

## Meathead Hippie Episode #78 with Hannah McKeand

**Emily:** Hey everybody, it's Emily Schromm your host of Meathead Hippie podcast. For all my new listeners, it is so wonderful to have you here. For somebody that's listened more than once or twice, so glad you're back. I love doing this podcast. Someone asked me why I started it. I legitimately started it because I missed having good conversations with people. So we don't really have sponsors outside of me just talking about my businesses and what I do and the occasional plug for people that I really believe in, but this is just your source of information for real things I guess. Sitting in the shit, feeling kinda icky about yourself, not knowing what to eat because everyone says to eat something else and soon as you eat something, the next day it's bad for you, the joy of being an entrepreneur but also the stress of it. We kinda like it all, and of course hopefully we maybe need some more meathead people here. We've been pretty hippie recently, but glad you're here. I wanted to just do a quick little intro because every holiday season I do some sort of free challenge. So this will year three. Last year was the holiday eight and we did a little bit of everything and I was thinking, "What are we gonna do this year?" and I realized one, being introduced to strength training or knowing how to even start strength training has been something I've wanted to help people with since I started and I want everyone to feel comfortable lifting a barbell. I want everyone to walk into a gym at any time and be like, "Yeah, I can feel confident taking this squat rack and learning how to deadlift." Male or female, I think that's something that's so important and so anyway, the point being it's Thanksgiving. We eat a lot. Let's learn how to lift because the best thing to do when we eat a lot is not to go run on the treadmill, even though sweating is good, it is mostly about lifting heavy because of all the glycogen in your muscles and it's actually science. It's not just me saying that. So I just am so stoked. Please sign up. If you listen to this podcast, there is no reason you should not be signed up. It is eight days, a free challenge. It is for people to learn about strength training, why I program the way I do, why you should squat, why you should deadlift, why you should press, why you should pull, why you get injured when you do those things, what should I do for mobility, how are ways I can progress into this move, how do I do it if I don't have a barbell, all of these questions shall be answered. And it is free. So go to [EmilySchromm.com](http://EmilySchromm.com). Hit Start Here with Em. It is directly linked at the top of this little description so you can just click there and go sign up, because I'm putting so much into this because I want everyone to learn. You're gonna just be- you're mind's gonna be blown. Okay, that's it. This podcast is- Keep in mind, we're gonna do our best with the audio, but this woman, Hannah McKeand, I met her, gosh, three years ago, and I heard her story and I remember every single detail, like I could not wait to have her on the podcast but I knew her whole story. I just couldn't wait to jump in about this. She has broken world records. She used to hold a world record for the most times crossed from the shore, from the seaside, or the coast, to the pole in the South Pole. I said that so bad, but basically this woman was like, "I need to do more with my life. I'm gonna quit my job in London." Maybe not London, but she'll tell you more about that, and then she goes. She just learns how to hike, takes a 40-day solo tour across half of Antarctica. It's insane, just insane. And she almost died. She just talks about it like it's no big deal. You're gonna love her. I am just so grateful that we got to catch a podcast, but keep in mind that she's in Punta Arenas right before we filmed this, so she's waiting for an airplane to get to Antarctica so that's why the audio's a little off. Okay, that's it. Go sign up for my challenge. It's free. Listen to this podcast. If you like it, leave a review because it means so much. And that's all I got. Have a great day!

I'm Emily Schromm, the ultimate Meathead Hippie. Welcome to the show.  
(upbeat fun music)

**Emily:** Hannah McKeand, thank you for taking the time out of going to Antarctica to make this happen. (laughs) Welcome to Meathead Hippie.

**Hannah:** My pleasure. How lovely to be here.

**Emily:** I know. It's been- we met- it's so funny because somebody was talking about the only continent they hadn't been on was Antarctica, and I remember being like, "Well, I know somebody who's been on that continent," and I was talking about your story and then right then, literally a day later, on Facebook it popped up that it was our friendiversary from when we met at the park in Denver.

**Hannah:** So nice. Yes, absolutely, doing that funny promotional thing. Yeah, absolutely.

**Emily:** So it's wonderful. And I know I'm catching you, so tell everybody where you are and what you're about to do, and then I guess let me start here. This is the bio that I found and I think this is very outdated so people, I'm about to interview the most badass female in the world I think because her story is just the coolest. I hope we can fit it all in. So this is seriously just a small glimpse. Hannah McKeand is an English polar explorer. In 2006, she set the record for the fastest journey, man or woman, to the South Pole, a 600 nautical mile journey she completed solo in under 40 days. So that was the world record, male or female, and there's been so much that's happened since 2006, but then you went in 2008 to the North Pole, and you had a crazy story that I got to hear about there, and now where are you going now?

**Hannah:** Well, all of that feels like a long time ago. The years go by, don't they? But I've been working on Antarctica or traveling to Antarctica and then working in Antarctica. This will be my 15th year in a row, and I'm currently sitting in South America down in southern Patagonia in an end of the world town called Punta Arenas and we're waiting to go to Antarctica. We are on standby to get onto a huge Illusion 76 cargo jet, and we will as soon as the weather cooperates, we will be flying down onto Antarctica to get to our base camp, which is at a place called Union Glacier, and we'll be landing that huge cargo jet on wheels on a blue ice runway. So it's all land on just glassy polished ice, which is to my mind one of the most amazing starts to any Antarctic seasons. It's a really incredible operation they do with aviation down there.

**Emily:** Oh my gosh, and I've been to Punta Arenas, and you are waiting on weather because it's just insane probably right? So it's hit or miss no matter what time of year?

**Hannah:** Well, yeah. it's the first flight of the Antarctic summer season and so they have very particular limits, they call them. So they're looking for particular wind speed, and a particular cloud base, so that they can land the big plane for the first time in nicer conditions so then maybe they will later in the season. So we're just waiting. It's too windy at the moment. It's blowing 40 knots and you need that here at the moment, which you can't stand up in 40 knots let alone unload a plane and do things safely around an aircraft. Just waiting for a little bit.

**Emily:** And I love it, because what are you doing- Maybe let's, I guess tell me what you're doing for this trip specifically. I know they probably all are a little different, and then I wanna talk about your journey to your very first trip, what lit you up and you're like I'm doing this.

**Hannah:** Yeah. Well these days, so as you said in your intro, I'm known or I got known as a ski side or guide and expeditioner as myself. I never used the word explorer. That seems very not quite right, but an expeditioner and a guide, and I skied coast to pole six times, which is my other world record. I've done that a few more times, which is hilarious. But only cause I know myself and it still seems crazy to me that I have any kind of records. That seems so unlike my usual M.O., any anyway I do. It's been some years. For the last six years I haven't been skiing coast to pole. I picked up this amazing job with this company, Antarctic Logistics and Expeditions, and I put in a project, which is a remote camp at the Emperor penguin colony, and it's a really technical project. We have to put in a camp and a runway, and it's all on sea ice. So

the camp and the runway are floating and we land planes on the floating sea ice, and we maintain a camp there for six weeks every summer. And it's an amazing place. We have 8,000 emperor penguins just in the neighborhood, and they come and go, and we bring guests in to visit them and scientists and photographers.

**Emily:** So you just hang out with penguins.

**Hannah:** I just hang out- I get to be the penguin lady.

**Emily:** I wonder if that's your spirit animal.

**Hannah:** It is now. Any spirit animal I previously had has been gently shouldered out of the way by 8,000 Emperor penguins. They're like, "We go this. She's ours now."

**Emily:** So cool. And what's your favorite thing when you're there with the penguins? Is it showing other people just like the beauty of Antarctica? Is it for you personally, what's that big draw that keeps you going so far South?

**Hannah:** It's such a leveling place. You know, it strips away all the nonsense of real life in the world and finances and relationships, you know, reefs falling off, whatever your day to day things are. And it just puts you in this really exposed environment where you certainly are able to remember what it is just to be a human animal, to be in touch with the basics of existence, to be concerned by shelter and nutrition and your ability to move safely, and it just puts your back into the environment, back into the world in a way that nowhere else quite does for me. I feel fairly comfortable most places in the world, but down there I'm always alert, you know, very very highly tuned and alert to what's around me, and I love that feeling. It's like when Dorothy steps into Oz and it all goes into glorious technicolor. That's kind of how I feel when I step foot in Antarctica, like suddenly the world goes into glorious technicolor and I get this heightened sense of being. I really like that.

**Emily:** Ah, I love it. So you said six times your world record, what was the term you used from skis to, to from end to end, right?

**Hannah:** I skied from the coast to the pole, so the coast of Antarctica to the pole. I haven't done a crossing. I haven't been right across, although I would like to very much. I hope one day I can put together that kind of expedition, but it's really long and really hard, especially the way I would like to do it.

**Emily:** Yeah, cause the one you did, it's the world record was 40 days, just under 40 days, right?

**Hannah:** Yes. Yeah, exactly.

**Emily:** So let's talk-

**Hannah:** It got beat pretty heftily.

**Emily:** But I mean, that's just incredible that you- I kinda wanna hear about your first- Okay, talk about where this drive, I know a little bit about your story, how out of the box this was for you, and I wanna know about what sparked it.

**Hannah:** It was, yeah.

**Emily:** This is so great for my listeners.

**Hannah:** You would think, wouldn't you? I regret to say that I have no recollection of the moment that I decided to go to Antarctica. I have been asked this question before, and I literally have no recollection of it. What I can tell you is that previously my first departure from some comfort zone was that I spent three years traveling in North Africa in the eastern Sahara with some rock arch researchers, and I was just there to volunteer and a foot soldier with them and we would go and survey parts of the eastern Sahara and look for cave paintings. And that took me for the first time to into a really big exposed bit of wilderness that gave me that feel, the sort of heightened feeling I was talking about. And so it was a quite of a easy sidestep to want to go from the hot desert and experience a cold desert in the biggest wilderness on the planet, and I think it was just such a daydream that sort of came to me over time. There was no epiphany moment. There was no, "Oh I read Shackleton's as a kid and knew I had to go to Antarctica." There was none of that. It was just this sort of longing for big empty spaces, this just sense of wanting to feel small. You've met me. I'm a really big person. I'm not a big elegant person. I'm not Naomi Campbell. I'm a big clunky big person.

**Emily:** I don't know about that.

**Hannah:** No, it's really true. You're sweet, but it is. So I spent a lot of time feeling too big for the world. I feel like, you know, everyone's a big daintier than me and knocking things over less and being less obvious than, you know, when I walk into a room everyone knows I've just walked into the room. You know, there's no super sneaking in quietly, and it's a shame because that's my personality. I can be very high functioning and social, but in my heart I'm a true introvert. I'm quiet. I would like to start to cycle into a party, but I can't get away with that because there's 6-foot-2 of me and a solid lady. So yeah, when I started encountering these places, it was in a really, it was a really refreshing feeling because I feel so tiny in these places. I feel like this little insignificant spec and that's really a lovely feeling that I treasure.

**Emily:** I love how you said that. Well the thing that we love the most, and what we talk about the most, is how the world has taught us to take up less space and we hate that. So I just love how you take up space. You are doing. You just said I'm doing it because this is drawing me there and I think that's where a lot of people get stuck, right? Like they have maybe that draw, or a calling, or a pull. How did you get through those big, oh shit, what are you doing doubts that we all tend to have?

**Hannah:** There's a classic bit of video of me. I was taking sort of self video diaries when I was on my solo expedition, and I did a little training trip before I left just to get myself warmed up. I just went out for a week skiing around the mountains and Antarctica and getting myself back up to speed with everything, and there's this classic clip where I just have a crappy day, and some things broke, and then I'm out to fix them but I just felt bad and it was just a horrid- it was sort of a PMS-y day if I'm honest. It was like, "AH. I don't know why I'm here. I don't know why I would do this again. It was just the hardest thing I ever did, and now I'm trying to do it in a harder way and that's stupid. And I just don't know what to do." And so I just do this big kind of whining to myself at the camera, and then I realize that I have to make a schedule to the camp and tell them where I am, and I just switch, and I go, "So I'm gonna do a schedule now. I'm not gonna mention any of this and I'm gonna be cheery and optimistic on the phones and no one's ever gonna know except anyone who watches this video, which will probably ever be me so I'm actually just talking to me. That's weird." That's it. But that's kind of my personality. I'll have a good sort of crisis, a suffer, a little meltdown, but I have a lot of pride and I don't want that to be on display to the world. So I'll try to process them privately and then I'll push them aside, and I'll be like, there's just not enough time in life to be crushed by feelings of anxiety or lack of confidence, you know. I don't mean by overly confident. Don't be a dick. I mean (laughs) have some faith in yourself and dig deep, and sometimes it's hard and that's what we've gotta do and I'm okay at that. I feel a little down sometimes, but mostly I'm good at pushing them aside and saying, "Okay, that was great, but now we have to move on."

**Emily:** I love it, and I'm just trying to visualize what it would be like to be alone for almost 40 days. Was that the longest you had been alone before?

**Hannah:** Oh, very much so, yeah. But interestingly, and this makes me a bit of a sham artist. People always assume that that was the hardest thing and that gosh, weren't you lonely, and the reality turned out to be that although I felt alone, I never felt lonely. As I say, I'm naturally internally quite an introvert, and I actually relished that time of being alone, and it felt like almost like a big meditation exercise. It felt like this giant beautiful moment in my life to just be alone and think and look at an empty blank canvas of a world, and it was a really special experience and something that I treasure and I sometimes long for. So far from that being the element that was hard, it was actually a bit of a treat.

**Emily:** I love that. That's a great answer, and I think when you're just on a mission, right, so you were like, you had schedules, and you had things to check and things to do and protocols, so it is almost this routine that becomes meditation. It makes sense.

**Hannah:** Yeah. All day every day, you do exactly the same thing. Like you wake up at 6am, and you put the stove on, and you melt some snow, and eat breakfast. Then you pack your gear up, and you put it all in your sled, and you put your skis on and then you ski for 11 hours, and then you go put your camp up. I mean, it's exactly the same, and the only variable is the environment, the weather. And some days it's just still and blue skies and lovely, and then other days it's raging and a blizzard and it's storm and you can't see more than 10 feet ahead. You know, and other days it's just cloudy and gray, and you just carry- if you're successful in that environment, you just carry on just doing exactly the same thing everyday. And it's not that you ignore the environment, but you're just like- it's like saying, "Yeah, alright. There's no need to fuss. I'm just gonna do my thing." Great, okay I can see you're very wound up today. I'm just gonna do my thing if that's okay. Try not to get in the way. (laughs).

**Emily:** What a life lesson. Gosh. I could use some of this I feel like.

**Hannah:** Cause sometimes the world, the outside world feels like that doesn't it?

**Emily:** Yes.

**Hannah:** You know, when you- sometimes you- you know there's bills and demands and prick people and traffic and really do just sometimes have to check out a little bit and go, "You know, I'm just doing my thing through the world, and I'm not gonna be too rattled by anything like that."

**Emily:** Yeah, and I love this. And as you're stepping- I think my sister and I have both realized we sometimes count when we're on long hikes of 14er's, or we have long runs. We have to have something in our head that goes around. Do you have in sort of saying or songs or methods to kind of win this blizzard in front of you just to kind of keep your eyes down or eyes up? I'm just curious.

**Hannah:** I think you mean something useful, and I was gonna come up with something not very useful. You know those eagworms that you get?

**Emily:** Oh, no that's useful.

**Hannah:** Well it can be useful I suppose except the one that I got stuck in my head for probably about four days, and on a couple of occasions. There's a British comedian called Billy Connolly. He's Scottish. Have you ever come across him?

**Emily:** I haven't.

**Hannah:** He's very funny and he's a Scottish man who's got long curly hair and so funny, and he sings some comedy songs and he- I don't know where it was but there was this silly Billy Connolly song that he, for some reason popped into my head, and it's about rubber boots. You know, in England we call rubber boots wellies, you know Wellington boots, and he goes, "If you didn't have your wellies, where would ya be? You'd be in hospital or infirmary. Cause you'd have a dose of the flu or even pleurisy. If ye didn't have your feet in your wellies." And that went round and round my head for days and days, and I'd be skiing along going, "Hmm hmm wellies." I went to base camp one day and they said, "How you doing?" and I said, "Well, I feel a little suicidal and I may kill myself." Luckily they know me and know that and I'm not ever that and it's my sense of humor, so they're like, "Why, what's going on?" I said, "Well, I've been singing this stupid song for four days now and I think I'm gonna kill myself." I said, "So please would you sing me a song, a really catchy irritating annoying song. I need a new ear-worm. You have to find something really bad." And so then she said, "Okay, let me think about it." And the next morning I called in, and she said, "Are you ready?" And I'm like, "Yes." And I don't two if this was in American, Kylie Minogue. Was she big in America? She's a pop star, Australian, from forever ago, and her first ever hit was a song called "I Should Be So Lucky." It was really annoying and the phones operator goes, "I should be so lucky, lucky, lucky." I was like, "That's it. That's it." And then I was stuck with that for days and I wasn't really sure if I was grateful or not, so anyways I'll never forget. In my heart, I was like no not that one.

**Emily:** I love this, because I think so many of us talk about adventure and going on it, and then we can get stuck in our nonsense and we think about too much, and I think that one I would love your advice for myself even, or for people that are listening, like when it comes to getting started and becoming, maybe not the explorer cause you don't like that world, but exploring the world more in a way that we need to experience, as humans we have to experience, and we just don't, because we get stuck in the corporate world, which is the world you were in before, correct?

**Hannah:** Yes, indeed, yeah.

**Emily:** What's your advice for people, I mean is it just go do it? Is it find the right people? Is it find the thing that draws you? That's a big questions, but so many times I feel like the logistics of going on a big exploration like this stops people, kinda paralyzes them like, "Ugh, that's too big for me to try." So I would love to know your thoughts.

**Hannah:** Yeah. I have great friend in London. He's pioneering something that I really not the concept of, cause he's really aware of this obstacle for people to sort of take that first step into doing something. And his theory on it all, which I am a big advocate of, is to set yourself up with a micro adventure. He likes this concept of micro adventures, and he's got a book of them out now. If you looked up Al Humphreys and micro adventures, he's got a book of suggestions and his point being is that you don't have to spend six months planning a thing and then executing a thing at great expense and difficulty. He said, you know, go out this weekend and take your sleeping bag and you know, go find a micro adventure, and he has all these like little ideas to spark you. He's like, we're just not doing that enough. You know, it's okay to embrace what's possible while you're dreaming about what seems impossible, and I love that idea. And you know where I live, I live in the forest up above, in the mountains up above Salt Lake City and it's really easy for me to have a micro adventure. The other day I needed to get something late in the evening from my car, I'd left it in the car, and there was a moose standing between me and the car. I was like, "Oh!"

**Emily:** Hello, moose. (laughs)

**Hannah:** "Oh, okay, hello, I'll just go look at you out the window." But that's an unexpected micro adventure, but yeah just go camping. Some people have never been camping, and camping couldn't be easier really, you know, and it's certainly a thing that if you take baby steps, it's fun to screw up at as well. It's quite nice to screw up things and then you can have a laugh a year later about, "Oh my goodness, do you remember that first time we went camping and knew to put a something in there and then it was all a disaster. We ended up walking home in our socks at 3am." Suddenly you had a micro adventure and you've got an amazing story to tell and make people laugh, so.

**Emily:** I love that. You learn so much about yourself when you do them and I'm curious some of the lessons, they probably change every year and every time you go back, but what were some of the lessons you learned about yourself? Like what are the biggest takeaways from this huge change that you made, which I think it's become such a part of you it probably doesn't feel like a big deal at all, but it is so cool, Hannah. I hope you realize how badass it is that you have taken this life with a twist.

**Hannah:** Thank you. Thank you. I've been trying to teach- I'm quite a self-effacing person and the last year or so, I decided I was going to try and teach myself to take a compliment because I would usually brush it away with some silly comment, and I felt I actually, you know, I have done unusual things and I know that some of them are cool, even that makes me sort of squirm inside to say, so I'll say thank you, that's very nice of you to say that.

**Emily:** Yay.

**Hannah:** Bleh.

**Emily:** It's a good way to practice what you preach.

**Hannah:** I haven't quite perfected it yet. (laughs) It's feel like nausea now. Yeah, maybe that's one of the things I learned. I don't know. Also I was a- I'm a really ordinary girl. I know you will resonate with this cause your story's amazing as well, and your backstory you know, and how you sort of turned yourself around into being a great version of yourself. At school, I was never good at sports. I was always chosen last. I was kinda big and lumpy. I wasn't interested in anything like that, not so complete. And then when I hit University, like I piled on weight and I just sort became heavy and miserably really, and then I've never felt good about myself cause I'm not a conventional person. Again, another London friend who's this beautiful, perfect blonde gorgeous debutant type London type, she said to me the other day, she says, "You're one of the nicest people I know. I don't understand why you're still single," and she was comparing me to another friend of hers. And I felt that look at us. We're not conventional pretty pretty girls. We're a handful. We're headstrong and big, and you'd really have to love our characters to be with us, and we live in such a sort of instant world of you know, relationships and dating and that sort of thing, and it's very hard to develop those longer term affectionate connections that take just a little bit of time. But yeah, I was just saying that you know, identifying after a childhood and a use, a young adulthood, a feeling really inadequate, and not that pretty, and not that good of stuff when it comes to physical things I suppose, to then discover there were things I could apply this body to and excel at in a way that almost no one else in the world could. That was really exciting and you know, I'm still learning that lesson. I still sometimes feel awkward and big and glumpy, usually at sort of parties and things, but it's okay because I know that I'm really good at some things, and I love that fact that athletes can look all different shapes and sizes. Look at a shot-putter next to a sprinter, you know? Guess what, people can be good at something regardless of what shape they are. For women, I think that's a huge thing to be able to learn and embrace. It's not easy though, is it?

**Emily:** Oh it's not, but I love that so much in so many ways, Hannah, because I think it's one thing when you feel like you're kind of just average or going through life and it's like, "Meh, this is it. I'm nothing extraordinary." But even if you're not an athlete, there is something about movement and finding what your body does well at moving and I don't know if we can tap into that capability and that power and that internal empowerment without the use of movement, right? So I think it's so interesting, because it's what you said. So many times people like, "Well I'm not an athlete. I'm not meant to do this X Y Z." But there is always a movement that I think is almost a necessity for you to start to understand the power your body has. We can't trick ourselves into thinking. We have to just do. I love that you said that.

**Hannah:** Yeah, absolutely. I sometimes say that I'm like a shark. If I stop moving, I'll just sink to the bottom and die. (laughs)

**Emily:** I'm kind of the same. If I stop moving, I just want to- just take me away. I'd go crazy.

**Hannah:** I feel like half the girls in the audience and I would be going, "I hate you" how I always need to move. I just wanna highlight that I have an exceptional ability to stay in my pajamas all day and you know, eat a pint of ice cream, so ya know.

**Emily:** I'm totally about to go take a hot bath, so I'm with you on that. (laughs)

**Hannah:** There you go. Bring in all those ladies who struggle with the moving, you know. It is hard work, so it just feels good.

**Emily:** Love it. And then one of the questions I for sure wanted to get to is really, you had this- so you went to the North Pole. It was kinda like, "Well, I now see that as my new challenge," and there was a pretty scary situation that happened while you were there. I think so many times- and this is a long way of asking this, but this is a quite figurative- not figurative, it's literal, of there's a situation that sucks and it's hard- You, there is no option. You have always been like, "I will figure it out." And I'm curious if there's, as you explain this story, I'm gonna just listen in to see if there's tendencies, cause I want everyone to realize that they can figure it out in any situation. There's so many times when people get stuck, and that's more figurative fitness, nutrition, their goals. They just get stuck and kinda paralyzed again, but the concept that you have, it's like- can you explain the story that happened in the North Pole? And you don't have to spend a ton of time cause I know you've said it a thousand times, but I would love it.

**Hannah:** No, no, no. I'll give you the sort of quick version, but I've got this idea after my solo South Pole trip that I wanted to try and be the first woman to go solo to the North Pole, which still hasn't been done. Still out there for some exceptional lady. And so I wanted to go through Canada, which is the harder route and the ice conditions are very difficult there. You're climbing over huge obstacles all day every day, dragging your sled up over them. There's thin ice. There's open water. You have to swim. You have to clamber. It's really, it's like a 24-hour CrossFit for 60 days, you know it's kind of that. And I got 16 days into the journey. I was moving very slowly and having to work very hard to get through this terrain with my load, and I got to this big sort of feature in the ice that I couldn't see an obvious way beyond, and I decided I'd unclip from my sled and climb up on it to have a look for if I could see a route that made sense to me. And there'd been a lot bit of drifting snow and it turned out there was a crack on top of the feature that was sort of snowed over and I didn't identify it until I skied onto it, and I just fell through the ice into this crack in the ice. And I basically dislocated my shoulder, and I bit my tongue really badly, and I twisted my back. I just felt beat up, in a generally beat up horrible way. Of course I had a dysfunctional arm then, and it turned out that this hole I had fallen onto did not have an obvious way of escaping. I was really stuck in this hole in the ice, and I was in there for probably just over an hour. It wasn't one of these like I'm gonna write a book about my, you know, three week epoch where I cut my foot off. Nothing like that. (laughs) It was an hour in a

hole in sea ice that I couldn't, I had to find a way out cause I was thousands of miles from the nearest assistance, and I needed to get myself out. And all of comms equipment and my survival gear was in the sled that I had unclipped from and left on the surface when I'd skied onto this thing to try and find a way. So you know, I began by assessing and going, "It's fine. I'm going to figure this out," and then thinking, "No I'm not," and I just couldn't see a way. I'd try some things and couldn't get out and I had a mini meltdown, for maybe, I don't know, five minutes or something, just sobbed and like terrified. And then that little voice in my head just went, "Great, are you done? Cause we still need to get out of the hole. So probably should just dry you eyes and get back focused on the problem." And in the end, I managed to figure out a solution where I had one of my skis had popped off, so I only had one of my skis in the hole with me and I had my ski poles cause they'd been on my hands, and I put the poles across the hole like a rail, and I pulled some of the snow and the ice down into the hole with me with the ski, like a sort of scraping tool, and I managed to lean the ski up against the side of the hole and use the binder as a single step ladder up. I could just get my shoulder above the lip, then you know, I'll be able to somehow just wiggle myself forward and out. But I kept trying and trying and trying. The ski just kept skittering out from under me and I kept like falling and not making it, and I was trying to get out so that I could- I was sort of pulling up on my good arm on the poles across the hole and trying to slide out on that same shoulder that I was using to pull up, because I wanted to protect the other shoulder, and after a while I sat there and I thought, "I know how to get out of the hole, and it's really gonna hurt. I've got to lean on the hole with my bad shoulder, and I've got to pull up with my good arm for me to move, and I've got to slide out on the hurt shoulder." And I didn't like the idea of doing that at all, but I realized that was the way out. And so I had one of those moments. I don't know if you ever know that there's a difficult thing that's gonna happen, like something's gonna hurt or something's gonna taste bad. You're like, "I've gotta do it. I've gotta give all the effort the first go cause I'll never be able to give that much effort again. I'll always be scared of what it felt like if I don't go full effort the first time, then you know, this isn't gonna happen." So I got myself lined up and I got the bad shoulder against the ice, and I got the rail and I was like, okay it's like ripping a bandaid off. I was just like, "Okay on the count of three. No four." I've got to go. (laughs) I just gave it everything and shot myself up and out of the hole, slid out onto the arm and screamed (laughs) partly with pain and partly with utter relief of being out of the hole, but yeah. So that happened.

**Emily:** Hannah, you are incredible. I know you don't want more compliments, but I just- this story stuck with me for years. I just- you have been so inspiring as far as hearing that and knowing that anybody if they choose to do so can put themselves in the most incredible, sometimes terrifying situations, and start a new life. That's really what you did. You started a new life, and I just love that.

**Hannah:** Totally. Yeah, that moment I suppose so. That's a lovely way to put it. Yeah. We talk about risk a lot in my industry. You know, running camping, operations in Antarctica, and we- I think that risk is a really interesting topic to me, how we analyze it, how we normalize it quite a lot in my industry. The type of people that I work with, we're constantly asking each other and ourselves, "Are we normalizing risk here because we're slightly freaky and we think that you know, landing a helicopter on cliff top if normal, you know whatever the mission is." And we're like, "Wait a minute. Are we being us here or is this actually okay?" But one of the other things I always talk about is sometimes there's a scenario or an issue where you don't quite know what the solution is, and I think you can apply this to anything in life, and you can sort of freeze. You can be sort of frozen and stagnating in a moment that you don't know what the solution is, and I always say if that sort of situation comes up, change something. Just change anything. It doesn't really matter, because the moment you change something in a situation, you change your perspective on it. You suddenly see it from a different angle, and usually it'll either get better or worse, and if it gets worse, you're like, "Oh, not that. That was the wrong thing. Well, let's go the other way, and you know, see if that's right." I think you can apply that in more complex terms to anything whether it's stagnating in a career, or stagnating in a relationship, or a physical

challenge, like training in your industry. I'm sure you know what I mean from your industry. If you're hitting a training plateau and you're not really getting anywhere, change something. You know, it'll either get better or it'll get worse, but you know which way is likely-

**Emily:** Which direction.

**Hannah:** Right, yeah exactly. So just change your perspective all the time. Yeah, I like that. I use that all the time to achieve the things that I'm trying to get done.

**Emily:** This has been amazing. I appreciate so much of your time. Seriously, basically on the end of the world in Punta Arenas (laughs) waiting on a flight to Antarctica. This is so cool. Where can people see your journey and see the penguins and where can they find you?

**Hannah:** Not very easily. (laughs) I'm gonna give myself a sneaky little plug, because actually if people are interested in polar travels and expeditions, it's something that for some years now, some years ago I identified as this sort of well of unknown and this intimidating, like how would you ever do something like that? So in response to that requirement and that interest, I actually started a company called Polar Expedition Training and our entire mission is to help anyone whose got any dream of winter travel, even in just a modest way or a full on come and join us for various skills and also want to undertake expeditions of this kind and get that kind of experience and skillset. So we love everyone and anyone. I've trained a 73-year-old lady who's gonna ski to the last degree of the South Pole this year. I've trained a 15-year-old boy who became the youngest person to ski coast to South Pole. You know, we take everyone and we have real faith in every human animal to be able to achieve something extraordinary.

**Emily:** I love that, and where do they- is it a website that they can go to?

**Hannah:** Indeed. [PolarExpeditionTraining.com](http://PolarExpeditionTraining.com)

**Emily:** Boom. I love it. Hannah, thank you so much for being on Meathead Hippie.

**Hannah:** Oh, thank you.

**Emily:** Of course I always ask what the spirit animal is, but I think we decided it's penguin probably in this moment.

**Hannah:** Penguin. Must be penguin.

**Emily:** Well safe travels and can't wait to dig in a little bit more about what you're doing and keep posting- when you come back, when you post, we'll see how your trip was when you're back.

**Hannah:** Yeah, fantastic. Thank you so much, Emily. Lovely talking to you.

**Emily:** You as well. Bye.