you want to be nervous, but we're going to, we're going to roll with that. But also, we're here to serve. We're here for the dog, we're here to give clear cues to the dog. In the case of students, if you're an instructor, those students are there to learn from you. They're not in front of you to judge you, they're there to learn from you. And so you need to serve. So for your students or for your dogs, if you show up to the ring, or to the front of the room with the intent to serve in the highest way that you can, then it's totally fine, if you're nervous is totally fine, to be nervous and show up with a an intent to serve. And usually, if you show up with an intent to provide service, whether it's I'm going to serve my dog the best way I possibly can. I'm going to serve the students the best way I possibly can. And usually nervousness is a sign that you care about serving the best you can. So it's totally fine to be nervous. And, and that kind of brings to mind a quote that an agility challenge member gave to me last week, and it was a perfect quote. It's from a guy named James clear. And he wrote a book called atomic habits. I'll post a link in the show notes. And the quote is this. He said, finish something, anything. Stop researching, planning and preparing to do the work and just do the work. It doesn't matter how good or bad it is. You don't need to set the world on fire with your first try. You just need to prove to yourself that you have what it takes to produce something. There are no artists, athletes, entrepreneurs or scientists who became great by half finishing their work. Stop debating what you should make and just make something I totally love that quote because it it kind of highlights the idea of just just roll around and get dirty with it. It doesn't. Don't



wait for the conditions to be perfect. Don't wait until you feel like you can do something perfectly to just do it. You know you hear over and over. I don't want to do that because I'm afraid I'm going to make a mistake. I don't want to do that, because I'm afraid I'm gonna ruin my dog. I don't want to do that, because I'm nervous. I don't want to do that, because I'm afraid I don't want to make a decision. Because what if I make the wrong decision, just make a decision, and learn from the consequences. So if we just show up with intent to serve, whether we're nervous or not, whether we're serving our dog in the ring, who's really only there because we wanted him to be right, or whether it's our students, or clients, or even our relationships with other people, because all this stuff is related, just, we just want to show up and serve. So if my heart's racing, and my skin is tingling, and my bladder feels like it's going to explode, even though I know, I just went the bathroom three times. So what, as I'm about to go in the ring, I focus on my dog. And I think, How can I be of service here? How can I best tell my dog where to go? How can I make my dog's life better in this moment, so that we can enjoy this run and execute to the fullest? How can I best serve my students? How can I make their experience with their dogs better? And how can I give the information that they need to create a good experience for them? Okay, so there's a lot of lot going on there. So I'm gonna recap here. So those so the first thing to recap is allow the nervousness to just be there, don't resist it, just notice it, breathe into it, make space for it. The second thing, if you're in front of an audience, whether it's at a competition, or at a seminar that you're teaching or presenting, you're there in that moment to step out of your comfort zone to serve your dog, to help your dog to love your dog, or, and to give your dog what he or she needs right in that moment. Same for your students. It's not about you, it's about your dog. So if you're in front of an audience teaching, it's the same thing. This is not about you, it's about your students and their experience. So your nervousness is totally fine. If you have it, it's kind of irrelevant in the moment there. And then the third thing here is that the more you practice, overcoming your lizard brain, your primitive brain, the better, you'll be able to utilize your more advanced brain to come up with some pretty amazing and



creative solutions, not just for your dog training and handling, but also for others in your community. And that's the really cool part. And that's true of any endeavor, whether it's dogs boards, or relationships or public speaking or whatever. Because when you allow nervousness or fear, or anxiety to keep you from showing up and serving, then you really shortchange not only yourself but your community as well, your community around you, the people, you train with the people, you go to shows with the people you hang out with. And when you can get beyond nervousness, then not only you but also your community, which includes your dogs are going to benefit. All of this ties in with the last couple of episodes about fear and failure. So check those out, I can't stress enough that we need to seek opportunities to fail rather than avoiding them, we need to seek opportunities to be nervous rather than avoiding them. So head to the website. For those for the podcasts for the previous episodes, it's [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com), check out the episodes that you've missed, started the first one and roll through and catch up to this one. I think we need to seek opportunities where we could be humiliated or just fail horribly in front of other people, even if it makes you incredibly nervous to do it, to step into the ring, whether it's a competition ring, or maybe it's something in your life that's doesn't have anything to do with dog training. Even if you have a little bit of a traumatic response afterward, being able to overcome that and then do it again and again, is what's going to help you overcome your lizard brain that thinks you're about to die every time you step into the ring at a competition. So once you've done that several times 10 times 20 times 100 times

you're going to head to the ring and things are going to get quiet and that isolation is going to happen. And your lizard brain is going to start to scream, I'm going to die. I'm alone, this is terrible. And you're just going to be able to say it's okay. We've done this before. You can panic if you want just hop in the backpack, let's go for a ride. You'll see in about 45 seconds or so this is going to be fine. You'll have to repeatedly prove to that lizard brain that you didn't die, that you're fine and that you can do it again.



When eventually you'll get out there and be able to set an example and serve your dog and serve your students. And you just don't even have to think about it because you've got such a rich history of having proven again and again and again that you can run even if you have no con It hurts even if you have some fear, even if you feel nervousness, and you can use it to help you turn that little backpack that you've got on into a, instead of feeling like a backpack filled with bricks, it's like you're strapping on a jetpack, and it's pushing you forward. And because of having done this over and over again, regardless of what the ring is, whether it's the dog agility ring, or maybe a dog obedience ring, or just the ring of relationships or whatever, it's all related, you become more resilient mentally, from having gone through this process over and over instead of just avoiding anything that would create negative emotions. And I've talked about confidence versus courage before. At first, when you do this kind of stuff, you know, whether it's a blind cross or a running dog walk training, or stepping into the ring, or talking to somebody who you are nervous to talk to, it takes courage to do that stuff, because you've not done it before. So why would you be confident that you could do it, you've never done it before. But once you've done this, once you've walked into the ring with those feelings of nervousness and survived, and you've done it 100 times 1000 times, then you have confidence, because you've done it before. And you know, you're going to recover from whatever circus might happen in the ring. And you can for sure, do it again. Now, again, like lifting weights, if you lift that weight over and over again, you you're gonna get tired, and you're gonna get fatigued, no matter how experienced you are, you're going to get fatigued at some point. So for me, I'm running not only one but two young dogs right now. And so if I'm not sleeping in my own bed at night, if the weather's not normal, if I'm far away from my family and my home, and I'm having failure after failure after failure, you know, after 10 runs or so of that, it's for sure gonna take more effort for me to strap on that backpack, and it's gonna start to feel more like a backpack filled with bricks and a jet pack. But I can still do it. And also, at some point, if I feel like alright, this is a little too much, I'm a little worn out, I don't think I can pick that weight up again, then I



know that about myself, and I can make a choice to stop going into the ring, or to do something to help myself recover from that mental fatigue. Or take some more moments before I go into sort of fortify myself. So it's not that it goes away entirely, it just gets a little easier to pick it up to pick up that backpack and put it on over and over and over again. And it takes longer before you hit that point where it just becomes really heavy. So it still does happen, it just gets easier and you get stronger. So another thing I want you to think about is, what's the worst part about being nervous for you? And you don't have to answer this question, I'm not going to answer this question for you, I just want you to think about what's the what's the worst part of being nervous, and is being nervous worth it. When you think about all the things that you have to offer to your dog, and to your community around you and to other people. If you can show up, show up in quotes, air quotes, even though you might be nervous. So if you never show up, because you never want to feel nervous, then others are going to miss out on what you have to offer them. And you might have some really good training ideas and some really good handling ideas, you might be a really supportive community member, if you just weren't nervous, you're thinking to yourself, well, you might just be nervous anyways, and show up because if the worst part is being a little sweaty, little sweaty palms or racing heart rate, that's not so bad, especially when you think about if you can just say yeah, I'm nervous, whatever my hands are sweating, whatever I can still, I can still do that front cross, best on front cross ever. For my dog, I can still be super clear so that my dog knows where it's going to the best of my ability. And even if I'm afraid of fear and feeling fearful or humiliated at the end of the run, I can still make absolutely sure that my dog had a great experience and serve my dog so that my dog gains confidence as well. And if you can show up and step into the ring, whatever that ring may be, and overcome that lizard brain fear of isolation, and welcome it and do more of it and be nervous on purpose. It's going to be amazing. And just like I said earlier, just like when Dorothy went from Kansas to AWS things are gonna go from black and white into color and you're gonna see things with a whole lot more clarity and depth than you saw before. If you're listening to this episode, and



you're getting ready to head to a big event like nationals or maybe an international competition, I want you to take a moment to just honor yourself and respect yourself. And I definitely honor you and definitely respect you for stepping into that ring. I know what it feels like and I say embrace erase the nervousness and just get dirty with it, just get sweaty with it, just do it anyway, whatever it happens to be, even if you have no idea how it's going to pan out, just go for it and carry whatever feelings you are carrying with you in that backpack. Strap it on, have that moment with yourself and go into the ring, and then come out and you will have done it. And you'll know that you can do it again and again and again. And also leave a comment I want to hear from you. I want to hear how does it feel for you to be open and welcoming to nervousness instead of resisting it and trying to avoid it. So if you'd like to share your thoughts, I'd love to hear from you head to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com forward slash eight](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/8/). This is episode eight. And if you're an agility challenge member, you can also head to [www dot the agility challenge.com](http://www.theagilitychallenge.com) And leave a comment or share your thoughts there. I'd love to hear from you. Go forth. be nervous, and I'll catch up with you for the next episode. If you enjoyed today's podcast, and you've got somebody in mind who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things we talked about today, head to the webpage for today's episode [podcast dot the agility challenge.com forward slash eight](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/8/). And scroll to the bottom you'll see a section that says Share the love that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. I'm a pretty tech savvy person but even for me it was a little tricky. So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of the page. So go ahead and head on over to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com forward slash eight](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/8/). subscribe to the podcast, leave a review and share it with a friend. Also, you can leave a comment below the episode and let me know your thoughts about what we discussed today. I'd love to hear from you, and maybe discuss your thoughts on a future episode.