

PaleoSolution 318

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Robb Wolf: Hey folks. Six listeners can't be wrong. It's another edition of the Paleo Solution podcast. I'm your host Robb Wolf. Today's guest is Steve Kamb. He's the intrepid adventurer, founder of Nerd Fitness and the author of Level Up Your Life: How to Unlock Adventure and Happiness by Becoming the Hero of Your Own Story. Steve, what's going on man?

Steve Kamb: Robb, what's going on dude? It's so great to talk to you and be a part of this. Thanks for having me.

Robb Wolf: Oh, I'm super stoked. I think it was Squatchy that made the connection for us. So I'm really excited...

Steve Kamb: Perfect. Good old Squatchy.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. Literally if there were no Squatch there would not be a podcast or a blog or much of anything else so that's...

Steve Kamb: That's not a world I want to live in anyway so glad with the situation we are.

Robb Wolf: Exactly. So Steve give folks a little bit of your background. You have a really interesting story and the founding of Nerd Fitness and then your book. Give folks some background on that.

Steve Kamb: Sure. Well at the most base level, I like to say like hey guys, I'm Steve. I'm a nerd. I try to eat healthy and I love dead lifting.

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Steve Kamb: So in a little bit longer form, seven geez, I guess now eight years ago, I had this idea to start a website to help other people like myself consider themselves relatively nerdy, probably worked a desk job, played probably a few too many video games, maybe have addictive personality but were interested in getting started with health and fitness. As somebody had spent years trying to get healthy myself and consistently ran in to a lot of misinformation on the internet and had tried following bodybuilder programs and pretty much tried everything under the sun, finally found a system that worked for me. Believe it or not, it was diet and exercise.

Robb Wolf: Shocker.

Steve Kamb: Yeah right, right? I figured that I had to tell the world about this secret I had discovered. I wanted to do it in a way that spoke my language and gave me a chance to tell and help people avoid the 6, 7 years of mistakes that I made.

I Googled nerd and fitness and nothing popped up so, I started writing articles about Star Wars and push-ups and Legos and paleo diets and kind of chronicled not only my journey but the journey of other people as well who consider themselves nerdy and wanted to get fit. It has since evolved from this one man blog in to this worldwide rag tag misfit community of people from all walks of life that are helping each other live better lives, become superheroes and as we like to say level up their lives in interesting ways too.

So it has already become something far greater than I could have imagined. I feel so honored and excited every day to work on stuff like this and write about things that I really love.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. I've got to give some full disclosure here. I forget when it was somebody shot me a link and like, hey have you checked out this Nerd Fitness thing. I like cruised on to there and I started looking around and I literally was like no, I couldn't have done it so much better. So you've done a really, really amazing job you know?

You've had kind of a brick and mortar presence with all this. How have you parlayed the information that you've learned from working directly in front of people into working with people and providing, I guess education to the masses online. Like I feel like there's some really good lessons on there but it's also a very different thing.

Steve Kamb: Yeah, absolutely. Well what's funny is actually when I started the first thing that I did so I was working a regular day job and I believe I stumbled in to a book store on my lunch break and stumbled across Tim Ferris's 4 hour work week. I picked it up, read it cover to cover and in about 2 days and that's where initial idea came to me where it's like oh combining something that you love and a social group you're a part of.

I picked up nerdfitness.com and my initial thoughts were like man you know if I'm going to start a website, nobody's going to take me seriously on this. I need to really dig in to this and learn and research more and start training people and so on and so forth. So I started picking up some clients on the side and training people in person after getting a personal trainer certification and tried to learn everything that I possibly could.

Eventually I got to the point where I realized like in order for me to impact enough people, impacting them one on one was very helpful. It was cool see them interact but eventually I realized like man, if this is going to become what I think that it has the chance to become, I need to really dig into this online presence. So I actually stopped training people in person and put all of the focus in to writing quality content connecting with people, trying to help them online and build this relatively large online funnel. We're closing in on 300,000 email subscribers up to this point.

Now it's funny. I'm kind of going back to the other direction where now we have this thing called Camp Nerd Fitness where we bring people to an in-person event. I've done meetups throughout the country and trying to explore more ways to kind of go back towards this idea of interacting with people in real life outside of just the internet.

So the internet has been really monumental in allowing us to scale the scope of what Nerd Fitness is and the impacts and the number of people we can help. But I have just seen how powerful it can become as well, when you can connect with these people in real life and show them like hey, you're not alone. If you want to debate Star Wars or Star Trek Or talk about your favorite game your favorite book and get dressed up but you are also interested in eating healthier and learning about how to squat properly or whatever it may be, there's a place for that too and you get to be a 100% yourself.

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Robb Wolf:

It's awesome. You know always being the objective scientist that I am, I look for confirmation bias everywhere. So, totally fishing for that but it's been a similar experience. We started with our gym in Chico and then I started blogging. I eventually wrote a book, started a podcast and what was interesting though is that then there was this clear desire or maybe a need for some in-person contact. So it becomes like this full circle thing and that community piece is really the glue that keeps it all together. The online part, is strong but having those occasional in-person experiences whether it's PaleoFX or a camp like what you guys are doing, like it really is the glue that keeps the whole thing going. It's pretty fascinating.

Steve Kamb:

It's the thing I'm most proud of honestly. When I started, I realized that when it began it was just me writing articles and people reading them. The conversation was very one way or you know it was them writing to me, and me writing back, me responding to comments but there was not a lot of interaction between them, between readers.

I didn't see myself as an expert anyway. I still put it on nerdfitness.com 8 years later whereas now I dedicate my life to this stuff. I still say like look I'm not an expert. I do everything I can, I experiment on myself in any way I can, I study every book, read every study and do anything I can to learn more but I'm not an expert. I'm a guy in the trenches with you who struggles with a lot of the same things and just a few steps ahead of where you might be.

So, I wanted to foster and really grow the community aspect of Nerd Fitness. The way I found to do that, we launched some free message boards and we now have some really, really cool communities, community sites that popped up through Facebook, or we actually like regional groups of people that now get together that are part of Nerd Fitness.

It is funny when I started it, I was like guys I don't want us to be called the community. That's not nerdy enough. What are we called? Do you guys want to build an empire with me? Or do you want to start a rebellion? Like the response overwhelmingly came back in the form of everybody wanted to be part of a rebellion. So that's why the Nerd Fitness community is so lovingly referred to as the rebellion and my official job title is rebel leader because of Star Wars and because you have to have some fun with it.

Robb Wolf: I do have to admit the occasional times that I play a Star Wars related PlayStation type game, I do like being in the position of saying die rebel scum. But I'm right there with you, I'm totally right there. I want to be on the rebel side too.

Steve Kamb: Sure.

Robb Wolf: So talk to me about the Level Up Your Life. What was the inspiration for that? I don't know If tickled is a nerdy enough term to pay homage to this thing but I think we have really gone around the like sleep, food, exercise, gut biome. Like we've done that well. We've done a pretty good job on that but there's so much more to this story with kind of optimized living and getting beyond fears and figuring out what the internal stories are that maybe hamstringing people. I feel like you've just addressed that stuff in a phenomenal way. What was the inspiration for this and where did you get the insight that there was so much more to this than just like eat a paleo diet, dead lift and do some sprints? There's a lot more to it than that, even though in some ways there's not but I mean there clearly is.

Steve Kamb:

Well it's funny at its base level if you do those things, if you sprint and pickup heavy things and eat a paleo diet, like you're going to be in really, really great shape. What I wanted to dig in to and kind of how this book came about is I wanted people to think about why they were doing these things. You know a lot of people start exercising because their doctor tells them to or because they want to see their feet again, or they're like man I'm ready to start dating but I just don't feel good about myself. So the dutifully run on a treadmill, they try to eat more vegetables and they do these things.

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With Nerd Fitness, I try to think of it as a fitness website for people who don't like fitness, like initially don't love fitness. I see what we do is removing the obstacles between people and what the type of life they are actually interested in living. Of course the initial way we get them in there is proper health advice and behavioral psychology and video game mechanics and certain types of motivation and things like that. But ultimately the goal is at the end of the day it's like are you proud of what you did today and do you wake up excited every morning to do the things that you want to do? If you can't say yes to those other 2 question, okay, those are things we can work on.

As I mentioned earlier the 4-Hour Work Week was really instrumental in changing the path that my life was on. For years, I resisted the idea of writing a book and you know, I've been approached by publishers. They're like oh man, you run a website that's called Nerd Fitness. Just put together a book about pushups, and workout plans and eating better and we'll put it out and you'll sell a bunch of copies. I was like I don't , that doesn't excite me. You know I've written about that on Nerd Fitness. I've published 700+ articles about these things and I want to write something I'm fired up about and something that I hope can change the path that somebody' life is on.

That book ended up becoming Level Up Your Life which I refer to as a personal development or growth book for skeptical people that are probably skeptical of personal development. So it's the idea of how do you help somebody live a better life and doing so in a way that is both entertaining and grounded in scientific research. So the book kind of walks you to this path of both inspiration, motivation, education but it helps you overcome as you mentioned earlier, overcoming fears, how to properly set goals, how to start traveling, how to determine what type of as I say in the book, what type of superhero do you want to become

? It's like a nerdy self-help book that really digs in to the nitty-gritty to help people do the things that they've said they always wanted to do and

haven't been able to accomplish it at this point. It breaks things down in to step by step information. It pulls motivation from some of my favorite resources like Star Wars or Marvel comics or video games from my childhood and things like that. It helps people put mental models and set the right mind frame so they can start doing the things that they said they've always wanted to do.

Robb Wolf: I'm so jealous. My life could be so much more fun if my life were your life. If I were to become an alter ego superhero, I would be you. So I'm not too sure... What was that movie where the guy kills the dude that assumes his identity? Oh, I'm recording this I shouldn't say that.

Steve Kamb: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Let's talk about that, create your own alter ego like you have a list of some of the things you have in here. The thing that struck me about that I found interesting and this maybe off in the weeds. But I've done some reading about like when people speak a different language they're literally a different person. My wife is fluent in Italian and when we go to Italy and she starts interfacing with the locals there, she is a totally different person. In English she's kind of a quiet reserved person. When she is speaking Italian she's out going, she dances, she smokes, drinks, goes wild. I find that I'm reasonably good at Spanish like, Spanish Robb is a very different person than English Robb. Does that kind of play in to this alter ego thing a little bit?

Steve Kamb: Yeah absolutely. So as a kid growing up, I used to dress up like Superman probably once a week when I was a little kid. Like it wasn't even Halloween. It would just be like a random Tuesday and I'd come down the stairs in the Superman costume with the red underwear on the outside. My parents were like oh, alright, I guess he's going to be Superman today so.

Robb Wolf: And tomorrow.

Steve Kamb: And tomorrow right. So from a young age, I've always been fascinated with the idea of superheroes. I was always the scrawny really weak kid, pretty shy growing up. As I started to get older and really kind of went all in on this idea of Nerd Fitness, I wanted to dig into like the mythology behind superheroes and what made them so endearing and enjoyable to us. Not just superheroes but our favorite heroes from movies, TV shows and things like that.

I think the thing that I really resonated with the most and the thing that a lot of members of the Nerds Fitness Rebellion resonated with is the idea that these superheroes have day to day responsibilities too, you know? Superman when he's not saving the world or flying around at backwards to put the Hoover Dam back together.

Robb Wolf: He's been castigated for screwing up his Oxford commas and stuff.

Steve Kamb: Right. He screwed up his Oxford commas and not turning his article on time. Indiana Jones when he's not globe-trotting and traveling the world and discovering buried treasure, he's a mild mannered archeology professor. You know another example from my youth Buffy the Vampire Slayer. She was a Sunnydale High cheer leader. So you have all these really interesting examples of people that do amazing things in their spare time but during the rest of their day, they have regular responsibilities. They have kids, they have relationships to juggle, they have bills to pay and so on and so forth.

So I thought wouldn't it be neat and why don't we just start looking at life from that perspective? Like yes, you're going to have a day job, yes you'll have bills to pay and a bed to make and the floor to vacuum, and laundry to do. That version of you might be scared to try new things and that version of you might be hesitant, to walk up to somebody and say hello. But why don't you start thinking of the other, there can be this other version of you that is the superhero version of you. That person can love to power lift and that person can love to run sprints. Maybe they like to world travel, maybe they love to play music.

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That person can be outgoing and when you can compartmentalize that in your brain, you can imagine okay, what would this other version of myself do in this situation if I was a superhero? I just fell in love with that idea and I shared it with the community and it really got people to jump up on the idea of like hey, we are all superheroes in training here, why don't you make a second version of yourself. You can have a theme song, you can have clothes that you specifically change in to.

Like when I'm going to the gym and I'm putting on my tall socks to get ready to go deadlift and I'll have my ratty T-shirt and whatever. I feel like I'm becoming a different person and when I'm at the gym I'm almost foaming at the mouth and in between sets. I'm listening to heavy rock music or whatever it may be.

Then I come home, I set up my computer. I write a few articles about Nerd Fitness. I'll plop down on the couch and play some video games and then

I'll go back to being the alter version of me which loves to play music and pick up heavy things and travel and is outgoing and whatever. So I really jumped on that idea with this book and encourage people to create character and start to assess what that version of themselves would do and then really digging into the specifics on how people can start pulling those things off as well.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. I will get the little disclosure here and my credibility is not that good anyway in this hole, completely put a nail in it. But when I was powerlifting, you know I liked Guns N Roses and Metallica and stuff like that but when I actually went to the competition and it's just so funny that you brought this stuff up. When I would get ready to go for like a PR, I would listen to the Imperial March before trying break a record [Laughs]

Steve Kamb: No way, are you serious?

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]

Steve Kamb: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: So, I don't know if that should give me Nerd Fitness Jedi level status just right out of the gate.

Steve Kamb: That's correct, that's perfect, like the part levitate and you don't even have to actually pick it up.

Robb Wolf: Totally. Oh, man. So I love that. How have people gone about doing this stuff? Like what types of things do they get into, do they get into yoga or martial arts or rock climbing? Like what are these alter egos that people put together to find this other element of themselves?

Steve Kamb: Sure. Well I'll try not to go too far down the nerd rabbit hole here. I saw some the group playing roleplaying games where you get to decide if you want to be a warrior or a monk or a druid or a wizard or whatever. You get to classify yourself based on what character you'd like to be in those games. I thought like well if you can be a superhero in real life, why don't we take those video game archetypes and apply them as well.

So we've actually built this entire character creation system at Nerd Fitness where you can decide how you are interested in training be it yoga, martial arts, rock climbing, power lifting, crossfit, and anything in between. We've assigned real life or video game archetypes to each of those different categories. Like if you like to power lift, you'd be a

warrior. If you like martial arts or BJJ, you'd be a monk. Personally I'm an assassin, I'm like a half assassin half warrior because I love to power lift but I also love gymnastics.

So we've built this whole kind of character creation system where you could write your back story. You can determine what type of alter ego you want to play. You can pick which class that you want to be. So now that Nerd Fitness has grown as large as it has, it's kind of cool. If you go on to the free message boards, you create your character. People aren't just like oh, I'm a member of the Nerd Fitness community. They're like, I'm a ranger I'm level 14 and I'm a member of the Nerd Fitness community. So that's like further classification of these things.

As a result of that, people have gone all in. They've written epic backstories and you know they're not just trying to break a soda habit. Like they create this monster that they're trying to defeat and in order to defeat that, they must go on this quest to vanquish all soda from their apartments and things like that. It's pretty cool.

Throughout the book, I love being able to share stories that come from each of those different classes and they get to talk about their alter egos. So it's you know, a single dad who is a construction foreman, spends his spare time as a monk training with his son in martial arts and that's how they get to bond and spend really quality time together. They both get the exercise at the same time.

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So I love being able to share some real world stories of people. It's not just me, regardless of who you are, where you are coming from, and what you are currently struggling with, there's another member of the rebellion who's probably in a similar situation who might be just 1 or 2 steps ahead of you, that is really interested and would love to hear what you are struggling with and how they could help you. So those are the things I'm most proud of.

Robb Wolf:

Man, it's just amazing because you know so little behavior change happens from information one. Then we have so much information out there. There's so much stuff you have to sift through, is it high carb? Is it low carb? Is it paleo? Is it vegan? So you got this analysis paralysis thing going on but, when people really make a change, it really comes from that emotive part of us. It's not the logical part typically, even for nerds.

Steve Kamb:

Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: So you've been able to tap into that emotional side and both make it fun and create this kind of like you know overcoming a personal challenge thing which shifts it all out of the logical part of the brain or maybe not all but a significant amount. You create this kind of emotive pathway where you know the real change begins. I think it's just incredible.

Steve Kamb: Thank you. Yeah as you said, we all know were all supposed to eat less and move more and that eating more vegetables and less processed food is better for you. For a lot of members of the, I think that tend to find Nerd Fitness, a lot of people that find Nerd Fitness they're really bright people. We have literal rocket scientists that read Nerd Fitness. They sit is on a desk all day and they love video games and Star Wars and they stumble across the website and they just can't get themselves to wrap their heads around, like why? I know I shouldn't be eating these things, I know I should be moving forward but I can't get myself to do them.

So when you re frame the perspective I'm not just doing this for me, I'm on a quest, I'm on a mission, here's my back story and let's have some fun with this and let's build in a system of rewards and accountability just like in the games I love to play and applying those game mechanics in my situation. It can help them overcome that initial inertia and remove a lot of that negative emotion that are probably associated with exercising and instead shift that focus to what am I capable of. I'm gaining +2 strength when I do this and I'm gaining +2 stamina when I run a mile a little bit faster. It's a complete mental shift but it's one that I think I have a lot of fun developing and from what I've seen people are just having an absolute blast and really running away with creating their own character and just really developing almost like the mythos, like the backstory of Nerd Fitness and the rebellion and whose a part of it and how they're shaping this world. It's pretty fun to watch.

Robb Wolf: It's so interesting. Have you done much reading like Joseph Campbell?

Steve Kamb: Yes, I love A Hero's Journey and I felt like I was on one to start Nerd Fitness. I went on another one when I was writing this book and even wrote about it in the book. So it's like very meta. The book itself as a big fan of the Hero's Journey and Joseph Campbell that actually shaped or structured the book from each step of the Hero's Journey. It actually walks you through that or it's like structured in a way so that the person reading the book is the hero. I get to be the mentor aka the Dumbledore, the Yoda, the Obi Wan whatever. The book is hopefully that call to action for people to embrace adventure and start to look at life a little bit differently.

Robb Wolf: Wow, I'm just thinking like a million different things here. One of them is, you know as science and technology has progressed like we really don't so like religiosity is on a down swing and most of these things that we would maybe put in that quasi mystical category, like they're really kind of on a down shift. But I think that there's something just woven in to the human psyche. Again Joseph Campbell was so articulate in talking about this, the need for myth, the need for stories.

Steve Kamb: Sure.

Robb Wolf: You know the hero with a thousand faces. Science historically hasn't left a lot of room for that. That's where this interface of like sci-fi and heroes and DC comics and all that type of stuff, like there's this interface there were, we pull things out of science and incredible logical thinking but then we're able to create this mythos for ourselves and you know be empowered by it. It's really amazing.

Steve Kamb: Yeah. It's funny, people ask me where do you get your inspiration from? You might not believe me but I'm sitting here looking at Captain America's shield hanging on the wall and hanging above me I have pictures of Iron Man **[audio glitch] [00:25:07]** which they would choose one food or another, one being healthier than the other.

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They were told to ask themselves, I think it was what would Batman do? And I'm not kidding you, when kids were told to say this and they went up and the kids that were told to asked themselves this question like overwhelmingly chose the healthier food because they figured Batman fights crime and Batman probably eats healthy. If I'm going to be like Batman, I should probably make that decision as well. So I think from an early age these characters that probably the adults would think oh, that's silly comic book stuff or that's whatever like they're teaching us valuable lessons.

I've learned a lot from Captain America and I can't wait for his next movie coming out in a few weeks. I'm excited to learn more from him as a character and to see kind of where he goes and where that story develops in to.

Robb Wolf: Yes, I love all that, I just love it

Steve Kamb: Why not right? You got to have freaking fun. Life is so short.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, it is and you know it's funny because this is just kind of shining a light on to my whole process. Because I've been this kind of clinical,

reductionist scientific guy, you know, one foot kind of on the research scene, one foot in the used car salesman pedaling of ancestral health. I think I've been able to weave some good humor and some thoughtfulness in to it occasionally but this ability to bring in the mythos and have stuff that teaches us by example, like little kids saying what would Batman eat and what would the Joker eat? Joker's going to eat like a cockroach clearly you know? So yeah.

Steve Kamb: Sure.

Robb Wolf: It's great. You get into...excuse me, I just had a complete dry mouth moment here. You get into productivity habits. Talk to folks about that and how do you weave that in to this whole story.

Steve Kamb: Sure. Well, as we said earlier, we all know we should be eating less and moving more and we all say there's things we want to do, be it learn a language, practice Spanish, learn a musical instrument, book a trip. We can never get ourselves to do those things. I really wanted to dig into and have learned personally through a lot of trial and error and a lot of late nights due to procrastination, like I've come to learn a few things.

One we're creatures of habit and 2 we're products of our environment. In the book I can equate being a product of our environment to, I think I called it building our bat cave. I looked at that well, Bruce Wayne AKA Batman has a bat cave, in which he has all these gadgets and gizmos and that's where his laboratory to build and create and without that lab he wouldn't be able to become Batman.

So I thought to myself what is my bat cave and it's the place in which I live and the place in which I work which happens to be the same thing. I generally work from home and so I learned as I'm trying to get myself to break bad habits and try to get myself to create new healthier habits or start learning a new skill that I couldn't get myself to practice before. Anytime I could increase the number of steps between me and the bad habit that I'm trying to break or decrease then number of steps between me and the good habit I'm trying to create, the far more likely I would be to have success.

So just for example while writing the book, I wanted to prove that the concept of it worked outside of just health and fitness so I learned to play the violin. I'm still not very good at it but I'm infinitely better now than I was before I started playing for sure. Really over the past year or so, since I starting to play, it's become something that I'm truly proud of.

But when I first started I couldn't get myself to practice. I come home for my lesson every week and the violin would be put away in its case and I would look at it, and be like oh, I have to take the violin out of the case then I got to razzen the bow and put the sheet music on the stand and this and that and I don't have time for that. That's going to take 20 minutes. I'll just play later when I have more time. Sure enough later never happens eventually never comes, I would never practice.

So what I did was I changed my environment. I hacked my bat cave and I spent 10 bucks on a cheap violin stand and I put the violin stand directly in the middle of my living room. So as soon as I came from my lesson, the first thing I did was pulled the violin out of its case. I put it on the violin stand and it's already tuned because I knew I just came home. Sure enough, that one change, cost me 10 bucks and taking 5 seconds of work at the end of a lesson resulted in me playing hours upon hours every week instead of 0 minutes.

So it works for whether you are trying to learn an instrument. Let's say you're trying to break a nasty food habit or you're all in on paleo and you don't want to eat certain things. Like throwing those things out of your house, and making it, sometimes you physically have to get your car and drive to go get, you're going to be far less likely to do that than if it is readily available sitting on your counter or call your name from the freezer or whatever it may be.

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I really got big in to hacking my environments and having like subtle clues that would remind me to do certain things so whether its Post-it notes hanging on the wall to remind me to practice my handstands or using certain websites or certain programs to block time wasting websites in my computer. Like I really went all in on making those adjustments and seeing how I would be suddenly influenced because I knew if I just relied on willpower or motivation or if I only wrote what I wanted to certain things would never get done. So I really dug in to those things and learned to not trust myself and not leave it up to myself to be motivated to do things and hacking my environment was the best way to actually get those things done.

Robb Wolf: That's fantastic. Steve, I've got to ask you, what's the demographics of Nerd Fitness? Is it mainly male? What's the age span on this?

Steve Kamb: I wanna say it's actually 60% female, believe it or not. We really have a great success story and her name is Stacy. Stacy found Nerd Fitness and have never picked up a barbell before and has ended up moving on and falling in love with barbells strength training and had one of the most

dramatic and exciting success stories I've ever seen in Nerd Fitness. She has since become, not only a success story for the ages and one that has inspired. I mean her success story have been viewed a million times on Nerd Fitness. She actually fell in love with fitness so much that she quit her day job and she's been working full time with me on Nerd Fitness. Earlier today I got a text message from her she lives down in Austin, I got a text message from her saying she dead lifted 3 singles so, 3 individual 1 reps at 405 pounds.

Robb Wolf: Holy smokes.

Steve Kamb: I think she weighs 145 maybe? So anyway she competes nationally and she has fallen in love with the strength training stuff. Like I have to imagine a little girl is growing up over the country being like I want to be like Stacy when I grow up, and I'm like geez I want to be like Stacy when I grow up.

Robb Wolf: Seriously right?

Steve Kamb: Yeah. The demographic tends to be I want to say, early 20s to late 30s on average. I would say that probably makes up the lion share 60 or 70% of the audience. And then we have number of older as we say veteran rebels and then we have some younger folks as well. But they tend to be people that work a desk job and they have some sort of nerdy pursuit.

So we don't think of a nerd as a particular thing but it's how much you love or how you love something. So you can be a med school nerd, a band nerd, you could be a video game nerd, a book worm whatever it maybe, just something that you feel really passionate about. So you have this quirky element to your personality that you probably don't get a chance to loudly proclaim out in public. You also have at least a fleeting interest or let's see, beginning interest in making healthier decisions for your life.

Once you get into the rebellion, I want to say once you're in, you're in for life. It's not like a 30-day plan or a 90-day, whatever or a one-week thing. It's like no, you're in. I don't care how much success you have tomorrow, I want you to be a little bit healthier today, and tomorrow we'll deal with that again and long term 10 years from now, I want you to be in the best shape of your life. Not because you're doing 30 day sprints and making yourself miserable but because you fundamentally shifted your relationship with food. You've shifted your mental model with how you approach exercise, you actually enjoy it. You take on challenges that are

exciting to you and you're surrounded by a community that champions you and supports you and embraces you for who you are.

It's my favorite part when we get emails from people that are like, I feel like I found my new home and we see that at camp. So we have this event that happens every September. Michelle Tan from Nomnompaleo will be one of our headmasters this year and all the meals in camp would be based on recipes that she has put together which is pretty fun. People come to this camp and they get to be 100% themselves and same thing with the internet. Part of Nerd Fitness where they get to debate Star Wars vs Star Trek and then talk about the PR they just set on the dead lift or the new record they just set for their 5k. They don't have to hide either part of it from anybody on Nerd Fitness because we take them for who they are. It's pretty fun.

Robb Wolf: That's fantastic. Can I sneak in one of these retreats? I see that there's only the bunk bed option. I'll can get Matt Lelonde and he and I can spoon and we'll go...

Steve Kamb: Yeah, I might know a guy that could help you.

Robb Wolf: Okay cool, cool, cool. I'm assuming it's a, don't ask don't tell retreat so nobody will be the wiser about Matt and I spooning so perfect.

Steve Kamb: It's cool. We have people that come from, I think last year we had people from at least 12 or 16 different countries. we had 10 plus people who flew over Australia and New Zealand. I don't know, it's crazy. Every year I keep my it together during the event but then on my trip home I just bawl my eyes out. I love everyone and it's like a giant hug fest and people are trying to do activities.

[00:35:20]

There's older and overweight people playing Frisbee with younger and really fit people and nobody cares. It's just like we're all in this the same reason. Let's all have some fun and then there's this really active Facebook group specifically for that have attended camp and they talk every day, all day. They book trips with each other. I actually just found out yesterday that 2 people that met at camp last year just got married the other day. So it's unbelievable. Again I feel like I was smart enough to get it started and then smart enough to get out of the way and let the inmates take over the asylum. It's been really fun to watch and see what they can do.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. So you know clearly what I've been getting from a lot of this is that you really lean on and encourage people to lean on folks that

are maybe a little bit further down a particular path. How do you encourage or instruct people to find those allies and mentors to help them with the guidance that they need?

Steve Kamb:

Sure. I'm sure you heard of the phrase as well but you were the average of the 5 people you associate the most with or you are the average of your allies. So I wanted to dig into that and you guys have been saying dig into, I don't know but maybe I'm thinking cave man at this point with paleo and wanted to dig things.

So I thought of who I spent my time with and how those people influence me and I broke it down into a few categories. 1 I think it's important to have a Yoda in your group okay like a Jedi master. Somebody that is ahead of you and has succeeded in a way that you want to succeed. So I don't mean going to read the latest muscle and fitness magazine about Hugh Jackman's Wolverine workout because you are not Hugh Jackman. You don't have 2 personal trainers. You don't have a dietician and you don't have a nutritionist. You don't have millions of dollars on the line if you don't look like that.

Instead I think we encourage the people to look at others that have succeeded in the way they want to succeed. So if you're a single mom looking for other single moms in the Nerd Fitness rebellion or if you are a college kid trying to date for the first time, finding other people that have succeeded in that way. So that's one, you have your Jedi master.

Next you have your fellow Jedi, somebody that in the trenches with you. So that's somebody that's in the same level as you, somebody that is going to help keep you accountable, and you will keep them accountable. So that could be a running body, somebody that you check in with online in the Facebook group. It can be a friend of yours that you text every morning if you get up and go for your, do your exercise every day. If you don't like respond to them, they go donate money of yours to a political cause you can't stand. Something that keeps you accountable. Somebody you can check in with and help keep you on the right path.

And then next I think it's important to have your own patawan, okay, somebody that you're training. When I started on a scale of 1 – 10, 10 being an expert in health and fitness, I'd probably put myself at a 3 or 4. I was very open and honest about that and I said hey guys I'm here with you. I'm just a few steps ahead of you. Now I probably put myself in a 7 or an 8, maybe and 8 or a 9. But I knew when I started even at a 3 there were plenty of 0s, 1s and 2s who needed my help and not only could I help them but I was probably more equipped to help them, than

somebody that was an expert because I knew exactly what they were struggling with, because I had gone through it with the years prior to it.

So whoever you are I think a great way to learn and get better at something is to teach somebody else how to do it. Be honest with them and let them know where you are at on your journey. But let them know that like hey, I just struggled with this too and here's how I was able to succeed. It might work for you, it might not but give it a shot. And then last but not the least, I think it's important for every one of us to have a wild card in our group. This would be the Han Solo of your crew but it's the person that is good for you but they push you outside of your comfort zone.

So as somebody that loved to sit at home and play video games and I loved the idea of travel but I was always scared to do it, I needed a friend of mine who was more seasoned in travel and more adventurous and was up for doing these things to kind of drag me give me that little nudge out of the door and get me started exploring and trying new things. If I'm scared to do something then strength in numbers going with them because they are not afraid of that thing.

So more often than not when I'm hanging out with this friend, his name's Cash. He and I have been friends since first grade. We were at Cub Scouts together and have visited a number of countries throughout the world over the past 30 years or 25 years of our friendship I guess. More often than not, I'll end up in a situation with him where like how the heck did I get here and Cash what did you get me into. Sure enough I'll come home with a story that I will never forget and an experience that has made me in to a better person and has taught me a lot about a different culture or given me more importantly a story I'd be able to tell my great, great, grandkids someday when I'm sitting on a porch, on a rocket ship you know? Circling Mars when Elon Musk figures out how to get us all there.

[00:40:14]

Robb Wolf:

Right and most of the challenging situations can be cleared up by the antibiotics and stuff so.

Steve Kamb:

[Laughs] Right. So those are your four. You need your Yoda, you need a fellow Jedi, a patawan, and a wild card.

Robb Wolf:

Oh, I love it, I love it. It reminds me of a lot of martial art kind of corollaries like in the Filipino martial arts they talk about, the you know your first exposure to something like when you draw a triangle when you see something for the first time, it's kind of the first layer of

understanding. When you do it, it's another layer of understanding and then finally when you teach it, it's a whole other layer of understanding.

Also in my Brazilian jujitsu endeavors, I'm a blue belt knocking on the door of a purple belt and interestingly the best coaching that I've had has been lately coming from purple and brown belts. Like black belts are always good but sometimes they're so much further down the path than what I am that the next little niggling piece that I need, these purple and brown belts are like, "Oh dude, you need to do this, and then they're just right on it because they um.

Steve Kamb: They speak the language. They're there.

Robb Wolf: They speak the language and their process is more advanced than mine but it's not so much more advanced that the black belt is looking at me like okay you've got 3 left feet and none of them are working right and so I love it, I love it

Steve Kamb: Sure.

Robb Wolf: Steve is all that information in the book?

Steve Kamb: Yes, I mean I dig in to that I help people so I spent 2011 living out of a back pack and traveling around the world and instead of having a bucket list which again wasn't nerdy enough, I called it my epic quest of awesome. I turned the world into a video game and myself as the character and created a list of quests and mission to complete. Anywhere from visiting certain country to living like James Bond in Monaco which is the first story I tell in the book to exploring Machu Pichu and Finding Nemo in the Great Barrier Reef.

Throughout the book, I share that story and I share the stories of different members of the Nerd Fitness Rebellion who have gamified their existence and done that. And then I really walk people through a version of their own hero's journey, encourage them to create a character, teach them how to start pulling these things off and get them to do those things. How to build the team of people that they want on their side and it's all done with the really nerdy metaphors. I can think of at least a few instances in the book where like I was typing the draft of it with the manuscript handed to the publisher. I was like laughing maniacally. I can't believe I get to put this in a book. I'm having so much fun writing this thing and I'm hoping that when people read it and have heard from some people they're like how did you get away? It was like I don't know. You know, if you go on Amazon and read the author description or the author

bio for me, it is absurd because the publisher is like well if you want to write your own bio go for it. I'm like all right, you said I could so here we go.

Robb Wolf: Here it is. Well when people ask me, they're like Robb how have you had the success that you've had. I usually say it's a clear indication of a lack of quality in the rest of the world. So maybe that's what's going on. You just happen. It's kind of like in the old Bug Bunny cartoons where they want somebody to volunteer for something and everybody takes a step back. It's like "oh, I'm that guy". So it's awesome.

Steve Kamb: Yeah everybody loves as reluctant hero too right?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steve Kamb: We need those folks in our lives as well.

Robb Wolf: Okay. So Steve you need to help me with something here.

Steve Kamb: Yes.

Robb Wolf: I'm trying to figure out my hero's journey that I'm on right now. I just bought a small farm and I have two miniature donkeys arriving tomorrow and a couple of goats the day after that.

Steve Kamb: It's so awesome.

Robb Wolf: Who am I. [Laughs]

Steve Kamb: Oh man.

Robb Wolf: What's the super hero analogue for that?

Steve Kamb: Well I mean it's not that...This is funny. It's not that exciting of a game but there was a game back in the day for Super Nintendo called The Harvest Moon. It was a farming simulator and like you had to wake up and go outside and brush your cows and your donkeys and then feed your chickens and water your crops and everything. So there is game equivalent of currently what you're doing. As far as a super hero version of that, geez I like to think like...

Robb Wolf: So what you're saying is I'm pathetic.

Steve Kamb: No. I'm saying it's like you have like --

Robb Wolf: I have broken the Nerd Fitness rubric they're like Robb actually found a superhero path that is actually not interesting or inspiring in the least.

Steve Kamb: No that's so good... you're building like this self-sustaining, not utopia, but like that's video game 101. Like in Sim City, like you're building your own farm and expanding upon it. So the game elements there as far as superheroes go I mean clearly you have to work the word wolf into your superhero alter ego.

[00:44:59]

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Steve Kamb: Yeah I imagine you with a giant cyph like the Grim Reaper has that old farmers used to have as well. I don't know we can get there. Give me 10 minutes after this and like I'll come up with something.

Robb Wolf: I like where you're going. It's a good save. I've been, we've been waiting for the remodel in our house to be done and then on our front gate, I was going to get this water cut piece of steel that is the Lazy Lobo Ranch and sleeping wolf so.

Steve Kamb: Sure.

Robb Wolf: I might need to jazz that up though. That might be a little too sedated. It might be the nerves...

Steve Kamb: Dude, wolves are in right now. The dire wolves of...

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Steve Kamb: Game of Thrones. Wolves are in right now so Lazy Lobo I'm into that too. I think the thing is you don't want to be the person that wakes up the Lazy Lobo right? Because I imagine they're just waiting to pounce. They're just conserving their energy and using it when necessary. So that can be you during BJJ or strength training and or going out all in on your farm whatever it maybe.

Robb Wolf: You know, me remarkably well. I am completely lazy until I don't need to be lazy.

Steve Kamb: And then watch out right?

Robb Wolf: And then watch out, yeah.

Steve Kamb: Perfect.

Robb Wolf: I love it. So Steve, this stuff is awesome. One other question. Can you bring kids to the retreat?

Steve Kamb: what's funny is actually the very first year we did this, we had somebody that was going to be turning 18 while at camp. We didn't realize this until a week before and then we're like I'm sorry man, you can't come alone due to legal reasons and it's a five-day event sleeping away. Your mom would need to join us and he was like okay, cool, can my mom come? I'm like ah, yeah, sure why not.

His mom was hesitant and his mom had so much fun. We throw these parties at the end of the night and we all sang happy birthday to him on his birthday and she was like this is the greatest birthday he's ever had. He's so excited to be around these people. It was pretty cool. So it tends to be like, it's like a summer camp for adults really. You know, we do serve alcohol. We have some pretty epic costume parties. Last year we threw a party called a Rubrics cube party where you show up in six different colors of clothing and like a red hat and yellow shirt and orange cape and whatever. Then you have to trade with other people until you end up all of the same color.

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Steve Kamb: So by the end of the night you might be in like a – I think I ended last year in literally like a wedding dress and a white flower hat and gloves whatever is like well I made it to all white so I guess I win.

Robb Wolf: Done.

Steve Kamb: There's some pretty cool experiences that happen there. I know Michelle again from NomNom came last year and she was so excited to come back again this year. We have 16 instructors that teach anything from yoga, to parkour, to martial arts, to sword fighting, to improv, swing dancing, pretty much anything that would probably scare the crap out of you but you know it would be really good for you to try. This is probably the safest environment for you to do so and then get dressed up and look crazy at the end of the night and then wake up do it all over again the next day.

Robb Wolf: Okay. I'm just making a proclamation here. I'm closing down RobbWolf.com and I'm coming to work for you guys. This is I'm...

Steve Kamb: Perfect.

Robb Wolf: What I'm doing is not fun enough. I...

Steve Kamb: Actually we've had an opening for a lazy wolf for like three years now. Just nobody has been able to fill it so I'm really excited. This is fantastic.

Robb Wolf: I will fill that demographic. It's a done deal.

Steve Kamb: Perfect.

Robb Wolf: Awesome. Steve, remind folks where they can track you down on the innerwebs and also where the book is located.

Steve Kamb: Sure. Yeah. You can head to NerdFitness.com. We send two free articles a week. I hang out on Twitter [@stevekamb](https://twitter.com/stevekamb) and Instagram [@stevekamb](https://www.instagram.com/stevekamb). The book is called *Level Up Your Life*. You can buy it in bookstores nationwide or on Amazon or if you go to Levelupyourlife.com you can read the first chapter about my weekend living like James Bond in Monaco. And create your own character which is free. Set up your backstory and start tracking your epic quest and turn your life into a game.

Robb Wolf: Awesome. I am so jealous. I'm just so jealous. It's amazing. Steve, you're doing incredible work. I mean that sincerely. Like I was excited to do the interview. Really enjoyed the book and have been a huge fan of Nerd Fitness for ages. So just really a ton of fun talking to you and I just think you're doing amazing stuff.

Steve Kamb: Thank you. It's kind of like the mutual admiration podcast at this point. I've been a fan of yours for years as well and I know a ton of members in the rebellion are very familiar with your work and thankful for what you do as well. So I'm glad we finally got a chance to connect and have a fun chat and nerd out about wolves and Star Wars and the imperial death march.

Robb Wolf: OH we haven't even gotten started. When we get you back on the show, I'll go all in nerd next time.

Steve Kamb: We'll go full nerd.

Robb Wolf: I was being a little restrained this time so yeah.

Steve Kamb: Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: Well Steve it was great chatting with you again. Congratulations on your amazing success and the fantastic work you do. I look forward to seeing you in real life. Are you in Paleo Fx or anything like that or...

Steve Kamb: I'm not making it into Paleo FX but I have no doubt in my mind our paths are going to cross very soon.

Robb Wolf: Okay. I like it. I like it. All right Steve, talk to you soon.

Steve Kamb: Thanks so much for having me.

Robb Wolf: Okay. bye-bye.

[00:50:02] End of Audio