

Paleo Solution - 310

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Robb Wolf: Hi folks. Robb wolf here, another edition of the PaleoSolution podcast. Super excited for today's guest. We tend to talk a lot about you know, diabetes, autoimmunity, trying to stave off the Grim Reaper but today Brad Davidson who is one of the world's leading experts in elite performance enhancement is with us. He has a new book The Stark Naked 21-Day Metabolic Reset. Brad, how are you doing man?

Brad Davidson: I'm doing so good. So excited to be here Robb. Thank you so much for having me.

Robb Wolf: Oh stoked to have on here. I have been following your work for a long time and really enjoy it. We were talking briefly before we started recording that you know, I tend to be ear lobe deep in cancer auto immunity all that type of stuff and it's kind of nice to dabble one's toe into elite performance and kind of leave the pending doom and death on the wayside. So I'm really excited to talk with you today and I'm going to be picking your brain a little bit trying to figure out how to improve my old dude jujitsu performance a little bit as well because I've always got to drag it back around to me.

But it's done thing I learned from Dan John. He's like always if you talk to someone figure out a way to make the topic germane to you so selfishly I'm going to do that. But Brad, I get a ton of questions from folks. You know, once you get outside of health related stuff, they're like what do I do with my life? Do I open a gym? Do I become a doctor, do I do this, do I do that? Tell folks about your background and kind of how you've gotten on to the passage you're working with now.

Brad Davidson: Yes. So my background, I started off as a personal trainer. I think so many people probably entered this arena that way. Gosh when I was 31, 32, I was kind of training a couple of pro athletes. I'm thinking gosh I could still hang with these guys. So I got crazy and decided I wanted to try to make an Olympic team. So I went and tried out for the US boxing team at 31, 32 years old. I definitely was at the very low bottom of the totem pole but I made it and I was able to train with these guys. By training with these guys, I must be honest here, I had no shot at Olympic spot but I was good enough to kind of be there and be a break man for the new drivers trying to figure it out and crash and burn a lot.

Robb Wolf: You were canon fodder basically okay. You could get it going and then you're cannon of fodder.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. At 40 years old, I'm comfortable saying that was my role. My nickname was gramps. I mean I was the old guy of the bunch. But it was super fun to be there and all of a sudden I'm training at this international level of some. I mean gosh the years they were there they won a gold medal.

I got to see this level of performance and training and it was different than what I had been taught. When I decided to retire after I had my little girl, it gave me a whole different perception on performance and what athletes need and how much of the information that's out there is honestly asked backwards.

You know, I fell apart from it right? I just totally overdid it. I trained twice a day six days a week. I ate perfect. So all these things to myself that I thought were right and it actually destroyed me. So it was kind of a bummer but at the same time because I figured it out what a high level athlete really need, what anybody with extreme amounts of stress needs, and then you know, okay if you've broken down and fallen apart and destroyed yourself, how do you reemerge and come back from that. It led me to the small little world of extreme high achiever. So now I get to work with professional athletes that need to come back I get to work with celebrities that need to come back. I get to work with the SWAT teams and a few people in special forces here and there just people that have been through the thick of it that are beat up and need comebacks.

It's just led me to this really cool little niche of hey you're not sick so your doctor can't help you but you're definitely not feeling great so let's go and fix what's broken. And then optimize the hell out of you and it's led to this awesome little arena for me. It's very small but it's very lucrative and it's very exciting on a day. I never know who's going to call me for help. It's kind of fun.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. That's awesome.

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Brad what are the common misconceptions for folks? So like I've tended to run more of a generalized gym body composition, reducing inflammation, teaching people the difference between a mouth and a vacuum cleaner. Like where is the ball being dropped between that scene

and then needs of an elite level athlete or say like a spec ops person or something?

Brad Davidson:

Yeah. Everybody forgets the importance of recovery. It's this world where they think that I just got to out train the person next to me and that is not the differentiation. It's the guy or the woman that can recover better than the next that actually I have found becomes the greatest performers. Because everybody's going into competition tired, fatigued, dragging ass and nobody is teaching them how to optimize into that.

So I can send them the athlete super recovered and the athlete they're going up against is dragging fanny because they're super over trained. Still even if I have a lesser athlete they're going to win. So that's one big misconception.

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A second big misconception is how to use nutrition. I actually learned this from you in 2012. We had a conversation. I doubt you remember it. But it was revolutionary for me because at the time I was avoiding carbs like the plague and feeling horrible and I asked you like what am I doing wrong and you said geez, people like you that train at your level, they can have the 600 grams of carbs a day in my program. I was like I thought you said carbs were the devil and you're like yeah for sick people but not for high achievers you idiot. Start eating something with carbs and Robb it changed my whole world. Like my hormone profile came back. My sex drive came back. I started sleeping again. Like right there is an awesome misperception is everybody believes carbs are the devil and for a lot of people they are but for this niche group that I have they're a game changer.

When done right, they use it the right way and I learned that from you. I mean so -

Robb Wolf:

Well you know, the funny thing god do I even say this out loud? It's going to end up on some durian writer or video or something somewhere but it's like as many people as I might have helped save their lives on the sick side, I might have killed as many athletes on the other side. Because you know you tried to get these simple takeaways and it's like okay we want to – you know, we start with kind of the lowest carb paleo diet and kind of go from there.

For so many of these people, the desk jockeys, you know, folks that are on shift work and stuff like that, like this is an amazing fix. And then someone who's doing double days and really burning the candle at both

ends you know, we might as well just douse them in gasoline and set them on fire doing that. Like it's terrible.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I was one of those people.

Robb Wolf: Oh man, man. Well I'm glad that you reached to me and I'm glad that I actually had a decent answer at that time so.

Brad Davidson: [Laughs] It was life changing for myself and for my athletes. You know, so my athletes one of the reasons I think they love coming to me so much is that I don't make them sacrifice. I use carbs accordingly but to their training loads and their body composition and their needs. Gosh somebody comes in and they have you know, a fasting glucose of 85, a low A1c levels and they're stressed out to the max. I'm going to blow them on carbs to keep them recovering.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. So those are probably the biggest common ones is the misunderstanding of recovery and the misuse of nutrition because they're high performing people. Treating themselves like they're sick and expecting to have --

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: -- incredible outcomes. I think those are probably the two biggest things that I see over and over and over with the battles that are trying to take care of themselves.

Robb Wolf: That's a fantastic point. That's a really great point. What -- how are you helping folks on this recovery side? Like to the degree that I've dabbled with high achievers like I've done some work with some MMA athletes, what I discovered pretty quickly was like my main job was to act as a governor on these people. Like they didn't need to be motivated. They didn't need anybody in their facial anatomy.

Like somebody that wants to get in a cage and slug people and get slugged, they don't need motivation. They need somebody who's actually kind of like hey man, give me your wallet because you're so fucking impulsive you're going to go spend all of your money in like one day. So I played more the role of baby sitter and governor on this stuff. There was some decent per iodized strength training and we would do some targeted conditioning based off of what we saw that their needs might be but mainly it was just like trying to make sure that when the showed up

on game day they weren't burned out and broken and had orthopedic issues and stuff.

Like how are you dealing with helping people understand that recovery part?

Brad Davidson: Yeah that's a great point. You know, it's funny I always say look I'm people's brakes, not their gas pedals. If you need a gas pedal you go to go somewhere else. I want to be the governor as you put it. I want to control you. if I tell you to walk out of the gym and go get a massage, you're going to walk out the gym and go get a massage, you got to be okay with that. That's the role that I love to play.

So we're just constantly, we're pushing them as hard as we can to get great results but there are things at the top that are most important. One orthopedic issues. You hurt one of these people, you're out of a job. I don't care how great your training is. If they show up to competition hurt you're not very good. We are constantly managing the orthopedic side. We're making sure they sleep and then we're making sure that we're constantly watching their body composition, their weight, their HRV status to make sure that we are not driving these performers in to the tank. We always are just constantly making sure that come game day or performance day or whatever it is for them that they need to be – I mean gosh you could even be a mom who is just exhausted and wants to be more energized for her kids.

It is literally like just making sure that we manage energy first. That if foremost important for us, more important than body composition or strength loads. It's energy. You got to show up. You want that beast just trying to get out of the cage on performance day.

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So that's what we're managing most if I was to be honest with you.

Robb Wolf: No, that makes perfect sense. I'm part of a great jujitsu school and man I beg, plead, cajole with these guys. Like they're getting ready for Worlds, del mundials or whatever, and I'm like we need probably seven to 14 days out from competition world. The hard training tapers off and we're doing some slow rolling and nobody gets hurt. I swear they train harder and harder heading up to the point of competition.

Like their idea of a taper is like the day of traveling that's involving a red eye from the west coast to the east coast. They're like I'll sleep on the plane, I'll be totally good. I'm like oh my god, you know, and orthopedic

issues and like some clear like HBTA access dysregulation. You're just like okay man you go be achieved.

So how are you integrating HRV with this stuff? Like I've been following that a lot. Like I know that there's a lot of art to that. You know, talk to folks a little bit how you're using that both from the management of the training volume itself but also may be looking at dietary and other lifestyle factors and how that pops on HRV?

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I am still new to this as well. I mean Joel Jameson is probably my biggest mentor. The guy who first brought me to the attention of it so I played a lot with his stuff and then I've also played a lot with oh my gosh, what's the companies at the forefront of it? I've been using their stuff a lot lately, Omega Weight.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: So what I've seen is it's really interesting. So you know, how it goes sympathetic parasympathetic shifts. So when someone starts shifting sympathetic they're kind of in a high stress state. They're in sympathetic overload. You know I found that I can use carbohydrates to non electric carbohydrate loading to help calm the central nervous system down a little bit. I use a lot of adrenal adaptogens to calm them down, you know, vitamin C, magnesium, things like that.

Well it's interesting is when I see somebody do a parasympathetic shift where their body just kind of shuts down and just forces recover. The best thing I've learned from Joel Jameson that day is I will give the athlete a glass of red wine and I'll have them go jump either in the ocean or take a cold dip somewhere and then call it a night. I have found this over and over with my cross fit competitors to be super powerful. It like resets their whole system the next day they're up and rolling. Joel never told me why that works so well. But my god a glass of red wine, a cold dip, go to bed and that has been huge for my people.

Robb Wolf: Dude, if you did an eight ball on top of that it seems like --

Brad Davidson: I know.

Robb Wolf: - it could be even better. [laughs]

Brad Davidson: [Laughs] I know exactly rolling because it --

Robb Wolf: Huh, that's interesting.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I haven't been able to figure that out. This HRV stuff is still super confusing because I don't know. Everybody is kind of using it in different ways but I'm just trying to adjust you know, like I'll definitely drop training volume when somebody goes parasympathetic so I'll cut volume back and not intensity. I have a Charles Poliquin background from a strength training standpoint so I've always liked his strategies in those realms of aiding and recovery and super compensating by dropping volume not intensity.

So let's say I have an athlete doing sets of eight on exercises and all of a sudden they have that parasympathetic dump where just their body just shuts down. I'll drop them back to four sets. I'll cut their volume 50%, 60%. They tend to rebound really well that way.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: My goal is just never to drive them too far into the tank.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Brad Davidson: So and with gosh like cross fit world it all depends on the cross fit coach I'm working with. Some of them are driving over training their athletes three times a month and other great coaches maybe once in a while cycle they put them in an over training state. It's kind of nice.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. Right. How have you –you know, for the cross fit athlete are you looking at that as kind of a yearlong progression and they may be looking at skill deficiency, strength deficiencies and kind of building that up over time and then peaking? Like how are you slicing and dicing like a yearlong cross fit approach?

Brad Davidson: You know, I don't actually work from a gym standpoint with a cross fit athlete. I just do all the nutrition labs, some notation.

Robb Wolf: I got you.

Brad Davidson: Sleep, lifestyle strategies. My athletes are NFL, major league baseball, you know, the guys making a lot of money.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: They're the ones who can really afford that high level of a service. So that's why I kind of stick with them from the training component

standpoint. The PGA I got a great golfer in the PGA that's just crushing the ball now from the stuff but it's always a year round cycle. I always give them one month a year off just to go be people and get out of a gym and not focus and everything. That where I came up with my book is every year I send these athletes out for a month with no rules just have a good time. They're always the ones that's got the greatest results in the shortest period of going back into the new season even better than they were the season before.

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So they're really good about managing and being okay with taking time off where the problem with cross fit is they get knocked out of regionals and the next day they're preparing for the next year.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: It's so hard to get them to take down time, it's frustrating.

Robb Wolf: I mean this is just old eastern bloc periodization type stuff. I mean when they finished competition cycle like they relaxed, they traveled. If they did some activity like if they were an Olympic lifter, they went and played volleyball and stuff like that. They really you know, have a lot of downtime. I think it's fascinating like Americans I think are willing to work harder than just about everybody on the planet but it's to their detriment oftentimes. It's kind of like they need more pot and valium than cocaine and stimulants you know.

Brad Davidson: [Laughs] Totally. Yes and it's probably the biggest frustrating component I deal with is this the American obsession without working everybody. At a certain level that's not the difference maker. At a certain level, everybody is just as good as each other. Pollack always used to say at the level it's whoever the strongest athlete is the winner.

I see that a lot because the strongest athlete is usually the most recovered. He's the least over trained. That's why he's the strongest. So it makes a lot of sense in my opinion on those ideas.

Robb Wolf: Nice, nice.

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Brad, so you work with a lot of folks that are on pretty short time indexed activities, NFL, baseball. What do you for folks and this is where I start steering things around towards my camp. What do you for folks in this kind of mixed glycolytic work? I mean clearly cross fit is in that camp

more like a Brazilian jujitsu MMA. You know, how are you balancing the development of maximum power generation with also building enough metabolic engine to keep the person able to do 10 five-minute rounds of rolling?

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I think for general population, you know, people like us that don't – with the athlete it's fairly easy. There's a specific strength requirements for their sports that you just need to get them really good at. Well once you roll outside of that sport and you're in general life, you go to be really good at everything. So I think we've spent a lot of time in general population or the weekend Warriors like I am just building that metabolic fire. SO you have the ability just to go, the capacity to do whatever you want as long as you want. I think capacity has to be there first personally and then I like to build power from there.

There's no point in being super powerful and having no capacity because then you're going to lose every time.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: It's not fun to roll when you run out – when you're the first one to run out of gas every time.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: So we'll just work in the cycles. You know, I won't lie. We use a lot of Russian conjugate style of systems. I learned from a guy named Ben Prentiss. He's great for hockey players and the hockey players are kind of that person where it's just this long lactic acid cycles on the ice, short break, do it again. I kind of adopted his programming style. It's a conjugate style of a method where he'll do earn in a week more strength work, later in the week more it's either repetition work or dynamic work or speed work. I just kind of fluctuate that around throughout the year.

We'll start people off with body comp right out of the gate. I want to get people as lean as possible early on. So we'll do a lot of lactic acid work early on and then we'll move them into repetition to give them some muscle mass. Then we'll move them into some strength stuff and then some dynamic speed stuff just to try to make them a complete athlete if we can.

Robb Wolf: Nice. What type of modalities are you using to build that kind of metabolic furnace? You do it with like some intervals on the Air Dyne, rower, strong man stuff? Like how are you building that metabolic edge?

Brad Davidson: Yeah. So we have all of that stuff. So we'll definitely do- I'm a huge fan like we have I think four AirDyne bikes. I love AirDyne work. Oh Lord almighty that is hard.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: So we do a lot of that. We have a Jacobs ladder. We have all kinds of different row machines. We even have which really surprised me that it was hard is the standup cross country skiing one. I'm like oh this looks super easy and two minutes into it, I was gassed. So I like to do a lot of that early on and then I love modified strong man training to help teach the body how to buffer lactic acid system. That is my true forte and what I really like to use to develop that capacity that athletes need.

Robb Wolf: Nice. What type of event type of stuff are you doing with that?

Brad Davidson: Oh gosh, we have everything. We have tire flips to farmer walks to sled drags to the prowler pushes, sledge hammer swings.

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I mean we have huge medicine balls. We can do medicine ball throws. You name it, we can pretty much come up with it now. We even have a bear crawl. We've kind of broken it down and put it away because it takes so much room. That's probably one of the nastiest machines I've seen in a long time is the bear crawl.

Robb Wolf: What the heck is that? Like is it like a belted squat machine and then you're crawling resistance or?

Brad Davidson: It's actually this. It's on four sleds and you get on your hands and knees and there's like a pad that you put your shoulders against. You weight it on the outsides. There's spots for weights and you literally just bear crawl against the resistance of this machine. So it basically will be like a prowler that's built for bear crawl.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Okay.

Brad Davidson: Whoa.

Robb Wolf: That does horrible. Okay.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. My NFL line men love it but hate it.

Robb Wolf: I bet. So let me divert here just a little bit. You mentioned that you had a really huge performance bump from reintroducing appropriate levels of carbs. There's still a decent amount of controversy out in the interwebs about like ketogenic adapted athletes for longer time indexed activity. Are you playing with that at all with folks? Is there anybody that you're saying okay you're an ultra-marathoner, you're trying to do multiple iron man triathlons within a block of time. Are you using a nutritional ketosis approach with anybody?

Brad Davidson: You know, I find it fascinating that I've read a lot. Is it Ben Greenfield or something like that?

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I've read a lot of his stuff and listened to a lot of his stuff. It's fascinating. I don't work with the ultra-endurance athletes. It's never been my- I'm a speed guy. Speed power guy so I've never done much work with them. I find it not to work at all with my population.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: One of my football players got convinced to do it and holy moly after three months of going straight ketogenic his serotonin receptors in the brain shut down and it was ugly. So I've been super scared to play with it with my people. But I've read a lot about it. it's super fascinating. So I just kind of do some partial ketogenic. So I'll go most of the day in a ketogenic state thrive and then throw some carbs in later in the day type of a thing.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. That's been about the best hack I've had with that is just it's cyclic low carb but cycles typically on a 24-hour basis not even like multi-day or multi-week kind of story.

Brad Davidson: Yes.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Yeah.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. That's what I've found as well with my people is every day there's got to be a little carb loading and then you know after a certain period of time and performance starts to dip we'll go a big carb load kind of a feast mode for like three hours.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: It has worked really well to keep. What 'I've found is if I go too low carb in my people for too long their hormone profiles just start to drop. They get irritable, they have no sex drive, not fun people to be around. So that's --

Robb Wolf: It's like a party. That sounds absolutely amazing. [laughs]

Brad Davidson: I know. It's great. [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: It's interesting and I tell you there are some people on in the interwebs that it's somewhat frustrating for me because I'm a huge advocate of ketogenic diets for different situations, TBI, epilepsy, certain types of cancer. I think there's huge potential there but it's a tool and I don't know if carpenters bitch and complain about screw drivers versus wrenches versus you know, hammers and nails. But holy smokes the contention that pops up around use of carbs versus fat is a primary fuel and it just is like a religious war.

It's just fascinating to me that I have definitely seen some people do well seemingly pretty well when they're doing very long time indexed activities with a more ketogenic approach maybe with some targeted carbs. I've seen some power athletes, legit power athletes who okay on something like a metabolic diet like a cyclic low carb diet.

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: And then in that glycolytic realm, MMA, boxing, jujitsu, cross fit it's like you know, the hollo- if we were graphing this, it would be a giant hollowed out chunk of the graph where it's like nobody exists there you know.

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: you know, so.

Brad Davidson: You know, what's funny is I met a lot of the top level athletes have forced that. Like they would avoid carbs like the plague. It's so interesting when I get their labs back, the common thing is they're always prediabetic and basically almost hypothyroid.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: I'm like you're prediabetic. I'm like freak I haven't had a carb in five years. I'm like well maybe you should start. [laughs]

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Brad Davidson: It's not working for you. I mean that style of training I personally think requires a lot more carbs than they're playing with.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: So from my experience I know that there are people out there that we have good results doing other things. But from an easy to manage, easy to apply standpoint, I have found using carbs in those states to be safest and the most effective .

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Robb Wolf: Right, right. Brad, how much emphasis are you putting on food quality, avoiding potential immunogenic foods? Like are you playing around with gluten avoidance or anything like that? Like how far down that rabbit hole do you go?

Brad Davidson: yeah. I think that's a huge one. I find it to be one of the top three most common road blocks we deal with. So every client that comes into our facility gets food sensitivity, food allergy testing done. It's just easier to knock it out first thing than it is to move on. Now the labs that we run, you know, I'm an MRT guy. I like it. I've had a lot of success with my people doing it. it's easy for me as I'm trying to get my hands on the test.

My medical side, they like to use the meridian valley IGG testing. So you know, that's what we are using. I've just found it to be a huge thing and if I can get people to remove the right foods that are causing problems from their nutrition plan. we win quick.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Brad Davidson: So big fan of that. I think it is one of the top three most important things especially if you're a high performer trying to get that little extra edge. You need every bit of energy you can find.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. You know, recovery capacity as you've already alluded is a finite resource. So if the individual has some sort of immunogenic response, that's going to cause stress. It's going to require some recovery and I don't know if that's taken one person off the top end or five person or you know, I have no idea what it is. But if we can reallocate that to straight up recovery from cognitive activity, physical activity and not dealing with gut inflammation then that seems like a win. It's not a big ask when we can shift to like white potatoes, white rice, maybe use some

targeted like large high molecular weight carbohydrate beverages at appropriate times that are not immunogenic and the person seems to tolerate well.

Brad Davidson: For sure and I know people it's funny. I think one of the biggest reasons people have these issues is they overeat the same foods. Because every time I run a test I'm like what the hell am I supposed to eat? Like there's ten foods on there you can't have. Like there's a hundred --

Robb Wolf: The rest of the world, yeah, yeah.

Brad Davidson: Give me a break. Like get off those ten foods and within a matter of a week the energy supply and the brain clarity and the performance enhancement, the better sleep it's just it's so worth that I think it's one of the most valuable things people can do for themselves is to remove that stuff and just get away from it. It doesn't do anything good for you except maybe tickle your dopamine receptors in your brain or whatever make you feel good for the moment.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: But --

Robb Wolf: Right. I think you're right back into it later. Yeah, yeah.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I grew up a massive asthmatic, four inhalers a day, trying to be an athlete my whole life up until the age of 30. I grew up on a dairy farm in Oregon so I grew up thinking cow's milk was the greatest gift to every person on the face of the earth. I get my food sensitivity testing back, and my biggest sensitivity is cow's milk.

Robb Wolf: Oh wow.

Brad Davidson: Stopped drinking the cow's milk and all of a sudden I don't have to suck on my inhalers anymore. I'm like are you kidding me? I called my doctor and when I saw him, I'm like hey watch I can give myself an asthma attack. I have a glass of milk and bang and he's like oh that was just a spontaneous thing. That doesn't mean anything. I was like oh my gosh, [laughs]

Robb Wolf: Where does that come from? Like if you drop a hammer on your foot, and you're like is there a randomized control trial for this? He's like no, it's like well doesn't exist then and it's like that's ridiculous but then saying, hey doc I've introduced and removed dairy 20 times and each

time I introduced it I get a rash and my wife has to do a tracheotomy on me and he's like oh that's totally circumstantial evidence. I don't buy it. You know?

Brad Davidson: Yeah. we all need milk. It's a vital substance for us. It's like no, it's not. [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Are you able to tolerate like sheep or goat dairy at all? Do you do any of that?

Brad Davidson: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I can do I've never tried sheep but I can do goat. I'm not the biggest fan of it but I can do it.

Robb Wolf: Right. It's pretty goaty man. It's a different gig, yeah, yeah.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I'll slug some goat kefir every couple of months for about a month just for the probiotic aspect of it but it's not my go-to.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Right.

Brad Davidson: I'm fine with water. [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: I don't blame you there, yeah, yeah. That's awesome. So Brad, what lit a fire under you to write the 21-day Metabolic Reset? You alluded to that a little bit like you maybe had an insight from looking at the athletes that you work with who take some time off and kind of kicked their heels up and whatnot, and then you got them back in and did some lactate specific conditioning. Started building that metabolic engine. Like what went into kind of formulating this plan?

Brad Davidson: Well so the 21-day reset is all about just fixing what's broken and where this came from was when I decided to hang it up, from bobsledding. Had my little girl and then all of a sudden 90 miles an hour in tin cans is really stupid. I came off and I said the first week off and we all experience this right.

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We take a week off or we go on vacation and we get sick. I got super sick that first week and then the second week I couldn't get out of bed. I was irritable, I couldn't function. I was – something is not right. My wife is like you need to go see the doctor. I'm like I'm fine. I'll figure this out. she's

like no, go look in the mirror. You need to go see the doctor. I look in the mirror and there's two big patches of hair missing off my face.

I go see my doctor and at the time you know, I was at the peak of my physiology. I was probably 207 to 210, right around 8% body fat. I was monster for me. I mean right now I sit at 180 pounds is where I normally sit. I walk and I see my doctor and he's like what look at you. I didn't see you in the ten months that I put on the 50 pounds legally and that's probably one of the reasons I destroyed myself.

But he looks at me. He's like why are you here? you're like the epitome of health. I'm like I know I look good on the outside but something is really wrong on the inside. He runs my labs and he calls me a couple of days later and his response was what the hell did you do to yourself? I'm like what do you mean? He's like well you're prediabetic, you have hypothyroidism, you get the testosterone level of an 85 -year-old sick man and those patches of hair missing off your face are autoimmune disease. he's like you are destroyed. I said so what do I do? How do I fix it? This is where my world really shifted.

I really came to realize the importance of recovery. It's like I don't know. Normally I'd tell somebody in your position, you need to eat more or eat better and exercise more. You do both to the extreme. I don't know what you do and I walked like a handful of script of all these different hormones. I was like oh my gosh, I'm 33 and I'm destroyed. I did this to myself. oh my god, I'm doing this to my clients why did I get here? You know, his thing was oh it's just poor genetics. It's andropause. You know, just you got a raw deal. [laughs]

I'm like I don't buy that. so then over the years my study and stuff I just came to found that I've done it to myself and the reality was that I didn't take any breaks during this time period. I just crushed myself every freaking day. Do you remember Charles Poloquin's Super Accumulation Phase? Do you ever read that?

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. yeah.

Brad Davidson: Yeah well I did that five times in ten months.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]

Brad Davidson: Yeah that's -

Robb Wolf: That's like a once every five years thing that you pulled out that you dust off. You like say a prayer --

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: --before you jump into it and you hope you survive it.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. And you know, when you read it's like okay you'll get to a point where your weight will start to go down and that's when you're training hard enough. Well I never got to that point. I mean my weights every time has kept stronger and stronger and stronger but I totally fried my physiology.

So based on what this book is was the long journey of how I rebuilt myself. So I found it in simple things like this managing stress, like number one was grasping perception of stress right?

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: I think that we can be very resilient to stress. It's all how you perceive it and a lot of the situation. So I had to learn how to perceive stress better. I had to you know, drink enough water and sleep enough and all these things that I was cheating thinking I was being a high performer. So based on the book is it's a 21-day plan on how to reset a metabolism of it's off, if you have no energy, no sex drive, and you can't make any progress in the gym, if you're irritable all these signs are telling your metabolism is beat up. The answer is not to go jump in the gym and destroy yourself more. the answer is fix what's broken, get your energy back and your sleep back, get your sex drive back and then move into the optimization phase.

I mean that's all the 21-Day Reset is is the fastest way I figured out how to do that from everybody I've learned over the last six years, all natural, no supplementation requirements, things like that are kind of the challenge it was given to me as I built this thing. it's been awesome how great it works for people and I have tested on a good 1500 people and the high performance business world all the way to cross fit to my proathletes. Now they all love me to do it the first three weeks out of season. So it's a pretty cool system, pretty excited about it.

Robb Wolf: The book is phenomenal. Like I get a lot of books. I absolutely loved it and I actually read the whole thing which I don't have a ton of time kicking around and so usually I'll be a little bit selective on the you know,

everybody has got good shit and so I'm always trying to dig out good nuggets.

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: But I was leafing through the you know, kind of the introduction prologue part. I'm like oh this is looking interesting. I have been like this before and it just sucked me in. I really dig the way that you handle all that stuff. So do you see much variability between how men versus women are going to flow down this pathway?

Like I got burned at the stake because I had Doc Parsley on ages ago and I was like you know, we mainly talk about, I've mainly talked about male hormones because that's what I understand. I don't actually understand the female endocrine system because it's much more complex and these people like hung me out to dry. They're like well why don't you spend more time on it? I'm like because I'm not smart enough to get it. You guys are so complex. I'm just too stupid to get it you know.

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

[0:35:00]

Robb Wolf: But you know, there are definitely some considerations male versus female. Do you see much bifurcation with that on gender?

Brad Davidson: It works really well for both. I mean obviously guys will lose more weight in the first 21 days. So we just retain and bloat more than women do. But what's interesting with the women is they tend to get a better hormonal response because part of the book is just loving on the liver. I can't...

When I first started working with women and their hormones I was always trying to manage estrogen and progesterone. Well what I found was that the stress path, like once you're too stressed out and it just causes progesterone to just tank.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Brad Davidson: So it doesn't matter you go in and try to detoxify estrogens and all of that if you're super stressed out, you're just driving the progesterone on the ground. You're always going to lose. And then on top of that most women have these congestive livers from all the lotions and creams and shampoos they're putting on their bodies before they leave the house. So what I found is in the book is I get to talk about it because I get them just to start loving on their liver and decreasing their stress loads and oh my gosh like they start to get the responses they want in regards to the

hormones or to balance out a little bit sex drive comes back. It's my favorite thing when a woman texts me or sends me an email like hey thank you so much for making me want to have sex with my spouse again. It's like yes. [laughs] The poor dude. [laughs]

Robb Wolf: Yeah, the poor couple yeah. That's not -

Brad Davidson: Yeah. That's super hard on the relationship and so it works really well. I've had a lot of women. I can't claim that the book can do this but have just said hey, what did you do? My hot flashes have gone away and all this stuff. It's like we just managed your stress better. We took the load off your body and we loved on your liver a little bit. And you know, that is a super powerful place to start. You don't have to get all super fancy right out of the gate. Just fix the deep stuff first and then start to manage that stuff if you want.

Robb Wolf: Awesome.

Brad Davidson: But yeah. But I agree with you. The women hormones I've studied that a lot over the years and I've had some success with it but if you're not going to go in and fix the stress component and love on the liver first, it just doesn't matter what you do in my opinion.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. I just listened to a great podcast with Christopher Kelly over at Nourish, Balance, Thrive and I can't remember the name of the scientist he had on but he's developed the Dutch urine screening.

Brad Davidson: Oh.

Robb Wolf: It was fascinating because you know we look at like serum cortisol and hormone levels and then saliva testing and whatnot and what the Dutch testing does is it looks at all the downstream metabolites of these hormones.

Brad Davidson: Oh my gosh, yeah.

Robb Wolf: And so --

Brad Davidson: that guy is married to one of my best friend's sisters.

Robb Wolf: Oh, oh. Okay. Okay.

Brad Davidson: His lab is in my hometown in McMinnville and I'm blanking on his name right now.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. I cannot for the – but I was listening to this. I'm like oh this totally clarifies this stuff. Because you know, he would – he talked about how some people maybe had seemingly low cortisol levels or like a flipped circadian rhythm. But if you didn't look at the downstream metabolites you don't know if they have a production issue or an over metabolism issue. You know, like if you're inflamed the your metabolizing this stuff.

So to your point and unless I'm getting this totally wrong in which case just squash me and we'll move on. But you know, the big inputs of stress, sleep, food, appropriate training volume and whatnot those are the things that are going to influence kind of the macro level. They have to be addressed. You can't just get in and target dose a particular hormone in many cases because you don't really know unless you've done really a full systems analysis on this. Are they low or are they just burning through it too quick?

So if they're burning through it too quick then you're just augmenting this process that's already gone wrong and you're not actually addressing the underlying issue which is maybe you know, stress or thyroid dysregulation or something like that. But the Dutch testing was something that's relatively new to me and I think it's just going to revolutionize this functional medicine scene.

Brad Davidson: So I think it's called like is it precision? His last name is Newman I believe.

Robb Wolf: That sounds right. That's a --

Brad Davidson: Yeah, Precision Analytical I think is the name of the company.

Robb Wolf: We're both digging around on the internet now Joe Rogan style.

Brad Davidson: It is. He's fascinating. I used his labs for a number of years and fascinating. Like I've kind of been since he started on this. It is awesome.

Robb Wolf: Let's see here. I've almost got this pulled up. Joe Rogan has like four guys that pull this up while he's doing the interview. I have no such infrastructure here. it's just my spanky self. Mark Newman.

Brad Davidson: Mark Newman. Thank you.

Robb Wolf: Mark Newman. Yeah. Yeah.

Brad Davidson: That guy is a brilliant, brilliant man and his labs are brilliant. I have done them on myself, I did it with all clients. People should check him out because it is super cutting edge cool stuff.

[0:40:10]

Robb Wolf: Yeah. I wish I could have gotten in to like a funding round for this stuff because I think that they're going to absolutely blow doors on this. So you know, as part of your strategies for helping people to mitigate stress, what are you recommending for them? I know part of this is like some reframing like Andrew Bernstein has a great book, The Myth of Stress which was great for me. But are you recommending any apps or any other things to help with kind of guided meditation or anything like that?

Brad Davidson: I try to keep it really simple to start. It's in the book. I just use a couple of apps there just really basic like colon.com and get some head space. Just ten minute short guided meditations that are just more or less just basically bring down the resting heart rate and calm the body down. Bring down blood pressure a little bit.

I don't get dramatically into it. What I love and what I've seen work really well are some kind of retreats where you go in and you deal with some stuff. I like that a lot. One of my favorites, it's a leadership organization that I've done some work with but they have this retreat up in the mountains of Orange County called Bold Advanced leadership. It was probably - I went into the thing I'm going to become a better leader and all these things and when I came out of it, it was life changing for me because I saw all the things that I was blowing out of proportion that weren't really important that I was focused on that I couldn't get through.

I've actually become -you know, I'm working to become one of the trainers for them because it's amazing when you shift mindset for somebody how much easier it is to get them to focus on eating better foods and like all of a sudden use exercise or something more than just to look sexy. Like it's got a purpose behind it and at that point they're willing to run straight at the stress just like our special forces do versus try to hide run away from it and hide from it. That resiliency is there. So that's probably my favorite recommendation for people that are looking to take their lives in the next level is something like that a driven for life bold advanced leadership course where it's three days no cell phones in the mountains going through the process pushing yourself to hold another level and become extremely resilient to stress. That's been my favorite.

Robb Wolf: Wow. Wow. That's a fantastic resource. How about getting a handle on sleep? What are you recommending for that?

Brad Davidson: Oh gosh. So I do a lot of things with sleep. This is actually with our clientele the people the first thing we attack is try to improve their sleep. We felt we're going to prove their sleep we win and I love this stuff you and Doc Parsley have done on sleep. It's so critical for the world to get this. So we'll start off. Some of my advanced strategies for that are like I have a rule for unplugged. I like people to just shut off all technology for 30 to 60 minutes before bed and just reengage with themselves and people they love the most. That I found that to really do a great job of bringing stress response down.

In my world of CEOs, so often they can't fall asleep or they fall asleep and they wake up and their brain takes off. So I found if they do a 60-second brain dump, just set a stop watch, hit 60 seconds, go and write down the three most important things for the next day, it tends to slow the brain down a bit. And then I also found you know, grateful journals. There's a lot of research behind those working well but I found an advanced strategy is to just say pick one thing from your past that was really hard on you that you're so thankful you went through because it made you a better person.

For some reason when I can get people to focus on some like oh that horrible relationship that I survived led me to find a better significant other for me. You know, all of a sudden you go I'm really bad. It's like being a good outcome. It tends to calm people down dealing with the stress and stuff they're under.

Because so often we get stuck just in this perception of my life is over. I'm never going to recover from this. The reality is we've been doing it our whole lives. We're built to be resilient. So those are huge.

I just have this awesome acupuncturist out of Arizona that got me coloring in an adult coloring book.

Robb Wolf: My wife and I for Christmas bought each other adult coloring books, yeah, yeah.

Brad Davidson: How fascinating is that? 30 minutes it's fascinating.

Robb Wolf: Oh dude, and it's like crack. I have a fireplace here and it's been cold so I'll get a fire going. We sit in our chairs in front of the fire and we got the lights kind of dim and we've got our colored pencils out. I'm doing a fractal one and I forget which one Nikki is doing. It's more kind of art scene type stuff. But dude it is crack. Yeah. yeah.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I just started it two weeks ago and it has been mind-blowing to me. So I like those things and then you know, people have a hard time if they wake in the middle of the night. You know, my Chinese medicine doctor has taught me a lot on the liver meridian. It's kind of most active from 1 to 3 and 1 to 4 in the morning. So if people are waking from 1 to 3 or 1 to 4 in the morning we'll have them drink green tea in the afternoons maybe take some milk thistle before bed. Just do things to support the liver at night to keep them from waking up and we find that to work pretty well.

[0:45:00]

Robb Wolf: That's great. That is fantastic. Awesome.

Brad Davidson: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: So Brad, where can folks track you down on the interwebs?

Brad Davidson: Yeah. So on my website at BradDavidson.com and I recently started up a Facebook page which is just you know, Facebook.com/braddavidson fan page. Those are probably the two best places. I'm on Twitter at Brad Davidson as well but I don't engage in that as much. But mostly because I don't understand the technology.

[laughter]

Robb Wolf: Hi. I'm taking a poop, tweet yeah, yeah.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. So I never got that one. You can find more about my book at the StarkNakedbook.com. Every month I do a pretty cool community 21-day metabolic reset as a group and I have a private Facebook page. we have direct access to me. So we do it all together. Those are kind of the big spots where I'm found at.

Robb Wolf: Awesome and we'll have links to all that in the show notes and then correct me if I'm wrong, but it looks like you also have a gig coming up in Belize sometime soon?

Brad Davidson: Yeah. I'm building out a retreat form down there. I have a client that owns the top resort in that area and it's not open to the public. It's right on the Caribbean. It's these fetched sealed huts right on the beach. It is the most ridiculous place in the world Robb.

[crosstalk]

Robb Wolf: San Pedro or --

Brad Davidson: It's not on San Pedro. Not 100% where San Pedro is but it's --

Robb Wolf: it's the island there.

Brad Davidson: Okay.

Robb Wolf: So is it mainland or okay.

Brad Davidson: It's mainland. Just it's by Placencia

Robb Wolf: Placencia okay, yeah, yeah.

Brad Davidson: Yeah. So you fly into Belize city take a little hopper. It has its own runway.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Brad Davidson: It's heaven so I'm working with this gentleman on building a retreat there where people can come and just get away from the world and detach and snorkel and fish and just lounge. The food is all made right there. It's all organic. It's all farmed right there. It is awesome. It has an awesome place where seminars can take place and it's ridiculous. So yeah, so we're in the mix of that so.

Robb Wolf: I super dig Placencia and if you want somebody to carry your bags down there I will do it so.

Brad Davidson: [laughs]

Robb Wolf: I will carry your bags, clean the toilets, whatever you want done. I'll do it.

Brad Davidson: I'll have to take you down there to check it out because it is breath taking. I'm even -- it's just -- I'm just it's breathtaking and if you like Placencia you'll love it. I mean it's my new favorite place on earth. I can't wait to have this come out and be all put together. It's legitimate --

Robb Wolf: Awesome and when you get it going when you need your sanitary engineer to keep the toilets running, call me man, I am on it so.

Brad Davidson: I'll hook you up, I love it.

Robb Wolf: Yeah perfect.

Brad Davidson: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Perfect. Well Brad it's been great having you on the show. Really stoked for all the success you've had and thank you for writing this book. Like this was some amazing material and I think folks are going to get enormous amount of information out of it.

Brad Davidson: Coming from you I really appreciate that. One of my long term mentors, I really appreciate that so thank you.

Robb Wolf: It's true. thanks man, hopefully you listen to this stuff I got right so...
[Laughs]

Brad Davidson: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: I've gotten so much wrong so hopefully you managed to – it's like a radio coming in and out and it just happened to be those two or three times where I accidentally got something accurate and so that hopefully that's how it worked for you.

Brad Davidson: Oh yeah. Well I found you bring a book out, you're pretty much putting your chin out there and taking it so.

Robb Wolf: Oh yeah, yeah and there's going to be somebody unhappy with it. So no matter how thorough you are with it.

Brad Davidson: Oh yeah.

Robb Wolf: But I think you did an outstanding job. Super stoked for the work you're doing and definitely look forward to seeing you in real life again man.

Brad Davidson: Yeah for sure. We'll have to set that up and love that.

Robb Wolf: Awesome. Alright, Brad, take care. Will talk to you soon.

Brad Davidson: Alright brother, take care.

Robb Wolf: Okay. bye-bye.

[0:48:42] End of Audio