

Paleo Solution - 264

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Robb Wolf:

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Howdy folks. Robb Wolf here, another edition of the PaleoSolution podcast, the technological gods, almost tried to shut this one down and I have a sneaky suspicion I know why. My guest today rocketed into the ancestral health scene, lighting the world on fire for his fat burning abs and his Fat-Burning Man podcast. You know him. You love him. You wish you were him. He is Abel James.

Brother, how you're doing?

Abel James:

I'm doing awesome, man. [Laughs]. Thanks so much for having me, Robb. I like that. That might be the best intro I've gotten a long time.

Robb Wolf:

Oh just clip it out and stick in to some sort of a mash up deal since you're doing some music.

Abel James: Amazon Fire, I think I'm going to start actually using that. [Laughs].

Robb Wolf: You know, anything is better when it's on Fire so--

Abel James: I agree.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah.

Abel James: Except for my truck.

Robb Wolf: Well, yeah. And my desktop which we thought was on fire here a minute ago. Uh-hum. We're about 20 minutes late because of my whole system just had a complete, basically, took an enormous dump. But we seem to be going, we seem to be motoring forward. Abel, I know everybody knows you but give some folks some background in case they are new to the scene, they've been under a rock or you know, they just don't know what the heck's going on.

Abel James: Yeah. So I'll give the story that, you know, I'm kind of dripping out pieces of the story as it comes up but I actually grew up in the middle of nowhere in New Hampshire and I was really sick as an infant. Basically traditional--I know you have a similar story. Traditional western medicine couldn't save me. I had a temperature of almost 106 for like a week and so they pump me full of all sorts of antibiotics and I was in trouble.

So I was a really sick little kid and my mom had three options coming out of school which was teacher, secretary or nurse, and she chose nurse. It was actually that experience of having her first kid who was really super sick that got her into herbal medicine and holistic practices and Chinese medicine and healing with herbs from the backyard. So that's kind of where I came from and there was a lot at stake when it came to my own health. But then of course, you know, as I thought that I was better in everything and super type A and got out of the woods in New Hampshire and went to Dartmouth and then went and took a consulting job in D.C. For the first time in my life, I had awesome insurance and was also--

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]. That was probably the root of your undoing right there.

Abel James: Exactly, yeah. And also being, you know, a rebel, I wanted to kind of say that I was better than where I came from and what my mom was all about and that whole side of thing.

So I, you know, marched into the doctor's office. He was one of the best, you know, like top-rated doctors in D.C. for this stuff and I said, you

know--I was an athlete and I was in pretty good shape and I was working really hard though. I was trying to pay off my loans with consulting and then moonlighting as a computer programmer and then also as a musician, playing gigs, nights and weekends. So I wanted to make sure that I preempted any of the problems that genetically my family had like thyroid disorder, high blood pressure and other pretty normal stuff these days.

So, you know, immediately he's just like, "Here's what you have to do. You have to start eating like basically no fat, go super low calorie because already you're looking at some high blood pressure even though you seem to be in good shape."

[0:05:02]

And so over the course of time, you know, I was working hard and stress was definitely a factor and whatever but I was following this diet. For the first time in my life, I was really paying attention to what I ate and how I fueled and the food tasted terrible, you know, it's like cardboard and eating low fat is hard. So I was putting a lot of effort into that and then compound that with the fact, you know, as consultant I was actually working with the big food industry. I still can't say exactly who it was but, you know, exactly who it is and they make pretty much every drink you've ever heard of and a lot of convenience foods and a lot of foods that are marketed to be healthy.

So we we're taste testers and you know, experienced these foods and helped to market it and stuff like that and I was drinking the Kool-Aid. But then I kind of realized that a lot of these people who ran this companies wouldn't feed these products to their own kids and meanwhile, you know, every time I go to the doctor's office, I'm fatter, sicker and all of a sudden, I'm like 23-24 years old, 20-30 pounds overweight, have thyroid problems, have high blood pressure, a high triglycerides. All these things that I was trying to prevent I all of a sudden had and you know, my doctor's just giving me a new drug to try every time I go in there and you know, I'm peeing in a cup and getting my blood drawn every time.

So after all of this happens, my boss actually starts ragging on me for getting fat. And he's just like, "Well, you must be hitting sweets" or something like that and I was like too embarrassed to say that I was dieting harder than ever and I'm just, well, "This sucks, man." [Laughs]. Like I'm trying so hard and you know, one of the weird things about it though is you know if you've ever seen like any sort of political drama from D.C. or House of Cards or anything, like those guys aren't looking too good--

Robb Wolf: No.

Abel James: Right?

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Abel James: And that's--so it was just kind of like par for the course. I thought it was, you know, genetics and it wasn't directly because of what I was doing but in spite of it that I was still getting worse. But it got to this point, you know, my brother he had drug problems growing up and then he watched Pumping Iron and he's a couple inches taller than me and he was like 145-150 pounds emaciated.

I saw him in like 6 months put on like 60 pounds of mass and he just became this monster. He barely changed the way that he ate. He did all his protein but what he did, he was never afraid of fat. He is my half-brother. His dad was always eating steak covered in mayonnaise, like in a stick of butter like that was his meal and I'm just, "How does that work?"

So I really get into the underground body building opuses and stuff like that and I'm just like, "How can I take out the variables if I'm going to experiment on myself because clearly this isn't working." So I just figured, "Why don't I do what those old crazy body builders did?" which was, you know, drinking a gallon of milk a day or chug heavy cream or eat 36 eggs a day and try the high fat approach. I didn't all the way to that, that's stuff of the deep end but I did get really into--. My dad's side of family, dairy farmers, so I've always love like heavy cream and stuff like and butter.

So I just started loading up my food with that and eggs and rounded it out with a bunch of basically non-starchy veggies and did the cyclical ketogenic thing. So I went from this schlubby guy who looked like he was like, you know, all pale, in his 40s, in just about a month to the guy you see who looks like wolverine on my podcast--

Robb Wolf: Right.

Abel James: And I was just like, "Holy crap! Why doesn't everybody know this?" I was pissed off actually because I've been trying so hard and then I went to eating like the most luxurious foods in my life and I saw all the people with the exception with you, Robb. I think you were one of the first pioneers certainly in the podcast space who was doing the right thing and talking about the right stuff but most people were just like you need to

be miserable and restrict yourself if you have any hope of, you know, getting a hold of your body and your health.

You know, after that happened, I was like, "This is bullshit and we can do better than this." So I just figured, "I'm a musician anyway. Why don't we just hook up a mic and I'll talk into it and see what happens."

Robb Wolf: And then you ended up with your effigy basically sketched on to the moon after that so it isn't going so bad so--

Abel James: My caricature maybe?

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Abel James: [Laughs].

Robb Wolf: So Abel, you know, you started shifting your nutrition around, started playing with the cyclic ketogenic approach which I am a huge fan of. If I didn't have this nutty passion for Brazilian jiu-jitsu, that's pretty much the way that I would eat. Just cognitively, I feel really good with that, I've a great body composition, really consistent energy, even though, you know, there's so much drama in paleo ancestral health land about like low carb versus not low carb and everything. You know, I think it's a really easy thing, try one and see what works best for you and if you do well on, you know, like paleo carbs like sweet potatoes and tubers then that's great and if you don't, then you can fiddle that. It's a couple of months of fiddling like it's really not that big a deal.

[0:10:12]

Abel James: Oh, it totally is. Yeah, you really do--I mean I didn't have it under wraps. I didn't know exactly what I was doing at first and you know, skip ahead today. It's the way that I'm eating is quite different.

Robb Wolf: And that was my question, you know, how was that grown over time and what are you doing today like how's that morphed over time?

Abel James: Basically just going back to what I came from, right and not rebelling against that and embracing the more eastern style and the more ancient way of eating which is, you know, eat the stuff that grows in your backyard and eat the freshest food possible. So, as much as I talk about fat and eating really awesome meats and joking about bacon which is totally awesome that you can get away with eating stuff like that, I really do have a more plant based approach and I know you were a vegetarian for a while.

Robb Wolf: Uh-huh.

Abel James: I was too. But I was the bad kind. Uh-hum. And I think now it's more of--

Robb Wolf: The whitetarian.

Abel James: [Laughs]. Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Everything is white or a pasty shade of brown. Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Man, I do not miss that at all. But what I do and what my--it's been interesting too, I actually got married while we're off the grid. And so it's been cool to kind of see how we both inform the way that we eat because we always eat together and cook for each other and so we're really into super fresh veggies and we eat an ungodly amount of them.

Abel James: Okay.

Robb Wolf: And I'm also a huge fan of eating mostly like uncooked foods or raw-ish foods, pretty much fruit, nuts, and veggies in the opposite order of me saying that throughout the day. Then at night, we have big feasts and that's where we get the majority of our luxurious meals and then during the day, I also might have things like bone broth and other kind of fatty foods that have lots of nutrients in them but don't have a whole lot of bulk because the nature of what I do is a lot of recording as a musician and a lot of interviews for stuff like this. I usually don't eat my first like real meal until after sun down. And that's the approach that seems to work really well for me right now.

Then with my wife, you know, she's 105 pounds and it wouldn't seem to make sense that she would eat the kind of the same way as I do because we've totally different compositions. But the only real difference is that she eats a little bit more often than me and a little bit less than me when she does eat. So if I'm under eating until like 3 PM or maybe 6 PM, she might be having her meal at 12 or 3, the first one, and then eat with me again but in smaller portions. So it's been really cool to see how the interplay between totally different body types that are very intimate with each other and talking very honestly about it because just we love food and we're really into it. So we're experimenting.

Robb Wolf: Nice, nice. Where's your caffeine intake? Because I've found for myself that I can do a little more intermittent fasting if I don't do caffeine and I've really dialed mine back. Like I'm basically one or two single shot of espressos a day. But I find that if I start doing a little bit of intermittent

fasting, it seems like some of that adrenocortical activity, like I either get to do the espresso or the intermittent fasting but not both. Like where are you with that?

Abel James: Yeah, totally. That's a really important question. That's the one thing that I think has gotten a little--I'm good friends with Dave Asprey and I think he's really an interesting dude and we kind of came up together in this world. But I think people can really run away with it too much because, you know, like caffeine is a very--we know what it does. And I love coffee and I roast my own. I get the beans green from all over the world and so it's more of a hobby than anything else but because the coffee is so good, I have like one cup in the morning generally and I might have another like small and like a not a Starbucks cup, right?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Abel James: Like you go into a place like that and it's like the small one is something that's double the size of anything you get in any other country. But anyway, so I'll have like a cup of coffee and that'll make me feel pretty good and I'll have great energy and I'll put whipping cream in it or coconut oil, sometimes MCTs or butter, whatever. You know I've tried backing fat in it and tallow. But really it's a cup of coffee that I leave at 1. I don't abuse it and chug it all the time. I think it's really tempting for people to get into it. I think you can actually fast more with more caffeine for a little while until you burn out and then you're just toast and nothing works anymore. So you have to be careful with it.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. I completely agree and I was on the asshole end of that spectrum for a long time where I would both intermittent fast and drink like 5, 16 shot stovetop espresso makers. You know, Nicki and I would split that while we're going in, running the gym and it worked until it didn't and when it didn't work anymore, it was pretty epic how the wheels fell off wagon. So I was just curious how you manage that?

[00:15:11]

Abel James: Totally, you can so. You can push yourself but you get in trouble and then you learn and I'd like--this is what I'm doing now, right? And I've done at this point like 450 hour long interviews with a bunch of people who've gone through this incredible experience and focusing on health and combining that with my own mistakes has led me to why I do now. But, yeah, I mean when I was working in D.C., I was chugging coffee all the time, everyone was, right?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Abel James: Pretty much anywhere you go, we're working way too hard. I read this thing the other day that said--I couldn't believe it. I thought I got the statistics upside down but it said, only one out of five people takes their lunch break in America which means four out of five people eat at their desks and that's just, that's horrifying.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Dr. Parsley, a good friend of mine, a former Navy Seal, got out of the team so went to med school, so very intimate in two professions that are very sleep deprived and very, very demanding and so he does a lot of talk about sleep. He has a great info graphic that shows the increased work hours that Americans have gone through since the 1970's but the comparatively flat line in purchasing capacity. So you know, people are working way, way more but the relative power of their money and their dollars to do anything good for them has plateaued out which was all kinds of social and political kind of commentary on that. But you know, the takeaway is people are working way harder getting way less for their efforts and its pretty fascinating.

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Abel James: It's brutal and you kind of watch the middle evaporate. But that's a whole other thing but I think for someone who has experienced that, you know, and worked in that, it's an ugly business and you really do have to go against the grain so to speak.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Abel James: If you want to protect your own health and not burn out.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Doc Parsley just did a talk for big major league team, very well know. A very well known individual on that team really latched on to him. Parsley was talking about sleep and taking naps and relaxation and parasympathetic, you know, balancing because we're always on in this kind of sympathetic dominant state. This guy was like, "I love what you're saying. I've been telling these guys to take naps for years and they say that I'm just lazy but I always kick their ass."

I remember Wellborn telling me that, too, is that the dudes who were the best people in the NFL and the people had the longest careers, they weren't like listening to Metallica before they went out on the field and were like head butting lockers and stuff. They were literally asleep on a bench with a towel over the face and then somebody would have to like

shake them and be like, "Dude, kickoff in like 30 seconds." They're like, "Oh, okay." And you know, they go out there but they go so effective at being able to turn on and then possibly more importantly turn off that really sympathetic dominance, adrenal focus, fight or flight thing you know and it seems like whether we're talking about a good physician, politician, military, whatever it is. The people who seem to have good longevity but they're in a pretty high stress environment, they get very adept at being able to go in and out of the different states that they need and really turn those on at will.

Abel James:

Yeah and I think I took that for granted for a while because one thing that I experienced growing up is that I went through a bunch of hard stuff and being totally type A and all wrapped up in that world of achievement. I had this other thing which, you know, I went through--someone really close to me died when I was like 15 and I knew that I needed to cry and I couldn't for like weeks and I'm like, "What do I do?"

Then I found this little secret which, you know, I play guitar, I play saxophone, other things like that. The only way I could get myself to cry was crank up the amplifier and play along to Stevie Ray Vaughan or Jimi Hendrix or someone else totally crazy until I couldn't keep up anymore and then I just collapsed and all of these tears would come out. I feel all these emotions. So every since that, I've used music as kind of this outlet that you can feel your brain switch when you have that sort of outlet.

It doesn't matter if it's music or if it's art or if it's, you know, just taking a stroll with your dog or something or taking a nap or meditating. But I think everyone, you're totally right, everyone needs that thing and we used to get it, you know, like we unplugged and we sold our house and cars but last June. I haven't actually recorded until this past week for the last six months. And you start to appreciate living in these old school places or living in the woods that we used to just, you know, walk outside and listen to the birds and be in the woods and kind of get in to this super relaxed state and that just doesn't exist anymore for most people.

It's like you walk outside and you hear these sirens or someone is trying run into you or shoving you, you know, under a bus. We need to now actively reinsert things like that, that work for us into our own habits.

[00:20:17]

Robb Wolf:

So wait, let me ask you this like clearly you take your own health and wellness and fitness pretty seriously. You're very committed to helping a lot of people down this path. How much does helping other people damage your own health? Like clearly you are in a spot where you can check out and be in the woods and travel around and spend the weekend

in the Bahamas and you know, do whatever it is you want to do with that regard because you can do a lot of stuff remotely.

But to really keep the wheels spinning on something like what we do, it requires quite a bit of presence and I definitely know that if I were to 100% prioritize my own health, there would be a big "gone fishing" sign that pops up on RobbWolf.com. You would need a private detective to find me but I have this sneaky suspicion that, you know, you and I and a lot other people have some information that could potentially help a lot of people save some lives, all that stuff so I kind of take a little bit of bullet for the team. I've gotten a lot more balance in my life of late. But you know, how do you balance that and what's your internal dialogue around that, you know? Are you willing to take it for the team or what's the deal?

Abel James: Yeah. That's such a great question because like writing a diet book is the worst thing you could possibly do for your health. [Laughs].

Robb Wolf: Well, open a gym also and that--

Abel James: [Laughs]. Open the gym--

Robb Wolf: Those two were just neck and neck processes but I 100% agree, yeah.

Abel James: Or start a business or really achieve anything, right? It's hard and the world isn't designed for health these days. So yeah, you're totally right. For me and for Alyson, too, I knew that well, I wanted to finish this book and I wanted to write it in a place where it could be informed by that lifestyle, right? The unplugged kind of approach to life that we don't have any more that I grew up in.

You know, I'm very fortunate to have experienced that as kid like I totally didn't dig it, you know, growing up without cable and missing out on all those pop culture jokes and stuff like that. At the time, there was nothing to do. But I think it gave me this perspective on the world that's almost like from the last generation that they all had, right?

So I wanted to kind of like bring that into my work and revisit my work with a new perspective like that. But yeah, you're totally right, I mean coming back on the radar like, what I have done for the past two weeks? Every day, it's like seven or eight interviews in a row and then at night we do cooking videos and then in between that I'm recording a new album. So it's like the thing I think that I've learned more than anything else is that you can't gun it all the time. You need to have those cycles where--

especially were doing this now because we can and I know that we can't later, right? Like you have a little Wolf cub and we don't yet but when we do, you can't just like go in the woods and put up that sign like you said on your website and disappear for a while. So we really wanted to, while we still could, take advantage of kind of the mini vacation or the workation approach. You know, Americans say that they can't do that, but if you're eating it, you're desk cannot take in your vacation, maybe you can. Right?

Abel James: Maybe there is a way that you can -- it doesn't happen all at once, but you know, for me for example with consulting, I worked in D.C. at my desk and hated it for like a year and a half and then I'm just like screw that, I'm gone. I paid off my loans and then I drove around the country in a 1985 Mercedes Diesel running on vegetable oil because I learned all about biofuels and got really into it.

But like right after that happened, one of the vice presidents there was just like, hey, like, you want to work together. I'm starting my own thing and I'm just like sure, but I'm just going to like go live somewhere. I don't even know where and that's where I'm going to work from. I hope that's okay and he was like, yeah, you know, like, cool. We can kind of telecommute these and so I'm moved to Austin and lived there and worked for the next like 4 or 5 years in consulting remotely.

Then I'd fly out once maybe twice a month and so I think a lot of people feel like they can't do that. I felt like I couldn't do it either until I kind of challenged the status quo, took some risks, and then you know, other people started doing it too. In this day and age, it is something that a lot of people can do, who were in kind of the high tech world. If you can't, maybe there are things that you can do within your own workspace like there is a growing acceptance now for like standing desks and things like that or even those ridiculous treadmill desks.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Abel James: So if you are trapped in a cubicle-type world, there are still things like, tell your boss that it will make you more productive and then once you are because you're more active and more healthy, then, they will be like, cool, right, and then you're part of like making everything better and sub-settling for something that's really bad.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right yeah. Although I will say I bought Nikki a treadmill desk and she literally cannot walk and type at the same time so and the thing is to have either move from her office...

(00:25:10)

Abel James: Right.

Robb Wolf: Downstairs into my office and I'm like, okay, yet another classic exercises equipment that gets covered in dust, you now.

Abel James: [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: But I totally agree on the standing workstation right now and then I've got a physioball and a chair for my options Soulspin.

Abel James: Nice.

Robb Wolf: A 20 to 25 minutes at each pot doing my Barbara Oakley, you know, Pomodoro Technique, set a timer, 25 hard minutes, take a little break, do some mobility work, change positions. Because, you know, now Katy Bowman and some other people were saying oh, you know, just standing is also a problem like you need different, you know...

Abel James: Sure.

Robb Wolf: I think she calls it like movement palate or you know whatever and so that created more drama that I needed to work on to be compliant with the latest and greatest. Now, we've got a physioball, a pretty nice chair, and I've got a standing spot and a treadmill mixed it up with that.

When you mentioned the focused intense kind of chunk of work, I really like that. Part of what's rough for me doing this is that it definitely turns into a bit of a grind.

Abel James: Uh-hum.

Robb Wolf: Like you've got podcast after podcast, blog post after blog post, you know, there is just this thing that kind of stretch us into infinity with this...

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: And trying to figure out how to do some really punctuated, you know, mach 10, hair on fire, because of really crazy project that you're just a 100% committed to, can be very exciting, very rewarding, but it's nice to have an endpoint to it too.

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: You know, it's kind of like, you know, finishing up finals at the end of a quarter or semester and saying, okay this sucks...

Abel James: Spring break.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. It get to go out a beer and get a tan and be good and everything is fine and it's that part of life that just kind of doesn't, you know, like our work environment needs a dedicated like spring break. You know, when you go to Italy, depending on how you look at it the right or wrong time, all the Italians are at the beach.

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: They're gone.

Abel James: Right.

Robb Wolf: Like whole cities are just shut down and there is nothing going on. So you don't want to go there at the wrong time.

Abel James: Uh-hum.

Robb Wolf: But everybody like just, you know, de-stresses and chills out and gets out of town and they all kind of go together, which is also a little bit crazy. It seems like you could break it up into like queen dials and you know, but...

Abel James: Right.

Robb Wolf: The weather is only good for certain times. But you know, I'd like what you were saying with that where you guys have really been unplugged for a while and then you've come back recharged and clearly, your abs on fire, hair on fire, ready to do, ready to go do some projects, so I really like that.

Abel James: Yeah, it's cool and then you know, next week, we're going to Peru and doing some like personal growth stuff and like plant medicine and going down and just unplugging again. And then coming back, and you know, launching my book and I hate going to New York, but I have to and then I know that I'm going to be doing, you know, like 12 interviews in a row and stuff like that. So like doing that, you're exactly right. You're recharged and if you have too much grind then you start to lose perspective. Like we're in a health business right, and I think, I've seen a lot of people burn out and the reason is because they can't walk the walk

anymore because they are trying too much to do the health business stuff. Right?

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Abel James: I totally feel that it's really, really hard, but so I am very intentional. Like I said, I can't get sick right, because if I do, like I might die. [Laughs] So I want to be very protective of like everything that I've learned and also try to be a positive example and say like yeah, it is hard to do this, but it's the best thing that I have ever done. I hope other people can kind of see that as an example that no matter where you are right now, you can get to a spot that's a little bit better, a little bit closer to, you know. If you want to talk about Paleo, like caveman didn't have to deal with any of this crap, you know, so like try to get a little bit closer to that, not just with like the way that you fuel your bike, but also the way you think about your lifestyle.

Robb Wolf: Right. You know, when I did the I-Caveman Discovery Channel gig...

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: It was very rough in a lot of ways, but I have to say there was one piece that was really amazing and I didn't have to multitask anything. If I needed to make an at ladle or like build a fire or whatever and it took me five hours to do it, that's just what I did.

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Like that was the thing in front of me. That's what you did. There was no bouncing around, multitasking, phone call, emails, Skype, you know, Twitter, all these stuffs. So if I missed anything about that, it was just the simplicity and being able to just take one thing, see it through to the end, you know, enjoy the process because you didn't have these other things nipping at your heels trying to get your attention.

Abel James: Yeah, totally. Another cool thing that happens, I don't know if you experienced this, but like, when you kind of unplugged for a while or you lived in a single tasking type of world for a while, when you come back, you're like holy crap, we live in Start trek.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

(00:30:08)

Abel James: Like I had no idea. But you start to see technology not as something that you have to be a slave to because everyone else is, but as an opportunity.

Like, I think it's red that we can have this conversation right now, just like we're, you know sitting next to each other enjoying a little Espresso, but like tons of people can listen to it and learn from it. Like there are really cool things about technology that can make your life easier and make what you do more meaningful and you don't like. I think that only happens once you realize and this is kind of what happened to me.

One of the reasons we sold our house and sold our cars and everything else. Basically, I declared technology bankruptcy.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs]

Abel James: It got to this point where there is Twitter, there is Facebook, Instagram, all these social media stuffs that we don't even know how to use yet and everyone is on all the time. All these text messages, phone calls, you know people trying to get in touch with you or whatever and It just got to the point where I'm just like, I can no longer serve all of these people by responding to everyone. I kind of just need to like take a little time to think about like what is the value that I bring to the world. What can I do to make sure that I can affect people? Because it's certainly not responding to all of this stuff, you know.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right, Yeah, because your responses become more and more clipped, less thoughtful.

Abel James: Right, yeah.

Robb Wolf: And it is not particularly productive.

Abel James: I want to help people and so when you try to help people, but you can tell that you're not, and there is no way you could ever keep up, you need to like re-visit what you do a little bit. So it's been really cool to go through that.

Robb Wolf: Which is the nice thing for doing a book or a podcast because you have at least the potential of leveraging that one hour of time where the couple of months of time working on a book or the one hour of time on that particular podcast. It has the potential to reach a lot of people and if they're in a spot for hearing what that message is, then you know, some of the good stuffs can happen for sure.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Abel James: Yeah, yeah.

Robb Wolf: Great.

Abel James: It's a whole new world.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. Indeed, yeah. We actually have two Wolf cubs now. You were off in the woods so long that I got Nikki knocked up

Abel James: Congratulations.

Robb Wolf: And we have another Wolf cub now, so yeah...

Abel James: Oh, my gosh.

Robb Wolf: It definitely adds to the fun. But did you tow in amidst this busy life and a little bit of intermittent fasting and what not, how are you fitting in your strength training or your movement? Like what does that look like, how does that plug into your day, week, month?

Abel James: Dude, so it was great, right. At first, we unplugged. We lived in Bali for a little while, went to Fiji, Australia and then lived in national parks around North America and then in August I was hanging out with my friend Pedro and we did the documentary origins and...

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Abel James: We are going to film this new show. So we go out in California bouldering and I'm wearing my Pocahontas sandals, you know, the one -- I've run marathons, but I was an idiot and I wasn't prepared and we had this one jump that we needed to do. And I had actually my manuscript in by backpack and all of a sudden, there is water everywhere and so if I fall well, you know, I'm toast or whatever. I'm an idiot. But anyway, I make this jump and I try to stick it really hard and when I stick it, my foot breaks.

Robb Wolf: Oooh.

Abel James: And so then I had to hike an hour out there and then I'm just kind of like holy crap, I'm fat-burning man and I can't do anything, in terms of exercise, really from, you know, dead lifts to squats to even pull-ups. Because you have to, you know, either get up there or get down and I was like, I'm screwed, what I am going to do? [Laughs]

Then a week later, we're driving the burning man actually and my truck catches fire along the way. I'm screwed in so many different ways. So there are definitely ups and downs, but what I did was I saw as an opportunity. You know, cause everyone gets to the point where you know that you should switch your exercises every once in a while, switch to mobility, or switch to something else even though you're having great results, like you do something too long and you get injured, you know, and like, I had plenty of mass. I could go through my workouts, no problems, the strength stuff for sure, but then without one of my feet, I couldn't anymore and I really value -- I do it more for like strengthening the bones and keeping up you know like longevity.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Abel James: Really more than anything else right and so I saw like maybe this is an opportunity. Maybe this is a gift in disguise for me to revisit the way that I see movement and so I started getting really into qigong and tai chi type movement. The balanced type approach to making yourself stronger, revisiting that as opposed to just the raw strength and then more importantly, I just went inverted. So one thing that I've wanted to add to my bag of tricks was, you know, handstand, pushups, and really strengthening my fingertips and stuff like that. So I started doing exactly that handstands. You don't need your feet for that obviously and...

Robb Wolf: Right.

(00:35:00)

Abel James: I started doing fingertip pushups. I started out, you know, just like forcing myself to do four of them and then, you know, over the course of time, just to add a couple of day or every once in a while, you plateau. I got to the point where I could do as many with my fingertips as I could regularly.

So I started doing this all this almost like acrobatic, gymnastic-type training things and then, you know, my foot -- I was good to my foot. I love running, but obviously, I didn't do that for a while or hiking or whatever, but I started biking. One of my favorite things from when I was 8 years old besides ninja turtles was mountain biking. For you know, some reason, I just, you know, didn't do it anymore and then I bought a bike and we went to Moab and just like rocked out and I had the best of my like, and I was like, how did I not do this for the last 10 years, you know. So it's been really cool to do true cross training and then sure enough, I can't come back. My foot healed and I started doing some strength stuff and I'm stronger than I was before I broke my foot. So...

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Abel James: I think everyone can kind of do that. When you get injured, its sucks. It's a huge psychological blow more than anything else and so I think that just use it as an excuse to do something you should have done anyway, which is switch out to your workout and truly cross train.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. I have had a couple of friends, that you know, it's seem to be particularly pronounced if it is a lower body injury, a knee, a hip, foot whatever, but this is the time that the person either gets the first pullup in their life or their first one arm chin in their life...

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: You know, free standing, handstand, pushups on the rings or muscle up or whatever. It is kind of funny if you can wrap your head around, okay. I don't get to run. I might not get to hike. I can't even bicycle right now because my foot is in a big boot, but...

Abel James: Uh-hum.

Robb Wolf: You know I can do that stuff.

Abel James: You know I do that anyway, haha. There we go, there we go.

Robb Wolf: But, you know, you have this opportunity to either languish and lose everything that you've had or you've got a period of forced focused where it's like, oh I'm going to become an upper body expert.

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: And that's all there is, is to wait, you know, and you get to tick some of those boxers. That's very cool.

Abel James: Yeah. It was fun. It was. I wasn't at first. I was like I'm screwed, what I'm going to do. But then you know just that happens to everyone at some point and usually once every year or three years with increasing frequency as you get older, you know. So...

Robb Wolf: Right, right. We're doing Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Every class I'm just kind of like, is today the day.

Abel James: Right.

Robb Wolf: Is today, you know, the day that a 22-year-old white belt gets me, yeah and you now, they're like 220 pounds and they were former defensive back from college or something like fucking sweet man. This is going to be awesome, so...

Abel James: Right.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. So tell folks about your recent writing project.

Abel James: Yeah. So my book is called the Wild Diet and it's basically just an awesome cookbook. That's book ended by memoirs from my own life traveling to different cultures and I've seen the way that they eat and live and mostly -- also you know, some of it is from the food industry for a while there.

One of the reasons I did Fat-Burning Man the way I did is kind of this, actually, so my friends started calling me Captain America because they know that, you know, I have this very multicolored personality like you and not the cleanest mouth or whatever. But what I saw I really wanted to bring positivity to the world of health because I saw that there is so much negativity out there especially in the mainstream stuff. Then I wanted to bring out the good stuff, but I also like couldn't bring out a lot of its truth for a while because I had recently worked with a lot of the big food industry like inside of it. So I kind of had to drip out the truth or get other people on my show to say things that I couldn't say. [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Right.

Abel James: So it's been a cool day. Like I spent enough time and so I put some of the stories of, you know, what were actually up against when we go even into a health food store, in terms of food marketing and addictive substances and where this crap came from in the first place. And how they basically took our food and things that used to be a pie. You know like in the 50s or whatever, and everyone used to eat pie and everyone looked great and like wasn't really fat for the most part.

So I kind of like questioned a lot of the ways that food is made today and put a lot of their stories in there straight out of big food or straight out of you know when we went to Bali and asked why are Americans fat, just dig at their opinion. So it's been fun to kind of do it in a memoir style and then literally what we've tried to do with like I've never felt comfortable. I think because we work so closely with the industry with like selling fat burning pills or something like that but I can totally get pinned selling recipes and getting people really into food.

(00:40:01)

So we spent months testing all these recipes and basically taking all this old school things like pumpkin pie and comfort foods and really tasty foods and making them good for you and basically, you know, like my mom had this recipe for red velvet cupcakes...

Robb Wolf: Hmmm.

Abel James: That was really old and instead of making it with crushed-up bugs or artificial red sweeteners or whatever, the way they used to do it was with beets.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Abel James: And beets are slightly sweet and they are slightly reddish and it turns out they are quite good for you in a lot of cases especially if you're going to go for something that's kind of a cheap food anywhere or whatever, like you might as well put some really food in there. So it's been cool to make that sort of mini cookbook in the middle of this book and that's what I wanted to be. Like, I want people, as soon as I got the first copy, it's you know, covered in batter and cinnamon and all stained by real foods and that's what I want it to be. So we took recipes from my dairy farmer family and Alison's huge Mormon family and then our community who contributed a lot of really cool stuff that, you know, some of them are cooks, but most people are just regular.

You know, we're not cooks and I think the world is so full of all of this incredibly well-trained impressive cooks that it makes people feel like they could never come close to that so why even bother. So we wanted to make it like quick and easy to make really rad stuff that anyone can make for themselves and for their family and I'm pretty stoked about it and it is out April 7, so people don't have it yet, but I'm really excited to see what people will think.

Robb Wolf: Well, I'm stoked. I think that I've got a copy of it on the way...

Abel James: Yeah, you should. We just got a bunch to send out to people like you, but you're going to be at Paleo FX, yeah?

Robb Wolf: I will indeed, so...

Abel James: Nice, so we're going to be bringing baskets of these books I think.

Robb Wolf: You know what I'll do is I will slather you up with ink on your chest and you can do like peck imprint on it. That would be your signature. So...

Abel James: [Laughs] I like that or you can just oil me up and set me on fire.

Robb Wolf: We will again, you know, abs on fire, right. I think that, you now, you just can't go wrong with that. Now with the one-time gig, but you now, you can't go wrong with it. So Abel remind folks where they can find you, how to track down your podcast, how to find the Wild Diet, all that good stuff.

Abel James: Yeah man, so pretty simple. The Wild Diet will be available anywhere books are sold, April 7th but in the meantime; we're doing a bunch of cool giveaways. We're giving away a bunch of cooking gear. My favorite skillet, a drone that films HD for outdoor adventures and everything in between, so that's it, wilddietbook.com and then can't miss me on the iTunes store, the podcasting world. It's called The Fat-Burning Man, you will see the guy with a flaming abs somewhere.

Robb Wolf: Nice. Awesome man. We're super stoked for you re-emerging from the backwoods. Glad that you did not die a watery death while weeping across the chiasm in your Pocahontas moccasins. It is really funny because Zoey wears basically a hippie shoes, you know, the leather hippie shoes and we go to the local playground on some days and everything is plastic and like all the other kids have this rubber soled shoes that stick to the plastic really well and they can run out all the play, like run up the slide backwards and everything.

Abel James: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: And Zoey gets likes two feet up and her feet spins out and she just collapses and she is like, oh I suck at this. I'm like no, your parents are just bad and we buy you hippie shoes.

Abel James: That's awesome.

Robb Wolf:: Yeah, yeah. It's got pluses and minuses. Super stoked that you're back on the scene, really excited that the Wild Diet is coming out soon. We will have links to that in the show notes. We will have links to your website and just looking forward to seeing you at Paleo FX.

Abel James: Yeah man, that will be super fun. Thanks for having me out man.

Robb Wolf: Awesome man and thank you for your patience. Folks may have caught a little bit of this, but it took me a long time to get online today and Abel is very patient with me. So thanks for your patience man.

Abel James: Been there.

Robb Wolf: Alright amigo. We'll talk to you soon.

Abel James: Thank you.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Bye-bye.

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