

Paul: [00:00](#) Ladies and gentlemen, angry Americans around the country and around the world. Welcome to a very important conversation at a very important time with a very important man. We are improvising, adapting and overcoming like we do in every episode, but especially right now. I come to you live from New York City and on Skype with me, on video and audio is my friend, a true American hero. A true American inspiration, the great Flo Groberg. The great and powerful Flo Groberg. I got to do my intros properly.

Flo: [00:35](#) I don't know about powerful, but hey, it's an honor to be here with you. So it was a fun time to watch your episodes and see the folks that you bring on and you challenge the norm. And so I'm excited to have a conversation with you.

Paul: [00:47](#) Well, you and I were talking a little bit before we came on and this is kind of reminiscent of being deployed, right? I feel like you are a deep in the fight in Seattle, and I'm deep in the fight in New York. And it's kind of like you're in Afghanistan in Kabul and I'm in Baghdad, Iraq.

Flo: [01:07](#) No, no doubt. And we got our marching orders. The mission is simple; social distancing. Do make sure you wash your hands and you listen to the experts. But it's funny, like I was just telling you this when we were having a quick conversation prior to the show. That noise, that music from Skype, you know, doo doo doo. That brought me so many memories from my second tour. I was just looking forward to talking to the family and looking forward to talking to friends, and just looking forward to that sound. It's been a while. It's been years.

Paul: [01:38](#) That's one reason I'm excited to talk to you. It's one reason I think that my conversation in the last episode with Myles Craggins was so valuable. He was in Baghdad talking about adversity. Before that we talked to Chris Fussell about adversity and chaos. But even very basic things like distance work, right? Like, we're used to distance work. We're used to remote operations. We're used to connecting with family remote, right? So I think for many of us we're going to be built for this. I want to get into a lot of the reasons why you are built for this. But first, we can't have an actual drink in person. We will do that when this is all done. But I want to start by asking you my friend, what is your adult beverage of choice?

Flo: [02:21](#) Maker's Mark.

Paul: [02:22](#) Really?

Flo: [02:23](#) Yeah, love it.

Paul: [02:25](#) Ah, why do you love Maker's Mark?

Flo: [02:27](#) I don't know. I just had it about a decade ago, and it used to be Jameson. I felt like let me grow up a little bit. And I went to some good Maker's, and I still have a couple of Jameson's here and there. Can't go wrong with some Jameson, but I just love the taste of it. It's smooth and it just goes down smooth for me. And I love it.

Paul: [02:46](#) I love it. I have Maker's Mark in my bar in the living room. So now-

Flo: [02:51](#) Me too, downstairs.

Paul: [02:52](#) I'm going to send it to you, and when this is all through, we'll get back together. Maybe at the Classic Car Club or somewhere in Seattle, and we'll have that drink, man. And I was going to ask you, but for folks that don't know, I'm going to do it. I have an intro prior to this conversation where I explain your background and why you're such a valuable leader. But the first time I met you was kind of surreal because I had read about you, I knew about you. Everybody in the veterans community knew about you and about your story. And I think you had recently gotten the medal. You had been awarded the medal.

Paul: [03:27](#) And I was in Washington, I think, for the White House Press Corps Dinner or something. It was good weather. And I was running near the Capitol. I was 25 pounds heavier than I am right now, as fat as hell. And I was running and I saw a couple, very young, fit couple, come riding by on two bikes. And I don't know if I recognized you or if I got in your way, but I looked over and I was like, "Yo, you Flo Groberg?" And it was you and your now wife Carsen riding a bike right near Union Station in DC, right?

Flo: [04:04](#) Yeah, we were riding one of those ... You pay a buck, and you get to ride that bike. And I thought you were yelling at me for not having a helmet on, then I recognized you and that was pretty cool. But it was kind of weird because it's true. It was right after the medal, and prior to the medal, no one ever recognized me or knew who I was. And so this was happening very randomly, on occasion. Someone would be like, "Are you Flo Groberg? I think I saw you on TV, or I saw your ceremony". But this one, I really thought you were yelling at us at first because you're running by. And then you turned around and

said something. I was like, "What's going on?" And I was like, "Yeah". He's like, "Hi!" And then I recognized you. I was like, "Oh my gosh". It was pretty cool.

- Paul: [04:48](#) I think that Carsen had a helmet on and you did not, if I remember ...
- Flo: [04:51](#) I think that's what it was.
- Paul: [04:53](#) And I was like, dude, you just got the Medal of Honor. You survived all kinds of shit, and you're going to get killed by a DC cab because you don't have a helmet on.
- Flo: [05:01](#) Sometimes you just got to roll the dice. But yeah, that's probably cool. Safety first.
- Paul: [05:07](#) Because now all the people who were hating on those bike sharing programs in DC and New York, they're not hating on them now. I don't know how it is in Seattle, but here in New York, I've never seen CityBike more popular than it is right now. It's off the charts.
- Flo: [05:20](#) Yeah. It's a little more difficult here in Seattle. I mean, everybody's athletic in this area. It's been a ghost town actually since this Covid-19 Coronavirus piece. But it's hilly though.. It's really, really hilly here in Seattle, so you better be in shape. I've seen people try to go up these massive Hills and you just quit halfway through. It's kind of funny but it's kind of sad, but it's really funny. It's like, yeah, you got to try.
- Paul: [05:43](#) So set the stage for people because it feels ... The president is now saying we're on war footing fighting this Coronavirus enemy. I don't think he's articulated as well as you could or I could or others can. But if we are fighting common enemy, if we are now on war footing, it felt like the first phase was Seattle. It was like the battle of Seattle and now it's moved to the battle of New York, and I'm there, you're there. And the next fight it looks like could be New Orleans or it could be Atlanta. We'll see. We don't even know where it is yet, which is I think somewhat reminiscent of the global war on terror. This never ending war that we've had since 9/11. But on a very basic level Flo, through your eyes, which are so well trained. And I think also you have great empathy, which is part of why you're such a powerful leader. But describe for people what is it like in Seattle right now, and what do you see happening around you?

Flo: [06:39](#) Well, you know, Seattle was the sort of the first stage for the Coronavirus to hit the United States. That home for elderly people, and it was just awful how it just came out of nowhere. It was devastating. And I don't know if we were ... I know for a fact that we truly weren't ready for it, but the governor's done a heck of a job, communicating every day in different ways. The community has really rallied around each other. We're following, we're trying to follow obviously, the experts and the government's requirements and recommendations and piece. But people are social distancing here. My neighborhood, we had an event three weeks ago, two weeks ago, and we canceled it just in our neighborhood for a meet and greet. Because it's a new community.

Flo: [07:35](#) Folks are going to grocery stores, but they're keeping their distance. It's really interesting. A lot of places are like ghost towns right now. I mean, this is day 19 for me, day 20 right now, I think, quarantined in my home. So it's been a while. But I look at it, my personal view, I look at it as a battle. I do agree with the President of the United States that we are at war with an invisible enemy. And what we all are are; we're infantry. We got our orders, it's called social distancing, hygiene. If you can follow your orders, you're going to be a part of the solution. We've got our special operators, which are our doctors and scientists who are out there trying to find a vaccine for this disease and this virus. So we're going to let them do it.

Flo: [08:25](#) But for spec ops to be successful, they need the resources, but they also need us to do our part. Because if we're not doing our part, the enemy's going to win. And this is one of those situations where it's really not complicated. It really is not complicated. You really need to do everything you can to stay in your home. If you're infected, to quarantine yourself. But you can't lose hope either. It sucks. I mean, no one wants to be at home and confined in their household for this long. There's only so many Netflix TV shows people can watch. So many books you can read. I guess there's a lot of books you can read, but you got to find a positive, man.

Flo: [09:04](#) I think here what we've done in my community is; we've really taken this whole social gatherings through the internet, through Zoom, through Skype, through FaceTime, through other apps. There's another app that I've been looking at with my friends which is; you just send a video. It was called Marco Polo. It's been pretty cool. We've had opportunities to reconnect with friends around the country and the world that we haven't talked to in a long time. But we want to do our part. And if we

do our part, if we all sacrifice just a little bit and listen, and do our part, we're going to get through this. I look at the Chinese, I look at South Korea, look at Singapore. Look at all these other places out there that have had some pretty difficult times dealing with this virus like we are currently. And you know there's light at the end of the tunnel.

Paul: [09:54](#) So there's so many reasons why you are a man of the moment. Someone who can bring people ... I talk about the four I's; integrity, information, inspiration and impact. You bring all those things to everything you do, Flo. But I also know that you know what it's like to be down, to have pain, to go through adversity. When you were wounded, you were wounded pretty significantly in combat. And I wanted to see if you could talk to people about how to get through being down, how to get through being depressed. How to get through the moments where maybe you don't have hope. And you've inspired so many people around the country and around the world, but can you talk about that? Talk about moments when you were low and how you got through it, and how that helps shape that worldview you have now about being positive even when things can seem dark?

Flo: [10:49](#) Yeah, absolutely. First of all, it is 100% okay to be down, to be pissed off, to be sad, to feel depressed. Why? Because we're human beings. They're feelings. Being happy, excited, feeling ecstatic, these are feelings. We're human beings. So of course you're going to have these negative feelings. And when you obviously mix that in with the fear out there, that creates an issue where sometimes you can't understand. You truly don't understand the situation. All you know is that, man, this is really bad and I don't even know what's going to happen.

Flo: [11:27](#) Can I get infected? Can someone I love get infected? Can I lose my job? What's going to happen to my 401K? All of these things. So many negative thoughts that go and sort of engulf you. And this is something that I went through in my personal life after August eighth, 2012, when I was injured in Afghanistan. Because I was sitting in a hospital and I remember thinking about [Commence Omniture Griffin 00:00:11:48] Major Gray, Major Kennedy and [Reggio del Fata 00:11:51] and how four of these incredible Americans, incredible individuals were gone from this earth. And here I was living.

Flo: [11:57](#) I was in charge of that patrol and somehow a guy detonated at my feet, with his bomb. And I lived and they were 20 to 30 feet away, and they passed away. And so I was super angry at myself

and to the point of ... Mix in the Dilaudid, the Oxxys, the morphine, all that good stuff, ketamine, you're suicidal, right? Because your demons in your head, these negative thoughts, they're winning, right? I've never fought against an enemy that was more powerful than my own brain. And so to get through it though, I needed to find a positive in that negative situation. And that's the first time truly in my life that I learned how to take something that's just devastating, that hurts me, that creates fear and turn it into a positive going forward.

Flo: [12:50](#) And so in that case, I have four new families, and so I got to spend Christmases, Easters, Thanksgiving with the Griffins and I got to suspend incredible moments with the Kennedys and incredible moments with the Grays. I got to be there with the Reggae's two sons and his wife at his memorial with USAID. And I got to spend time with these beautiful families, and they accepted me. And it gave me this purpose in my mindset. It was, "My gosh, I am still on this earth for a reason. The reason is to earn it and to represent them, to make sure that I live up to their values and that I do something with my life to showcase that there are individuals like them who are willing to sacrifice it all for us to live in the world that we're in. To live in the country that we're in".

Flo: [13:39](#) And so I focused on that positive, that I was now a courier and a voice for them, and all those folks who made the ultimate sacrifice. To go forward so that we can improve our environment, we can improve our community. And so that was a positive, and it really got me through some really tough times. And adding in a good support system around me, people to talk to, being open and honest and have a conversation about my feelings. I know it's sad, right? I talk about my feelings. That's what saved my life. I take that today and I look at this Covid-19, and the state that we're all in.

Flo: [14:15](#) I mean, there's an incredible amount of fear, and I'm the same boat, right? I'm putting things on Facebook like, "Hey, I'm disinfecting all my groceries. Anyone else doing it?" And some folks are like, "Oh, I'm doing that. I'm leaving it outside for 48 hours". Some people are like, "You're crazy. Why would you even do this? It doesn't stay, you know?" But because I'm part of the system, and honestly, I want to do the right things. But I wake up in the morning with a positive mindset. Why? Because I focus on the positives. My wife is the most amazing human being in the world, and I am so lucky to have her around me. I'm healthy. I can still put food on the table. And I know that there

are incredible individuals out there who are working day in, day out, night in, night out to find us a cure. Find a vaccine to-

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- Flo: [15:03](#) ...out to find us a cure, right? Find a vaccine to help us guide us through this incredible crisis. So I want to play a part, I want to be a part of the solution. I don't want to be a negative. I don't want to be another obstacle, another hurdle for these folks in our communities to succeed. What I want to do is play my part, and today my part, my number one job, number one job is to stay positive and to go out there and follow the instructions. Social distancing. Do my part. If I can do this, I'm part of the fight. I am part of the solution. And so why worry, right? Why worry? Why am I going to create all these negative thoughts in my own head right now when I know that there is good, there is light at the end of the tunnel and actually me doing my part is going to help all of us get there sooner. So how do I influence those around me?
- Flo: [15:50](#) That's sort of a mindset that I have. And this is a really powerful example today because we're living it, we're living history right now. I mean every day is history, but this is one of those things that is going to talk about for hundreds of years.
- Paul: [16:03](#) Yeah. Yeah. I think everything that you do, Flo is so powerful and I think that we who have served overseas since 911, we felt like that was our call. Maybe at least I did right. There was our call to do our part for our generation and now it's an even deeper call and it's a call to serve again. But I also feel like we are better prepared for it because we had that first one, right?
- Paul: [16:29](#) Like I didn't think after 911 which Ground Zero is a couple blocks from where I'm talking to you now, I didn't think that I would end up in Iraq. Okay. I was there at Ground Zero, ended up in Iraq and that fight after 911 I thought was a fight of our time. I was angry, I was frustrated and I did not know at that time it would prepare me for now being in the same neighborhood with my family, fighting a totally different, terrifying enemy. Instead of somebody flying planes into the buildings up here, I'm worried about my kid getting sneezed on.
- Paul: [17:01](#) But that moment and that experience prepared me for this one. And you know about heroism, you were recognized by the President with the congressional medal of honor for your heroism. Can you talk about what it takes to be a hero? Because I know that those of you in the medal of honor community, and

today it's an honor to talk to you, especially because today's National Medal of Honor day and to be able to record this, we're recording this on Wednesday, it'll drop on Thursday, but I'm talking to you on National Medal of Honor day. And I've been telling people today, look at these folks for inspiration because I've met so many of these guys that have been at the depths of despair, and I think it was either Bud Booker or Bob Kerry that once told me, "Remember that every time you talk to a Medal of Honor recipient and they share their story, they're often sharing the worst time of their life or one of the hardest times of their life. Every time they share that story, it hurts. And it's an act of courage just to share that story."

Paul: [18:05](#) But you've thought about heroism, you've been recognized in the highest platform possible in America for your heroism. But can you talk about in your view, what is a hero and what does it take to be a hero? Because I see heroes now in every form rolling by my window right now in NYPD cars and FDNY ambulances and doctors going to work. But can you break it down for us, Flo? What is your view on heroism and what it takes and what it means?

Flo: [18:36](#) It's such a such an interesting word being a hero, heroism. I think it's something that falls on a decision, on a decision that it's not about you, it's about those around you. It's not about your goals and your end state, it's about what you can influence in your environment and community and the people around you. It's not about I, it's about the team aspect. By that I mean individuals who are willing to go out there in combat military side put their lives on the line and every single day, every single night for their brothers and sisters around them. And they're willing to die to save them and it's something that's... they're not thinking about themselves, they're thinking about, "Man, I need to be the best of the best. Make sure he or she is good to go. That it doesn't fall on me, that I don't drop the ball and then people get killed."

Flo: [19:36](#) And I think that happens in every different types of professions. I mean, right now, look at our nurses, right? And doctors. I mean, I know we see a bunch of these pictures and these new stories and people are like, some people are like, "Oh, I've seen it again. Yeah. That's what they're doing. They're nurses." Guess what? Yeah, they're nurses, but this is next level, folks. They're putting their lives and their family's lives potentially on the line to help us. And so all they're asking is for us to follow simple instructions. They're heroes.

- Flo: [20:12](#) Our policemen, our firefighters, our EMTs, all of our public servants. Even our politicians, who are willing to go out there. Our politicians are a willing to go out there and walk that community and just trying to preach the right words and take away fear and bring in understanding, bring in information, factual, good information that people can utilize in our day to day lives and actually do something positive with instead of bringing this whole fear.
- Flo: [20:41](#) I can't stand fear. It's just like, because fear... I can't stand fear because I don't think people truly understand how to take fear and turn it into a positive. Fear in combat allowed me to be sharp, right? It destroyed complacency because I knew there was an enemy around and I was scared and so all my spidey senses kicked up and I was ready and wired with my training to go do my job. Fear today for this virus will remind me that, "Man, I need to wash my hands. I need to make sure that I take care of myself and I follow instructions." But to a lot of people, fear is, "I need to sell all my stocks because the world is ending and this is going to be terrible. I'm never going to be able to put food on..." Or "I'm never going to get a job," or fear is like, "Man, if I opened a door just to walk my dog, the virus is going to fly into my mouth and it's going to go through my lungs and I'm going to die infect the rest of the world," right? It's just like....phewww.
- Flo: [21:43](#) And lot of times is because folks are reading different news stories. They're reading, not even like from credible new sites, right? And you start quoting things or like, "I'm going take these pills to beat the virus." Come on guys. Let's be smart about this. But it's something that day to day I'm thinking about and I'm just like, "Man, if I can just follow the simple instructions..." I lost... You got to edit this.
- Paul: [22:15](#) No, I think what it is, is you're bringing great passion, Flo. And that's what I love about everything you do is you bring passion and you're a real man. We honored you at IAVA's Heroes Gala. You remind me of this. It was 2017, right? And we honored you in New York and you were looking sharp and you've got the medal and you're so put together and you're this empowering ambassador, but you were the most real guy I'd ever seen. You talked about your struggles and you were open about your vulnerabilities. And I think that that was so powerful.
- Paul: [22:55](#) One of my mentors talked about powerful vulnerability, having the strength to put out to the world what you need. And that I think is what we're seeing in leaders like Governor Cuomo right

now. He sat out there and saying, "Look, I don't have enough ventilators. I need ventilators. That's what I need. I need help." And on the flip side, I've been critical of many leaders in government. The secretary of Veterans Affairs right now saying, "We got everything we need, we got everything we need. We don't need any help. Don't worry about it." You know? And I think having that awareness and that recognition that fear is real. But as Myles Caggins, Colonel Myles Caggins said last episode, he said, "It can be a mind killer."

Paul: [23:33](#) You've got to take that fear and harness it. It can be a runaway train or it can be a locomotive and you've got to figure out how to harness it and put it into positivity. And you've been doing that your whole life. And especially in these last couple of years where you've been thrust forward into... I try to explain it and I don't know from personal experience, but from knowing some guys who have gone through this experience, Sal Giunta and you and Dakota and others, it becomes this Forest Gump life where you're a normal guy. Sal Giunta was working in subway and then a couple of years later he's flipping the coin at a NFL playoff game. Right?

Paul: [24:12](#) So, you have confronted a lot of adversity and going through difficult environments. But that started with your immigration story. Your story is so powerful because you not only define what it means to be a hero, but what it means to be an American. And I come from a family of immigrants that shaped my entire worldview and I know it's shaped yours as well. I want to give you a chance, Flo if you would, share your thoughts on what it means to be American and what it means to be American right now. And in your personal journey as much as you're comfortable sharing because you are a man of the moment for many reasons in part because I think what will happen is you are a leader for America, but you're also well-renowned in France, you are now known worldwide and this is a global fight more than anything else we've ever experienced, right? This is truly a global fight and I think the world is going to be looking to you to define what it means to be American, but what it means to be a leader.

Paul: [25:12](#) So for you, Flo, what do you think about all that?

Flo: [25:15](#) Well, first of all, on the hero piece to finish it up. I'll tell you one thing, it came back to me what I wanted to say. If you want to be a hero and you'll never be your hero. If that's your goal in the military or anywhere else, it's to get medals, good luck, because you're probably going to get people killed. A hero is an

individual that is selfless, that is willing to put everything that they love and care about out of the line for others. And then they're willing to commit over and over again for it. And that's why you see a lot of these recipients. It's the worst day of our lives because more than likely if we're here and we're having a conversation with it, someone isn't. And we live with that every day. And so those nurses, those doctors, those police officers, and firefighters, EMT is all those folks out there, they're not doing it for a paycheck. Trust me, not right now.

Flo: [26:09](#) I mean everyone would get paid, but they're doing it because this is important for all of us, for our safety, for our survival, for people's lives. And they're willing to put their own welfare on the line to take care of us. And that's something that I credibly, credibly, I have a lot of incredible respect for. And we take it for granted. 100% do. We take it for granted because they're out there right now while we're here sheltered and quarantined, they're out there protecting us and giving us an opportunity to get through it.

Flo: [26:42](#) So as well as the scientist and those doctors who are trying to figure out a vaccine and those individuals who are volunteering to be on human trials, my goodness. So that goes into your question, what it means to be American. I don't know personally... I think France is a great country. It's very different to US. I don't know of another country that can rally around each other like the United States of America in a moment of crisis. I always looked at World War II as a great first example to me, personally to me because that is, it goes far enough that I've met, I still have conversation when those World War II individuals and so I can gain an understanding and a true appreciation and a one on one setting of what they went through. You know, we call it the greatest generation.

Flo: [27:33](#) Oh my gosh, what I want you... You have time, Google this stat because I've been saying this for years and I think I'm right? But I think like in 1938 and 1937 as a world power, the United States was about 37 and after Pearl Harbor, you fast forward six months, we are number two. And then fast forward another year, number one on the food chain. And Germany is second. And that's because not because we know we just magically had the greatest military, it's because every single individual in this country took it upon themselves to be a part of the solution. They rallied around each other, men and women went out there. If they couldn't deploy and they couldn't put the uniform and go fight, they worked in the factories, right?

Flo: [28:16](#) Everything was about one set, one mission, one goal, which is to eliminate this world threat and come out stronger together. And that changed the entire course of our history, right? We being world leaders. People started looking at us and saying, "Okay, United States is leading the way," and that's because of our character, our ethos and our people. So, it's been hard, hard for the last, I would say decade, but really the last four years I've seen us being so divided, so angry at each other. So unwilling to have a conversation, so unwilling to listen to each other. And now this invisible, deadly virus is bringing us together. It's unbelievable.

Flo: [29:02](#) I mean, people were arguing about this stimulus package and you know, Republicans, Democrats, little bit of blaming of each other, but guess what? I don't think people understand. You don't just wake up and come up with a 2 trillion stimulus package like that. How fast it got it done together is unbelievable to me. And that's something that I take a positive right here that they actually said, "You know what? Let's put our differences aside. I still don't like you very much right now and I don't really like this, but I'm willing to compromise a little bit because this is about survival. This is about our country," and this is why I love this country. This is what it means to be an American is that you're a patriot. And when shit goes wrong, went sideways, man, you're going to stand up and you're going to sacrifice and you're going to be a part of solution and then you're going to start working together.

Flo: [29:53](#) This country gave me an opportunity to call myself an American. It gave me the opportunity to build a home, build a family, and to speak my mind, to enjoy-

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Flo: [30:03](#) ... And to speak my mind, to enjoy life with all the freedoms. And the only way I could repay is when he went to war I had to be a part of that team. I had to be a part of the solution to earn the right to call myself an American as to go fight for this country. But to all of our difficulties, to all of our differences, to all of our annoyances, there is still no other country in the world that is willing to truly, truly good at love to that next step in terms of being free. This is facts, you know it. Go down Iraq, go to the middle East, go to parts of Africa, go to Europe, right? You don't have it. And we take this for granted.

Flo: [30:42](#) So to me, being an American is one of the greatest honor. I'm humbled by it every single day and I can't say it enough. But it's

really an opportunity to show the world and as an American of what is right. And even though we're not perfect, and even though we have a lot to learn, when all hell breaks loose, like right now, we stand up and rally around each other. It doesn't matter who is the actual top leader, right? People rally. Look at what's happening in New York, look what is happening in Washington state. Look what happened in California.

Flo: [31:17](#) People are like saying, "Hey, we're going to make these tough decisions. It's going to suck. You're not going to like it, but this is what we need to do, and together we're going to get through it." That's why I go to bed like a baby at night because no matter what, I still believe in the folks who lead this country and also all facets, whether it's local or to federal and state, but I just believe in people and I believe and I believe in the hardiness country and this is why I'm super positive about it. This is why I'm looking forward to us getting through this, but I'm really, really looking forward to us learning something from it. And maybe this huge negative is going to allow us to be a little bit closer to each other in a moment where we've been very divided.

Paul: [32:05](#) I think that's right man. And people live and rally to leaders. They're going to look to leaders for inspiration, for experience, for integrity. And you bring all those things, but you also bring passion. And I'm a passionate guy. Some folks say I'm too passionate. You are a passionate guy, and I love it because I think it's an honesty and it's a realness about you that especially in the military community where folks are so buttoned up sometimes when they get out they have a hard time fully expressing their emotions. But you're a guy that does bring inspiration. You do bring motivation, but you also, rightfully are outraged by things that you see that you feel are wrong. So I want to ask you Flo the question I ask of all our guests, Flo Groberg, what makes you angry?

Flo: [32:51](#) I think individuals and whether it's the news, whether is people, whether it's... People who are so pessimistic and maybe they're living in a world of misery in their own head and I'm there to support, right? I will have a conversation with you, but there are folks who go out there and they just want to bring you down. They're going to create this fear, this sense of no hope. I can't live life like that. I've been in situations where the situation is dire, right? You've got enemies, they got the high ground and they're out there to kill you. And if you just give up, if you tell yourself, "Well, this sucks and I hate the world and why me?" Instead of, "Hey, you got this, you got that? Okay, follow me or

lead the way. Let's go, let's do this together as a unit," as a single organism, believe in each other having hope. And this is how you defeat the enemy.

Flo: [33:55](#) I can't stand people who are incredibly negative and all they want to do is create this immense amount of fear in others, to create anxiety around them. A lot of times it's to hide their own insecurities, to hide their own fears, and to want to have other people feel the same way as they do or bring in a same mindset and created this... this creates this unrealistic reality around them. But what it really creates it's another virus, it's another virus. It's this negativity of a virus that's so negative that it just engulfs your mind and it takes you into this stage of hope to doom and despair and folks make wrong decisions because of it. That's what makes me angry.

Paul: [34:42](#) I appreciate.

Flo: [34:42](#) It's just people that have no hope.

Paul: [34:44](#) That's powerful man. That's powerful. So you burst onto the scene because of this moment in Afghanistan that has shaped your life profoundly. I would love to hear your thoughts on whether it's defined your life, because some folks it has, and I think you've been a great example of someone who continues to redefine himself and continues to find new ways to be impactful in new ways to serve. Some recipients understandably go up in the mountains and build a shed and don't ever come out and then others are out there doing all kinds of stuff, right? Everybody takes their own path. But you've told the story countless times. The story has been told countless times. What do you want people to know? Especially people who maybe have never heard you before. What do you want them to know about that day in Afghanistan?

Flo: [35:40](#) I just want them to know about Command Sergeant Major Griffin, Major Gray, Major Kennedy and Ragaie Abdelfattah. I want them to know that four incredible Americans died that day for us. They died for me. They died for my team. They made the immediate ultimate sacrifice. They all like kids. Gray's got three beautiful kids. Kennedy had twins that were a year old, right? Griffin and Kylie and Dane. Ragaie had 14 year old boy and a 16 year old son. They're all were leaders in their communities, incredibly well respected in our profession. I would have given my life for every single one of them over and over again and didn't come home. And their families have to live with the consequences of that day for the rest of their lives. When we

celebrate Easter, we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate Thanksgiving, things like that.

Flo: [36:33](#) They're missing a key person in their family. It's something that I want... When I talk about August 8, I want people to read to remember that there are individuals across our country but that travel world and fight against the evil for us. Whether or not you believe in it, whether you're pro military, against the military, pacifist, whatever it is, guess what? The world is evil. It's just the way it works. But why I love it is because we have incredible people who are beautiful souls who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for us so that we can be happy. And be provided with an awesome environment to live in. So that day, to me, it's all about them. It's about them, it's about their families. I am a medal of honor recipient, but I'm a carrier or the medal, right?

Flo: [37:23](#) Nothing that I've ever done in my life, in the military makes me a hero. What it does is it makes me a part of the solution and part of the team. I've been recognized so that may see a carrier, hell, Mahoney, Ballorama, CCorp, Ochart, Brenk. These were my guys on that team. They all played an incredible part of our day for the success of that day to save the other 24 lives. So it's not just like as if like I came out of the nowhere and I was just incredible mythical creature that saved people. No, I lost four. Right? They did their part. To me, that's the biggest piece, and it's something that has defined me, but it's not made me the person I am today. Every day I use the platform of the medal of honor to hopefully preach a good message to do some good to help, but I don't wear the metal to gain recognition or financial gains, all that good stuff.

Flo: [38:28](#) I have incredible amount of respect for it, and my entire purpose though is to earn it. Just like I want to earn a right to be an American, I want to earn the right to still be in a service for my brothers who didn't come home and I want to make sure I'm a good representation on the medal in the military and our country. The only way I can do it is by wanting, being a good husband, being a good citizen, a good worker and everyday challenging myself as we know. Whether it's at Boeing, or whether it's the nonprofits that I'm a part of, whether it's organizations and groups that I support. It's by being a good person and challenging myself.

Flo: [39:05](#) Last thing, yeah I work- I'm 36 years old and I worked for a company and I will do that until I retire. Because that hasn't changed who I am and I have so much to learn, so much

growing to do and so many more experiences to go through and so many people to learn from. So I'm excited about that piece.

Paul: [39:27](#) I'm excited to watch you man. You are kind of a next generation, not just a hero of Valor, but kind of a superhero, for anyone who is an immigrant, anyone who is an athlete, anyone who is a soldier or anyone who is a husband, I think you are an inspiration to so many people. But like every superhero, there's an origin story. So when you were growing up, Flo Groberg, what was your first car?

Flo: [39:56](#) Oldsmobile 88, Oldsmobile AKA nicknamed 'the boat.' And it was a tank man. You could drive into a wall, wall will break but nothing could destroy that vehicle. Everybody made fun of me in high school, but you know what? I love my vehicle would define who I was. They were like, "Damn, Flo has got that Oldsmobile so slow, man you can drive into it and you're not going to... guarantee he's going to win that battle."

Paul: [40:23](#) Was it a Delta 88 or was it 1988.

Flo: [40:26](#) 1988 Oldsmobile. My dad's a... I mean it was a cool car when you had it still had like the phone in there with the cord, a little speaker thing. I thought that was cool. Power windows. I mean it was like D car back in 1988, 99, right?

Paul: [40:43](#) What color was it Flo?

Flo: [40:44](#) It was dark blue.

Paul: [40:45](#) Dark blue. Do you know that my first car was Oldsmobile as well and my friends used to call it the boat, so-

Flo: [40:51](#) Are you serious?

Paul: [40:52](#) Yeah, absolutely.

Flo: [40:53](#) Because they're so wide and big man.

Paul: [40:55](#) I had the brome package. It was like that Felty kind of stuff where it felt like a velour couch on the inside. Yeah, I talked about in a previous episode, but that's a fantastic car. What happened to it? Did you sell it? Did you wreck it? Did you sink it? What happened to the boat?

Flo: [41:11](#) They wrecked it.

Paul: [41:12](#) They re-wrecked it?

Flo: [41:14](#) Yeah, I did. It's... yeah, I wrecked it. It was raining and I did a California roll through a stop sign.

Paul: [41:27](#) Oh yeah.

Flo: [41:28](#) And some guy just drove right into it. I was completely at fault. I was 17 years old. I was an idiot. And I learned my lesson, but then it's like karma because I've wrecked every single car that I've ever had except this new one. But everyone I've wrecked since have been other people driving through stop sign or red lights at me. It's like, okay, I get it. I was wrong. No one got hurt, I apologize, but please stop doing this to me.

Paul: [41:57](#) Mental note, to make sure when I ride with you, it's only on bicycles and not on cars.

Flo: [42:03](#) You drive, or you ride it... you drive.

Paul: [42:04](#) Yeah, you got it, there. You got it. I've been impressed to watch your journey in so many different ways, but it's included a foray into politics. I was at the democratic national convention, I guess it was five years ago when you came on to the stage. And I was so inspired to see, I remember being there and saying, "Oh, you guys don't know this guy's story." It was a lot of political people, people who maybe didn't, weren't aware of you, but you made a decision to put yourself out there and, and challenge Trump. And I want to ask you if you're comfortable now, your thoughts on him, your thoughts on this political race for president that's still happening and whether or not you'd ever run for office yourself?

Flo: [42:48](#) Yeah. It's super interesting. A lot of people took it as me challenging Trump. I did not to go out there to challenge Trump. I went out there to speak as an immigrant about the importance of having a commander in chief that will support our veterans and our active duty military and their families. And the reason why I did this is because I didn't know anything... I have never had an interaction with Trump before, but I've had with Hillary at the time. I had seen her come to the hospital at Walter Reed and I was there for a year and a half, with no cameras, and just go out there at the Fisher house, spend time with the family, spent time with my mom, spent out with folks and just talking about, "What's going on, what can I do to help? What can we do to be better? Thank you for your service," and stuff.

Flo: [43:33](#) I saw that personally and so of course when I had to make a decision and as I was registered as Republican, that is the person that I felt, well, she at the time, meant more to me in terms of how could she be a good commander in chief and support our troops because of what I witnessed. So I went and I did it. I had a heck of a lot of backlash and I've lost some friends over it. Some people thought... was like, "Wow, I can't believe you're such a traitor or you can do this." I'm like, I don't understand how I'm a traitor. This is my American rights, an American fight for who you believe. I didn't say a negative thing about, now our president, and what do I think about the president United States? Listen, you know me man, I support the office. I support the seat and I understand in that position, and I'm out here right now trying to make sure that, I do what I'm supposed to do in my own environment to be the right type of leader.

Flo: [44:31](#) I think that Trump's got a hell of a job in front of him and this is a very difficult job. He came in with a lot of enemies and let's be honest, look at Obama. Obama came in and a lot of enemies and to all the great things that Obama did, he had a hell of a lot of people that were calling him names and telling him he was a terrible president and go out there and fighting him in every single policy, we know this, right? It's happening again for Trump. And so it's just same thing that I've been talking about for the last decade, right? We've been so divided. Instead of being able to listen to each other, I think that-

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Flo: [45:03](#) Divided instead of being able to listen to each other. I think that Trump's got... It's about who you have around you to run. And so I just don't know. I don't know many of those folks who have been going in and out of the White House. I know he's had a heck of a lot of turnover, so I think that's going to make his position a little bit more difficult. But yeah, even though you said earlier potentially the articulating this COVID virus as an example. I still think he's making some really good decisions and tough decisions, right? In there, you got to look at a positive. It's not easy. I don't care who you are. It is not easy to be a President of United States or President of any nation right now because you want to take away this fear and you want to bring in some good information and sometimes you have to do a little gambling, right?

Flo: [45:48](#) Because if you're too transparent, people are going to crucify you, if you don't see anything, people are going to crucify you. If

you say something and the next day it changes people are going to crucify you, right? And if you have people that don't like you, no matter what you say, they're going to crucify you. So it's on us too take a step back, truly look at the wheel on end and put ourself in his shoes and his team's shoes and I think right now that it's not about being a Republican or a Democrat, but being American. And I've listened to some of the stuff he said, hey, he's saying it. He's trying to say it. Listen to the experts, right? He's got the folks around him and we need to listen to them, right?

Flo: [46:30](#) We need to listen to their message. So on the next presidential election, guess what? I think it's going to be interesting, first of all is Sanders going to allow Biden to be the representative for the Democratic Party? Is this going to keep going on forever? But I think it's going to be really... I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to the debates. I'm looking forward to what policies they both going to go change, or are they going to campaign on, I'm looking forward to more conversation with folks around me about this election. I'm just very hopeful for the United States of America and the rest of the world.

Paul: [47:07](#) And many people are hopeful that you will one day run for office. So, have you thought about it? Would you do it? You've been a Republican. You've spoken to the Democrats. I think you appeal very much to independents like me and so many others. I wish you were the Mayor of the City of New York right now because I think our mayor is terrible, but you're a strong leader, you're a great communicator, would you ever run for office yourself, Flo?

Flo: [47:32](#) I don't know. I mean, first of all, a blessing for me is I can't run for president. I'm an immigrant. I'm naturalized citizens. So that's out of the way, until we eliminate that.

Paul: [47:42](#) Until we fix that because I think if something that requires a constitutional amendment, I think that's one of them. And you're a great example of why it's you. But you haven't considered it strongly yet?

Flo: [47:58](#) No, I haven't. I think it's because this is my own fear here. I'm seeing how this, people will go out and create this image about you that is completely unrealistic and false. There's so much hate in a lot of these campaigns and that's why I love With Honor with Rye Barcott, what he's doing with trying to like, "Hey, we're going to go out there and support folks who are

Republican, Democrat, independent as long as you work across the aisle with each other, right?"

Paul: [48:26](#) Yeah. For folks that don't know, it's an organization that's trying to support veterans from both parties. I've been an advisor, I think Flo, you've been an advisor and the attempt there is to try to bring people together in common issues. Just as an example, one of the areas where I saw opportunity for unification was we had a Republican Brian Mast, who was a Republican from Florida and Democrat Tulsi Gabbard who we had on this show that got together to focus on burn pits, the toxic exposures that are hitting so many of our friends and I think there's common ground that we can look for maybe in this moment, we can find common ground, but Flo, you are great about bringing positivity. So, I want to give you a chance to answer the other question I ask of every single guest. Flo Groberg, what makes you happy?

Flo: [49:11](#) My wife, my family, my friends, but really every single day waking up next to the most beautiful human being in the world to me, who makes me happy, who I frustrate the heck out of her a lot. But she's a great reminder that life is beautiful. If I can just every single day I have an opportunity to tell her I love her and appreciate that moment the way I'm supposed to appreciate it, which is with all my heart and all my love and no matter what comes at me that day, at least I have her, right? At least have that love. And the same thing some of my friends and my family and so I appreciate these tiny little things that should be sacred to all of us, which is our relationships. And with that, I can get through anything. That's what I truly believe in and I feel blessed. I'm the richest person in the world because of the people around me.

Paul: [50:08](#) Well, I feel blessed to know you. Normally we would come to the point in the conversation where I would present to you gifts. So, I can't do that right now. I'm going to do it virtually. So I'm going to get you, first of all, I'm going to get you, this is a virtual bag I'm giving you. Let me give you some Oscar Mike Gear the made in America, Angry Americans Oscar, Mike gear. I am going to get you some Maker's Mark whiskey that's coming your way and then I don't have them here in front of me, but normally I would present an ask every guest. There are three colors of peeps the Easter candies, right. I would normally present blue, yellow and pink and I ask every guest of those three colors, blue, yellow, and pink, what color would you choose and why?

Flo: [50:51](#) Blue because my favorite color since I've been able to watch a Power Rangers.

Paul: [51:00](#) I love it.

Flo: [51:00](#) Since I was a kid. So the blue was always mine. It's been like, that's my guy and I fell in love with the color blue. So, that says everything is blue for me.

Paul: [51:09](#) I love it. I love it. And-

Flo: [51:09](#) Nice shirt by the way, I think it's blue.

Paul: [51:12](#) It's blue. I wore it just for you. And also because it's the infantry is blue and as we always say, why is the sky blue? Because God loves the infantry, right? And it's actually, it's a little cloudy here in New York today. It was blue earlier, but it's a good reminder that the sun will come out. I always am reminded that on 9-11 it was the bluest sky I ever saw. And everybody always talks about now and sometimes in New York we've called the 9-11 blue because that night, that day it was so clear and so crisp but we always remembered the color of the blue.

Paul: [51:43](#) But I also remember that if not for 9-11, I never would have gone to Iraq which in my view was a mistake, but it never would have gone. I never would have come home and started IVA. And then I never would have met a guy named Gabe Kleinman, and he never would have introduced me to my wife on a blind date in a snow storm in December. So good can come out of bad. I never would of had these beautiful kids, I never would have had this life. So it's all about the approach. It's all about your attitude and your effort and that's what you demonstrate. And also, we both now share an excitement for our friends at Bravo Sierra. And look at you, you got it right there, we didn't even plan this, you got the big antibacterial wipes.

Flo: [52:21](#) Yeah. I got the big one.

Paul: [52:23](#) They are our newest sponsor of Angry Americans and from Righteous Media I love these guys, and now I know you love these guys. This is a total coincidence, we didn't know that we were both hooked up with them until they told us. But what do you like about this product and why?

Flo: [52:39](#) First of all, it's this deodorant. I'm just going to go right here. This deodorant is awesome. It smells amazing, and we are talking about veterans that put their mind into it, right? They

wanted to create an unbelievable organization, but also it's not just about the financial side of the house and create a product and send us, it's about giving back. And every purchase that we make, 5% goes back to the MWR, right? And that's going to keep growing. So it's just such the military and American mindset, it's like, "Hey, I want an awesome product that is better than anything else on the market." This is it. I also want to bring in some really cool people who had the same type of mindset. That's what Bravo Sierra is doing, man, they're competitive, but they care about the community, they care about the environment, they care about each other. And then they want to give back and that's what they do. And so I thought I was just a natural fit. And in terms of being an advisor for them and I love it. I love their stuff, and right now especially-

Paul: [53:46](#) Yeah.

Flo: [53:47](#) ... this is very handy.

Paul: [53:49](#) Antibacterial body wipes. So you've got the big version. They gave the big guy the little version, but have all these and so if you're trapped in quarantine or self-isolation for 14 days and maybe you only have one bathroom and everybody else has got to use it and you can't shower. This is a shower in a bag. I mean, stick it in your bag. It's good to go. Its antibacterial smells good also. It looks cool and it's endorsed by Flo Groberg so how much better can you get than that? But I think like you, man it's an inspiration. It's innovating, it's changing and I think in times like this man people need leaders and they need people... You've shaped what this country is what it was and most importantly, what it will be. You've been steeled by your experiences, but you're always giving back. You're always looking forward and especially in times like this, I've been so grateful for your time and especially on National Medal of Honor Day. I don't think you say happy Medal of Honor day. I don't know what you say-

Flo: [54:49](#) I don't know what you say.

Paul: [54:51](#) I'm still trying to figure out how to say goodbye and I'm going with stay frosty for now. Because that's going to be right. I mean, we can't say like, "Hey, have a happy pandemic or like I hope you don't get infected or stay healthy is rooted in fear for me." So for me it's been all about stay frosty. So my dear friend Flo Groberg I am so grateful and honored that you joined us my very best to your amazing wife Carsen and to everybody in Seattle. It's good to know on the first front in the war and

Coronavirus that they've got Flo Groberg leading the charge, my friend,

Flo: [55:27](#) Same goes to your wife and your little one and to you in New York and to all the New Yorkers. My love is sent to you and let's all do this together. Let's work together. This makes sure that we sacrifice a little bit for the greater good because I know what you're going through. We're going through it here as well and other parts of the country are going through it as well as the world. So it's really, really, really important for all of us to do our part.

Paul: [55:53](#) That's it, man. We're one team, one fight. A lot of Makers' Mark when this is all through.

Flo: [55:58](#) Absolutely.

Paul: [55:58](#) I'll come out to New York we'll tear it up and until then my friend stay frosty.

Flo: [56:05](#) Take care. Catch you later.

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