

Paleo Solution - 229

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Robb: Howdy folks, Robb Wolf here. It is another episode of the PaleoSolution podcast. Why do we keep doing it? Why do people keep listening? I have no idea but here we are and none the less, today we have a very special guest. Virtually anybody in paleo land will know this bouncing ray of sunshine if she's talking about awesome Austin, Texas, Amy Kubal. What's going on kiddo?

Amy: Hey, living the dream here in balmy Austin.

Robb: Are you feeling a little gamey kid? Do we need to send you some antiperspirant or what are your needs here?

Amy: Yeah, I need no humidity and preferably a cool breeze as opposed to walking into a wall of fire.

Robb: Yeah you're with the wrong direction. You should have headed north out of Colorado instead of south.

Amy: Right. Right. Now you tell me.

Robb: So Amy I'm sure virtually all the folks listening know you, know your shenanigans on robbwolf.com and what not. But give folks some big picture background and then we'll talk about some of the juicier more recent stuff that you and I have been talking about as we weave our way through this podcast.

Amy: Okay. Where did I come from? I came from South Dakota and I went into nutrition probably most likely because of my history with – my messed up history with food and exercise and my constant focus on it starting when I was 12 years old. Right now I am a practicing dietician and that's what I have been doing up to now and more recently I have shifted my focus to help other people that have some of these food issues and things of that sorts. So I guess I'm not sure if you were asking me like where I'm at in life or where I'm at with where I'm at.

Robb: Everything works. It could be a GPS or it could be philosophical. It's good either way. Amy, give some folks a little bit of background about your youth years and how some of the challenging stuff related to food kind of developed. You talked a ton about this at paleo f(x) and you've been doing some more writing kind of talking about you know, trying to make people aware of okay yeah, this is healthy eating but maybe taken into an extreme some of this stuff maybe become unhealthy you know from more of a psychological perspective first and then possibly from a physical perspective because of an overly restricting food. Give people a little bit of background with how that story developed.

Amy: Okay, so it was the best of times. It was the worst of times. Wait a minute it was actually just the worst of times.

Robb: It makes it a shorter book that way.

Amy: Right. Right. It started when I was about 11 years old for me. I remember getting weighed in school at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year and it was my 5th grade year and I was 4'11 and I weighed I believe 90 pounds at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year I've done nothing to lose weight or do anything and I was 4'11.5 or 5 feet and I weighed 85 pounds and I was like dang, that was easy. And I didn't even try to lose weight.

So I'm like I bet if I got down to 80 pounds – I had a really thin cousin who was like I want to look like her. And I've been thinking that my legs were kind of fat and I'm like well I bet if I got down to 80 pounds that then I'd be happy that's what happiness is. So I'm like – so I just want during that summer I'm just okay I'm just not going to eat snacks and I won't eat dessert and I'll be more active. And that's what I did.

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And about mid-July I hit 80 pounds and people like my cousins were like oh you can wear my clothes now and it was cool to me and I thought I felt good. Seeing that number go down made me feel good and like well, let's keep going. And I did and I got a book in the mail at the end of that summer I think it was called Girl Talk or something and it had pictures of body frames of three different types of body frames, a small bone, the large bone and like medium size and I wanted the body type of the really thin look and by that picture it said 1200 calories a day.

So that's when I started counting calories and figuring out okay, this is what I need. This is what I can have. This is what I can't have. And my obsession just kind of grew from there. By the end of October and by the beginning of November, I was admitted into an eating disorder program and I weighed 58 pounds when I went in. So that all happened from June through the end of October.

And that has sort of written the rest of my life from that point. Series of ups and downs and like my entire life has revolved around food and weight and calories and exercise and I was from a small town so that was my identity. And coming out of that like even now, I don't know who I am and emotionally on a lot of levels I am still that 12, 13 year old because I never got to grow up. I never developed past then because my eating disorder numbed me out for so long.

And now I'm like seeing that there is life outside of food. There is life outside of exercise and not everything is hinged on this number or a certain way that you look. And damn life is good outside that box. That is all I have to say.

Robb:

You know, I think something that's interesting for me and I'm sure it gets discussed a lot like so often times when I read folks talking about this or like the popular media will grab it, there will be a lot of finger pointing about why this stuff happens it's like oh, the media portrays women in these unrealistic ways and you know, different things although I always find it ironic that they'll hold up like a picture or a Barbie doll and talk about the Barbie dolls to mention and nobody mentions like the GI Joe doll that I would need to be on like 10 grams of steroids a week to look like this. It seems like opportunities for body dysmorphia are just right everywhere.

But I remember growing up, my older cousin who I also really idolized, he was about 4 years older than I am. He started lifting weights in like 6th or 7th grade and I thought that was the shiz nitz. I thought that was so cool and he had posters of like Arnold Schwarzenegger in his room and they had kind of a workout setup out in the shed. They had a pretty good chunk of property and so I totally idolized this guy, grew up idolizing this guy and so I kind of went down that road like what do you – you mentioned your cousin but you know and then you mentioned this book Girl Talk. Is it a formative piece?

If we're trying to break this thing down and I don't think stuff like this is as easily like isolated, like diagnosing somebody it's like oh you've got a case of influenza virus. I mean it's not that easy. But if you were to try to put one or two like can you hang it on one thing? Can you hang the development of these eating patterns and exercise patterns on 2 things, on 10 things, like if people are trying to understand what went down with you and potentially what happens with other people? What do you think that caused a big factor was or is there something that you can even put your finger on?

Amy:

That's a good question. Again, a lot of ways, I felt like I didn't warrant having an eating disorder because from the outside view, my family was perfect. Like my parents are still together. I've never been abused. It wasn't – I didn't have a hard – what people would say term a hard childhood you know. And so I'm like well geez, I have no reason to have this so I'm really screwed up.

But I was the oldest child and it's really – since it developed so young in me, it was less about I think the body image but more of a way to cope for me. I was a very much perfectionist. I was the oldest child and I had a sister that's 9 years younger than me and my brother's about 2 years younger than me and I was the one that took care of things.

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And it was expected that I take care of things and I put a lot of pressure on myself too and I didn't get a lot of attention because I didn't – I was the good girl. I mean I didn't need any attention you know. And everybody else did and I wanted some and this was my way of saying hey, here I am and take care of me. I remember telling my doctor earlier this year I don't feel like in my life there's ever been a time where I can relax. I don't ever remember being able to count on anybody for anything. I've always had to figure it out myself.

And when I was sick that was probably the closest time that anybody ever took care of me. And it wasn't in a good way. So like I look back on that and I'm like dude, I screwed that up. But it was my way of being...

Robb:

Let me throw something in there though. It's kind of funny. My mom died last year and just now we're trying to get the room ready for the next wolf cub that's arriving and all that stuff so I'm riffling through a bunch of

stuff that was in my mom's house before she died and we cleaned it out and everything. And so I've been riffling through this stuff and it's just been stuffed in these boxes because I haven't really been willing to go there yet.

But one of the things that she had was a Robb box and in it there was a book about Guns N Roses because I totally idolize Guns N Roses and I really do have a point to this here. It's completely meandering but Axl Rose in this book, he was being interviewed and they were like what do you think about like drug addiction and all that stuff. Isn't it a sign of weakness? And he looked at the guy and he's like no dude, the people who are the addicts are the ones who survived. They figured out a way to cope. The ones that aren't the addicts didn't survive.

And so I think that's a really important maybe perspective to throw in there whatever these things are, it's easy to put a negative connotation on them but to some degree, it was adaptive. To some degree it was trying to give you something that you needed to keep going.

Amy: Exactly and that's exactly what my doctor said too. There's a reason that you had this and if it hadn't been this, it would have been something else or you might not be here right now. And that's scary because like I think about this and in my mind, I have done everything in my power to take myself out like why am I still here? But it is. It's how I coped. And when I didn't know what to do, it numbed me out so that it got me what I needed for a short time even if it didn't look like what I wanted it to look like.

Robb: Interesting. you know I mean making it a little more mechanistic, you talk about numbed out, it's interesting that the states of being calorie restricted and even in ketosis to some degree, it changes one's neuro chemistry dramatically and it does put one in kind of a – I don't want to say sedated but it's a calming state. Because when you are calorie restricted, initially you've got a phase of like a really ramped up activity almost frenetic activity because your body recognizes that one is starving and so you kind of go into a frenetic mode for a couple of days.

And then on the low slow slog through that, then our energy levels go down the neurotransmitters really change a lot and so it really – I think it's important for people to understand that this legitimately is a form of

kind of self medication. Some people smoke, some people find other stuff to use but this is a legitimate way of self medicating on kind of the neuro transmitter side but then on the other side like you said, this was a way of having some control and in a not direct way and maybe the only way that you could say hey, I need some attention too.

Amy:

And you know like I know my parents did the best that they could when I was sick but their solution and my doctors at that time were always like they wanted to put a band aid out. Well all you have to do is eat. All you have to do is eat. Look, your friends are eating. Your brother is eating. All you have to do is eat. And like it's not about the damn food. Let's address that this isn't just me.

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If I eat, everything else isn't going to automatically fix itself. Like everything's not going to be perfect if Amy weighs 100 pounds. There's something deeper and that never got addressed. And so what do I do? I keep reverting back to the only coping mechanism I know. And I had I think three relapses while I was in high school, one in college and then my latest one started after I got out of a bad relationship. And it's like that's the coping mechanism that I know.

And so finding new ways to cope that are more constructive talking to people about it being able to talk about it without them telling me that I just need to put a band aid on it and deal with it and just being able to get those feelings out and ask for what I need instead of try to figure out what I need on my own. And again, always having – if I need something, I have to figure out a way to get it and that was the way that I had figured out to get it. And it got me nowhere.

Robb:

Amy, you and I talked a lot like on the phone and you know, when I guess maybe all this stuff came to a head and so I think one of the things that you said just struck me and it was just a gut shot for me. You said if I just had cancer it would be okay because people get that. They can wrap their heads around it and you know, which is so interesting to me and so kind of gut wrenching when I have somebody that I love like you that I've got a great relationship with and that I care about, if somebody has cancer, we don't just say well just eat and it will go away because clearly that's not the issue.

We can pick a zillion different life challenges that people have and it doesn't have this seemingly immediate right at hand walk into the kitchen and solve the problem kind of solution. And so it looks like there's a solution just literally one mini mark away and that's not the fucking reality at all. But that just struck me dumb honestly when you said that because I've never thought about it.

I had never – the only brush with any type of disordered eating that I had was when we were running the gym and it was early in my cross-fit kind of career and I had ways kind of recommended this Lucy goosey paleo approach, get in, give it a shot, see what happens, exclude some foods, reintroduce some foods, see if you've got food sensitivities and then just kind of roll from there and that it worked pretty well.

I didn't see people doing anything squirrely with their food when I recommended a weighed measured zone which is what the cross-fit HQ scene had recommended I had two girls that in very quick order they came to me and they're like hey man, I'm getting some really compulsive like eating feelings. And I didn't have a lot of background with this stuff, really any background and I was like okay we're going to ditch that and go with something else.

And I had this sense that cross-fit plus kind of a paleo approach was really powerful and I wrongly assumed as I make many wrong assumptions as I go through life, I thought that this performance orientation plus this kind of unweighed, unmeasured eat to society paleo thing, I didn't really think that could foster more disordered eating. If we had a focus on performance that people would – if they skipped a meal or did something like that then the next time they came in the gym, they wouldn't do so well and so there would be this feedback mechanism and you know, it would kind of self-correct.

And I think for a lot of people, that's true. I don't want to throw that one completely out but clearly, that's not true across the board. Could you talk about that a little bit because you in some ways managed to also figure out a way where you could actually out-exercise almost any amount of food intake that you're putting in.

Amy:

Yeah. I knew exactly. I had it so dialed in and yeah like it's weird because I think back now, how did I not see that my performance was dropping off

like I told – I was just talking to my roommate about this and I used to be able to over head squats were easy for me. I'm not a big girl so I could do a 65 pound overhead squats like 10 reps without blinking.

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And toward the end of last summer, I cannot even get the 45 pound over my head. Like where did that disconnect happen and you know like what I justified, what I told myself it's oh because I'm working out so hard. I'm working out so much I'm not giving my body time to rest but it doesn't matter. I can't give my body time to rest because I have to – if I want to eat, I have to work out so I'll just do this instead and that was true with all my lists.

I couldn't do as much but oh I'm getting older. My body's tired. But in my mind, I had a certain exercise quota that I had to meet and if one day I did a little bit more, that became the new baseline. And if one day I ate a little bit less that became the new baseline. And so those – they just keep feeding on each other and it's small bits at a time but at a certain point it's like all those small bits add up and pretty soon I'm exercising for three hours. I'm eating very little for breakfast, no lunch, it's like oh I didn't eat lunch yesterday so I don't need to eat lunch tomorrow.

And it's just it's like a snowball effect. And somewhere I get buried so deep in that snowball that I don't even see that as happening. And that's where like I've numbed out to the point that I don't even know and that's scary because it's like I don't even know. It's like if you do drugs and you're like so high and you don't know what you did for three days you know? Like okay. But it just becomes that it's something you have to do and not doing it regardless of there's no way you can't not do it.

Or it was like life was worse. If I had not go to the gym, oh my gosh my anxiety through the roof. Then I couldn't eat because I didn't deserve to eat. So it just – crazy. It's crazy and that's like the best way I can explain it. It's like trapped in hell. You're like you're a prisoner in your own mind.

Robb:

Amy let me ask you this, so I've always – I think it's always like guys always want to be bigger. Gals always want to be smaller. It seems like that's just this thing written to our DNA or something like that. So I always had this – really I would overeat. I was like I want to be 10 pounds

heavier and usually what that meant was I was chubbier than really what I needed to be, my body wasn't super happy at that post.

And so I have over the course of time kind of found this thing where okay if I'm more active today then I eat a little more. If I'm less active then I eat a little less. And that generally seems like pretty good recommendations for folks and you've been doing some writing about you know, different stuff and I think some folks are kind of losing some of the distinction in this and it's something that I'm still trying to fully get my arms around this.

Some of this advice is good until it's not. The advice of like on your more active days, eat more food. On your less active days, see you eat less food. That's still reasonable recommendations unless what? Unless what's going on?

Amy:

Unless you are on a day that you're less active and then let's say something would come up or like your friends are like oh, we're going to go to dinner and hey let's go have some ice-cream and you're like I didn't work out today. I'm not having ice-cream. Like when it becomes fear, when it's fear based, I'm not going to have this because it's going to make me fat, because XYZ. And if you don't work out and you want some ice-cream, it's not going to be the end of the world.

It's not like oh I can't have that. It's not a – I can't have carbs because I didn't work out today. And I'm scared that if I do it's going to make me instantly fat or it's going to make – screw up my metabolism or something. It's not – it's irrational to think that one meal is going to do that but that's the place like I was all in. Like I did 10 less pushups today so that means I can't eat as much carbs or I shouldn't have this or that.

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And it's that fear, that incessant fear or that obsession. Or if you have something that you don't think you should and then you obsess about it like oh I had this. Oh my gosh I'm getting fat. I can't see my fifth ab anymore. It's that craziness where it's gone too far. That irrationality when your thoughts start to become irrational about it.

Robb:

So how do we – but it's still so interesting because a lot of it again, a lot of what – I don't know, maybe my eating has disorder. But it's a lot of

what I do. It's kind of like well I didn't do that much today so I'm just generally going to cut back my food. Your point here is when the food is living with you every moment, every day that's the only thing you're focused on.

If there's some foible in that like you go hang out with some friends and they have somebody. I guess that's a thing like if we have some friends come into town and they're like hey man, we want some gluten free pizza and I'm like okay and how much are we getting? I'm like all of it.

Amy: Right. Exactly.

Robb: I definitely don't worry about that. I definitely avoid gluten. I have some cheese and when I have some cheese I'm like well I'm going to get some acne from this and I just kind of accept that. But I guess what I'm hearing you say is that it's when you're carrying crying this stuff all the time you can't put it down. There's never like a moment where that's not the fixation and that's where the problem is. And I assumed that problem has brewed long before that.

Amy: Right. Totally. And it's like in the past where like oh we're going to go out to dinner and you know you're going to go out to dinner on Friday and you find that out on Tuesday and you're thinking about that dinner from Tuesday until Friday. Well what am I going to have? Oh, can I get to see the menu online? Well, what should I do for my workout so that I can justify having that?

And then, if you eat something that you don't think you should, you think about it for three days afterwards and that oh, that's affecting my performance still and oh my gosh I've totally messed up and I remember I was I think probably in 7th grade and I went to a picnic and apparently I didn't eat enough so we stopped at Dairy Queen on the way home and my parents made me get a blizzard and I didn't want a blizzard. I remember sitting there eating, crying the whole time and I thought about that blizzard and how awful it made me feel for the next three days. And that's where it's not healthy where it's that obsession about that one thing that you did, that one day, that guilt and self deprecation.

2, I see that a lot in my clients where it's like man, I failed because I ate a piece of chocolate and it wasn't a workout day and I'm terrible. I'm awful. I'm not strong. I'm weak and that deprecation that you're letting food

and one decision decide your value and that's where it's probably crossed the line that you don't – there's something deeper. It's something besides the food that needs to be addressed. Does that make sense?

Robb: Absolutely and that's maybe a good segway for I guess the intervention I needed. Let's even go with a little bit further back than that. I'm still trying to – I think I met you. You were doing some work for Joe Friel and then we kind of got – like you I think maybe...

Amy: Do the Air Force base.

Robb: Across the message boards or...

Amy: No, I emailed you when I was at with the Air Force base, that's when I got into cross-fit and I was like dude you are off your rocker. I was running marathons at the time and I'm like there's no way I can do this without grains and carbs and whatever. And you told me I had my head up my ass and you sent me – this was when you're still at cross-fit your cert stuff like if I'm ever in your area, you come into the cert on me and you can't tell me that this doesn't work unless you try it and then I tried it I ended up winning a marathon and yeah then it just sort of went from there.

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Robb: So it was good for a while.

Amy: It was good. And I was still coming off my breakup at that point. So I had this intense fear of fat at that point when I first entered in and then paleo did help me add some back, be more okay. I started eating more meat again. Being okay with nuts and that kind of stuff and actually eating the yolk of an egg. But I never let go of that fat obsession either and then I started becoming more carb obsessed. So then I had both things in the ring and then it's like no.

Robb: Right. So you know, when we met for the first time I guess at the very first AHS back in Boston and I remember – met you, you were super high energy and everything, definitely springy, spritely Amy particularly when we've got an audience to be in front of and everything and but nothing really flagged my radar. Where were you at that point in this whole process? Still doing pretty good or like the foundations starting to get a little shaky because definitely by the second Ancestral Health Symposium

you weren't looking healthy. You weren't feeling as good. Your energy levels were different so like where were you at in that spectrum?

Amy:

I was definitely not 100% at the Boston one. I would say I probably – my mind had never been healthy but it was getting – my exercise was out of control at that point, out of control and that's where it starts for me. That starts getting out of control and then I start backing off the food slowly. And like this last time I never stopped eating and I actually ate quite a bit but I just kept working out more and more and more.

And then I think after that Ancestral Health Symposium is when I started to get even stricter where I was like well, maybe I shouldn't have nuts. Maybe I should stop eating dried fruit. I started – I still did a good bit of dairy at that point and then I just like okay I'm going to do this 100% and that was probably one of the biggest mistakes I made because I don't do it just 100%. I do it like 166%.

And then I fall back into still like okay so I'm going to take all these carbs out but I can't put anymore fat in because I'm still scared of fat at the same time. I've reached my quota there. And so then I just run out of things to eat and it wasn't pretty for me.

Robb:

Right. I mean yeah. You're widdled down to not many macro nutrients, not much latitude with that stuff and so you've been working on robbwolf.com for quite a while now. You've done tons of articles. You've done lots of consulting with folks. And I had asked you a couple of times. I'm like hey kid, are you okay? Do you have a tapeworm? And how did all that stuff go? You were pretty adept at shaking me off your tail.

Amy:

I was adept at shaking myself off my tail like I seriously I'm like something's wrong with me because I'm eating. I'm like there's no way that I could eat this volume of food but I just – I didn't want to believe that it was that again. I didn't want to believe that it was my eating disorder again so I'm trying to tell myself there's something else wrong with me. There's a reason my digestion was a mess which it was. There's something deeper wrong.

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And I wanted so badly to find something wrong and this is why the cancer thing – I'm like why can't there just be something wrong with me so

people will like be not oh that's the weird girl and I think where that whole thing comes from is I grew up from a very small town and if I had cancer, kids wouldn't have been scared of me. They would've been trying to be my friend. Instead, I had very few friends because I was weird.

Well I'm just like well maybe this time something is really wrong with me. I remember points last summer where during a workout I would pray to Jesus like please injure me. Make me stop because I can't stop on my own. And when I think back to that, those were some sick thoughts like I need to be stopped and I'm praying to be injured and I'm praying to have cancer. I'm praying for them to find something and I didn't want to believe that it was my eating disorder again. I didn't want to believe it.

And if I could have other people not believe it then it had to be true that it was something else. I guess that's what I wanted. I wanted something else and unfortunately I always keep getting the same damn thing.

Robb: So how did we finally throw a lasso around you? You described that yourself.

Amy: You guys sucked, let me just tell you. I kind of hated all of you. But After the Ancestral Heath Symposium, everybody just kind of – first off I was like okay, I thought everything was cool. I was seeing Dr. Amy Myers at the time so she knew what was up with my stuff like lab stuff and Michelle Norris asked if she could come to my doctor's appointment which is like okay I guess and she did and there was sort of an intervention there.

And then yeah, you guys are just like hey, this is where it's at and you need to fix it or we're going to tough love you and you're out. And like okay, that's where I'm like in a way I hated you all. I hated you all a lot. Very angry. But at the same token, you were the ones that told me I could stop. You gave me a reason to stop and I've been asking for that.

I've been praying to be injured like something. And this was my reason to stop. It didn't look anything like I wanted it to look but it was and I remember we talked and you were wanting to run the other way and...

Robb: [Cross-talk] worth mentioning that my background, my family, they're good folks. My parents were good people but there was a – when I look back at the childhoods they've had, they had really rough childhoods.

Being honest, I had a pretty dysfunctional codependent type family life and it took a lot of work for me to figure out how to extricate myself out of that.

And for a long time my emu was to find the broken wing. Find someone who had some stuff going on whether it's a friend, a girlfriend, it didn't matter. And I would get meshed in their stuff and my life would go on hold while I was trying to help this person get through their stuff and usually what I was doing was facilitating them staying exactly where they were and took a long time and a lot of suffering to figure that stuff out.

But my coping mechanism with that was that when I encountered someone whether they had a drug dependency issue or borderline personality or whatever the deal was, I was just out of there like a scolded cat. It was scorched earth. No forwarding address just done. And so that was really a tough deal for me because it really challenged me to look at the challenges or let's even call it the addictions that I have.

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Let's say that you had some food addictions I think that depending on how we want to parse that out and define it, food and exercise, control issues around that. And I had huge control issues around can I just simply be here for a person who's going through something like this yet not jump in and try to intervene. And that was a big, big deal for me and it was honestly really scary. It was not comfortable for me and I would say it's probably the first time in 10 or 12 years since I had figured out how to cope with this stuff that I had allowed myself to try to do something besides just scorched earth and out.

So my issues were tiny compared to yours but for folks to kind of understand a little bit of the back end, it was the easy thing for me to do particularly like I'm busy. I got a wife. I've got a kid. I got a business. I've got this. I've got that. It would've been really easy for me to be like okay I'm fucking done. I'm out. It's been great but you're going to have to figure this stuff out on your own and it was a really big challenge for me to hang in there on that.

Amy:

And I am like eternally grateful for you for hanging in. I was scared. I was like damn, I don't even have friends anymore. I don't know what to do. Eva was the first person that called me, Eva T. and she probably gave me

the most love. I would say was the easiest on me but everybody else was really tough. And just the fact that some of you did stick around through it, like you have no idea how much that means to me because I think I've gotten to the point with a lot of people. I feel like I know my parents love me but I think they're just like whatever sometimes.

And I know they'd do anything for me but it's like we've done this and we can't do this again and last time I talked to them I'm like I can't do this again and we're in a different place now but I think before that, they were just like we can't do this anymore.

And just knowing that everybody else wanted to too like I started being cutout of everything and I was like what am I going to do? I don't have a job I don't have anything. And I was already at a hopeless place and it got me to an even more hopeless place and I was like I just want to not be here anymore. I mean honestly that's where my mind went. And the fact that you guys did stick around, man you have no idea how much that meant. Not everybody stuck around but the people that did, I am so eternally grateful to all of you.

Robb:

It wasn't easy but it's worth it. You're worth it and gosh, it's so many thoughts with all that stuff and it's hard to even really fully articulate it because it's all very felt stuff for me but it was a big deal and I guess something too, I tend to kind of stick to the stuff that I know. I kind of know food. I kind of know strength and conditioning. I do a little jujitsu and those are the things I kind of know and that's this fear that I stay in and this was something that I cared a lot about you and I also didn't know at all if what I was doing or the way that I was just being was helping, hurting, I didn't know.

And that's where Amy referred you to your doctor in Austin. I started talking with him and just kind of getting my own kind of background of like okay, is this appropriate? My behavior in this way and I kind of explained some of my background and my issues with codependency and what not and he's like no I think you're doing good and it was a hairball deal. It was kind of no joke figuring out – you were like a very slippery fish that wanted back in the water and it was trying to figure out how to hang on to you enough so that you knew that you were being hung on to. I think for what you just related just now I'm kind of realizing right on the fly.

It was interesting on the one hand you wanted to bolt but then on the other hand you wanted us to tackle you and pin you down and be like no, you're not going to do this again. We love you and we're going to be here for you and we're not going to let that go down. But then doing it in a way also that didn't like crush your spirit and dude oddly enough there's no perfect guidebook.

Amy: Right.

[0:45:00]

Robb: Nobody's written the 10 easy steps to helping somebody go through a crisis like that so it was definitely not the easiest thing in the world that I've ever done and it was pretty scary and I'm very, very happy. I'm definitely happy that I put that effort in there and I'm stoked to see where you are and what's going on with you. It's very exciting.

Amy: Again I'm so grateful that you all stuck around because yeah, like doing it alone is even harder than doing it with people that you think hate you. I seriously thought that everybody hates me because I failed again. That's the eating disorder thought. I fail at everything. I didn't exercise enough. I ate too much. These people don't like me because this, I said this wrong, I did this wrong. And then like people have bottled out of my life forever like my friends and when I was young like oh Amy's sick, we're done.

And I'm so used to people running away that I'm always by myself trying to figure it out by myself and just having people that actually want to stick around is like wow, maybe people do care. Maybe there are some people out there that actually do care and that, that's huge. That makes me think that I am worthy of love and self love. At this paleo f(x) this year I felt more love in one day there than I probably have in my 34 years of life and I'm just like wow, people didn't run away. They weren't like she's weird. We don't want to talk to her. People have said I know how you feel. I've had this. I feel the same way and just knowing that you're not alone too is huge.

Like if you're struggling with this, you're not the only one. This isn't just you and it doesn't mean you're a failure. It doesn't mean that you're doing something wrong. There's a deeper issue. It's not about food. It's not about exercise. It's about something deeper and until you figure out what that deeper is, it's not going to go away. And it hurts. It's hard. I

probably have tried more in the past year than I have in the past – last 10. But I've also laughed more too and felt more because feeling is hard. But it's good.

Robb:

Man, yup. For a long time I thought that I had this sense which I know was completely wrong but I thought that I just felt things harder than what everybody else did and so that stuffing of emotions and not really wanting to deal with what needs to be dealt with, my internal excuse for that was just I feel the stuff more than everything else. It's more intense for me so it's okay for me to not go through this stuff and clearly we never live in another person's shoes truly and so never we know 100% but over the course of time I lost some of that egocentrism I guess and kind of realized okay yeah, everybody feels this stuff. It's hard for everybody and you still just get in and chop wood, carry water and move forward.

Amy every day I feel this paleo ancestral health thing, I feel like it helps a ton of people. I feel like it does a good – are we doing good? Like is there good stuff? Are we just creating eating disorders? There are people there who I want to say are bastards and I wish that they would catch a case of herpagonasyphiloids but because they say that paleo is eating disorder and I think they're mainly doing it to get attention and to get bandwidth. I feel like we're doing good stuff. But are we not?

Amy:

I totally think yes. I mean like the premise, the base of paleo is awesome and for a lot of people it's great. But when it becomes your religion, when there's no bending, when there's no flexibility, when food is something you fear instead of something you enjoy, when your whole life revolves around it, that's when you've taken it too far. I think eating real food, staying away from processed stuff, that is always a good idea. If you have gluten issues, I'm gluten intolerant too. I have celiac. So I don't eat that. That's the only thing I didn't make a rule about because I'm going to feel like ass and potentially be really, really sick at some point.

[0:50:21]

But I think there's a certain subset that will take things too far and if you recognize that you have crossed that line that it's probably loosened up a little bit, talk to somebody. Figure out why. And it works the same on the other end of the spectrum with people that do our paleo for two weeks

and then binge for three weeks. There's a reason for that. And it has nothing to do with the foods you are eating sometimes. It has more to do with the emotions behind why. Why do you feel like you need ice-cream and donuts or why do you feel like you don't deserve to give yourself permission to have a treat once in a while.

But ultimately the paleo foundation is awesome. I believe that everybody has a different – there's no one perfect recipe, no one perfect paleo for everybody. Some people need a little bit more flexibility and that's okay and that's where you don't feel like a failure if you eat oh my god rice one day. It's okay. And just not making it you live and die by this set of rules and I think as long as you're doing that and you feel good and you are healthy body and mind, if your mind is healthy in it then damn, run with it.

Robb: What do we do – what are some resources for folks like you you're doing some writing for the blog kind of touching on some of this stuff? If somebody suspects they or someone else that they know – let me ask you this. How often does some body in your situation or similar situation you said that some people at paleo f(x) came up to you afterwards and they're like I've struggled with similar things.

Does someone ever bootstrap it themselves? Is it always a deal where like they've got to get some friends and family and people that care about them to get in and help? Or is there a spectrum on this? People kind of brush with a little bit of disordered eating and then they're able to write themselves and get going. I mean what's the spectrum on that?

Amy: I've never met anyone that's been able to like cure themselves. I think that you can go into phases of being better or worse where it's absorbing your entire life or where it's just an annoyance in the background kind of. I think that for a certain subset of us, that's our coping mechanism and that's where we're going to go. So just like if you put an alcoholic in a bar and something triggers him to want to take a drink, it's the same in my situation.

Like if I'm in the gym or if I'm having a really, really hard day the first thing I want to do is go run like I just want to run and run and run. And not feel this, not feel this feeling right now. And until you actually deal with that stuff, and can you do that on your own? I guess you probably

can through journaling and dealing with that hard stuff but the likelihood that you're going to, I don't think is very high.

I know with several clients that I am working with now, that's one of the things I make them do like I didn't eat this or I ate too much here. Well like why? Because it was there and I wanted to. No well, okay yes it was there and you wanted it but what feelings were you having that made you feel like you wanted it even though you weren't hungry? Were you stressed, were you bored, were you – what is the reason behind it? And until you deal with that stuff, you're never going to be fixed and that's just reality I'm afraid.

[0:55:05]

Robb: That's good. So if somebody finds themselves in that situation, what do they do? Who do they reach out to get some help along that line?

Amy: There are lots of associations like eating disorder resource, National Eating Disorder Association, NEDA is one of the good ones. You can just Google eating disorder doctors or eating disorder treatment resources, tell a friend that you're struggling with this and you want to talk about it. Reach out to the people around you. Let them know that it's an issue and let them help you. Instead of hiding it.

Because one of the major traits of eating disorder – we isolate. We don't want to go out. We want to be alone. We want to be alone with our eating disorder. Don't isolate yourself. And if you see one of your friends isolating, not wanting to go out, not wanting to eat anything in front of you, having to schedule their life around their workouts, that sort of thing, that's isolating. And that might be a cry for help even if they don't realize it's a cry for help.

Robb: So since it was tough for us to lasso you, looking back now, how did we do? What could we have done different? What could we have done sooner or do you feel like things played out kind of the way they were supposed to.

Amy: I think that it played out – even before AHS I have been talking with my roommate and looking for a therapist to talk because I knew that something had to happen. I didn't know how to make it happen just like my prayers to be injured. I knew I needed to stop but I didn't know how

to stop. So you guys hit at the perfect time. It was like I think if I would've kept doing what I was doing, I would not be here right now and that's scary. That's really scary.

But yeah, you guys did well. You saw an issue and you addressed it and your friend, if this happens with anyone else, they are not going to like you. They are not going to like you right away but know that coming back around, they are going to be so grateful to you because you saved their lives and that's kind of a big deal.

Robb: That's kind of a big deal.

Amy: Kind of a big deal.

Robb: I agree. Got anything else kiddo?

Amy: I don't think so. I'm just going to still cry a little bit and then we'll be back to life living the dream.

Robb: Cool. Well Amy I love you. You're a really good friend and you've given me so much just contributing the blog and helping so many people like you've given and given and given and I just want to say thank you for that and thank you for letting me be with you on this thing. It wasn't easy. It wasn't comfortable but I am just really grateful that I was able to look inside and deal with my own stuff and be there with somebody that I really legitimately cared about and who's been a really important part of my life for 5 or 6 years now. So I thank you for all that.

Amy: And thank you for not writing me off and just being there and yeah. Because I know I'm difficult to say the least.

Robb: You're slippery. That's for sure. I don't think hound dogs could track you.

Amy: I can't even track myself so yeah.

Robb: Maybe that's why nobody can [Cross-talk]

Amy: I don't know where I'm at.

Robb: Amy thank you. I know that this stuff isn't easy for you. You know it's still – everyday's kind of a work in progress with all this stuff but super stoked and I'm looking forward to hitting north and getting out of the apparent

relative hell hole of Austin, Texas and hitting to cooler climates at some point.

Amy: Amen brother. Yes.

Robb: Awesome Amy. We'll talk to you soon.

Amy: Alright. Have a good day.

Robb: Bye.

[1:00:00] End of Audio