

Paleo Solution - 245

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Robb: Howdy folks, Robb wolf here, another edition to the Paleo Solution Podcast. Can't believe we haven't been pulled off the air yet but since nobody has control over that except me I guess, I'm still shocked that we haven't been pulled off the air.

But today I'm very excited to have on Grant Peterson. Grant is the founder of Rivendell Bicycle Works. He is the author of the bestselling book Just Ride and the forthcoming Eat Bacon, Don't Jog: Get Strong. Get Lean. No Bullshit. Grant how are you doing?

Grant: I'm doing okay. Just right, it's a bestselling book. I know it says that on the cover. I don't know what the qualifications are for that but I think I've sold like 35,000 copies so I don't have – makes it the bestseller, maybe 40,000 but anyway I am doing fine. How are you?

Robb: Good. You know, I used to feel pretty hoity toity about being a New York Times bestseller and then Snookie made that list with her book and then I realized that it meant absolutely nothing. So but it sounds good and our publishers love it when we mention that stuff. So you have to keep the publishers happy...

Grant: I didn't even mention it. I mean it just showed up on the cover of the new book.

Robb: Again, that's your publishers there because they want the second book to sell.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: Yeah. Grant, tell folks a little bit about your background. I have some interesting stories about cyclists having worked in my gym for eight years so I'm going to share a few of those observations. But give folks a little bit of your background. You kind of took the whole bicycling story and kind of threw it on its head. Give some folks some background on that and

then I want to delve into how your fueling and eating has changed over time to support your bicycle addiction.

Grant: Okay. When you ask me about my background or my bicycle background, that could be a 15-minute answer but I'll try to make it to a 40-second answer.

Robb: You run as long as you want. Run as long as you want.

Grant: Yeah, because you can edit it.

Robb: Actually, we do absolutely no editing on this. Whatever we flub, that's what we got.

Grant: Really?

Robb: Yeah. I refuse to do anything on this show which before I was rolling I was talking to you about how my friend Dave Warner's horrified by the level of slap dickery that I bring to this production. But I found that if I had no net to work with, we just rolled with how things came out and it's been reasonably good so far.

Grant: Okay.

Robb: So 15 minutes is fine if you want.

Grant: If I go on any longer than a couple minutes I'll feel self-conscious about how to dig myself a hole this deep and how do I get out. So I'll get kind of fast.

Robb: Okay.

Grant: I've never been a car person. That's sort of a long version. I have never been a car person but I am 60 years old now and from the age of about 15 in fact exactly 15 getting around on a bike, that has been how I've gotten around. I drive a car maybe 600 miles a year and that's only when I feel obligated to share the driving on family trips.

And I rode my bicycle across the country and I raced for six years and I guess my bicycle life sort of changed when I started racing because once you start racing and training that way, you achieve levels of fitness or a certain kind of fitness. And bicycle riding fitness I guess that you can't get any other way. You can't get that just from riding, from casual riding.

And so I sort of like being one of the fast guys and posting these pretty good times, pretty steep hills and things like that. I was never super successful racer. I won a couple races and I raced for six years and then I quit racing for various reasons and I tried to maintain that level of racing fitness for the next 21-22 years.

So every ride I took was really hard and it was time. It was just one series of personal time trials after another. I would ride with friends also but I went full out. I went 100% plus probably 90% of my rides for all that time and I became a slave to the bike and I was trying to be really, really fit at the time and when you get sort of rewarded for being fast and being fit, I got that way and my body fat percent tested at a laboratory in physiology lab at Cal was 2.5% at one point.

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And I was 5'10, 176 pounds, and 2.5% so I didn't have a whole lot there. But I tried to maintain that and I sort of got burned out on that kind of riding but I believed that the higher you got your heart rate and the longer you kept it that high, the fitter you were going to get.

I felt guilty whenever I slacked off, I would even pedal down hills really fast to maintain my heart rate because I thought a constant high heart rate was really good. And it just turned bicycle riding into a chore for me and so I stopped liking it. And then well you say something now because I talk too long.

Robb: I was thinking that if you had driven a car that way, it might have been informative as to how that wasn't a good idea for bicycle riding.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: Wow, I burned through three engines in two years. I wonder if there's some transverbal job skills or something to learn on my training side of this.

Grant: That's what I was told. That's what I read. I mean there were 50,000 people in the New York marathon. And that was just a couple of days ago. And so a lot of people are still believing that its high heart rate and length of time and how much you can endure it and I don't believe it anymore. I got 6-7 years ago I guess I read some Mark Suson stuff. And

that sort of is life changing there and mark was super fit. He was fitter than I ever was and everybody who's listening to this now or reading the transcript or whatever knows who Mark is.

Robb: Right.

Grant: But he offered an escape from all this stuff. And along the way, I was eating constantly and I was still gaining weight. I was never fat. I'm not like Jimmy Moore. He used to be really heavy. I never had...

Robb: Significant weight lost.

Grant: Yeah. I was always one of the fittest strongest guys. But when you are that way, you have your own personal standard. You don't judge yourself by other people and I was eating – today and exercising hard for an hour and a half to three hours a day and I was still gaining weight. And my blood scores were not that good. I mean by most standards, they were excellent. But by my standards, they were not that good.

Robb: And I think maybe something to pull out of that is that they were just creeping in a direction I'm assuming that you would look at you'd say why is this happening?

Grant: Yeah. Well you know, I got to the point where I was exercising hard just to maintain a slow rate of fat accumulation and I was extrapolating it over the decades and thinking okay, if I don't do this, if I'm gaining weight like two pounds a year which to a lot of people have seen nothing but you just think well that's [Cross-talk]

Robb: That's a lot.

Grant: Yeah. 10 years later, that's a lot. And all I can do is – I couldn't imagine being less hungry. I couldn't imagine eating less. So I thought well how much more can I exercise and oh my god how do these normal people walking around with apparently normal weights eating food that I thought was worse than the food I eat? How do they even do it?

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If I eat like that and exercise that little I figured I'd gain – I mean I calculated it out. I figured I would gain about 20 pounds a year just

slacking off a little bit and I figured I would still maintain all that eating. So I just felt trapped by it.

Then I read this Mark Sisson thing and read his book. I interviewed him for one of our publications also and I talked to him a little bit and it just seemed like such a fantastic way out. I thought oh my god this seems to – he does it, it works and so I tried it and it worked too and so I wouldn't be – I don't know, stragglers whose jumped on the train and sent my claws into it and I know.

Robb: Here we are with a book about [Cross-talk]

Grant: Yes. I'm one of the 35 or 45 who now been converted and wrote a book.

Robb: Nice. Awesome. I've just got to share some of my experiences training cyclists. We lived in Chico California, really, really big cycling community. I think Chico was named top bicycle city in the nation a couple of times. Virtually all these people became very close friends, very likeable folks except where it was concerning training these folks.

And on the one hand trying to figure out how to improve their performance on the bike which was typically a goal that they had but then also trying to save them from themselves and they were the most orthopedically broken difficult to train group of people that I've ever had in my life. I frequently wanted to shoot both them and myself.

Grant: How did you even go about doing it? Do they – I mean as in exercise or something. These people are not professionals I'm guessing.

Robb: They weren't but they aspired to it typically.

Grant: Right. Everyone aspires to be that. And okay but continue with your story. I find this interesting and I don't know how you do it.

Robb: Well, it was frequently a case of me begging, cajoling and then eventually yelling, screaming and throwing fits at these people. It degenerated into almost Jerry Springer-esque chair throwing kind of thing. Almost every session...

Grant: Good old Jerry.

Robb: Good old Jerry. He set a standard which immediately gives you this feeling for exactly the picture I'm trying to paint and again, these were

wonderful people, people who've continued to be my friends over the years but because of all the time that they spent in the bicycle seats, all kinds of really wacky orthopedic issues and super tight hamstrings, super tight hip flexors, Kyphosis, rounded shoulders, terrible posture...

Grant: What's Kyphosis?

Robb: Rounded shoulders...

Grant: Throw out a word like that.

Robb: It makes people think that I have some sort of aptitude in this topic but I just have like an open...

Grant: I'm going to start using it.

Robb: You just drop it into any type of conversation and immediately sounds like you know something about something. It's a rounded shoulders basically kind of hunched back.

Grant: Yeah. Kyphosis.

Robb: Yes.

Grant: I know you have this training background. Can I just ask you a question?

Robb: Absolutely. Yeah.

Grant: A good friend of the family, a friend of mine, a friend of my daughter's she's a high school senior. She's I think third rank cross country in the state and she's really good and she's suffering from IT band and something to do with her heel strike anemia or something like that. She's anemic. She has some heels strike problems and she has IT band syndrome – it's not really a syndrome. She has a tight IT band.

Robb: Okay.

[0:15:00]

Grant: And yet she's still doing high miles. She's running 70 miles a week and I don't know what season it is at school for running cross-country or track but that's what she's doing. And I don't have – I'm a good friend of hers but I don't have much credibility with her because they wrote this book that has don't jog in the title. So she thinks I'm – but tell me if my advice

to her makes any sense at all. And I also want to put you in the spot and see what your advice to her would be. So you know her situation, she's got heel – I don't know if it's heel strike anemia or just anemia.

Robb: Anemia plus a bad heel strike, well you know...

Grant: She's got little fractures in her heels and type IT band. So I am telling her that she doesn't need to do all those miles for her form because her running form is already good. So her form and as that relates to efficiency, she already has that down. She doesn't need the miles. What she is trying to do by running is improve her running and presumably get a little bit faster but the way that you do that, would be to train anaerobically to increase your oxygen consumption and you can't really do that with these long aerobic runs that just exacerbate overuse injuries.

And so I'm suggesting maybe cut back on the running a whole lot at least or you have these problems. And just do an anaerobic squats or something or slow body squats or something just to give her body a little bit of time to heal or run uphill's.

Robb: That was my primary thought which would – I would argue potentially that she probably does need to go back and readdress her running stride because the heel strike and this just gets difficult because you're asking somebody to potentially go to a little bit more of a minimal footwear kind of story. I would almost certainly find if I did an assessment on this gal that there's some trunk instability. There's some weak quad or quad hamstring kind of imbalance clearly needs some mobility work.

And the process of getting her to tone things down to work on her technique is going to be maddening to her. This is one of the things that I would experience from a cyclist but also endurance athletes of all ill which they would come in and they would have all kinds of itisis and osis.

And I would say hey let's dial you back a little bit. Work a little bit more on the strength and mobility side. Work on your technique. Get you healthy. And they were like so you're wanting me to work out less and I was like yes and we're kind of wanting to shift gears and do some other stuff. But you could see this terror as if it was Freddie Kruger standing behind me ready to decapitate me and then decapitate this person when I suggested that they reduce the amount of training that they were doing.

Grant: Yeah they're probably think it's the end of the road for them.

Robb: Yeah and it was a very hard sell and we had some success with this stuff. It still is a constant battle with the folks that I'm thinking about. One little gal was a very, very good 800 meter runner in high school and got a college scholarship on that and she ran 800 meter and then also did the hurdles and she's all of 4'8 which was just insane to me.

Grant: She was under 5 feet?

Robb: And she was a hurdler. She was extremely fast twitch. She was very, very fast twitch. But she had like some plantar fasciitis and all kinds of problems going on and so we just – we've spent a lot of time trying to work on her running stride and kind of modify where her foot was landing to de-emphasize that heel strike, get a little bit more of a 4 foot land...

Grant She running and pose running and all that...

Robb: A little bit more that way. Yeah. And we really started layering in some hill running, which makes that whole process a little bit easier to bring about because you kind of get a little bit of a forward lean and you just intrinsically get a little bit more of a 4-foot pawing type action...

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Grant: Yeah.

Robb: Engaging her hamstrings and stuff like that. We actually had her coach come out to the gym and the guy was just hopping mad. Hopping mad. I was like listen man, give us a couple of weeks here. The girl's inflamed and also we have fiddled with her diet. Because from my perspective, she was eating a very pro-inflammatory diet.

And so we tweaked her diet, tweaked kind of her running schedule and relied a little bit more on kind of anaerobic intervals for providing some framework for her to work technique and then got back in and threw in a block of periodized training where she kind of re-established that aerobic based before getting in and doing some more specific work around the 800 meter training and she ended up PR-ing that final senior year of high school and got a scholarship to a pretty darn big university and did pretty well with that.

But her coach was losing his mind because they were just – even for the sprinters, like you said before, you need to layer in that technique and get that base line established. But sometimes if there's some broken elements to that, you've just got to go back and kind of tear the whole operation down and start over again if you want to avoid all the injury so yeah.

Grant: Well the comment you said a minute ago about to re-establish that aerobic base or something like that, I mean isn't that sort of automatically maintained if you're improving your anaerobic threshold or something.

Robb: It does in some people but – and I am by no means an endurance coach. I will not even – I'm reasonably fast twitch myself so where running and stuff like that are concerned, distances over 100 meters are equivalent to like 100-mile footrace for me. It goes 0 to 100 meters is kind of like my wheelhouse and then everything beyond that is 400 meters or 100-mile foot race are equivalent to me.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: So I'm not an endurance coach but the folks that I followed like Phil Maffetone and some folks like that, even for sprinters, I've read a lot of Charlie Francis's old stuff and even his Olympic caliber sprinters. He had an aerobic base period that had some interesting effects on the nervous system, had some interesting effects with increasing mitochondrial density, fat mobilization, vascularization getting more artery and capillaries growing into the muscles and what not and I think there's...

I don't know that there's a completely formulaic piece to it one way or the other either relying 100% on anaerobic activity or relying 100% on base building and technical stuff. I think that's where a reasonable coach will kind of look at the person and think okay I think we need to try this.

I equate all this stuff much more to trying on a sweater or a pair of jeans and see how you like it and see how you look in it. Then any type of actual scientific process. It's not doing an acid catalyzed reaction in a beaker. It's a lot more Lucy goosy than that.

Grant: Let me ask you a science type question anyway.

Robb: Sure.

Grant: And maybe you've addressed in a podcast that I have not heard. But what's your take on endurance sports and telomere length?

Robb: Man, I've only done a little fiddling on that. I'm going to have two separate answers to that. There's one interesting observation which is that Olympians in general live longer than the general population which is really interesting to me. And part of what I pull from that is that Olympians probably have a really strong genetic component to the ability to withstand the workload that they are undergoing and possibly even despite a disadvantageous workload and granted not all Olympians are high volume endurance athletes but you know, there's an aggregate there.

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But it's interesting to me these people in general have a really remarkable workload but yet they still tend to live longer but then on the flip side of this, there does seem to be this story where if you – and there's kind of inflection points like I can see 30 minutes to an hour spent doing this 120 to 140 beep per minute like aerobic base building stuff seems to have some pretty good benefit almost regardless of physical endeavors.

Even power lifters and more sprint type athletes seem to benefit from the kind of parasympathetic nervous system kind of almost meditative elements of doing some of these lower level aerobic work. Not everybody benefits from that. But there's some decent case to be made for doing some of that stuff.

For I think to your point, a lot of the folks that we would stick in the competitive or whether in realty or in their own minds endurance athletes, half an hour to an hour, these folks have not even – their ass isn't even warm on the seat yet. So that's the other side of this. I think there's a saying the poison is in the dose. So I think there's some real...

Grant: I've never heard of that...

Robb: You've never heard of that one. Yeah. And this is a bitter pill for me to both swallow and regurgitate because I'm wanting to constructs a world

that justifies my lazy fast twitchiness where I sprint 100 meters and then have a smoke and a cup of coffee.

Grant: It could be that the Olympians are living a long time because they've lived a generally healthy lifestyle their while time and they've avoided a lot of the poisons that kill other people. I mean...

Robb: You don't have a lot of smokers in there.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: There's all kinds of stuff in there. But you know, so I don't have a super good answer to that other than I do have this just kind of observational piece and there seems to be some reasonable literature to support this back to your telomere length question.

Really burning the candle at both ends, really pushing hard all the time, I think there's an inflection point where performance clearly diverges away from longevity and that telomere length story, we get each of ourselves – we have our DNA wrapped inside ourselves in the end of the DNA have these things called telomeres and they're really important in managing DNA replication and preventing cancer.

And when a cell becomes cancerous, it actually ramps up this enzyme called polymerase which makes the cancer cells essentially immortal and the immortality comes from the fact that they don't degrade the telomeres. Whereas in normal aging, our telomeres eventually break down over time. They get shorter and shorter with each cell replication.

There's this thing called the hayflick limit you get about 50 replications out of a given cell and then the telomeres are so short that all kinds of bad things start happening and it seems like really a significantly high volume training is not friendly to the telomere length.

And that's where for me, I kind of like a mix – unless you really are just so incredibly passionate about the particular activity that one is into that you can justify really high volume training because of the joy it gives you or if the person's getting paid for this stuff then there's different considerations there.

But otherwise I like a little bit of this low level aerobic base building stuff that's almost at a meditative level but seems to have great effects on

vascluarization and fat mobilization and those types of things as well as seems to tune down that sympathetic nervous system kind of again puts us into a little bit more of a relaxed meditative state.

And then I like a nice sprinkling of anaerobic intervals and lifting some weights and that seems like a really good spot where you've got some decent strength, some decent cardio, some decent anaerobic stuff if you really get into a hard scramble, almost like wrestling or boxing or something like that and that seems like a pretty good spot to be for a generalist who they want to look pretty good when they throw you in your coffin when you're 80 or 90 or something like that.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: Yeah.

[0:30:00]

Grant: Well when did you last do something aerobic for let's say an hour?

Robb: I rarely get a full hour. I am more of a 30-40 minutes kind of top and yesterday I did a pretty good hike. I live in Reno which the area that we live in is either up or down like you kind of need to be a private detective to find a flat area around here. And so that I know I'm dipping in and out of an anaerobic activity even just hiking and this morning actually I jumped on a Schwinn Airdyne for 30 minutes and watched 30 minutes of the newest Star Trek movie just as a little bit of a recovery deal because I did...

Grant: Do you have one of those white towels around your neck?

Robb: I do not. Because the interior temperature of my garage today was 27 degrees so...

Grant: So you were doing it just too literally warm-up.

Robb: Just to warm up. Yeah. I was about 15 minutes into it before and I had sweatpants, sweatshirt, two shirts on and it was about 15 minutes of work before I was like oh I think I've got a tiny sheen of sweat on my back now.

Grant: Yeah. But that sort of exercise is about what I do. I love riding my bike and that's what I do but I don't go on long grinders anymore. I don't go

on club rides where we're going to ride 30, 40 miles, or anything like that. I ride with my friends and I ride with myself and I do – I goof off and then I do intervals.

So I have these little hills behind my house and I tie myself up there and they're like 38 seconds to a minute and 20 seconds and I don't know if I guess I can't be absolutely anaerobic for a minute and 20 seconds but it sure feels like it.

Robb: Right.

Grant: So I do that and I gave myself a little bit of break in between and I just tried to get in five minutes a day of really hard stuff and then I don't care about the rest. I geared down and old people passed me. I guess I'm kind of old but even older people

Robb: Older people are faster.

Grant: Yeah. And everyone passes me. But when I'm just goofing off but it's a good way to ride a bike and it's still my transportation too so I figured I'd get enough just paddling. But in the old days, I would have thought. I mean not I would have thought. I did think – I totally believed that if my heart rate was not at least 80% at maximum that I was just wasting time in the bike. And I used to think well, I can't really ride with friends who are less fit than me because I'm not getting a workout. All I'm doing is maybe I'm training my muscles to relax on a bike.

And I didn't want to get into the habit of going easy because then I figured it would make it harder of me to go hard and I was all messed up about that, the whole world that I...

Robb: Performance is kind of a neurotic thing. It's an amazing thing but it can be an absolutely neurotic thing. I am trying to compete in old dude Brazilian jujitsu and I have this aspiration for competing in the world championships next year and we'll circle this kind of tying into your book. I've historically felt pretty damn good doing kind of a cyclic ketogenic diet where I eat kind of low carb through most of the week.

I'll have a couple of carb ups after a harder workout and stuff like that but I got into this goofy thing called cross-fit which is very glycolitically demanding and then jujitsu and MMA are very glycogen demanding

activities. Like I've tried and tried to figure out how to keto-fuel this stuff and it's an epic disaster.

I've talked with Ken Ford a bunch about this and Peter Attia and different folks they're like well it's just a different animal. It's very glycogen demanding so you're going to have to do some fiddling with that. So if I were to eat the way that I probably feel best which is this kind of cyclic ketogenic approach, my performance is really at least 10 maybe 20% reduced off of...

Grant: Really?

Robb: A particularly activity I'm doing.

Grant: And you're talking about for this jujitsu stuff

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Robb: Basically wrestling yeah.

Grant: Well how long do these matches or bouts go?

Robb: About 5-10 minutes depending on the parameters. So it does have an aerobic component to it but you have a lot of anaerobic scramble and I have just – I've fiddled for the better part of I think 12 years now trying to figure out how to make that work. And I've been fully keto adapted and done rolling and I can roll a long, long time with that but that low gear of really being able to switch my hips super fast multiple times, shoot in and take a shoot for a single leg, take down or do like a judo throw or something.

If I am not successful and I need to scramble or there's more continues scramble with it, that low gear just does not exist. I can motor along at a low-ish intensity for a long time. But when I'm thinking okay I want to...

Grant: But these things are only five minutes long.

Robb: Yeah.

Grant: I don't get it. So I mean you can be anaerobic. It's not – are you anaerobic during any of it? I mean...

Robb: Virtually all of it.

Grant: That's I would think.

Robb: Yeah. And that's hard to do without some carbs in there.

Grant: So what are your bad carbs?

Robb: I wouldn't...

Grant: Is it vegetables or is it...

Robb: I'm gluten intolerant and so I don't really go down the gluten route at all. But I'll do some sweet potatoes, some bananas, rice, I tend to still – compared to a really high volume athlete like my total carb intake on a non-training day might press to 100-150 grams of carbs on a hard training day like if I did two grappling sessions, it might be 300 grams of carbs and I do pretty well with that.

But as far as performance, but the mental clarity isn't quite as good. And then the interesting thing is that then I'm kind of back in that deal and you talk about this in your book where I get hungry, I'm hungry like I'm ready to eat whereas when I was more keto fueled in the past, I was doing some Olympic lifting, some gymnastics tumbling type stuff which is very imitable to lower carb approach.

And I just really didn't get hungry. I would eat when I got hungry and had really good body composition. My body composition now is actually pretty darn good but it's a different deal and it's a fascinating thing that I'm somewhat frustrated that I've decided to pursue a sport that makes the fueling so untenable for the way like I have my best mental clarity and stuff like that.

Grant: Well, how often do you test your ketones? The blood, not the pee right?

Robb: I do the blood I've tested that pretty vigorously and it's interesting when you look out into the keto adapted athlete scene, it's almost universally what I would characterize as aerobic athletes. And I have seen nobody hack this – crack the nut of figuring out how to keep some really good performance for something like MMA or grappling or something like that. I've never seen anybody crack that nut and I've seen quite a number of people kind of take the work that I've done and then try to expand on that.

There's this guy who his handle is the BJJ caveman and he did a year long kind of keto gig and tested his ketones and fiddled and farted and kind of found that he too needed some more carbs in there and it's kind of funny because I'm the Paleo guy where you poke around and you say you do a search term that's diet for jujitsu or MMA, the Paleo diet pops up. But it's typically with more yam, sweet potatoes, I mean it's pretty darn clean diet but quite different.

Grant: And it's Robb Wolf.

Robb: And it's me talking about it yeah ironically. It's one of the bummers when you're theoretically the world expert on the topic and you still can't figure your own shit out you're like who do I go to for this?

Grant: Oh yeah, I wrote that.

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Robb: Oh yeah, I wrote that three part piece my thoughts on low carb and Paleo. But some of that is just being curious and seeing if there's another way of hacking all this stuff. But my training before really getting into Brazilian jujitsu was much more the way that you would describe. I would do some 20 second to 1 minute type hard intervals and then get myself however much rest I wanted and kind of...

Grant: What kind of intervals did you do training for jujitsu?

Robb: It's more like a five 1 minute rounds at different stations, push-press, body rows, kettle bell swings, stacking them and then a one minute rest in between and 3-5 rounds of that and it's pretty frisky stuff.

Grant: Could we talk about cross-fit for a second?

Robb: Totally.

Grant: I'd like your take on that. I first found out about cross-fit about seven years ago. It's not a whole lot older than that is. I mean...

Robb: I'm a ton older than that. Yeah.

Grant: Yeah. So it seems like one of my ideals is that sure, most of your listeners are not going to agree with this but I like to make general statements that I can always back off a little bit anyway but I think the competition kind of

ruins a whole lot of things. I just modified myself there because I really kind of think it ruins everything. Where it ruins many things.

And in terms of cross-fit and competition, cross-fit originally it was supposed to be like functional body movements and strengths and things like that but now they have these competitions were how many times can you snatch 62 pounds in I don't know, five minutes or something like that.

I would like to know what you think about how cross-fit – and I know not all of them do this but there seems to be an almost unavoidable trend toward functional movements, smart exercise, let's get strong, we don't have to sweat a lot, it just grows because you get all these people in the gym and suddenly there's all these comparisons person to person comparisons and maybe even cross-fit gym to cross-fit gym. What do you think about the escalation of the length of cross-fit type exercises?

Robb: Yeah. You may not know this but I actually help to cofound the first and forth cross-fit gyms in the world. I was one of the people that tracked the whole thing down on the internet and I just loved it. I loved the combination of weightlifting, gymnastics, and sprint modalities and in the early, early days and this stuff is still available if you go back into their archives 2001-2002. Even the kind of epistemology that they talked about was about a minimum effective dose.

How do we get a huge return on our investment by sticking as little in as possible? I'm kind of student of economics and that really, really appealed to me but somewhere along the line, coach Glassman who's the guy that largely founded this whole thing...

Grant: Is he the Santa Cruz guy?

Robb: He's the Santa Cruz guy yeah. And they eventually kicked me out for talking about stuff like this.

Grant: They did.

Robb: Yeah.

Grant: They kicked out Robb Wolf.

Robb: Yeah. What is the term when they kill someone like maximum not impunity but I'm totally blanking on the term right now but yeah...

Grant: You became an apostate.

Robb: Yeah. Exactly.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: And you know what I was arguing for is the sport of fitness kind of thing was fantastic. Like if you want to get into that stuff, that's great. But for 99% of particularly westernized populations, having a good effective varied workout that gets some strength, some mobility, some anaerobic and some aerobic fitness and that you did it with community, that's just fantastic.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: And Greg Glassman figured out that if you started putting folk's names on the board, he made this observation that men will die for points which is very powerful both on the motivational side and this should be a bit of a cautionary tale too because that statement is absolutely true. And when you start putting folk's names on the board, when they're doing these reasonably complex movements and their form starts degrading.

[0:45:03]

If they're in a timed environment where they're potentially going to come in dead forcing last, they are uncoachable. It's impossible to get this person to modify their technique. And you get all kinds of squirmy stuff going on. So my heart has always been in the early iterations of cross-fit where the idea was a minimum effective dose, a maximum return on one's investment and what the sport of fitness has grown into is we find how much work an individual can do without dying.

And it's a very, very different animal. It's kind of ironic in the cross-fit journal recently they had a piece that was suggesting that owners and trainers should really keep it in mind that their general populous should not be trained like cross-fit games competitors which I basically got kicked out in 2009 for making suggestions similar to that.

And it's kind of avante garde coaching at this point in their generation. But I think they're finding enough problems arising from folks so enraptured by the cross-fit games and this chasing what they consider to be elite fitness that it's very damaging to the culture of the gyms and to the bottom-lines of the gyms because you chase a ton of people out. And ironically if you're going to run a successful business, you actually want people to show and continue coming to your facility, not so break them either emotionally or physically but they're like I'm good, I'm never coming back to that. So it's an interesting thing.

Grant: Cross-fit gyms are – they're franchises. How much autonomy or affiliates...

Robb: [Cross-talk]

Grant: How wild and crazy can they go?

Robb: It can be very wild and crazy.

Grant: I mean they have the freedom to be wild and crazy.

Robb: Yeah. There is zero quality control in their implicit or implied as to the way that they could function which is on the one hand it's kind of cool because you've got some latitude to get in and experiment and stuff like that. But on the other hand I think it would be very easy to – and they're kind of slowly coming around this but this is all a bunch of old drama filled back story. But it's really the successful gyms, which I would put our gym in that category where our trainers make good money, they have a retirement plan, they have health insurance and stuff like that because the gym at large is successful enough to offer those silly perks like that.

Most gyms don't experience that and that's because most of them are really catering towards this kind of elite fitness side of things and it's funny. I see parallels with MMA and jujitsu gyms, the gyms that really focus on developing a broad group of people. There's financially successful and they can also have a competition team. No problem with that.

But you keep the meat-eating animals away from your old beat up dudes like me and the old beat up dudes keep coming back and paying their dues and keep the lights on and the bills paid for the gym. So it's

interesting. The heart breakers that if folks just took a little bit of a thought towards having some different program offerings, we have a couple of different classes in our gym where nobody's name gets on the board, nothing really gets reported, it's all very qualitative instead of quantitative and those are our most popular classes in the gym.

And they were a response to trying to figure out well how do we progress people and create an environment where they continue to have fun. And the main fun is that you get a good workout but there's community there. Like everybody's breaking each other's balls and having a good time and you get in good shape and you have some challenges but it's not completely white buffalo in the sky every single workout which at some point I don't care how tough you are, how wired up you are for suffering.

At some point you decide that you've had enough of that and you leave which is a real shame for these gyms because that's usually somebody that's been in a gym 2, 3, 4 years and then they end up peeling out and that's a huge shame.

[0:50:00]

Grant: Yeah. And the book Eat Bacon, Don't Jog Book, I say you need 2 ½ to 7 minutes a day and I rarely go 7 minutes. I've been tense things a day so a lot of my days are 3 minutes. And even in the 3 minutes, sometimes it's continuous. I may do tabatas but sometimes I just break it up like in the morning and a 1 ½ minute and middle of the day another minute and then the evening another minute.

And as long as you are eating right, that seems to be enough maintenance as long as you do general moving during the day. But the minimal effective dose of exercise is – I think that has a lot more potential to bring people in and keep them in escalating competition, numbers, public scores comparisons.

Robb: It's both a miracle and a curse for that scene. Yeah. And it will be interesting to see how it progresses over time like how many of these gyms will succeed or fail based off of their recognition of the need to cater to the folks that actually pay them and again, keep their lights on the bills paid versus the very few gyms that are real hubs for that we call elite level folks that are trying to get into cross-fit games or the brat

league or something like that. That's a very, very small pool of people and you're talking about...

Grant: The grit league, there's something called the grit league?

Robb: It's a niche within a niche. It's a whole another...

Grant: Here's another question. I like being able to ask you these kinds of questions. So let me throw this out loud. Here's I think we can all agree that cross-fit is a huge step in the right direction and is far better than most other kinds of fitness things with they're all people are doing backwards elliptical and things like that.

Robb: Right.

Grant: Okay so that is understood. But since effective exercise can be had in such small doses, I don't know whether you've exercised today but after we hang up here, you could spend five minutes and you could get a day's worth of good exercise if you choose those five minutes right.

Robb: Absolutely. Yeah.

Grant: And so since exercise can be so compact and so short and it can be so private, I mean you can do kettlebell swings, burpees, tabatas, you can do all of these stuff, you can do in a 3 by 8 foot square of land, dirt, floor, carpet, you could do it in your pajamas, you can do anything, you've got the kettlebell or not or you do body weight stuff tabatas, kangaroos, things like that.

Since you can do that and it need not take any more than five minutes, do you think that cross-fit places are sort of afraid of that fact in that they have to offer something that you can't do solo and at the time – like you go to cross-fit, you pay for an hour \$25 or \$30 I don't know what it is anymore. Just for the record I've been to cross-fit many times maybe 10 times, I don't know if that's a lot. But I have been there.

And what cross-fit can offer is other people doing it, sort of the strength of the group, the encouragement of the group doing it and that's something that a lot of people can't do by themselves. I think if you think of it as only three minutes, it would be pretty easy to do themselves. But cross-fit can also offer this competition environment and you obviously

can't do that by yourself or it's certainly easier. You're going to phone up your friends and ask him how many kettlebell swings...

Robb: Burpees and kettlebell swings...

Grant: [Cross-talk] yeah. All that kind of stuff. So do you think that is either consciously or unconsciously one of the reasons that they seem to go that way?

Robb: I don't think so. I think you touch on the community piece is huge like seeing – it's kind of our gym is kind of like cheers but we don't have a bar in it yet. And which it would be amazing if we did. Get your workout in, have a drink, call it a day. Even for myself, I'm a reasonably disciplined pretty motivated person and going out into my gym alone to workout, I've been lifting weights and doing different stuff since I was like 13. So at this point, that is just so onerously boring for me.

[0:55:14]

My neighbor, a guy across the street, I've been working to him to get up and we're going to do three day a week little deal where we do some strength work and do a quick little conditioning session at the end. And just having another body there for me at this point is just so much – so my gym temperature was 27 degrees today. Eventually it's going to be 12 and it just sucks so bad and because of my work schedule I can't go to jujitsu everyday so I'm kind of limited there.

I do when we get some snow I'll throw on some snow shoes and go out and stomp around and stuff like that. But I think there's an element of the community and then also in a well run gym, ideally you're learning some cool stuff. You learn to do a muscle up. You climb a rope. You get good at back swatting and dead lifting. You've got a good coach there.

But I think the reality is that most people who go to a gym like some type of cross-fit type facility, usually they get a day or so a week at home whether they're doing intervals or pull ups and whatever.

Grant: That's a good pint. Yeah. When I go to work there's a few people at work and we do – we lean on each other to get the work out even though it's like a six-minute workout we say have you done anything today yet? No.

Okay, good, neither have I. I want to just go down there and do it and we go on to the kettlebell room and the burpees and we just...

Robb: Get something done.

Grant: And it's nice to have someone else. You write the workout this day. I'll write it. Okay this is what we're going to do and then yeah, it's a short time but it does help to have people there. So I think I may not have come off this way but I am pro cross-fit for the contributions that it made but just that when I hear the scary workouts that one of my friends, a woman named Amy, she tells me her workouts are, I think I could not do that. I cannot run 300-400 meters or two 400 meters with a whole bunch of other stuff in between, all these dead lifts and burpees and body slams and ball slams. I don't know. It just seems incredibly hard. Maybe it's too hard for me.

Robb: It's a lot of work. It's a thing where if somebody really aspires to do that, in my opinion you got to ramp them up progressively. It's interestingly the way that I've tried tackling a lot of that stuff is parsing up the works so that they largely stay aerobic and actually kind of avoid that real glycolytic melt down and we build some aerobic capacity in the folks and some technical proficiency over time.

And then we slowly ramp them up and you know, it's interesting in our gym we do a lot of strength and skill work. So if the beginning of the class, you get a warm up and some mobility, you might back squat and then work on handstand walking and then we'll do some sort of run burpee pull up kettlebell swing, dumbbell thruster, just kind of cross-fit type stuff. And they're usually 6-12 minutes somewhere around there maybe once every 10-12 days we'll get a 25-30 minute white buffalo in the sky thing because this is another fascinating piece of this.

And this goes back to your point I think really at the beginning of the call which is we will have people leave our gym and go over to gyms that have terrible coaching, not particularly good community but because these guys are posting 45 minute workouts everyday and there just like I just want to do more even though the person is a smoking smoldering burn out like dude you really don't need more man. You need to kind of stay in the programming that we have is doing great.

And we've sent people both teams and individuals to a top 5 top 10 top 20 cross-fit games finishing and we've sent some people to world championships and MMA jujitsu age group triathlon so we're really pretty good at getting people in shape and a lot of our jobs as coaches is actually reigning these people in and not letting them kill themselves in the training process so that you need to train really, really hard to be ready to compete.

[1:00:00]

But if you're beat up and overstrained on the day of competition, you would've almost been better off showing up a little bit out of shape versus overshaped.

Grant: Yeah.

Robb: Yeah. So Grant it's funny. It's been you interviewing me more. So kind of a shift around on the normal format.

Grant: Well there was stuff that I wanted to ask you. This is my opportunity.

Robb: I love it. Do you want to mention anything else about the book? Like you covered food fantastically, the training is great, it's a really funny and easy accessible read, what else do you want to tell folks about Eat Bacon, Don't Jog?

Grant: Well it has the same format as just write, which I know most of your readers are not familiar with. But there's like 106 – I call them entries and they probably average maybe 220 words on a variety of topics. So it's sort of like a Whitman sampler and it's divide into 8 or 9 different areas. Some science stuff, some exercise, and food, eating, recipes, there's also a section called outgrow this book.

I am not an academic. I'm not a doctor. I make that clear at the beginning. But as I also say somewhere in the book that once the science has been established, A, you don't need the credentials. It's no less true whether I say it than whether somebody else is saying it. If I'm breaking new territory, if I'm going off on my own and I don't have the academic chops for that, that's another thing all together.

But if I – this is the stuff that works in my sort of contribution to the field, if it is a contribution, it is sort of the way I've presented. It's a book you

can pick up, open at any page and you've got a minute and a half to read something. You can read something and you won't get any bushtit on it. It's advice. It's how to do this. It's why this happens.

I talk about fat, the good kinds of fat, how to exercise, and there's even a section called outgrow this book in which I reference a lot of other good books, many other really good books that have been my inspiration or my education. And it's just called Eat Bacon, Don't Jog. And the title sums up the approach that we all seem to have toward food and exercise. I think the Paleo approach probably talks about more leaner fats and stuff so probably more heavy on the fat than the pure technical Lauren Cordain and Robb Wolf's Paleo approach.

But the whole thing is just keep the carbs low and watch what kinds of fats that you eat and don't waste a lot of time doing aerobic exercise without the anaerobic training in there. And that way you can spend as little time possible getting strong and getting lean and getting in good shape and that's sort of what it's about.

Robb: I love it. It was a super enjoyable book to read and we were supposed to roll this thing about a month and a half ago and I think it was right as Segan was born or something like that but something popped up and we had to reschedule this thing. So I was stoked that we're able to put this thing together. Grant, when is the book released?

Grant: It has been released according to my editor but I don't know what released means. So I expect to see – I have one copy now and my editor has another copy and I expect it to be in bookstores in a week.

Robb: Okay.

Grant: So Eat Bacon, Don't Jog and the normal place, even the biggest order we got for it, they got for it was from Urban Outfitter.

Robb: Nice.

Grant: Yeah, they ordered like 4600 copies.

Robb: Awesome. Right on.

Grant: I don't know if all bookstores will have it but you know, you can certainly ask for the bookstores and Amazon, Independence, whatever.

Robb: You know, I put it on the radar of a local independent bookstore, maybe we'll rope you into coming out to Reno and do a book signing and then I can bring them property values and hangout with you on that.

Grant: Sure.

Robb: Awesome. Grant, it was great having you on this show and you do a pretty good interview. This is fun.

Grant: You do a good interview. But thanks a lot Robb. It's really fun. Thank you.

Robb: Awesome. Well folks, check out in the show notes, we'll have a link to Eat Bacon, Don't Jog: Get Strong. Get lean. No Bullshit. We have links to that and definitely check out just write also. That is also a very fun read for me who I am not an endurance athlete and I've had borderline homicidal feelings towards cyclists because of my training of them. There was actually some really great stuff to see coming from a fellow cyclist that actually affirms some of my feelings and maybe we'll have to – so Grant it was great having you on the show.

Grant: Thanks a lot Robb.

Robb: Okay. We'll talk to you soon. Bye.

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