

Nicki: Welcome to the Healthy Rebellion Radio. This is an episode of Salty Talk, a deep dive into popular and relevant health and performance news pieces, mixed with the occasional salty conversation with movers and shakers in the world of research, performance, health, and longevity. Healthy Rebellion Radio's Salty Talk episodes are brought to you by Drink LMNT, the only electrolyte drink mix that's salty enough to make a difference in how you look, feel, and perform. We co-founded this company to fill a void in the hydration space. We needed an electrolyte drink that actually met the sodium needs of active people, low carb, keto, and carnivore adherence without any of the sugar, colors, and fillers found in popular commercial products. Health rebels, this is Salty Talk. And now, the thing our attorney advises. The contents of this show are for entertainment and educational purposes only. Nothing in this podcast should be considered medical advice. Please consult your licensed and credentialed functional medicine practitioner before embarking on any health, dietary, or fitness change. And given that this is Salty Talk, you should expect the occasional expletive.

Robb: Welcome back, wife. Welcome back, everybody else, everybody not wife.

Nicki: Hello, hello. This is another episode of the Healthy Rebellion Radio, and it's another Salty Talk.

Robb: You're kind of running this one. This was your idea.

Nicki: Am I running this one?

Robb: Yeah.

Nicki: This was my idea.

Robb: Do you want the power of the mouse or are you just going to tell me to... I will be your mouse bitch as it were.

Nicki: I kind of like that.

Robb: Okay.

Nicki: You can be my bitch mouse today.

Robb: Perfect.

Nicki: Yeah. So, the idea for this episode came about because we had a member inside the Healthy Rebellion who posted, she's like, "I know I'm late to the game, but I'm just hearing about Substack. How do you find people to follow? Who are you all following?" And we had mentioned, frequently people will share articles from different Substacks in the healthy rebellion, and we had mentioned specifically somebody that we're going to talk about here, Vinay Prasad, who we've mentioned on the podcast before as well. And so, she was wanting to dig in and kind of learn more about Substack and who might be interesting to follow.

Nicki: So, it was a nice little thread with several people chiming in with different people that they enjoy, and so I thought that there might be more people who kind of are new, or maybe haven't heard of Substack, or just aren't sure exactly what it is, and I thought we could do a little show about that and also share some of the people that we enjoy following and we'll also share some of the other people that were mentioned by

members of the Healthy Rebellion at the very end. So, that is what this episode is about. I think we should start with just explaining what Substack is.

Robb: Launch right into that.

Nicki: Well, so it's essentially, the essence of it is it's a newsletter, right? So, it's a newsletter in sort of blog format where you make a post and your subscribers get an email about your post, and the nice thing about Substack is it allows people to monetize their content. So, several folks who maybe have left kind of mainstream professions are able to make a living writing on Substack if their audience finds their content valuable. So, they can monetize their content. People can choose to subscribe as a free subscriber. People can choose to pay monthly, and it's usually something nominal like \$5 or \$7 a month, or there's annual options as well which make it a little bit cheaper. So, it's a way for people to reward and contribute to the authors that they find value from.

Nicki: So, that's what it is in a nutshell, and the nicest part about it, and as you'll see, some of the people that we mention in today's show were kicked off of other platforms like Twitter. And so, Substack so far seems to really be a platform for everyone. So, it doesn't matter if your views or your conclusions that you come to when doing science or different research-

Robb: Or an opinion. Just a basic opinion piece. Yeah.

Nicki: Or opinions. Doesn't matter if that doesn't fit the narrative or what is accepted on platforms like Twitter. Substack, you can have your own audience there.

Robb: And I have some thoughts around that. I mean, the Healthy Rebellion was born when we were not deplatformed, but we were effectively demonetized when Google, via the Owl update that occurred in 2017, made our website very, very difficult to find. And so, we saw like a 97% drop in site traffic, and we had challenges on Facebook selling things like the keto masterclass. It's kind of funny because it hearkens back to the very beginning of our journey in all this stuff. Do you want to tell the Greg Everett and Greg Glassman story early?

Nicki: I don't know. That can be lengthy and can take us, lengthy and can take us...

Robb: No, it won't be. But the fact that you're hesitant to do it tells me that we should do it.

Nicki: All right. Go for it.

Robb: Early, early, early CrossFit, and I mean, there were maybe 10, 15 affiliates at this point, fewer than 50. People entering the scene were super unsophisticated. People didn't know what they were doing. It was still at a time when there weren't WordPress or Foursquare whatever these...

Nicki: Wix, yes.

Robb: Yeah, these easy-to-throw-up websites. Getting a website installed was a non-trivial thing. So, Greg Everett was great at building websites. He had been doing that in a variety of locations prior to that. And so, as these new CrossFit affiliates kind of started coming online, man, they needed a website, and here was this guy who was in the community. He had beautiful design, aesthetics, and everything. And so, he would build these websites and all was good until Brian Mulvaney who was one of Glassman's henchman, and he's a former tech guy, and just generally an enormous piece of shit

now looking back in full retrospect, but he was doing some poking around and found that Greg Everett had built a website called Newtopia and he was contracted to do this. Greg wasn't-

Nicki: He wasn't involved in it. Yeah, he built the site.

Robb: He built the site. The horrible premise of the site was that let's get people from both sides of the political spectrum, get a topic, and then have these folks write about it. And so, Greg built a super functional site. Ostensibly, he showed the people how to set it up and run, and the site had been running for quite some time. But one of the articles that was on there was from a Catholic priest who had written a piece suggesting that 9/11 was an inside job. And so, you could find this thing by clicking on Greg Everett's-

Nicki: A CrossFit website that Greg had built, you could click on his name and it would show his portfolio.

Robb: Down at the bottom portfolio, it would say, "Site built by Greg Everett."

Nicki: Yeah, and it would link it, and you click on that, and you could see a portfolio of all the other websites he had built, and this Utopia site-

Robb: Newtopia.

Nicki: ... Newtopia site was on there.

Robb: The concern, and this is an opinion piece on my part, but the concern that Mulvaney and Glassman had at this point was that their burgeoning group of folks in the military, and potentially even the military who were paying for folks to go get certified through CrossFit, they were worried that somebody might click on a site built by Greg Everett, and then they somehow find way to Newtopia and then they find that article, and then...

Nicki: And find that article, and then it would reflect poorly on CrossFit, Inc.

Robb: Which is ironic because this was right at the time that we were having discussions with Glassman, largely being ignored, that hey, maybe we need something other than one main site because every photo posted on the main page was dudes breaching doors and helicopters and everything which I love our police, military and fire, but when you're trying to spin up a gym and you have school teachers and stuff like that coming in, and the place that you send them is this-

Nicki: CrossFit.com.

Robb: ... one size fits all thing, it was a problem, and eventually, everybody had their own website and this stuff became moot, and our concerns were actually validated as they always were. But what happened is that it was suggested that if Greg's work wasn't... Basically, if people didn't cease using Greg as a web builder, that there was going to be problems for them.

Robb: So, this kind of opened our eyes to the reality that we don't actually own what we have here. We had a website, CrossFit NorCal, and it's like, "Oh, we don't actually own the name CrossFit. We're building this brand and all this stuff." So, anyway, that was our first brush with this kind of censorship, or kind of some entity bigger than us curating our ability to do what it was that we wanted to do, and that was when we dual-branded.

We became NorCal Strength and Conditioning and CrossFit NorCal, and that was a huge bur under Glassman's saddle because he'd lost control over us, immediately, and this was a longstanding thing, but this stuff around power and control is where this stuff all comes from.

Robb: And so, I think it was 2014, 2015, Kresser and I were having a discussion fact that Google was effectively starting to curate medical and health-related material, and I didn't really piece things together at that point, but it's because Google has all these fingers into pharma. This is the reason why they want... I didn't piece that together until pretty recently, but they began curating content around certain topics. And during that Owl update, again, our website lost 97% of the site traffic, lots of other sites that are in this kind of low-carb space, also lost significant traffic, and it caused us to need to go look for something else, and we ended up settling on Mighty Networks. Maybe Substack was going at that point, but we wanted to do-

Nicki: Well, we wanted a community.

Robb: We wanted a community.

Nicki: We wanted something a little bit different than what Substack offers, and I'll still maintain that that was a bit of a tangent.

Robb: It was a bit of a tangent, but I'm also, the people who get systems which is everybody except my wife will see their-

Nicki: Are we going to have that kind of Salty Show today?

Robb: We certainly can. We certainly can. My back's been hurt and I haven't been going to jujitsu.

Nicki: Yes, I know. I know.

Robb: The common theme here though is just kind of some freedom of access on both sides of this, both you individually as a creator having the freedom to put out what you want to put out and then consumers to be able to find you and consume what they want to consume, and we're finding that there are ever more intermediaries in that process. And it's funny because there are some people who will kind of play the libertarian card back on this or these are private companies and they can do what they want to do, and it's kind of, okay, I kind of get that, but they also start looking a whole lot like a public utility. And also just because an entity can do something, is it really good that they do something? Is this type of censorship really, really in the public's best interest? Is it in the world's best interest?

Robb: The internet grew due to the democratization of information and access to that information, and that was very good, and now there are basically monopolies within this scene that the thing that made it good now should go away. And so, that's always trouble me. I think that people are idiots and shortsighted when they pull that thing. But the other side was something that actually Bret Weinstein mentioned a couple of shows ago which is the flip side of this, which is that these information curators think that you, we are so feeble-minded, so addle-brained that we need to be protected from everything, and that's the other side of this. If you want to play the kind of pseudo-libertarian market card, and these things are even though I would argue they're multinational entities and supersede governments and that's probably a problem in and of itself, but the flip side of this is just that me as a consumer, I maybe want to have

access to more or less what I want to have access to within certain bounds of decency and all the rest of that stuff.

Robb: So, Substack has been maybe one of the singular bright lights in the story because even outfits like Patreon has censored some people. They've deplatformed some people. Certainly, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, et cetera, has deplatformed folks.

Nicki: And it really seems like Substack is committed to really defending the freedom of expression and the freedom of speech. So, I saw an interview with the CEO with, I don't remember his name, but some mainstream kind of news anchor type who was asking the CEO, and I don't remember his name offhand, how can you stand behind hosting people like Alex Berenson on Substack. He's putting out so much misinformation, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The CEO stood his ground. He was like, "We need the ability for all voices to have a place. Even if it's poor information or people don't agree with it, we have to be able to have that conversation. We have to be able to have that discussion. Just censoring and blocking people and making those voices disappear is not the answer." And so, I'm pretty heartened by his position because I feel like, without Substack, I think it would be pretty challenging to find a lot of the people that we're going to be talking about here today who are bringing a lot of value to the world.

Robb: Cool.

Nicki: Cool. Okay, mouse bitch, scroll down.

Robb: I like this. Kind of warming up to this.

Nicki: Okay. So, one quick thing about Substack. So, it's basically a platform where anybody can have their list of articles, their feed where they publish their writing. If you follow a lot of people, it can be a little overwhelming because those people, whenever they publish something, it goes directly into your inbox. So, you can put things in a folder or have them go directly in a folder. They do have something called Substack Reader that's in beta, basically compiles it. So, if you have five different authors that you're following, it compiles it in a list as if it's published like a newspaper feed and you can just read them like that, or you read them one at a time as they come into your inbox, or if you have a separate folder that you have those emails dropping into, then you can read them when you have the time to read them, but it can be a lot. Some authors publish multiple times a day, some once a month.

Nicki: So, one of the questions in the Healthy Rebellion was how do you stay on top of all this because one of the gals, Rachel, posted probably 10 different Substacks that she recommended and follows fairly regularly, and somebody asked, "How do you stay up on all this stuff?" And her answer was, "I don't always. Sometimes I skim or depending on what the topic is, I'll dig in more deeply." Twitter, you have all voices kind of dropping into your Twitter feed. I'm not on Twitter anymore so it's been a while, but this is dropping directly into your inbox. And so, you have to know who to follow in order to... As far as I know, maybe you know the answer to this, there's not one Substack feed where you can kind of find other people the way that Twitter-

Robb: That I don't know. I don't think so.

Nicki: Yeah, to my knowledge, I don't think there is. So, the way that you find people is either by recommendations or they send you an article and you read it and you're like, "Oh, this guy's pretty interesting."

Robb: Honestly, I think that that's one of a big, a social media move would be to start trying to push you into those ecosystems, whereas they're just letting you find this stuff organically which I think is good, ultimately.

Nicki: So, the subscribers that people are gaining, they're earning them the hard way. They're earning them because their work has been shared. People like it, they decide to subscribe. So, subscribing again can be you just...

Robb: Let me just touch on that really quickly. It's just kind of occurring to me. Facebook will push you things. Twitter will, Instagram, your Instagram feed. That's a great way of growing followers, but then what you are incentivized to then do is ridiculous shit-

Nicki: To get more, yeah.

Robb: To get more, whether it's more and more shirtless selfies or just hyperbolic over the top stuff. It is interesting that it hearkens back to kind of the early days of blogging where if you did good work, people would eventually find it, and you could carve your way in the world.

Nicki: Would find you, would share it, and you would grow your audience.

Robb: They would share it. You do something crazy, like provide value. So, it'll be interesting to see how Substack grows and evolves, but I would predict that if they got into the business of trying to curate and send people here and there, then it's going to poison their business model. Right now, I assume they make a cut off of what goes into the donations to run it.

Nicki: Yeah, I'm not sure how they monetize it. I think people maybe have to pay to have the platform.

Robb: A platform, okay.

Nicki: And I'm not sure if they take a percentage.

Robb: I've been waffling on, spinning up Substack and Nicki's only answers were no or hell no.

Nicki: It's all a matter of time allocation.

Robb: Which we have very little of.

Nicki: Very little of. Okay.

Robb: Anything else around that?

Nicki: I don't think so. I think we'll just dig in. I think we have seven, I believe, that we kind of want to talk about a little bit in more depth, and some of them, we're going to read a little bit of a passage from a piece of their writing, and then at the end, we'll share probably, I don't know, it was like eight or nine more that were mentioned in the Healthy Rebellion by different people that folks might want to check out as well. We'll include links to all of these Substacks so you can find them in the show notes. You can also just search the name of the person along with Substack, and you'll usually get that return right up on top. So, the first, okay, mouse bitch, up.

Robb: Oh, I thought we were there. Okay, okay.

Nicki: Maybe I do need to drive.

Robb: This one, there was no link there. Okay. Okay.

Nicki: Okay. I didn't put the link there, but there will be a link in the show.

Robb: Okay. Okay.

Nicki: My first exposure to Substack was Common Sense by Bari Weiss. If you're not familiar with her, she was a journalist at The New York Times. She resigned, I believe like a year and a half ago and wrote-

Robb: Probably more than that now.

Nicki: Yeah, probably more than that now, wrote a very eloquent resignation piece that she published on her website, and then shortly thereafter created a Substack. So, that was my first exposure to her. She is, I think, one of the best people today providing really solid journalism on a lot of very touchy topics. She's a Jewish lesbian woman. She's I would say a little bit left of center and she'll talk about everything from relations with China, transgender issues. She tackled the true story of the New York Karen incident, how we all came to know that phrase, Karen, and call people a Karen, the true story behind that.

Nicki: She has a very, very popular Substack and now has several writers doing writing for her. And so, she's grown this into a little bit of the business. So it's true-

Robb: It's not a little bit.

Nicki: Kind of a sizable business. Yeah, but true journalism is happening. People are digging into complicated topics, sensitive topics. They did a whole piece on how professors in medical schools are apologizing for saying the words pregnant women because students in those classes are finding that term offensive because you can't say pregnant women anymore. You have to say pregnant people. So, all of these types of...

Robb: These professors not just getting kind of a slap on the wrist which I think is interesting in and of itself, but facing career censor and legal issues and whatnot. I'm sure we will probably get some backlash even mention this, but there's something really interesting and very scary about that, and there are historical precedents from where things like this come from, and Bari talks about this stuff. And again, it's interesting. This is a person who was a fairly far left of center, writing for The New York Times, living in the big city, Jewish, lesbian, and then has-

Nicki: And finding herself discriminated against on Slack within her own company, finding articles that she wanted to write being butchered or not getting published because they didn't fit the narrative. And so, she decided that that was no longer true to herself and it wasn't what she wanted to be. She did not want to step in line and follow that. She needed to speak and report on stuff that she felt needed reporting on, and so she went her own way. And again, now she has a very-

Robb: I think she reported, I don't know if it's 800 grand a month or a year that the Substack generates, but she makes-

Nicki: And she's able to employ writers. So, now she has several great, great writers that she's able to pay far better than these folks ever made at regular newspaper houses. I don't know. It's a cool thing.

Robb: It's a cool thing. It's a good indicator that if you do good work, it can and will be rewarded. I personally don't agree with everything that Bari writes herself or her podcast or that is curated by her folks, but it is always thoughtful. There is always diligence and work that goes into the material, and there's an honest attempt at finding the truth.

Nicki: And we can just say this about everybody we're going to mention. We don't agree with everything everybody says, and I think that goes without saying-

Robb: The Gato, I don't know, I don't know I've seen anything I disagree with, yeah.

Nicki: He's up next. I feel like that's another thing that's missing in today's world. You want to read people that you don't agree with everything that they say, right? That's the whole point of growing and learning. It would be super boring if everybody was somebody that you agreed with everything that they said. It makes you kind of think and stretch and like, "Oh, I hadn't thought about it like that. Maybe I still don't agree with it, but that's a really interesting way to frame that, or that's a perspective I wouldn't have considered." So, yeah, all of these people that we mentioned, maybe with the exception of the Gato, we don't agree with everything that they say, but they're fabulous. I think you'll find their writing top-notch. I want to also mention that Bari has a podcast called Honestly and it's also quite good.

Robb: It's quite good. Very, very good.

Nicki: Very good.

Robb: Okay. This next Substack fellow goes by the handle Boriquagato and his Substack is called bad cattitude. This is an anonymous Substack so we don't know the true identity of this fellow. We believe that he is male, and we know that he spends most of his time on the island of Puerto Rico.

Robb: And maybe from Puerto Rico, likely yes, yes.

Nicki: I think he's Puerto Rican, and we know that he went to Brown University. There's just some...

Robb: And also there was some discussion about trying to get him on Joe Rogan, and I texted Joe and said that this person might be the smartest person he's ever had on his show. So, Joe was intrigued.

Nicki: We'll see. Yep. Fingers crossed on that because I think everybody, at least everybody in the Healthy Rebellion who follows him, we're all very, very curious about his true identity.

Robb: We're Gato curious.

Nicki: Gato curious, yes. So, he is a person who got canceled on Twitter, and I'm going to read a paragraph from his sort of... So, on Substack, people can kind of pin or have a main post that's always featured, and then all of the other stuff kind of falls below that. And so, this is the opening paragraph to his featured post, a cat's tail, about how getting

canceled on Twitter, I think the rest of it is Makes Me Hopeful for the Future, but here's the opening paragraph.

Nicki: Once upon a time on an internet not so very far away, there was a cat who met a bluebird. The cat had opinions and ideas. The bluebird had a forum and a promised "stand for freedom, empower dialogue, and speak the true truth to power." The cat believed the bluebird and set about joining this community. He made many friends and had many adventures. By and by the cat grew to some small prominence and was friend to pundits and politicians, researchers and soul searchers, Nobel laureates, and nattering noobs. But Twitter was not an honest bird, and one day, without excuse or apologia-

Robb: Apologia.

Nicki: ... the abusive avian banished the cat from all the realm. Many others who failed to suit the narrative of the bullying bluebird were treated likewise. And so began the madness of King Jack. So, what do you want to say about the cat?

Robb: He's brilliant. He's funny. He's inspiring, clearly has a strong background in medicine and-

Nicki: Statistics.

Robb: ... statistical analysis, very, very strong, has honestly been a beacon of hope for me because he has made some observations, connected some dots, looked around some corners that I've seen nobody else do and frames this in a this is the struggle of our time, but that we cannot fold, we must hold the line, focusing a lot on the vaccine mandates and the blowback and the challenges around all the social-political stuff that is falling out around that.

Nicki: And the terrible data that is available in the United States, like in a lot of countries. I think the UK has the most reliable data currently that he's pulled from.

Robb: But he will constantly make the point so I need to do all the following adjustments because the data is garbage and something that I have meant to ping him, and I might even try to do it myself is to just compare and contrast the way that data is available for influenza. We don't have these holes and gaps in virtually anything else. He points this out and he makes these cases for why the challenges around the data exist. It shouldn't. We have all this material, looks very scientific, there's charts and graphs, and it's a suffocating amount of information that one would need a full-time job dedicated to staying on top of, and that's kind of the point. It's kind of sciencey-looking, but then when one really digs into it, it's hard to find stuff that we can make solid conclusions out of, but of the people out there doing some data analysis, he's one of the best. We'll mention a guy, Astral Codex Ten, who is also phenomenal at this. There are some great people. I mean, there are great people out there, but it's accessible. It's funny. It's inspiring. And he's Gato.

Nicki: And don't get your panties twisted in the fact that he writes with no capitalizations. He doesn't capitalize anything. That kind of bothers some people apparently.

Robb: It's been funny where some people have gotten completely britches twisted over that, and the fact that they can't see the genius of what the guy's writing-

Nicki: And they're getting hung up on.

Robb: And they're getting hung up on the fact that he refuses to capitalize the first letter of every sentence is hilarious.

Nicki: Every sentence, yeah. Okay. So, we'll link to him in the show notes as well. Vinay Prasad. I think you mentioned one of his articles.

Robb: Early, early.

Nicki: No, just like probably a month or two ago because he just started Substack.

Robb: A month or two ago. He got on my radar early being on MedPage.

Nicki: Right.

Robb: And he was a person that in all this contentious time, well, where do you go for some information, and generally, MedPage has a very kind of missionary style, orthodox kind of approach.

Nicki: Scripted, yeah.

Robb: Scripted deal, and then you had some pieces that were very sound, very reasonable, and you don't-

Nicki: But clearly asking a lot of questions that nobody else in the mainstream kind of publications were asking.

Robb: Yeah. And so, he, I don't think is a full professor of medicine in San Francisco, but he's kind of a young upstart whippersnapper that hasn't learned that the usual career path is be very careful about what you say, follow the orthodoxy, don't ask prickly questions, and he hasn't done that. And some of the writing that he's had, it's again always very thoughtful and he's willing to dig into some topics that are very controversial, very challenging.

Nicki: One of the most recent things that he wrote is a piece called Which Causes More Myocarditis, COVID-19, or the COVID-19 vaccination? And this has come up a lot in conversation because people are like, "Oh, well, COVID causes it as well." And so, he asks this question and he gets to the bottom and it's basically we don't know for sure because we don't have good data. And so, people that are just saying, "Oh, it's the same or the vaccine doesn't cause anymore significant rates of myocarditis," and they're just kind of brushing it under the rug, he is saying, and he goes through and kind of talks about the different rates of things, and we just don't have the data. So, until we get that data, everybody can have an opinion, but until we get the data, the answer is we don't know.

Robb: And this is, not to belabor this, but it's quite akin to the discussion around the COVID vaccine and kids. So, some folks will have the following line of reasoning. We have less than two years of data in these vaccines in children so we don't know what the long-term story is. The VAERS data, the vaccine adverse reaction database suggests that there's a signal there that's really troubling. The counterpoint would be VAERS is broken. It's corrupt. It's terrible, and so you can't trust it which then circles us back around again to-

Nicki: Why don't we have something better?

Robb: Why don't we have something better?

Nicki: We've had two years to get something better.

Robb: We've had two years to fucking get something better.

Nicki: And we never thought it was broken before COVID.

Robb: It's been, in one form or another, around for like 70 years, or at least, we have 70 years of data.

Nicki: If all of a sudden it's broken, we've had two years to come up with a different process.

Robb: And why on God's green earth would that not be one of our top priorities? Well, if you really want to hide whether or not there is a signal, then what's that saying, the police should be able to come into your house if you have nothing to hide. This is kind of that thing flipped around. It's like, well, we should have the best data that we possibly can because if these vaccines are really safe and they're really safe over the long haul and they're completely a win relative to experiencing the viral infection, then we should have some data to make some decisions around that. And just the long and short is that we don't have that information, and this long into it, that's challenging. And so, then some things like precautionary principle and whatnot should probably win the day until we have better data.

Nicki: Okay. You wanted to talk about Astral Codex Ten.

Robb: So, this guy is I believe a psychiatrist by training and does a lot of writing on psychotropic drugs, basically psychiatric drugs, but he writes on a host of different topics. And interestingly, he got on my radar, I forget who sent it to us, it might have been Chris Kresser, but it was a piece, The Only Thing I Can't Tolerate is Intolerance. And it got on my radar middle summer 2020 when cities are burning and were in pretty good social upheaval, and it seemed as if he had in this piece specific to that day, but it was actually penned I believe in 2012 or 2014. So, it far predated the kind of next layer of our social unstitching that we experienced. But this guy reminds me of the Gato in the just exceptionally high-level thinking that goes into this. He's not as funny, and doesn't bring that same kind of-

Nicki: He capitalizes his words.

Robb: He capitalizes his words. Not the same degree of lighthearted humor, although he does have some zingers in there, but just a brilliant person. He did a recent piece, Ivermectin: Much More than You Ever Wanted to Know. It's really worth a read. It is very long. One, it shows how complex these topics really are. And he goes through and looks at virtually every Ivermectin study done to date and talks about what is good about this piece, what is bad about this piece. There ends up being actually a remarkable amount of outright fraud on this topic. So, a number of the early pieces that provided maybe some hope or some interest around the ivermectin topic have been shown to be outright fraudulent, and he kind of details that story.

Robb: The finishing spot that he gets to, at least just with ivermectin specifically, is that it might have a mild, positive treatment effect in general. It likely has a powerful treatment effect if you live somewhere in which parasites which are commonly treated by ivermectin are a thing because you can dig in, and the immune compromise that occurs from having different types of parasites will further predispose one to poor

COVID outcomes. So, what he arrives at is that for the people who were that ivermectin was like the next coming of Jesus, that was wrong. It's likely not this 100% cure-all, although the little bit of me that's holding out some, dragging my feet on this, I still don't think that it's been super well assessed as a prophylaxis. Pierre Kory, everybody you talk to in those circles, that really is the thing that they've been selling. This thing needs to be used as prophylaxis, and maybe he ended up addressing that, and I didn't get it out of there because this thing was a remarkably long piece.

Robb: Aside from that, it's not a cure-all, but then the flip side is that everybody that's been saying there is absolutely nothing to see here, that's bullshit too because it appears to have a remarkably significant effect when you live in places that experience a significant parasitic load.

Nicki: Like Uttar Pradesh, like places in Africa.

Robb: Like these developing countries. So, this is this thing that was kind of hidden in there, and I've been tinkering on trying to... I have this idea around some of the issues of original antigenic sin, and what is it, the antibody dependent enhancement. I think some of that may be an artifact of our evolutionary biology intending to be more parasite-infected in the past versus dealing with lots of bacteria and particularly lots of viruses. I think the landscape that we experience now is very different than what our immune systems have experienced in the past. I think that that kind of explains the antibody dependent enhancement and also the original antigen sin, and I'm kind of noodling on a piece around that.

Robb: But the long and short of this from just the ivermectin thing is nobody was right. Nobody really had the full analysis, and maybe this guy does or doesn't but it's a fascinating piece. He does a very thorough job of going through and unpacking all this material, and then he has some social implications and some political implications which I think are really powerful, and he makes the case on both sides of this story that just blindly believing something out of hope is not helping. And the flip side of that, and something he didn't mention in here, is that ivermectin is just incredibly safe. It is one of the most studied drugs in the world. The difference between therapeutic doses and toxic doses are massive.

Robb: So, it was one of these things that at a minimum, from a public health standpoint, it could have been said, "This stuff is generally safe. It hasn't been assessed."

Nicki: We don't really think it does anything.

Robb: "We don't really think it does anything, but if you want to do it, do it because it's not going to hurt anything," which would've been a completely honest fucking statement.

Nicki: But the whole anti ivermectin campaign, I think did nothing but harm, and it harmed trust in these institutions which I think might be irreparably harmed, honestly when it comes down to it after this whole mess.

Robb: And he has a lot of commentary around that. If you're a data geek, you will get everything in the world that you would want from looking at his data analysis. If you're not super well steeped in that, even if you just kind of skim the data analysis and mainly focus on his intro, and then also the social implications and political implications, it's really powerful. You just get an insight into a brilliant thinker.

Nicki: Cool. All right, we're going to do our sponsor read next. This Salty Talk episode of the Healthy Rebellion Radio is sponsored by LMNT, our Salty AF electrolyte company. And as you all know by now, mint chocolate salt is officially in the wild, and I'm actually drinking some right now. It's the perfect electrolyte to keep you hydrated for all your winter activities, be they skiing, snowshoeing-

Robb: Podcasting.

Nicki: ... hiking, podcasting, or just sitting by a cozy fire in the presence of wonderful company. Remember, like grapefruit, it is a seasonal flavor or limited edition flavor so when it runs out, it's out. So, you can get your mint chocolate salt, as well as all of the other LMNT flavors at drinklmnt.com/robb. Remember to keep LMNT in mind when you're thinking about people on your holiday gift-giving list. That URL wants more is drink L-M-N-T.com/R-O-B-B.

Nicki: Okay. The next Substack we want to talk about is Eugyppius: A Plague Chronicle. So, this guy is I believe in Germany and he is another one of these amazing data, numbers, stats, cruncher guys, and a lot of wonderful pieces. Most of them are free. He did just recently open a paid corner, but he's committed to keeping most of his work free. And one of his most interesting pieces recently that we had a lot of back and forth with Chris Kresser on just in a text read is a piece called Stupid and Evil in Equal Measures.

Robb: Do you want to open that one to look at it?

Nicki: Sure. There's been a lot of conjecture, like did Bill Gates launch this whole thing so that he could... The pharmaceutical companies that he invested in September of 2019 could make billions of dollars for him, is this the result of some world economic forum, Klaus Schwab, great reset thing, was this intentional blah, blah blah. And this piece, Stupid and Evil in Equal Measure, is a really interesting, possible explanation. People will think, "Oh, this is a conspiracy theory," but you can have what's called... Well, his supposition is that there's an inner conspiracy and an outer conspiracy. So, there can be lots of inner conspiracies. There could be these global elites that want the world to do X, Y, or Z, but they can't. It's really hard to make those happen, but then you have people, bureaucrats and people that are kind of enacting-

Robb: Well, for example, animal husbandry is the sole driver of climate change. So, this is this meme that is very prevalent, and I think most people listening to this podcast kind of grok that there's some serious problems there. This is the whole thing that we... A big part of what we unpack in Sacred Cow, the book and the film, and that we talk about ad nauseam, but it is part of this movement where there's a slice of people, whether it's all the folks that have invested in Impossible Foods and this idea that lab-grown meat and these meat alternatives are somehow more sustainable and that they're better for the planet. There's this whole meme, and meme in the original meaning of this topic that it's basically a cognitive virus, not a cat photo with witty aphorisms attached to it.

Robb: And so, this would be one of these outer conspiracies where you've got a group of people who are, let's say the vegans, and they are committed to ending animal husbandry, and they're really concerned, rightfully so, about climate change, but their main concern is that we're going to shut down all animal husbandry because it's the main driver of climate change. And that just so possibly plays into someone like Bill Gates, who owns the largest private holding of farmland, and also has deep investments in these industrialized food products, and also, he has gone on record as saying that the greatest return on investment that he's ever had has been in vaccine programs. So, this

is where the vegans aren't necessarily sitting down smoking cigars at boardroom meetings with these people, but you can enlist these, yeah.

Nicki: They get sold the message, and then they are the best soldiers, the best purveyors of the message, and they go out, and it becomes a life of its own, and it just goes forth and prospers.

Robb: Indeed. Yeah.

Nicki: Anyway, this is a two-part piece. We'll link to this in the show notes, but it's a very interesting way to look at or way to consider how might this all have come. It's not so much the thing, what can we ascribe to incompetence.

Robb: Never ascribed to malice what could be explained with incompetence.

Nicki: Malice what you can ascribe with incompetence, yeah. It's not necessarily that, but it's an interesting framework to kind of think through how this all came to be.

Robb: And even if a bunch of his conjecture is inaccurate, again, it's cool to see some people that are just thinking at a very high level.

Nicki: Putting forward different models, yeah.

Robb: Yeah, and it's very consistent generally. There's a continuity to it that then also lends itself well to if it doesn't hold up to scrutiny over time, then the thing's going to collapse, and if it does, it tends to be self-reinforcing.

Nicki: And again, he's in Europe so he always has interesting pieces-

Robb: Insights from there.

Nicki: ... insights from what's going on in Europe. Okay. This next one is Natural Selections with Heather Heying. Y'all have heard us talk about Heather Heying. She is Bret Weinstein's wife. They'd run the Dark Horse podcast. Many of you probably already know about her Substack because you already listened to their podcast and she's mentioned multiple times that she started this new podcast. So, it's called Natural Selections. It's wonderful. I really like her writing style. I like how both of them teach, and it really comes through in Heather's writing if you're interested at all in biology and evolution and revolutionary biology, as well as she is now on the board of directors, I believe, of this new university that's kicking off in Austin. So, she's writing some about that and what's happening there with education and kind of innovating in education. And so, another great one to follow.

Robb: Yeah.

Nicki: Next, I want to mention a friend of mine, Tara Couture from Slowdown Farmstead, and I know I've mentioned her on the podcast before. I've read pieces from her Instagram account. This was probably a year or before the pandemic, so probably a couple years ago now, she was experiencing frequent censorship. So, they run their own farm in Ontario, Canada, and raise all of their own food. So, from cows and ducks.

Robb: And she has a pretty complex autoimmune situation that she manages with mainly carnivore.

Nicki: She's mainly carnivore, and yeah. So, nose to tail, beautiful, beautiful writer, beautiful person. And Instagram would frequently censor the images that she would share about when they would harvest their animals because it was offensive to some apparently. And so, she left Instagram for quite some time because it's kind of a toxic place.

Robb: Kind of.

Nicki: Kind of, as we all know, and kind of took some time off, and now she's back writing on Substack. I believe she's posting a little bit to Instagram, but mainly driving people to her Substack where she can write freely and also share whatever images she might want to share without having the Instagram overlords make decrees that it's not allowed.

Nicki: Anyway, I wanted to read a piece from her called An Ode to the Salty, and I'll link to that piece here in the show notes. I'm just going to read a little bit of a paragraph, but basically this piece, it was beautiful. It basically details several people, several friends of hers, and just their different idiosyncrasies and the uniqueness of their characters. One man is a welder. He eats bread and drinks and drinks diet Cokes, completely nothing on the same page with regards to the way that Tara and her family eat, but they have this commonality. They can learn to play card games together, and she goes through and details some amazing people and how most of them would be canceled in today's world. It all came about because she wrote something on Instagram, and a commenter said, "This post me feel sad because I think you're transphobic now," because she said something about being a woman or admiring women, and so it prompted this piece about all of these wonderful people in her life. These characters, these salty individuals who are unique and authentic and real. They're not these whitewashed, pasteurized, molds of people that it seems like society wants to create nowadays.

Nicki: Anyway, beautiful piece, and I'm going to read just this little snippet from here. And she says, "The irony is that the feminists would say I am a devotee of the patriarchy for my love and adoration of real and good men. They don't want me either. In fact, I can't think of a single flag-waving group that would accept me in my totality. You figure that out pretty quick in life. You figure it out and then you realize you have a few choices, conformity, silence, or go your own way. Conformity in any situation, to any issue that you don't hold to be a genuine truth, is a betrayal of one's own heart which is, ultimately, a betrayal of why you are here at all. Silence does the same. Our hearts are always listening. Sometimes silence is warranted. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a pattern of living where our words and our actions are kept sealed behind our mask so we can go along to get along. That leaves the only other option, go your own way. That one takes practice to build the confidence to stand with conviction. Each virtue takes time to build and shape. You will be battered and bruised, a scuffed-up human. But you will also be tastier, saltier, juicier, a wonder. True."

Nicki: So, anyway, I just love her writing. And I know this one came up on that thread that we had in the Healthy Rebellion over and over and over again. People are like, "I second Slowdown Farmstead. I third Slowdown Farmstead." She's like the calm in my chaos. Her writing just speaks to me, and if you read the comments on her post, she has such an amazing gift. She is in Ontario, Canada. So, she is sharing some of what's going on up there in this world of COVID, but a lot of it centers around her farm, her animals, the way that they approach farming. If you are interested in having your own homestead or raising animals, you will definitely find a billion gems in Tara's work. And so, I can't recommend Slowdown Farmstead enough. Again, all of these will be linked in the show notes.

Nicki: I think this is the last one here that we're going to mention.

Robb: And then we're just going to kind of go through...

Nicki: And then we're just going to kind of just list a few, and then we'll wrap this up. This writer, Raelle Kaia, she runs a Substack called Open Heart Open Mind, and this one is brand new to me. Actually, it was Chris Kresser's wife who sent this article to me and I find her writing beautiful, and this particular piece is entered on spell words which was a new concept, but it I think beautifully kind of relays where we are today with how we communicate as a society. And spell words are words that as soon as they're uttered, the people have an instant grokking of what that means, and all critical think thinking just stops.

Robb: Has a potential to stop.

Nicki: Has a potential to stop. For most people, it just stops, and you instantly make all these judgments about the person that go along with the spell word. And so, in this piece, which I think is really well done, she talks about several different spell words, vaccine, vaccine hesitant, conspiracy theory, and-

Robb: The science.

Nicki: The science. And so, I'm going to read a piece here about the segment is she wrote on the science. And so, she goes, "Where does the authority to apply these definitions originate? Through another spell word, "the science." Insertion of the simple article the achieves this infusion of authoritative spell power. The word the lets us know there is only one. In this case, there is only one scientific truth, and it is authoritatively and finally known. That's why we hear about how the need to trust the science and follow the science. We don't hear about how we need to trust science or follow science. There is a good reason for this. Science is a discipline grounded in the scientific method. When following science and the scientific method, knowledge is attained by proposing and challenging disprovable hypotheses. Each hypothesis welcomes as much scrutiny and challenge as possible. The more challenges a hypothesis sustains without being disproven, the stronger it becomes."

Nicki: And then a little further down she says, "The science is a spell word of authoritative compliance, wielded by those who operate the mechanisms of finance, governance, and mass media. Like a priesthood, the science has the power to invest words like vaccine and drug with spells of command, belief, and compliance. Such spells are alien to science and the scientific method." So, anyway, it's a beautiful piece. Again, we'll link to it. She's one that I think writes a little less frequently, but this piece just totally stuck out to me and shared that in the Healthy Rebellion and lots of people, it resonated with them as well.

Robb: All I would throw in there is I think anybody that's a student of 1984, Brave New World, we've seen this before. This game has been played before. This game is played in authoritarian power structures. It's frankly fascinating, terrifying, but also fascinating to see about half of the US population under a spell, really buying into this notion, and it's all under the guise of safety. It's always under the guise of safety. This one is specifically public health, but there's always a threat. There's always the creation of an other versus us, and then it's off to the races from there. The irony though is I think that the folks on the other side of this story are probably having similar discussions and we are, in some way, the authoritative-

Nicki: The ones under the spell.

Robb: Yeah. Yeah.

Nicki: It'd be interesting to see how this all...

Robb: I kind of wish I could be frozen and then just woke up at six-month intervals, and you kind of pop your head out and you're like, "Oh fuck. Not yet. Put me back."

Nicki: Not yet. Okay. I think that those were the main ones that we wanted to kind of give overviews on, but I wanted to just mention by name some other Substack authors that people in the Healthy Rebellion mentioned. Glenn Greenwald, Matt Taibbi, Popular Rationalism, that's another good one that we look at fairly regularly. John McWhorter, Alex Berenson, Toby Rogers, Steve Kirsch, another one like Alex who's sort of-

Robb: Controversial.

Nicki: ... controversial, but interesting nonetheless, to kind of see what's going on.

Robb: And just a quick comment on Steve, he's abrasive. I think he's probably on the spectrum and self-admitted, he's a tough person to like.

Nicki: He's hard to like when you listen to him speak. He's kind of brusque.

Robb: He's really abrasive. Even when he did a podcast with Bret and Robert-

Nicki: Malone.

Robb: ... Malone, it was like Steve was arguing with Bret and Robert, and it was like, "Dude, these guys are..."

Nicki: His enthusiasm comes across in this really abrasive way, yeah.

Robb: Super abrasive. But Steve's a brilliant guy and he has multiple... Being in Brazilian jujitsu and watching the development of the UFC, I literally was at ground zero when that stuff kind of got going and came from traditional martial arts and saw the Gracie challenge of like, "Hey, we'll pay you a \$100,000 if you can beat us in unarmed combat." And that was interesting. And Steve Kirsch has been laying a bunch of million-dollar bets with-

Nicki: Different people.

Robb: ... different people, and nobody's taken him up on this stuff which doesn't mean he's right, but goddamn, it's interesting, yeah, yeah.

Nicki: Which is interesting. It's interesting. And he's one who's interesting too. So, he's very, I think, independently wealthy and he has put a ton of his own personal funds into different drugs for COVID. And just throughout this whole last two years, he just recently started charging for his Substack and people were giving him a ration of shit, like, "Why do you need to charge for blah, blah, blah. You already have enough money," kind of thing. And his response, which I think is awesome, he's putting millions of dollars of his own money into these efforts, and he would like it to put tens of millions of dollars into it. So, people who donate, it's not going to him, it's going to these efforts towards finding therapeutics that work and also fighting mandates and whatnot. He's definitely one of these no vaccine mandate-

Robb: And he is vaccinated.

Nicki: And he is vaccinated.

Robb: He and his family are vaccinated, and he has mixed feelings about that at this point, yeah.

Nicki: Yeah, and then the last one that was mentioned by rebels is Dr Rollergator. So, again, we will have a list.

Robb: And he's another one that got booted off of Twitter. He was popular with Bret and Heather, with the Gato, with a good number of people, and he's another one that got booted out of Twitter.

Nicki: Yeah. So, we will provide links to all of these inside the show notes. Hopefully, that was helpful. Hopefully, you found somebody new. If you didn't know what Substack was, I think you're in for a treat. There's lots of people doing amazing work on the platform, and hopefully, y'all get something out of that. One last thing, be sure to check out our show sponsor, LMNT. Remember, mint chocolate salt is out just for a limited time. You can grab your LMNT at [drink L-M-N-T.com/robb](https://drink.l-m-n-t.com/robb). You can buy three boxes, get one for free. It's great stocking stuffer, great for gifts. Again, drink L-M-N-T/R-O-B-B. And any final parting words?

Robb: Just on that LMNT front, a little bit of, in the evening, some decaf coffee, chocolate mint, top it off with peppermints schnapps or some Kahlua, and it's pretty good.

Nicki: Schnapps.

Robb: That's all I got.

Nicki: All right, folks. Have a wonderful weekend and we'll see you next week.

Robb: Bye, folks.

Nicki: Bye.