

# Paleo Solution - 267

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Robb Wolf:

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Howdy folks. Robb Wolf here, another edition of the PaleoSolution podcast. Six listeners can't be long, as always, very excited for the folks that I have with us today. They are dear friends, clients, trainers, coaches from NorCal Strength and Conditioning. They jumped out of the nest, flapped their wings, flew to the sun, and have done amazing things. They are Adam and Vanessa Lambert.

Adam, a lot of you folks may follow his work at Fit for Duty. Vanessa, many of you may remember, was our anchorperson in our third place CrossFit games finished phenomenal athlete in the road, right. They are the developers of the Bee The Wellness and Unveil Your Wellness systems. Guys, how are you doing?

Vanessa:

We're excellent. Thanks Robbie. Thanks for having us.

Robb Wolf: Awesome.

Adam: Yeah, thanks man. This feel like it's has been a long time coming.

Robb Wolf: It has been a long time coming.

Adam: Yes.

Robb Wolf: We've threatened to do this for a long time like about five years or something that we finally got around to doing it so...

Vanessa: Well, we finally have some good things to talk about so...

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Vanessa: I guess that will work.

Robb Wolf: Very cool. Well, hey Vanessa, let's jump in with you. You have a really phenomenal athletics background. You were one of our first clients at NorCal Strength and Conditioning very, very early on. Somebody who may be doesn't care a lot about you paid for some personal training with me and I tried to kill you on the first day.

Vanessa: You did.

Robb Wolf: Tell folks about your athletic background and tell them about your first training session at NorCal.

Vanessa: Yeah, we were just talking about this the other day actually on our podcast and yes, so Robb got wind that I was a gymnast and I think for some reason, you thought perhaps that trying to kill me on the first session would be the way to win me over.

Robb Wolf: Which it worked though. It totally worked.

Vanessa: Yeah it did. In some twisted way, it totally worked, but yeah, you had me do round-off snap downs and I can't remember what the other thing was. It might have been like squats.

Robb Wolf: It was kettlebell swings.

Vanessa: Kettlebells.

Robb Wolf: So it was 2159 round-off snap downs and kettlebell swings.

Vanessa: Yeah and I think half way through 15, I looked at you and was white faced and you're like, okay, you're done. [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: And then Vanessa lay down on the mat and didn't move for a while.

Vanessa: Yeah preceded to half to decompress for like the next hour, but I came back the next day.

Robb Wolf: So your loving husband had given me a little bit of forewarning and he's like, Vanessa is a total pipetting athlete and she is super suspicious of everything and the only way you will get any buy-in with her is if you break her in half so...

Vanessa: [Laughs] Yeah, yeah, it's true and it's like, I think that just the fact that you were even incorporating round-offs into our workout, I was like, okay, this is interesting. I could get into this because there had not been a class thus far in my athletic career where someone started out a work out with a round-off so that was really fun.

Robb Wolf: Oh well, I had tinkered a little bit with that, that exact same workout having done some Capoeira but your gymnastic skills, if you were liquored up and lobotomized, would be better than mine if I continue training in for 50 more years.

**(00:05:10)**

Vanessa: Actually yeah. My gymnastic skills ironically enough get better with liquors. [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: Yeah. We have some photos and video to document that. Actually two from a NorCal holiday party so yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah exactly.

Robb Wolf: So Vanessa what was it like for you? You went from a gymnastics background, got into a lot of yoga and Pilates, then kind of got thrown into the early days of Crossfit and we had some progressions going and stuff like that, but it was still pretty rough and ready like, what was that whole process like for you?

Vanessa: Well, I think that the thing I really fell in love with it was that we had so much fun.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum.

Vanessa: So although there was obviously some structure and a point to the whole thing and when I came on to the set, Nikki was training for the game so I don't know if you remember, but I got to chase her around for like the first six months of my CrossFit introduction.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Vanessa: Which was really fun because it was like, holy cow. The first time you guys showed me nasty girls and then the next couple of weeks we're trying it, it was just -- it was out of this world. It was like, okay, we're finally using and combining all the skills that I had garnered over all the years of my athletic career and just my playtime and we're putting it into these fun workouts and play days and it was just so much fun. We had such a great time with you guys in the early days of just hanging out and doing all this crazy shenanigans together.

Robb Wolf: Indeed, it was a lot of fun. Should we tell people about the one crazy shenanigan? You know exactly what I'm talking about.

Vanessa: I knew it was coming. Would you like to tell everybody about it or do you want me to?

Robb Wolf: I'll do a lead in and then we'll see if I can hand it off and then give the hot potato in your hands. So Vanessa not only -- I don't want to draw too broad of a characterization here. But usually female gymnasts are quite good at tumbling and upper body strength can be pretty good, but not spectacular, but Vanessa's pretty unique in that she has both very impressive upper body pressing and pulling strength and so I was like, hey, I think you could get really good on the ring. So Vanessa was like, okay, sign me up and so we started working through a lot of stuff way beyond the muscle up. I think Vanessa had a muscle up like the very first time she even put hands on the rings because she had tons of dips, tons of pull-ups un-kipped. She was just very fundamentally strong and so we started working towards more advanced skills and one of them was a straddle press handstand and so...

Vanessa: Yeah, but, well, we started with the straddle through, which is I think where we were at this particular junction in our trainings together.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah and so for the straddle through, you have to be very tight. You have to be very hallow and when I say very tight, I mean, tight as in if you had

a chunk of coal in your purse and a diamond would roll out of your shorts.

Vanessa: You are squeezing tighter than you've ever squoze before if that's a word.

Robb Wolf: Yeah I like squoze. I like squoze and so while you were squozing, I had my singular experience like this that I've ever had with anyone and what happened?

Vanessa: Yeah, well you actually had -- I think you had a hold of my hips and you were actually guiding me from the shoulder stand down into the straddle.

Robb Wolf: Right and to do that on the best of circumstances, like in Vanessa's junk pretty much, like it's a pretty intimate spotting scenario. She is on the rings. Her legs were up in the air. She is curling down. I've got to be right up in there to spot it and...

Vanessa: You don't usually do this outside of marriage. Let's just say that.

Robb Wolf: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah and I fired it in your face.

Robb Wolf: Yes and did I drop you?

Vanessa: No.

Robb Wolf: Nope.

Vanessa: You said, did you just break wind? [Laughs]

Robb Wolf: And Vanessa looked at me like, dude are you deaf or just your olfaction not worked, like what's the story here.

Vanessa: Yeah, I pretty much died. The only thing I could do is just laugh because what else can you do at that point, but there were no boundaries between you and I after that point. It was pretty much like all hands off.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah, pretty much, pretty much, but to our credit, you didn't let go of the rings and I didn't drop you so I think it would...

Vanessa: And I made it through the straddle.

Robb Wolf: You made it through the straddle, yeah, yeah.

Vanessa: Yes so yeah, from that point on, we are pretty much in it to win it together.

Robb Wolf: Yeah and when you did, Vanessa was absolutely instrumental in our third place Cross Fit games team placing -- we had a very strong team. A little bit of bad coaching on my part doing some substitution cost us the first place position. We were set up to win the whole thing and I did a last minute substitution and it bumped us from first place to third place, but we were actually running even further back than that between both Vanessa and Adam basically crawled us back up to a third place finish. So you guys are totally amazing, but Adam, would you agree like Vanessa was essentially the anchor for that thing. I think we could argue.

**(00:10:46)**

Adam: Yeah, between her and Glenn.

Vanessa: Yeah, Glenn Scott.

Robb Wolf: Glenn is a cyborg, yeah.

Adam: Yeah I mean he has just like senseless ability to suffer...

Robb Wolf: Right.

Adam: ...is wildly helpful. I mean not to take anything away from Katie or John as well, but I was definitely the least adept athlete on the field like those everybody just...

Robb Wolf: I don't even know that I would call it least adept, but what we've seen in the CrossFit games is that the Clydesdales don't do so well. It gives some people some stats on you.

Adam: Yeah it will then. I'm a skinny wisp of what I once was mostly job related but then I was 6' 3", 225.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Adam: So I'm still 6' 3", but I'm about 198 now on a good day.

Robb Wolf: Right, but you were kind of move in to that big house on Jack Street at that time like you were not a small dude and there were a few things like the overhead squat that played to you well, but then we had to follow immediately after that by max pull-ups. But you still bank some very impressive numbers on that?

Adam: Yeah, yeah. I get -- like the kipping pull-up is something that, I don't know. Once I pick it up, it was like, this is actually pretty legit. I can always do way more kipping pull-ups than like ratio appropriate dead hangs. I don't know if that makes sense but.

Robb Wolf: Right, it sounds good.

Adam: Yeah I would say at the games and then I always get the qualifiers confused actually. Because those things seem like there are kind of back-to-back, but yeah, the overhead squat was definitely my gem. The relay, I can run hell so that's kind of...

Robb Wolf: You also have a decent whack of fame related to some kipping pull-ups and that goes back to your now famous firefighter friend. Tell folks about it. So give folks a little bit of your history within the fire service. You've been in there since you were basically an embryo and,

Adam: Sure.

Robb Wolf: And yeah, yeah and then lead folks forward to -- you've been in the fire service, you've been training your whole life, kind of got exposed to early CrossFit and then you mainly had this idea for this firefighter friend test, which was spectacular.

Adam: Yeah. So I started as a volunteer firefighter when I was 18 and then I got hired into a career department literally the next year at 19 years old. So I've been doing that for quite a while. I grew up in a super small town where there wasn't a lot of athletic opportunity. Like I played high school football stuff like that, but there was no strength coach. There was no time in the weight room. There was none of that kind of stuff. So really, my first real exposure to strength and conditioning was in the fire academy, which was pretty good. You kind of get that sense of what's going on, but in an academy based deal, which not very individual.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Adam: But that was -- I kind of decided then. I was like, well, I actually have some physical capacity. This is something that I'm pretty interested in and then clearly through the job, it became obvious that well, you need to be in shape to be a firefighter, right. That was kind of the concept and over the first few years, maybe five or six years in the department as a firefighter and then promoted into different positions, realized through some training.. Because I was kind of doing the standard run 6 miles 3

times a week and hit the wave stock for 2 hours doing predominantly body building type stuff.

There was a lot of like five cases and skull crushers and triceps pushed in my, like repertoire, and it was basically straight out in men's health magazine, was everything that I was doing and moderately successful right. I was lean. I've thought that I was in pretty good shape from a conditioning perspective. I never fell out on fires, I was kind of the guy. I think it had to be like in the early thousands may be 1999, 2000, 2001 something like that, there was this firefighter rescue drill that came out based on resulted from the death of a fire in Denver. It was the sort of complicated scenario where you had to -- you had to rescue another firefighter out through this very narrow window, like over the ledge and out this window.

**(00:15:10)**

So this was something we're practicing for because a guy died in this position. We though, hey, it would be a good idea that how a skill set for getting this person out. What I realized doing that drill is that I actually did not possess the kind of strength and conditioning that was required to do that part of the job. It is so much more anaerobic and so much more just mental toughness, grueling miserable kind of work and I just wasn't getting from my basic, like body building and running kind of a thing, and so that sort of set me on the path to trying to find something new

I started buying books and reading about various things and Mark Verstegen, the athlete performance guy at Arizona, I read his book. And was actually Googling around or Yahooing around or both or AOL'ing whatever it is and came across just images from this gym and people flipping tires and pulling things with ropes and all of the stuff. I was like, wow, this is what's up. Like this looks like what I need to be doing and went to the contact me thing and this is where we're living in Chico at that time and right there at the bottom was like, Chico California and here is the phone number. That was NorCal Strength and Conditioning and I was like blown away like there is no -- what are the odds that there is one place right when I need to be looking for, these guys are here.

So I think I reached out to you and we set up a couple of privates and then just started working our way through this stuff. I mean basically at the same time that Vanessa was doing. One of the things that's kind of funny about the whole deal was that right before this, Vanessa had horrible seasonal allergies, right. Chico is like the city of trees and pollen.



So her aunt had actually suggested that she go gluten and dairy free to help her with her allergies, right and so I was very much in the whole-grain bread, low-fat milk. Like we were actually digging back through some old fit day logging from back then and it's hilarious.

Robb Wolf: Oh, that's so awesome.

Adam: There are lean cuts turkey and 7 grain bread and low-fat milk. In any case, so she went gluten dairy free and then when we started training with you, I was like, that sounds like hogwash. I don't believe it and then like first day coming back from training with you, she's like, so you know Robb. He is totally down with the gluten free, dairy free diet thing and I was like damn it.

Robb Wolf: The news is circling.

Adam: Crazy and of course now there's just never been any going back from the dietary perspective but... So yeah from those early days of CrossFit, which they were -- I think you were almost selling yourself a little bit short as far as like the coaching that you guys provided. There was an assessment. We walked in. We sat down. You talked about our athletic background. We kind of got a little bit of exposure to some Tabata-esque kind of intensity. I mean you really walked us through the stuff. It wasn't this thing of, okay, here you are, now do you -- whatever ridiculous means I was kind of a thing. You guys always had a plan for kind of progressing people through, but...

Robb Wolf: Thanks. I still look back at even those early days just chagrined like it could have been so much better, but you know what, we're doing the best we could. We knew that progression was better than scaling. We knew that people needed to be exposed to less complex motor patterns versus more complex motor patterns early on so we did the best we could, yeah, yeah.

Adam: Oh for sure and I tell you, well yeah, I still like harping back to some of the very first coaching cues, like, hey, I put together this workout. I'm telling you. It is really awesome, like archer push-ups in the rings and like hang power snatches at 3-quarter body weight. You're like well I would normally for metcons would couple two things that are less technically challenging. Well I will get end up with like a broken nose and herniated disk in your back from this horrible workout.

Robb Wolf: That was only after we got Fragoso busy. I mean we needed to fit in some folks initially until, you know, got to keep the Fragoso's fed. So yeah, yeah.

Adam: Totally, totally. Yeah. so we just kind of kept cruising through the stuff. I think I got promoted the captain right and there so I had for the first time full-unsupervised control over my people at work and really started to take the things that we were doing at the gym at NorCal and trying to apply them there and okay, this worked in this scenario and then bring it back. So you and I did a lot of back and forth and tinkering on how to best approach this stuff for a fireman, for firefighters and I think I was an outgrowth of that.

**(00:20:03)**

They started to -- so this was like maybe 2007 something like that. I think CrossFit was really starting to become kind of a mainstay in the police mill fire thing. Like the main site pictures were always of some CrossFit Afghanistan or whatever and there was like, oh that kind of stuff is going on and the firefighter friend thing wasn't actually my idea. There was -- somebody else had been tinkering with it and I was like, you know what, somebody is going to do this, full meal deal on air and it's going to be a big deal and it might as well be me. So I talked to you about and said, hey, I wanted to do this and I think it was you and Nikki both and you guys just kind of like raised an eyebrow like the classic Robb Wolf. Okay eyebrow up and...

Robb Wolf: I just asked Vanessa if she had doubled your life insurance since she is like tripled. So yeah.

Adam: It is going to be a win-win. Yes, so we just kind of knuckled down and did and so it was Fran right. So 2159 with 95-pound thrusters and pull-ups and I did it in full structural firefighting gear with SCVA on and then also breathing air, which added a complete like different element to it. This idea that there is only so much air to breath and that factor was something that made it a lot worse.

Robb Wolf: Not only -- well talk about that limited air supply and like how much air theoretically you allotted versus how much you actually went through. You also the whole time were fighting the sense of drowning basically.

Adam: Yeah, absolutely. So the breathing apparatus, they're tested to produce or to like literally flow a certain volume of air and the assumption, I'm not sure what they based the assumptions on, but there is some assumption that you're not going to exceed that. Well, nobody is going to breathe more than this, kind of a thing. I far exceeded it like to the point that I

was -- the way that they worked. They're a positive pressure apparatus, so when you breathe in, it reduces pressure in the mask and then the tank, the regulator puts more air into the mask, right and so I was out taxing the regulator. I couldn't literally could not breathe enough air and so yeah, you're fighting back this like real feeling of panic, which is something that we do a lot of training on right to kind of keep your shit together so to speak in those kind of situations.

Robb Wolf:

Right.

Adam:

You practice that kind of stuff, but trying to do Fran for time, I mean it was absolutely a miserable thing. I mean there are times I look at the video and now you can just see like you get that whole like sternoclavicular breathing like you didn't even see it through my turnout gear. I'm just like, if the tank was even somewhat flexible, you'd swear you'd be able to see it flexing in and out while I was breathing. I mean out of that psychological component was a real eye opener. I mean it was a great thing to do from that perspective.

Then the rest of the workout, it's like, we weighed it out I think in the video. It was like 50 or 65 pounds of extra gear, which adds up and weird mechanical issues with the mask like trying to clear your chin over the bar and all that kind of stuff was a little bit odd. But did it nonetheless and came out and survived basically the whole thing, but the bottles with that time, we were using 30-minute bottles, right, that supposedly you can get 30 minutes of air out of those. Me, personally on a working fire, I never get more than 20 minutes out of a bottle and I think I sucked that bottle dry. The last reps of the bells were ringing and I was out of air and sucked that thing dry in 8 minutes and 30 seconds or whatever it took to do Fran.

Robb Wolf:

The 9 round I think on the last couple of thrusters, the bell started ringing and then you basically had to finish the pull-ups basically without air. Yeah. It was crazy and we'll throw that up on the links for the show notes with this thing. It's absolutely amazing. It still is one of the coolest things that I've ever been able to participate in.

Adam:

Oh, that's awesome. We actually just talked about this a little bit recently, but one of the things that I've seen and I'd actually just finished the strength and conditioning class specific to peace officers. So I got certified to teach post curriculum whatever randomly. But one of the things that was discussed in there is this idea of training like kind of getting too job specific with your training. So like you don't want to train necessarily in turn outs if you're doing this kind of thing and it brought up

the firefighter Fran thing. The instructor had no idea that it was me in the class when I brought up.

Robb Wolf: Oh funny, funny.

Adam: And what I realized is that there were a lot of people who saw that workout or that test, that publicity stunt, whatever stunt I guess and assumed that that's how I train, like, how often do you this, like, once.

**(00:25:13)**

Robb Wolf: Once and never again not even for like 10 million dollars, yeah.

Adam: Yeah which is sort of like it kind of, it's the same -- one the same issues I think that has sort of developed CrossFit as a whole is you have all this benchmark workouts that all of a sudden become the daily want. You're like, hey, you don't necessarily need to do a benchmark every single day. Anyway, so I've actually thought about doing like a full article post on that saying, hey, this is not how I train and in fact, to do this, this is how we train. You know?

Robb Wolf: I think they are not being credibly valuable yeah and I was talking with Fred Hatfield a couple of podcast back and that's one of his bugaboos is the said principle kind of getting twisted around so that you're swinging a golf club with like a universal cable tied to it and stuff like that.

Adam: Right.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah.

Adam: Yeah, that was actually -- that's the last podcast I listened to. That guy is awesome.

Robb Wolf: He is amazing. He was smoking a hookah the whole time. I got a video on and he didn't and Doc and they're smoking a hookah and I'm like, I wonder what it's got in there so yeah.

Adam: That's pretty funny.

Robb Wolf: It's awesome. So Vanessa, you in addition to being an incredible athlete and hell of a surfer and somebody not opposed to breaking wind among people that you feel close and safe with. You had a near-death experience that went on for a long time. Do you want to share a little bit of that and then what your process of recovering from that has been?

Vanessa: Yeah sure. Well, I was living in Nashville at that time. I had gone out there because I'm a musician so I was writing and recording my first album and my appendix ruptured. So I went to the hospital, had my appendix removed, did the standard sort of I think 24 or 48 hours in the hospital and followed up by antibiotics, all that good stuff. And thought I was good to go until about a year later, I literally woke up one morning and just felt like I was dying and I really don't know how else to explain it except for that my abdomen was in so much pain, that I woke up... Adam was actually working up in Northern California at that time and I was staying down in Santa Monica with our friends Dom and Nadia. You know Dom and Nadia.

Robb Wolf: Uh-hum, uh-hum.

Vanessa: And I woke up Nadia and I said, you have to take me to the hospital, I'm dying. I don't know what the heck is wrong with me, but literally like, take me now. So I couldn't even wait for her to call an ambulance. She was like, let me call an ambulance, and I thought, no way, get in the car, we've got to get there as soon as possible. So after a couple of unfortunate misdiagnoses, they actually thought I have like a, I think they thought I had a cyst or something like that, they sent me home with some pain meds and I went back Sunday night. Adam had come home and basically I tried to wait until Monday to go see a doctor, but I couldn't. So Sunday night, went back to the hospital and essentially what they discovered is I had abscess all throughout my abdominal cavity so all entangled in my bowel loops completely surrounding my -- I guess, Adam you would probably remember better. It was surrounding my ovaries?

Adam: Yeah exactly, so tubo-ovarian abscesses so like the whole -- like both fallopian tubes were completely inflamed and abscessed and then like these massive pockets of scar tissue that were connecting bowel loops all sort of walling off these infections.

Vanessa: Yeah and they couldn't believe that this would have been caused from an appendix rupture almost a year prior. Because typically, abscess will show within a couple of months, but because I had this sort of healthy bionic body that was trying to wall everything off and keep it protected, I essentially just created a maze of infection and scar tissue and abscess. So it was like pretty scary situation. I was in the hospital for about two weeks right out the gate and they sent me home. They tried to send me home and then of course again, I couldn't. I just had the sensation of like I'm going to die so Adam took me back to the hospital and then they found three more abscesses that were really entangled in the bowel loop

and that's when things got pretty scary. It was like, okay, this is pretty touch and go. I had three specialists, an infectious disease specialist...

**(00:30:09)**

Adam: Gastroenterologist.

Vanessa: Yeah, gastroenterologist and then of course, Dr. Gosling was...

Adam: Your gynecologist.

Vanessa: The gynecologist, yeah, so there were three doctors trying to figure out what the heck to do and they couldn't come up with a cocktail of antibiotics to deal with the infection. They couldn't go in and actually start to bleed out the pockets of infection because they were so entangled in my bowel loop. So this was a pretty life-changing experience to say the least because there were many days where I just wasn't sure if I was actually going to make it or not.

So it's so crazy to think about because it still makes me really emotional because it was...- I was so close to that experience of death and really not understanding if I would make it and coming to the sort of points in your life where you decide what's most important and what the human experience is all about. Luckily for me, just little by little, my body was able to start fighting off the infection and I actually ended up having two abscesses that they never could get to and that they left. Over the last couple of years, my body is just sort of taking care of, but it's been a long process and it was a really scary one and it was a really life changing couple of, I guess, really couple of years when I wasn't sure if I would ever actually heal from it and I'm still dealing with the scar tissue.

There is a maze of scar tissue in my abdomen that still causes me trouble every day. So it's been a journey in a physical way and a spiritual way of just really trying to stay present and recognize that every day, you have to do your very best to take care of yourself and this isn't something we can take for granted, this life thing. We actually don't know when things can take a turn for the worse and I in particular because I'd been an athlete and I'd always been strong, I could not believe this was happening to my body. I just like, it was such a bizarre experience to be such a physical person and to be so connected with your body and to all of the sudden have it completely do a 180 and just say like, hey, sorry, screw you, I'm not here for you, I can't deal with you. It was a really powerful experience and I'm so grateful for it in so many ways and in other ways, I would never wish it, in my words, done to me.

Robb Wolf: It was crazy for me because I remember when Adam contacted me in the early stages and he was like, hey, this is what's going on. What do you think? Things aren't looking great and I was kind of like, Vanessa, really, like.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Because I mean usually terms that went along with Vanessa were cyborg, terminator, depleted uranium, it was like unbreakable shit and then to hear that she was literally like in death's door. So it was just a complete like wait is this really the Adam Lambert that I'm used to talking to and not the singer on like American Idol or something like that, what's going on here and so there was that and I love you guys and so...

Vanessa: I know.

Robb Wolf: I was just completely wrapped around the axle by that whole thing. It was really something else to watch that from afar and try to provide some pittance of emotional support and luckily everything has gone far better than what it potentially could have. I think arguably that was probably a big catalyst for a lot of the changes that you guys have done that has led into the Be The Wellness and Unveil Your Wellness and you guys started working for the Sisson.

Vanessa: Yes.

Robb Wolf: Both of you have a serious passion for surfing and you finally left the landlocked environs of Chico and got some place where you guys could do those things that you really love in addition to the music, really being in the water a lot then you guys developed this other program. Would you like -- what is that part of this process or might just being at -- yeah.

Adam: Yes.

Vanessa: Absolutely. Pretty much after that happened, there was no -- I felt like in a way, there were no barriers anymore because the things that get in your way are really just figments of your imaginations. So, if you think there are obstacles between you and the life that you want to live, it's only the obstacles that you've put there. So by having this experience, it literally lifted the weight off of me personally and I know for Adam too and just gave us permission to live the life we really wanted to live and stop taking for granted that we had all the time to get there.

**(00:35:31)**

Adam: Yeah and wanted to stop, like following this sort of main, I don't know if mainstream is the word, but like this sort of social constructs like, okay, that might be your goal, but here's how you have to get there. The only people who get to have that kind of lifestyle are doing these things. Like all of that just kind of went away. We're just going to do this and then we'll build the infrastructure around it, whatever it takes to just kind of be, doing the things we want to do.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Adam: I think that – I mean this experience definitely -- it added like a very serious undertone to all of the things that we've learned from you Robb. I mean, just to say, there's nothing better than having you as the phone a friend.

Vanessa: Yes.

Robb Wolf: Thanks man.

Adam: You're in the ER and the infectious disease specialist is like, no, no, no man, you're wrong, it can't be this, it's going to be something else like due and like what about probiotics, he's like, ah, ah, ah. They don't really work. Yeah man, I need some supporter here.

Vanessa: Yeah, thank goodness for Robb. Adam's literally bringing me bone broth into the ER and he is bringing me, I forget, probiotics and kale shakes and basically Robb had given us a cocktail and thank God, I was off the hospital food and completely supported from Adam and Robb in whole foods.

Adam: I mean, honestly like that just, because, I mean, anybody who has been in that environment, it's like we talk about this a lot in the Paleo community where it's like, oh conventional wisdom and Western medicine and all this stuff is way off, blah, blah, blah. Well, it's really easy to say that until you're the one who's sitting there and it's your loved one that these doctors are adamantly telling you need this, that like flies in the face of everything that you have researched and believed about how this stuff works. It's really -- I mean that's a trying moment for sure.

Robb Wolf: It super is. You know the bugger is that current iteration of medicine is actually very, very good at treating generally infectious disease, trauma, those sorts of things, but man, they do the best job that they can to try to kill people with the food that they feed them while they're dealing with that. It's like, are you kidding me, like?



Vanessa: It's crazy, yeah.

Adam: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah and we were lucky enough to be in an extremely progressive and well-rounded hospital. So I think about folks who are in areas like -- I feel like if I was in Chico, I'll be dead for sure [Laughs] and nothing against Chico. It's just that like, we were so lucky to have a hospital that had a lot of resources and a lot of thought leaders to pull from and if you're in a more remote area, you may not have access to that kind of information or anyone that's in that specialty. So, we felt lucky in that sense at least.

Robb Wolf: Specialization is not for insects when you're talking about medicine.

Vanessa: Yes.

Robb Wolf: It's actually handy that the person sees 200 of X conditions per year because they actually kind of know what's going on versus the GP out in some backwoods area who is very well meaning, but they're like, I think I saw that in med school, but I'm really not sure.

Vanessa: Exactly.

Adam: So like as an example when Vanessa went in for her first surgery in Santa Monica, the head of Oncology from UCLA happened to be there and scrubbed in with the surgeon and so they were able to biopsy in real time and rule out some of the initial thoughts of some cancers and some stuff like that.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Adam: Okay, well, if you're all sewed up, it wasn't cancer. I've heard that.

Robb Wolf: Which is huge, which is huge, otherwise, you know you could be left wondering about that for weeks and possibly not even having that. It entered the discussion of options, so yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah, absolutely and especially, I went into the surgery thinking I was getting a cyst removed. They had no idea what they were going to find, and so, you know, when the doctor opened me up and saw all the scar tissue, he said, it resembled really late stage cancer. So, luckily, the guy,

the UCLA oncologist was there and like you said, was able to rule it out right away. So, needless to say, I woke up to a completely different story than what I thought I was going into and was like, holy cow, what is happening in my body? This is not at all what I expected to hear coming out of surgery and I've been sawed in half [Laughs].

Adam: Right, right.

Vanessa: What the hell [Laughs].

Robb Wolf: It's like that time when Adam had surgery and he woke up as an Andrea and then there was a whole process of putting him back to Adam, I mean that was a mess.

**(00:40:05)**

Adam: I'm still dealing with those problems haha.

Vanessa: It was a mess.

Adam: And it's crazy.

Robb Wolf: You look damn good in high heels so like, I could warm up to that.

Adam: Yeah, sorry, you go ahead.

Robb Wolf: No, no you go ahead.

Adam: Oh, okay so that I know where we're kind of going with this was that, we were very much Paleo CrossFit, NorCal Strength and Conditioning sort of glide slope on what CrossFit means in the beginning. What it start to change into how we sort of change that into our own blend of like what I actually just starts to look a hell of a lot like really good strength and conditioning.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Adam: With all names aside and then there is this hospital stay component really brought this sort of realness to it that has enabled to us to kind of I think relate to people who are not necessarily the young super fit athlete coaches. So from working with Sisson, Vanessa started personal consulting and coaching business for him and was doing all of the executive coaching. I think that having this ability to sort of having all of our background and having this ability to really kind of see both sides of the fence for when somebody is like, I just can't do these things. When you can relate to that, it helps dramatically.

So all of those experiences have kind of led us to try to make these things scalable, right. So Vanessa was really stoked and I was stoked. I think everybody was pretty happy with the results that we are getting from these personal coaching things, but the barrier to entry was pretty high. I mean, just spend an hour and a half a week on the phone with somebody and have private consultations and all the programing is really cost prohibitive for a lot of folks and then you can just only handle so much as a coach, which...

Robb Wolf: Right.

Adam: Really end up obviously, you know.. So we've been looking for a while for a way to scale this and to take sort of this middle ground approach where there is people who are at the gym, who are training in small groups, and there are people who are doing these individual one-on-one consults. And then there is just tremendous amount of people and this sort of band in the middle who read all the books. They read all the blogs.

They work out predominantly at home or on the road or something because they are super busy in travelling. There is a real absence of help and support and like community for those folks. Something that we really realized is that we were so fortunate at NorCal to have that community, like that's what our team and all of the people around us. I mean, that what made that really special. I looked back and like those are some very special years without a doubt. I mean coming from the fire service where there is whole other community of brethren and all of the stuff that you share these ridiculous experiences with, nothing came as close to that experience that we had there.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Adam: So what we were really trying to do is create a community for these people who don't have their community at the gym. They don't necessarily have a support group of family and friends, but they get the stuff. They think it's important and they really want to make these changes. So we were very fortunate to team up with these two developers from Venice who we're working on this behavior change, behavior modification coaching platform, challenge-based app. For almost a year now we've been working with them it has gone through a few iterations. Like we have this thing and we know it's a really good idea, but we don't really know exactly what to do with it and we came from the side of, we have this program and we know exactly who it's for, but we don't have a way to deliver it. So it was a very good marriage right

out the gate to be able to take our program and put it into this challenge this app based sort of challenge format with Vimify which is the platform that we're using.

Robb Wolf: And so tell folks who's most appropriate for this? Is there anybody that wouldn't be a good fit for this platform?

Vanessa: Well I think for the most part, it's for anyone who is ready to make a change and who is familiar with the Paleo or the Primal philosophy and has already started to incorporate the eating strategies and that kind of thing. It's not for someone who doesn't believe in Paleo or isn't convinced that eating that way is kind of the way to go. We're not really necessarily focused on targeting, getting folks converted into believing whether or not that's the right way to eat and potentially the right way to train and that kind of thing.

**[0:45:00]**

We feel like between you and Mark Sisson and all that great coaches and authors out there, people have done a great job of getting the preliminary information to people. So now we're taking that information and helping people convert it into actionable steps. So it's really for anyone who's familiar enough with the information, but now, they're just looking for some way to organize it and facilitate it in their day-to-day lives.

Robb Wolf: Some community, some accountability, some programming, etc.

Adam: Yeah totally. It's sort of like you've done your 30-day challenge, now what.

Vanessa: Exactly.

Adam: Some people are going to be good good to go. This is all the information I need. I'm going to continue to do this for the rest of my life until something changes and there are people who are like, well, shoot. That was cool, but what's next and that's really kind of where we're trying to pick people up.

Robb Wolf: Awesome.

Vanessa: The other thing about it is Mark wrote an article a couple of weeks ago about decision fatigue and a lot of people want to continue growing in their practice and they want to keep moving forward, but they don't have time to read all the blogs, to keep researching, to keep developing their practice.

So what we've done is we've done all that research. We feel like we've had our feelers out more constantly researching and chasing the trends and figuring out how to make it actionable for people on a day-to-day basis. So, hey, maybe you didn't have time to read every single blog post today, but this is your workout. This is your small article. This is a little bit of information for you to digest and here is maybe a little lifestyle challenge or something for you to throw in there as well. Boom, you can check everything off and you're done.

Robb Wolf:

And you know that decision fatigue in Mark's article was fantastic. Doc Parsley talked about that a ton and Adam you probably see there's a ton in the fire service. We have a limited amount of kind of mojo that we wake up with in the morning and hopefully, we weren't up at 3 am for a structure fire and then getting ready for a podcast at 6 am like Adam has been. You're already scrape in the bottom of the barrel with regards to your ability to have some willpower and have some executive functioning, planning your day all that type of stuff. But under the best of circumstances, we have a very limited pool of ability to deal with stuff like that and if we have life stress or we have deficient sleep, if we have pro inflammatory foods, if we have stress at work whatever, each one of those things basically takes a chomp out of that potential executive functioning.

Funny enough, executive functioning is what you lose when you develop Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, dementia and so modern life basically in an acute format gives you dementia. You know, essentially. I'm sure somebody will lose their shit because they're like, it's not true, but it is. From an outcome base perspective, lack of sleep stress, etc., etc. when we get all this end roads into our recovery capacity, it damages the executive functioning. Executive functioning is what tells you, hey, I need to get my ass off the couch and go for a walk, lift some weights, do the shopping that I need to shop so I can follow that recipe on Mark Sisson's blog tomorrow or whatever. So something like your program effectively removes that decision tree for folks.

Adam:

Yeah.

Robb Wolf:

It's like here's what you need to do, stick to it. You need to get online or get into an iPhone or something that good guy. If you can't do that at this point, then you're lost.

Adam:

Totally and that's just kind of one of the things. I mean we will try to make it as sort of accessible as possible and like the strength and conditioning component of it. There is a bodyweight option for

everything that we do and there is kind of like three options for everything. There is a bodyweight option. There is some sort of dumbbell or kettlebell variant for loaded equipment and then there is the full meal deal have access to an entire gym for every single workout and we have... Because we're trying to span as many folks as we can, but sticking with that sort of seasonal periodized strength and conditioning component that we're using.

The thing that we're finding is that none of it is overwhelming, like if you already take the entire year's program and combine it all, it would look very much like the average sort of Paleo book. There is a lot -- maybe not quite in depth on stuff, but it's a ton of information, but we've broken it all up and delivering it in these very short small sort of immediately actionable things so that people generally don't fail.

I guess one of the behavior change things that the Vimify guys have brought to the table for us is this idea that as soon as someone fails of something or if they look at a task and determine that it's too confusing or too involved or too difficult for them to do, they immediately feel as though they failed and their likelihood of not complying with the rest of the program goes way, way up.

**(00:50:06)**

So we've been tinkering and trying to find this great combination of things that are super motivating, challenging enough to elicit the adaptations that we're looking for, but accessible and easily managed on a day-to-day basis. So today, you need to do this and then tomorrow you will get a whole new list of things to do. When you put them all together and they aggregate, it's a pretty solid program.

Robb Wolf: Awesome, awesome. So guys where can folks go to tract this information down and check all this out?

Vanessa: They can go to our website, which is [beethewellness.com](http://beethewellness.com) and Bee is like a honeybee, so it's B-E-E and that will link you directly to the Vimify challenge. I know we'll have links in your show notes also to the challenge and the website as well. One other thing we wanted to do as well is offer 50% off for Robb Wolf listeners. So if any of you who are interested in trying out the program, you can enter the code RobbWolf and you can get 50% off your first month.

Robb Wolf: Awesome, awesome.

Adam: Yeah. One of things we just figured out when you get in there, but you can buy one month or you can subscribe for a season, which is three

months or you can subscribe for a whole year and there are all kinds of cost associations with that.

Robb Wolf:

Very cool. Folks are wondering, there is lots of stuff around like this, which is super cool. I think it gives people more opportunities to do more things and have more accountability, but the reason why I had Adam and Vanessa on here is because I've seen them as athletes. I've seen them as coaches in our gym. I've seen them as coaches within their professional life. I know them personally. I love them like family and so I vouched for them unreservedly by that's why these guys are on here.

They did a phenomenal job with this whole program just very, very impressed and they've always been huge supporters of this whole thing, but also always willing to grow and tinker and fiddle and go their own way which is incredibly impressive. So in addition to I think some really interesting stories and you just never can hear about a hot chick farting on a dude enough you know it's really satisfying, scratch that itch, but above and beyond all that, this is really phenomenal program fully endorse it, check it out like Adam mentioned. Try it on like a sweater for a month. If you like it, awesome. If it's not to your liking, you didn't do some sort of adjustable rate mortgage on and underwater house or something. So you're probably okay.

Adam:

The downside is pretty much --

Vanessa:

One thing I want to mention to folks too is just that there is people of all levels and all stages of their practice in this program. So don't feel like if you're not an elite-level athlete that there isn't enough space for you in this and in fact, what we've found with our community, which is an amazing really lovely community that we've built within the app is that the people who are a little bit more experienced are super excited to help and lend their expertise or their knowledge base to new comers. So it's really become the sense of a tribal community where there is the newcomers and the elders and everyone is really working together for that common goal and for the whole tribe to move forward together so it's a really sweet community that we have in there.

Robb Wolf:

Cool, shocker, because you guys put it together. That's very shocking.

Adam:

The other thing, we do have the podcast. So you can go I guess in iTunes, Bee The Wellness podcast, so B-E-E The Wellness podcast and you give a listen. So the way it works is that every week, we put up a podcast that talks about things from the program as well as whatever else we bring in there, but every week, we do a question and answer kind of a thing

through the program and kind of help check that out. So you can go, listen to a few podcasts, see if it sounds like it's your jam and then check us out.

Robb Wolf: Very cool and Vanessa, tell folks where they can track down your music exploits.

Vanessa: Oh, yes. So Nesta, I go by Nesta for my stage name and it's nestatunes.com and I have a new album coming out in a just a couple of months. So yeah, stay tuned with all that stuff too.

Robb wolf: Very cool. Well, you guys, I'm just super excited for you launching this program. I miss you. I know that Reno has all beach and no oceans. So I don't get to see you nearly as much as I would like to, but I'm super excited for your success, very excited for this program, excited for what it will do for folks. Anything else before we wrap up?

Vanessa: Just we love you and we're so grateful to know you and thank you so much for all that you've done for us. We would never be where we are without you Robbie and just, yeah.

Adam: It's 100% true. We had Katie-bug on our podcast not long ago and we spent a lot of time sort of opining about the wonders of Robb Wolf and it's...

**(00:55:08)**

Robb Wolf: Oh thank you.

Adam: It really is awesome and I know you have a ton of listeners and not everybody gets to know you and so just for the people who are listening and don't know Robb, he is way...

Robb Wolf: He's as big a moron as you think.

[Laughter]

Adam: He is even better than you think in real life.

Vanessa: Yes, yeah.

Robb Wolf: Thanks.

Adam: As well as Nicki.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, if there were no Nicki, there would be no Robb.



Vanessa: This is true, absolutely.

Robb Wolf: You guys really looking forward to seeing you soon and super excited for the launch. We'll get all of those details including Nesta Rae or Nesta Tunes in the show notes and I'm looking forward to getting you back on here. May be the next time you come on, may be we'll plan it 6 months or so, we'll do some Q and A for folks and you guys can answer some questions.

Vanessa: May be we can stop by on our way back from Burning Man.

Robb Wolf: There we go. I hear that Burning Man is pretty close to Reno. I've been getting a little bit bent that everybody is like going to Burning Man, not going to see Robb Wolf, like what the fuck, man chopped liver here or what?

Vanessa: You could always come to Burning Man too.

Robb Wolf: You know, the Freedland's kids are a little older than mine. I think like 8 month old out of Burning Man might be a little aggressive right now.

Vanessa: Yeah, yes. Give it a couple of years. We'll be there.

Adam: Yes.

Robb Wolf: Awesome. Alright guys, we'll talk to you soon.

Vanessa: Okay, thanks Robbie.

Robb Wolf: Okay, bye-bye.

Vanessa: Bye.

**(00:56:38) End of Audio**