

Paleo Solution - 208

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- Robb Wolf: Howdy folks. Robb Wolf here. This is the Paleo Solution podcast. I'm not actually sure which episode number this is because it's just been that type of a couple of weeks. But I do have my incredibly gorgeous and wonderful guest on today, Tara Grant. You probably know her from PrimalGirl.com. She's one of the Sisson's right-hand gals in everything primal. Tara, how are you doing?
- Tara Grant: I'm doing great, Robb. Thank you so much for having me on today.
- Robb Wolf: My pleasure. So you have a new book out. Can you tell people about your book?
- Tara Grant: Sure. It's about a condition you've probably never heard of called hidradenitis suppurativa or HS for short. It's a condition that I battled for over 20 years before I went paleo and found that it had an autoimmune connection and managed to put myself into remission. I've been in remission now for almost five years with the paleo diet and some autoimmune tweaks. I wanted to help other people out because there's just so much misinformation out there and there are people that are suffering really, really bad. So I sat down and started writing and you know, until I had a pretty good guide for people to be able to heal themselves and there you go.
- Robb Wolf: You know, the name of the book is The Hidden Plague. I've got to say you should have probably picked somebody besides that limp weeny Robb Wolf to do the foreword for the book though. I mean that -
- Tara Grant: Right, I know.
- Robb Wolf: --guy autoimmune stuff I mean that's just crazy. So give people -- I know virtually everybody who listens to the podcast is going to know you but they may not know kind of the longer term story that you had with this. Like you had initially like a really remarkable just kind of like body composition transformation and then this whole autoimmune story was kind of like another layer of the onion that was peeled. Can you give folks like a longer term rundown on what you've been --you know, just the whole health story from the dark difficult days to more recent times?

Tara Grant: Yeah, sure no problem. You really think that most people listening are going to know who I am though?

Robb Wolf: Well if they don't they should so.

Tara Grant: [Laughs] Oh well.

Robb Wolf: They will soon, they absolutely will soon.

Tara Grant: Oh thank you. Well let's see, you know, I never thought I was sick growing up. I was always 5 to 10 pounds overweight and I had all the standard things that go wrong with you in puberty. You know, I became nearsighted and needed glasses. I had cystic acne, horrific mood swings, irregular periods all of those things that we're told are normal. It wasn't until I was in my early 20s that the weight really started to pack on and it didn't matter what I did, how many calories I ate, if I ate low fat, exercised six days a week, I just kept getting fatter and sicker and more inflamed until I had every itis that you can get. I was on antidepressants and any kind of medication that the doctors would throw my way, I would take because I was convinced it was going to fix me.

Then after I managed to have my kids and I actually had to do in vitro fertilization. After ten years of trying I had messed my system so bad. I had polycystic ovarian syndrome and everything. Finally managed to have kids, put on over a hundred pounds during the pregnancy which didn't come off and a few months after the kids were born the numbers on the scale actually started going back up and I started to freak out. Because I'm like here I've got these two beautiful baby boys, I had twin boys and they were only I think 7 or 8 pounds at the time and I could barely pick them both up at the same time. I certainly couldn't get down on the floor and roll around with them and I started thinking about well these are boys, they're super active, like what the hell am I going to do when they're eight years old and they want to go to the park or what happens if the house is on fire and I have to grab both of them and put one under each arm and run? I can't do any of that right now. I knew that I had to fix something but I didn't know what.

Luckily my brother had started crossfit and he found out about you, he found out about the paleo and then he found The Primal Blueprint by Mark Sisson. He sent me a copy of the book, I swear to god I went primal before I even finished the first chapter. It just made so much sense to me. I had all these light bulbs going off and so I adopted an ancestral diet and I haven't looked back. But one by one all the problems that I had just disappeared. The weight started melting off of me and I found it was

simple, it was easy. I didn't have to count calories and I could eat all these things which I had been avoiding like bacon you know, or higher fat items, saturated fat. I had been avoiding all of that so incorporating that back into my diet was one of the best things I ever did. My hair changed, became like silky and smooth and shiny and my skin and everything. Everything went away.

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All the problems that I had went away one by one with the exception of the HS. It got drastically better and I would have said at that time I was in remission. Every four or five months or so, I would have a flare-up and I didn't know why. So since I had gotten rid of the weight problems, I had gotten rid of the problems with inflammation and all those diseases and syndromes that I've had. I was feeling fantastic. I wanted to get to the bottom of this one last thing that I had.

So I sat down and talked to Loren Cordain and he told me that there was an autoimmune connection and that's all I needed to hear. I just delved in, started experimenting on myself, reading all the science, learning everything using your website, Chris Kresser, Sarah Valentine and Loren Cordain and there you go. I just started writing it all down and the rest is history.

Robb Wolf:

So, you know, yeah, dramatic improvement. We had some phenomenal weight loss and some general improvement but there were some final tweaks that you had to do to really I would say like put this thing 100% behind you. What were those final little and this is kind of like the -- in my mind I'm kind of asking a leading question here you know, because we're talking about like this kind of paleo primal approach but then when we start talking an autoimmune protocol then usually we have to tighten things up even a little more. Like what were those final little tweaks that you had to do to really get the HS fully under remission?

Tara Grant:

A major one for me was removing night shades. That was a big one but it wasn't the final puzzle piece. It turns out that yeast and foods that contain yeasts and wild yeast are really probably my biggest trigger. For years, I thought it was wheat because every time I would eat bread, I would flare up. I was convinced it was the gluten but now I'm not saying I don't have a problem with gluten, I certainly don't eat it but I think it was more the yeast, the brewer's yeast or the baker's yeast that came along with the products that had the wheat in it that were really doing me in.

Robb Wolf:

Interesting. Interesting.

Tara Grant:

Yeah.

Robb Wolf: You know, that's where so much of this stuff like you know, we have some general ideas about these different things that cause intestinal permeability. With the intestinal permeability then we have systemic inflammation, we have the potential for both intact food particles and particles of things like yeast and bacteria to make it into the system and then a process of molecular mimicry to occur in which we are making antibodies that both attack the yeast or the bacteria but can also attack our cells. Clearly, this is another one of those examples where we don't really know exactly what it is but we've got some general ideas. You know, there have been people talking about like yeast-free diets and candida cleanses for years. There have been people talking about different intestinal permeability stories for a long time but I think with a lot of Loren's work actually that we started putting the puzzle pieces together and there's still so much more that we don't know than what we do know but generally it seems like more often than not we can get people motoring towards this potentially lower on the carb although that will vary from person to person. But then starting to look at these secondary and tertiary things like night shades, like dairy, like yeast then we start getting the whole thing pulled together.

So I mean what does a day's eating look like for you now? I know that that's – I've had some comments from folks that they really like when people describe a day or two of eating. You know, like how do you get around some things like you react to say balsamic vinegar or something like that because there can be some yeast in something like balsamic vinegar like wine or something?

Tara Grant: I can handle small little bits of vinegar. You know, the occasional salad dressing but to be honest, I don't eat salads all that often and when I do I usually just like have them dry and grab just a handful of spinach and shove it in my mouth.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Tara Grant: I'm not using utensils when I'm eating salad these days. Yeah, I can handle small amounts of things. People will have to experiment on themselves. But something that I found, a connection that I made which is pretty exciting for me, I've always had horrible sugar cravings. Even after I went paleo, they never went away. You know, you put a Cadbury cream egg in front of me and I would be all over it, there's nothing I could do. When I cut all yeasts and yeast-containing foods out of my diet, immediately my sugar cravings went away. Now I'd already –you know, I wasn't getting yeast infections or anything like that. I used to get that

before I went primal. I would have yeast infections and problems with yeast and fungus and whatever. All of that went away so I didn't realize I had an issue with yeast but what I found now is that when I eat it not only do I flare but my sugar cravings come back really, really strongly and I have to fight them. If I don't have any yeast in my diet, I could have a small amount of sugar though I don't want anymore. It's an incredible change.

[0:10:34]

Robb Wolf:

Interesting. Well you know there's some fascinating kind of psychoneuroimmunology stuff that relates to different parasites and their ability to actually influence the behavior of the organisms that they infest. Oh gosh, there's something that infects mice that makes the mice not afraid of cats and the cats eat the mice and part of the life cycle of this parasite is that needs to be in a cat host body and then it gets dumped out in the feces and everything. But there's also some pretty good indication that yeast can alter some elements in the cognitive function in critters that it infects. It wouldn't be at all surprising the yeast runs remarkably well on simple sugars and even starch to some degree can be problematic in this regard.

You know, right now I guess we're kind of in the paleo scene, we're having this kind of renaissance with like resistant starch and more carbs and stuff like that which I think is totally legit and spot on but or maybe there's like a comment there you know, some people depending on their situation at that moment, they may be due to some sort of a low carb, kind of like a gaps approach so that they choke down, kill off the candida overgrowth or the yeast overgrowth and then go on to really limited-yeast exposure diet to get the gut to heal, to get the systemic inflammation down and then we start playing with things like resistant starch and other carb sources. So again I think it's really important.

I'm going to ask you some questions about doctors here in a minute but I think it's important whether you're doing self-experimentation or somebody's a practitioner with this to remember that we've got lots and lots of tools and to not throw any of those tools out just because there's maybe some stuff that's in vogue or some new learning or something. Like I think that lower carb and these different like the candida cleanses historically have been very low carb, non-yeast containing foods and they seem to work pretty darn well.

Tara Grant:

Yeah. When I first started paleo I was extremely low carb and at the time I needed to be. I was really insulin resistant. Once I had lost some weight, I got my insulin sensitivity back, I was able to ride it out for about six

months or so and then I found I just didn't have any energy anymore. At the time people were talking about safe starches and whatnot and so I thought okay well let me throw in a sweet potato and the fatigue that I was experiencing, the low energy went away right away. I was talking to Jay Stanton at Primal Con about metabolism and how you can actually fix your metabolism. At one point you may not be able to handle a lot of carbs whereas at another point in your life, you can handle more. So it's really good to check in with yourself and your body how you're feeling and to also look at the literature that's out there and other people experimenting on themselves. Just because you've been doing something for a long time doesn't mean it's going to work forever and just doing little tweaks and making little changes, you can do this for the rest of your life.

Robb Wolf: Right and actually keep benefiting.

Tara Grant: Exactly.

Robb Wolf: Well you know, how was your – I guess kind of two questions. How is your experience early on with the kind of established medical scene and then do you have a doc or healthcare provider now who really understands this kind of autoimmune protocol that you're doing and the significance that it's had with your HS?

Tara Grant: Well I'll answer the second part. No. I have a couple of dermatologists that I've talked to. They are extremely surprised to see that I'm in remission and I've done it naturally. So they're interested in reading the book and whatnot. But traditionally for me, I haven't done very well with doctors. I like to do research. I like to know what's going on with my body and I have a really bad habit of marching into a doctor's office and saying I think I have this, test me for it and they instantly get their backs up. So I've tried to approach it different ways but to be honest I don't have to go to the doctor anymore.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Tara Grant: Nothing wrong with me. I have no reason to go. My children they're going to be 5 in a couple of weeks and they haven't been to the doctors in over three years. We just don't need to go.

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When I first started going out and visiting doctors I saw, geez, over 50 of them I would say. Part of that is a product of being in the military and so every time I go into the doctor's office you know, my old doctor may be deployed or he may have PCS which is when you move to a different base

so I might have a brand new doctor. But also I could never find a doctor that was a really good fit for me. In all of those doctors, not a single one of them suggested a change in nutrition. When I mentioned that I think what I was eating was affecting my skin, I was laughed at. I was told that what you eat doesn't affect your skin. Here's some hydrocortisone, put it on and come back if it gets any worse.

Every time I went in, I wanted to get to the root of the problem but the problem was is that I had so much wrong with me because I had all these syndromes and all syndromes are just a big collection of symptoms. So I would go in and I'd say well I can't lose weight and my periods have stopped and I've got acne and oh by the way I'm breaking out here and I'm losing my hair and there you go, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop. We can only handle one thing per appointment. What do you want to talk about today, make another appointment to come back to talk about the other things. So I would have to be you know, I'd have to concentrate on one symptom when nobody was ever interested in getting to the bottom and looking at the root of all my problems which turned out were all this. It was the same thing. It was insulin resistance, and I was eating all these gut irritating foods or I had leaky gut. You know, so I had to do that work myself. So to be honest I haven't been to a doctor in ages.

Robb Wolf:

Well that's – it's just you know, I know that there will be people listening to this that are probably still working with their doc or trying to figure out how to do this and it's great I think to try to get some help on board with this. But then at the same time if you're just still getting stonewalled, you know, a simple nutritional approach might be all that you need at the end of the day. Maybe not simple for some folks but you know, definitely worth tinkering with and giving it a shot.

So in the book, you end up breaking down autoimmunity in a really accessible way and there's one section in here that you get into genes, gut and environment. Can you talk to people a little bit about that? I think that that's so important for people to understand that it's not just the genes that you have, it's not just the environments, it's the whole ball of wax and how they all go together.

Tara Grant:

Well exactly and that's actually something that I heard on your podcast. The holy trinity of autoimmunity is the gene. You have to have the genetic component which is why some people can eat whatever they want and not get sick. They can do whatever they want and not get an autoimmune condition. So if you have that genetic component then you know, right out the gate you have to be careful. Then the second part is the leaky gut. If your gut isn't leaky and those proteins, toxins and

bacteria can't make their way into your bloodstream then it's not going to set off autoimmune responses. The third thing is the environment. You need to have those triggers present whether they come from your food which predominantly they do but also medications that you take, your environment. You know, maybe you live in a house with black mold or something that can set something off, an illness whatnot, some kind of environmental trigger. When you put them all three of those together, you end up with an autoimmune condition. What's interesting to me is to make the link you know, between all autoimmunity because people with HS often say it's connected to Crohn's disease or oh, it's connected to IBS or oh... You know, well no, it's connected to autoimmunity and all autoimmune conditions have the same root.

Robb Wolf: I completely agree and it's kind of funny and kind of frustrating in that this basic kind of evolutionary biology approach to this whole story, it ends up and I think I've mentioned this on other podcasts and this feels like I'm getting old and worn out saying that I'll keep saying it. One of the problems that we face is that this stuff works so well and on such a broad range of issues that it starts challenging credulity a little bit. It's like come on really like you know--

Tara Grant: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: --multiple sclerosis, lupus, vitiligo, HS, you know, and it goes and on and on. But we have some pretty clear common etiology with this stuff. You know, something that I used to do when I was working in the gym more often and somebody would come in and I'd be looking through their intake or just in talking to them they would mention you know, I've got this thing like porphyria cutanea tarda. You know, I'm like what the hell is that. So really while they were warming up or cooling down, I cruise over to the computer and I'd put in that disease term and usually not even spell it remotely close to correctly but you know. Give a shot with that and then I would put in insulin resistance or insulin and I would see if I would find anything.

Occasionally, it would be pretty heavily insulin related and if I didn't find some direct kind of insulin resistance stuff associated with it, then I would switch over and I would put in transglutaminase and almost inevitably I would find linkage with transglutaminase which usually there's some sort of gluten intolerance or gut permeability kind of story with that. We have I believe 8 different isoforms of transglutaminase. The one and the three tend to be related to dermatological issues so like vitiligo and psoriasis and all that sort of stuff.

But you know, it usually kind of boil down to one of those two camps and I had some pretty good success at least finding some literature to kind of convince people to give a shot. But you know, HS is interesting in that it clearly has an autoimmune element to it and lots of other conditions will kind of ebb and flow based on hormonal situation. But HS is interesting to be in that it really particularly in females, it tracks the period so much. So there is a huge kind of androgen, insulin kind of story. Could you talk a little bit about that? Like what was your experience with that and how do you see kind of the – what percentage of the problem is purely autoimmune? Clearly, we could say that that's maybe the causative factor but then how does the insulin resistance or some of the PCOS type stuff kind of feed forward into this and make it worse?

Tara Grant:

Well I have an entire chapter on hormones in the book. There are so many people out there because HS does kind of track with your period, people will often flare up seven to ten days before their menstrual cycle and they're convinced that this is what's causing it. When I put out there that okay you know, women all have periods not all of them have HS. Some little girls before they go into puberty are starting to develop HS and women after they go through menopause are still struggling with it. They don't spontaneously go into remission. It becomes a little evident that although your period may play a part, it isn't the sole cause of this disease or else pretty much everybody would have it.

So but what hormones do is they do play an important role in our skin. Estrogen, testosterone and progesterone in particular even cortisol all play roles in our skin but it all does come down to insulin because all of our other hormones are governed by insulin and when our insulin is out of whack then our other hormones try to find stability. So by getting to the root of the problem, by fixing your insulin eventually and what I found it takes about six months or so the other hormones responsible for these eruptions will start to fall in line and regulate. Sorry what was the other part of the question?

Robb Wolf:

Oh no, you really you got it. You know, just to what degree do you feel like I guess that interplay between autoimmunity and the hormonal disregulation will play and you've nailed that so no that's spot on. You know, part of the reason why I ask that is that I know that some of the common treatments that are prescribed for HS because we do see flares around the period that we'll see folks put on birth control --

Tara Grant:

Yes.

Robb Wolf: --trying to just suppress that whole story. I like that you mentioned and this is part of the things that should call that treatment methodology into question which is that we have prepubescent and postmenopausal people who still have the issue. So you know, is simply suppressing normal estrogen and progesterone cycling, is that really a smart way to tackle this or are we just kind of pushing the problem deeper? Yeah.

Tara Grant: Well it's like sticking a Band-Aid on in an arterial wound.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Tara Grant: You're just fixing it for a little bit. Taking birth control pills with estrogen in them can be helpful and that's what a lot of women are prescribed. But you know, you take a birth control pill with estrogen and progesterone in it and their autoimmune conditions just go nuts because the progesterone blocks the sebum in your skin and closes your pores and everything so you can have issues that way. I would say the leaky gut component, the autoimmune component of HS is about 80% of it I would guess.

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You can still flare up if you're not insulin resistant but what I've found in my own experience is that your flare-ups are going to be mild. They're not going to be those incredibly painful baseball-sized bumps and lumps and boils that you see some people afflicted with. If I've got my hormone sensitivity or my insulin sensitivity all locked down and everything and I eat one of my trigger foods, I will flare up. It's almost immediate. But it's gone within a couple of hours. It's not painful, it's very, very small and it's very easy to deal with. It's not a problem with my life. But when I was insulin resistant, the flare-ups were horrible --

Robb Wolf: Right.

Tara Grant: --and painful and lasted for months.

Robb Wolf: Right. Which you know, and again this is where this stuff is kind of fascinating and bedeviling to deal with, the autoimmunity which we would argue probably has a leaky gut component, that leaky gut can then feed into nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, systemic inflammation, dysregulation of hepatic glucose management which then that goes into letpin signaling and the brain signaling. Then if we throw legitimately problematic food, high glycemic load food into that mix, now we're driving that metabolic derangement forward and it just becomes a nightmarish mess to deal with if you're just trying to tackle one symptom at a time.

What you've got to do is really rewind the tape and say okay we've got metabolic derangement, we've got gut permeability, we've got gut systemic inflammation manifesting as autoimmunity. We've got to tackle all of this and we pretty much have to tackle all of it more or less at the same time. Like you can peel layers of the onion but ultimately you're going to need to be doing the full protocol to get the full results out of this. So yeah, yeah.

Tara Grant: Exactly. Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Speaking of the protocol, do you want to walk folks through a little bit of what you recommend? You go into fantastic detail in the book but what are the foods just as a surface level treatment like what can folks eat? Like what do you feel like is – you know, when we were little kids and we played tag and you have like the safe place of whatever where you're --

Tara Grant: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Like what are those foods that you're kind of like okay 99% of people, 90% of people this is your go-to stuff, start with this and then we'll start playing with other things from there.

Tara Grant: A standard paleo diet with the removal of nightshades and alcohol I would say which isn't – I guess alcohol is not on a standard paleo diet is that it's --

Robb Wolf: It really is because otherwise people would have a peasant uprising and not do any of it so that's why I've always advocated the booze otherwise like yeah whatever I'm good so yeah.

Tara Grant: [Laughs] But yeah, I mean when you start with the standard paleo diet, you've already removed the grains and the legumes and the sugar in the process garbage and stuff right. So that's a great place to start for somebody that is looking to heal themselves. What I often suggest is start there, just start there and get used to it for a little while and then if you're still flaring up then you can – and also write down as well what you're eating and when you're eating it and all of your symptoms and you'll start to be able to see a pattern. If you keep night shades in your diet and you realize that you're flaring up, your eczema is flaring up, the next day every day after you eat tomatoes well then that's a clue and maybe removing night shades should be the next step.

For inflammatory skin conditions especially where itching is involved I found that removing yeast and yeast containing foods is really, really helpful. But again it's so individual. Not everyone is going to need to remove yeast. Not everyone is going to need to remove night shades so you have to experiment. If you just for the first 30 days stick with like steak with coconut oil and baked sweet potato with steamed broccoli or something you know, something like that. That's what I would eat, that's my default meal for dinner is like meat with a sweet potato and steamed broccoli or spinach or something like that loaded with butter and ghee. But yeah just keep it simple at the beginning and as you add more things then you'll be able to see if you react to them or not.

Robb Wolf: That's madness, just using yourself as an experiment of one and finding out what works?

Tara Grant: Yeah. [Laughs] Well I've been doing it for five years now. I love it. I'm going to make myself a little lab coat and get a pocket protector with pens and stuff and get some --

Robb Wolf: I have extra of those --

Tara Grant: -- business cards made up.

Robb Wolf: -- so hit me up. I'll hook you up wholesale on that stuff so.

Tara Grant: Nice.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Yeah.

Tara Grant: Well you know gosh, again I kind of feel like preaching to the choir but I think every once in a while somebody who is a frequent listener of the podcast or follower of some Mark stuff or whatever, you know, most of these folks are pretty bought in but then we end up encountering friends, family, coworkers who maybe have a condition that we're talking about you know, and so I think that it's worth mentioning if you've got somebody new listening to this podcast and they're kind of like well what is this story.

[0:30:09]

Robb Wolf: I mean what you're really advocating here is what's called an elimination diet where we're assuming that there are some foods that are problematic, grains, legumes, dairy, maybe night shades, yeast containing items and there are some biochemistry physiology pathology that kind of supports the suspicion that we have for those. I wouldn't say that there's much in the way of any type of like randomized controlled trials yet. We

are getting very close to an NIH funded RO1 study that's going to look at paleo diet for various autoimmune conditions so we're getting close. But what we've got is some suspected mechanisms, some foods that are kind of held in suspicion. We eliminate those. Hopefully we get healthy in that process and then we reintroduce some of these suspect foods and just see how you do. Then that way you can figure out it's like well okay I can eat beans occasionally and I have zero problem. If I eat tomatoes then I'm absolutely immediately in a flare and I'm willing to do that every once in a while because my Aunt Suzy makes this amazing salsa and I'm just going to have some and deal with the consequences.

But you know, for folks that are maybe new to this that's the greasy used car salesman pitch is give it a shot, hopefully you get healthy. We've always got ways of tweaking and modifying things. There's usually a few other stones that haven't been uncovered yet that we can play with and you pretty well addressed all of that in the book. And then you know, at some point we get you healthy and then we figure out okay how much shenanigans can you get away with and still be healthy and then it's up to you to figure out what that level of buy-in is. Would you agree with all that?

Tara Grant: Oh absolutely, absolutely and I talk about that in the book as well. I'm able to cheat in small amounts with certain things and sometimes like you said you know, if a relative makes that wonderful bean dish you know, and you kind of have to. But coming from a place where your gut is almost totally healed and your inflammation is down and your insulin is good, when you do cheat, you're not going to have that massive fallout where you're missing weeks of work and all that. It's not going to be the same anymore and you'll be able to decide for yourself what is worth it and what isn't.

Robb Wolf: So do you have any other – like what's the biggest maybe pushback that you have from people? I would suspect like in my experience working with folks sometimes they've been so sick for so long they feel like they've tried everything and they're just kind of despondent. They're afraid of another failure. Like what's the main thing that if you've encountered people who clearly had an issue you're chatting with them about this stuff and then you were just getting some serious pushback. Like what's going on between their ears to provide that pushback?

Tara Grant: I'm dealing with that stuff on a daily basis. I actually dealt with some stuff this morning. The HS groups on Facebook in particular are just all the buzz. You know, you've got half the people that are supporting me and supporting the dietary changes and they've made them and they're

feeling better and so they're advocating my plan. Then you've got the other people that have been told by their doctors that there's nothing we can do. This is your cross to bear, there is no cure, you're always going to be in pain and they've kind of hardened themselves to always living like this. It's almost like they don't want to believe that they can get better and at the same time they're also suffering from depression.

Depression is really closely linked to HS and we in the paleo world know why that is. You know, when your gut is leaky and inflamed, it sends those signals up to your brain which also becomes inflamed and it creates depression. We know this but these other people may not and they're really in the throes of just this depressed desperation and they've been scammed. They have been absolutely taken advantage of in the past by different companies, by doctors wanting to experiment with immune suppressing drugs the TNFA blockers all of that garbage. So with this book I have to make sure it was kind of like a one-stop thing.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Tara Grant: It had everything in it. I wanted this to be the last thing that anyone with HS ever bought concerning their HS. Yes, so that's what I'm dealing with. I'm dealing with people that don't want to believe that they can get better and that are basically calling me crazy and writing mean things about me and stuff like that but I'm getting the thicker skin I got to just lead by example. That's why I wrote this book instead of helping people individually. Maybe I can help a hundred people out in the ether somewhere and that's going to be good for me.

[0:35:07]

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. Well if folks are willing to give it a shot, it will definitely help them because I mean this just mirrors – you do the really impressive phenomenal job doing the book. Like I could not have done this book. You know, in part because I didn't have that personal experience with HS. You know, like my stuff was more gluten, IBS, Crohn's which as we've mentioned you know, there's overlaps to it but there's a whole other layer to this story that you really did a phenomenal job with including all the hormonal dysregulation and kind of stitching the autoimmunity and hormonal dysregulation together and then also just having the passion of having healed yourself and being able to heal a lot of people.

It's interesting to me there have been a couple of different camps when I have written some stuff. Like I have maybe five or six articles on type 1 diabetes and the way that the type 1 diabetes story first got up on my radar was related to people doing crossfit and you know, as I'm sure folks

know, type 1 diabetes you don't produce insulin and so usually with exercise we see blood sugar go down. But crossfit is such an intense variety of exercise that you get a hormone-driven elevation in glucose from hepatic glycogenolysis from breakdown of glucose and release into the circulation. So people were getting these kind of paradoxical responses. They were doing crossfit workout and then getting sky high blood glucose levels and it took me a little while to figure out what was going on with that. We started writing some articles about it, found a few people who were in the honeymoon stages of type 1 diabetes where they still had some pancreatic function --

Tara Grant: Nice.

Robb Wolf: And if they did an autoimmune protocol paleo gig, they ended up restoring pancreatic function. We did some write-ups on this and you know, clearly this isn't going to work with everybody, although I think most kids who are in the honeymoon phase you've got an opportunity to do some stuff with this but people lost their minds. I mean --

Tara Grant: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: I had some of the nastiest emails I've ever received written about this stuff. You know, part of what I was talking about was just like okay on the most optimum situation maybe we intervene while you're in the honeymoon phase, maybe we reverse the pancreatic damage and you may be okay from here on out. You know, assuming that you avoided these problematic foods. Short of that then we can start figuring out ways like eating generally lower carb, being smarter with our exercise so that we keep blood glucose levels within a tighter control because type 1 diabetics just frankly don't age or live all that well because it's very hard even with the insulin pump to manage glucose levels.

But you would think that this would be pretty helpful and I actually had a lot of people similar to your experience chime in and say no man I've been doing this, I had great results just give it a shot, work with your doctor, map this stuff out. There was just this group of people that seemed so despondent and almost literally angry that --

Tara Grant: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: --you know, somebody was suggesting and I think one of the problems too is that I don't have type 1 diabetes so I lack that street cred. You know, it's almost like when you don't have kids and you try to comment

on anything related to kids you're just the asshole without kids so you know.

Tara Grant: Yeah. Although when I think back before I had kids, some of the garbage that was coming out of my mouth [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: It's funny. It's funny. I've had to change a lot of my thoughts about kids having had one. But I think that it's also very powerful for you having had HS and still needing to modify your diet and your lifestyle every single day to be able to keep it in remission.

Tara Grant: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: I think that just has some real power there and some real credibility.

Tara Grant: Thank you, yeah. If I didn't have HS I wouldn't have been able to write the book in the first place because and you know, any other book that's out there on it I think there's one medical book that costs \$300 that you can buy. It's written by somebody that didn't have it. They're just observing patients and whatnot and you really can't get to the bottom of it. All the different problems, all the different things that it causes, yeah if you don't have the disease, yeah sorry not...

Robb Wolf: No it's just unlikely that you're going to take the time to really understand it the way that you have. Because I mean there becomes a flavor of desperation associated with being sick in which you will try just about anything to try to fix what your situation is at least some people will so yeah.

Tara Grant: What I have seen from people that have this attitude where they are getting angry at me, a lot of times they've been in pain for a really long time and they've seen family members go through the pain. They may have had -- I know suicide is really a problem in the HS community, people just get despondent, depressed. They don't see a way out and they want to end it. So whatever somebody is coming from their own personal experience with whether it's themselves or family members or friends that they've seen and I found that they can really harden themselves to the thought that things can get better because that opens up a whole can of works like well if it can get better I didn't need to lose my mom.

[0:40:41]

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Tara Grant: You know, and then that can be really heartbreaking and emotional.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Tara Grant: And then the emails. [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Yeah, I mean I think I've mentioned this several times on podcast in various speaking situations. Nicki's mom died three months before I met Nicki from complications due to her rheumatoid arthritis and she was on immunosuppressant drugs, had to have a minor surgery, became septic and then there were a number of just kind of legitimate medical mismanagement stuff. This isn't like picking on the medical establishment. Like in anybody who's reviewed this case, I've thrown it by a couple of doctors they're like yeah, there were eight or nine different spots where the medical treatment had they not done XYZ then this woman would probably still be alive.

But at the end of the day, she had a condition rheumatoid arthritis which we've had a remarkable amount of success helping people with because it goes back again to this common etiology of autoimmunity and if we can get a handle on the gut permeability, systemic inflammation then we've got a pretty chance of helping somebody improve their health dramatically. You know, we still feel the aftereffects of that and it's a couple of days after Thanksgiving and whenever the holidays roll around without Nicki not having her mom here it's a big deal. So it's very powerful stuff.

Tara Grant: Yeah and I've found that people will react one of two ways. They'll either fall down or they'll pick themselves up and I had a similar situation with my grandmother postmortem, I've been pretty much able to diagnose her with celiac disease. She had rheumatoid arthritis. She had all of these problems stemming from autoimmunity. We didn't know at the time and she as miserable. The last few years of her life were really, really bad. But instead of sobbing into my cornflakes about you know, that she's gone and there was nothing I can do, I can fix myself. I can heal myself, I can pick myself up and live the best healthiest, most vibrant life that I can and make sure that my children do the same and by doing that I'm honoring her legacy.

Robb Wolf: Absolutely. Absolutely. Well we managed to drag it into a little bit of a morose deal but I think it's important for people to remember and this is some of the stuff that when we get some really big push back from the interwebs and whatnot, we don't know all the story with this. There's pieces of it that we're doing right. There's pieces of it that we're doing

wrong we're going to learn more and more over time but at the end of the day we have a remarkable amount of still admittedly largely anecdotal information but the bullous of information grows day by day and what we're talking about with autoimmunity and the systemic inflammatory issues it's everything from Parkinson's, Alzheimer's you know, the whole host of neurodegenerative diseases all of the known autoimmune diseases. So many of the autoimmune diseases that really aren't even recognized as being autoimmune like the porphyria and I don't know the HS is really well recognized as a legitimate autoimmune condition.

Tara Grant: No, it's not. If you look at the literature, the proof is all there and they're starting to look into it. But something that I discovered when I was researching this book is things like endometriosis and restless leg syndrome are also autoimmune.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum. Uh-hum.

Tara Grant: You know, and I had both of those and they're gone. So yeah, all of these conditions what I tell people is I say if you go to your doctor, you get diagnosed with something, they don't know what causes it, they don't have a treatment, they don't have a cure, they tell you that they don't know what's going on and then the symptoms either relapse or remit. I said look at it as an autoimmune condition, treat it as such. Go on an autoimmune protocol and you know, it's certainly not going to get worse. If anything it's going to get better and then you have your answer.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right. Well Tara, anything else that folks need to know about your book *The Hidden Plague* or where they can track you down on the interwebs and whatnot?

[0:45:00]

Tara Grant: Well they can find me on PrimalGirl.com. I'm having some issues with my website loading over the last week or so. I think the traffic is causing an issue. But they can go to PrimalBluePrint.com and the book is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and all that good stuff.

Robb Wolf: Cool. Are you doing any speaking engagements that folks are going to need to know about soon or will that be listed on the website?

Tara Grant: That will be listed on PrimalBlueprint.com. I'm going to be doing some seminars in the spring. I'm looking at going to Florida, Chicago doing a California thing, doing some primal transformations seminars and some book signings and stuff. I'm already busy at work on my next project. I

didn't get enough pushback or slack from this so I'm going to bust something else open. I'm working with -

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Tara Grant: --with Candle Kendrick on my next book, or our next book which is going to be all about sex.

Robb Wolf: Nice, right on.

Tara Grant: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: That perks me up, right on.

Tara Grant: [Laughs] Yeah, I mean it perks a lot of people up. We're all thinking about it and we've had so many changes in our body since we've gone paleo. You know, most of us have really healthy sex drives and we're all thinking about it but no one is talking about it. So just like with HS no one was talking about it so I started a conversation. We want to do the same thing with our sexuality.

Robb Wolf: Cool. Well I'm in for advanced copies on that.

Tara Grant: All right.

Robb Wolf: Let me know so.

Tara Grant: There may or may not be pictures.

Robb Wolf: Okay that works, that works.

Tara Grant: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: I can read. I'm a caveman but I can read so I'm good so.

Tara Grant: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Perfect. Well Tara, it was awesome having you on. I know we've had this in the works for a bit. Your book was released. This is going up Tuesday and your book was released officially on Sunday.

Tara Grant: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: So it is available right now. Folks definitely need to check this out and keep in mind this is a fantastic book for anybody with any type of autoimmune condition or systemic inflammatory issue. Right? I mean really it's good for whatever, like weight loss whatever. Like this stuff works for damn you whatever ails you but even though the book's focus is on HS if you know anybody with any type of autoimmune condition, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, etc., etc., this book is applicable for further situations so don't let your people just love to pigeon hole stuff so I just want to throw that out there that this is appropriate for a wide ranging number of issues and really your treatment of the autoimmune scene is better than what I've got in my book. So if people need that as a reference, definitely do it.

Tara Grant: Oh my god, thank you so much.

Robb Wolf: Totally. Totally. Totally. Well you know, let's see how this thing does and let's keep an eye on your secondary project and bring you back when you guys are motoring along on that. If you need to do any type of like a survey or something then I'm opening up my website to your services so whatever you need we'll help.

Tara Grant: Perfect. Thank you so much. We are going to be doing stuff like that actually --

Robb Wolf: Awesome, Tara. Cool.

Tara Grant: Thank you so much for having me on today, Robb. I really enjoyed talking to you.

Robb Wolf: Fantastic having you on and I'll see you at Primal Con in Mexico here in a couple of months I think.

Tara Grant: Yes, definitely. It sounds fantastic.

Robb Wolf: Right on. Take care. Talk to you soon.

Tara Grant: Okay. Bye.

Robb Wolf: Bye-bye.

[0:48:27] End of Audio