

Paleo Solution - 307

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Robb Wolf: Hey folks, Robb Wolf here with another edition of the PaleoSolution podcast. My guest today is Steph Gaudreau. She is a holistic nutritionist, coach of Olympic weightlifting, founder of the Amazing Stupid Easy Paleo. Steph, how are you doing?

Steph Gaudreau: I'm doing really well Robb. Thanks for having me on.

Robb Wolf: And we'll throw in there. You're also the wife and caretaker of one of my favorite beings, Craig Zielinski, who I just have to throw out there yet again where it not for Z basically swooping in on me years ago, helping me with my blog and podcast and everything, nothing that I am doing today would be here without his help. So enormous props to him and to you. You married pretty good. He married really good, but you married pretty good.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah. He is a pretty special human.

Robb Wolf: Yes, he is. Yes, he is. John Welbourn even likes him which that's like, John doesn't like anybody.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah, there you go. That's a testament right there.

Robb Wolf: Yeah totally. So Steph, give folks a little bit of your background. You have not always been a lean, jacked, healthy top of the food chain Olympic lifting coach, like you came from a bit more of a broken background than where you are at right now. Tell us about that.

Steph Gaudreau: Oh yeah. So I was joked like I suffered from an endurance background, but in all seriousness, I've had a pretty interesting sort of transformation and not always sports idea, but my career over the last, I'd say 3, 4 years. I decided back in 2012 that I was going to leave my career, which was at that time a Science teacher. I was teaching high school Science in public school, Chemistry and Bio. So I've always been really interested in nerdy and geeked out on human phys and the body and nutrition and food and the whole 9 yards, but just was teaching and kind of felt at some point that this wasn't where I was supposed to be. So in 2011, I had started my blog which is Stupid Easy Paleo and found actually the PaleoSolution and Paleo diet for athletes way back in 2009, 2010, so quite a long time ago in the perspective of the Paleo community.

Robb Wolf: In the interwebs, yeah.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah. There were like 3 blogs and 2 books and I've got the Paleo Comfort cookbook was the first cookbook I got when that came out and there was hardly anything out there in terms of resources, but just decided to give it a try. I was racing mountain bikes at that time, lots of like long distance endurance stuff too and I had doubled in all kinds of bike racing. I did downhill for a while and that was pretty high in adrenaline, high intensity, but I lacked the sort of like throw yourself off a cliff mentality that you really needed to do well in that sports. So I progressed to more routines sort of just go around and do laps and long point to point races and stuff like that.

So I was really out there on the bike long periods of time, but I picked up those books in the beginning because a couple friends of mine were like we're going to try this gluten free diet and I was like, what even is that. So I just decided to give a try and I was one of those people I was never sick per se, but I just knew I didn't feel good. I would leave work everyday and I would stop at the 711 across the street from school and I get M&Ms and a Coke zero to just feel energetic and make it through the rest of my day and hopefully make it through training and not feel like crap. So yes, I tried Paleo because I'd been a vegetarian. I have done Weight Watchers, like you name it I tried everything and I was like, wooh, what do I have to lose, probably nothing. It's probably not going to work, but then within a couple of months, I felt better than I ever had before.

So yeah, I started the website in 2011 because I always like to cook and I was putting recipes on my personal website at that time and somebody, I don't know who it was, I should try to figure out so I could thank them, was like, you should just start a food blog. So like all good things are people suggesting to you like alright, sure I'll do it and I had no idea what I was doing. I just started putting recipes on Stupid Easy Paleo and talking to people about it and people were just coming out of the woodwork and asking me questions like how do I this, how do you this and still race and do your thing and at that point in 2010 I found Crossfit, so I was actually doing Crossfit at the same time I was kind of toward the end of my biking career and got a lot stronger, just a combination of diet and sort of different training and so I had a lot of people asking me how to do the stuff. Yeah, so then, I decided to leave my job and like totally, everybody was like, you have the most secure job. You're a Science teacher, dual credential like and Science is...

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Robb Wolf: What in God's name are you doing, yeah.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah, that's the thing and I just kind of knew that if I didn't make the leap, then I would never do it. So I started working for myself, which was crazy, but it's been amazing and that was almost it will be 3 years coming up this June that I left.

Robb Wolf: I'm just curious like do you have a bit of an entrepreneurial streak or was that kind of a surprise? Because in our experience like running the gym, having trainers and stuff like that, like I cannot find anyone less entrepreneurial than school teachers, like the security, like man, I've got to have all these I's dotted and T's crossed and like you introduce any time of unknown, any type of questionable security for those folks and they absolutely freak out and it's actually hard to run a business around that sometimes. So I'm curious like what kind of got you into teaching and did you know that you had an entrepreneurial streak or did you just like take tons of amphetamines and just powered through that, like what's the story with that?

Steph Gaudreau: So when I was in college, I started premed. I started actually as a Physical Therapy major. I was going to Springfield College which the PT program there was incredibly competitive to get into. When I got in, there was like 50 people a year admitted into this program and did a year of that and was like I hate this. So then I decided to go move to UMass and major in Biology sort of premed and then as I went on, I was like, my uncle is a pediatrician and I just kind of thought about it and I was like, I love the idea of helping people and I love the idea of health and wellness and physiology and all this stuff, but I just don't think I have it in me to do that sort of a career, because I want to have the life that I want to. It's kind of selfish that way, but I came to the point where I had to decide was I going to go research track, was I going to stay premed, what was I going to do and then I was like, well, there is third option.

I could try to see if I could teach this to other people and I went into the classroom and you have to do a bunch of observations and volunteering and stuff just to see if it's the right fit and I was like I kind of like this and I can decide what I want to do from there. I come to find out like I almost got into a lab doing work on endocrine disruptors and PCBs and ALS/BP, like BPA kind of stuff and they worked with the amphibians and that probably would have been really interesting, but I just decided to stay the education route. But yeah, you're right, like for me, I literally for 12 years had a bell that would tell me when to show up to work, when to leave work, when to pee, when to eat. When I had my days off, which days off where my vacation was scheduled.

So I had this really structured career, extremely structured. For me, the idea of doing things my own way and doing what I wanted to do was incredibly appealing, but the idea of losing that security and sort of regularity in that safety net was really scary. Definitely I worked with a coach for quite a while about working through my own feelings on it and what I think people were going to say and how do people perceive me and was I ready to do this and yeah. I had no entrepreneurial bone in my body for sure, but now, I can't picture working for anyone else or doing anything else and I always joked that I'm probably would be the worst employee...

Robb Wolf: Employee, right.

Steph Gaudreau: Ever, ever, because I've gotten used to doing the things that I really feel strongly about and I'm passionate about.

Robb Wolf: Oh, that's awesome. It's funny one of the most common questions that I get these days not related to food or training or anything like that is just kind of like what do I do with my life. There is a lot of people that are asking me these questions, should I go into Medicine, should I do Physical Therapy, should I open a gym, and it's a really tough question. One of the first questions that I ask people is what your risk tolerance. Like if you have a low risk tolerance and you really want something that is like dot the I's and cross the T's, like guaranteed safety.

You could move anywhere and have a job than I'm like be a physical therapist, be a physician's assistant, something like that and then usually, if somebody is already in the academic world or in teaching in particular like high school or grade school teaching and they're asking me about a career change, I'm just like, I don't think you're going to be able to do it. They're like do I open a blog, do I put it together a gym and I've just found the security and kind of the metronomic lifestyle that comes out of that is so in training for those people that it is they almost need a brain transplant to be able to get out of that, so that's fascinating. So it wasn't just a super easy process for you to shift gears on that?

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Steph Gaudreau: No. It was really, really scary, really scary and I was just one of those people that I just thought, okay, I'm not going to know, like you always kind of want the path to be laid out in front of you. I was one of those people that I want to see where this is going. I want to know what's going to happen next year, 5 years from now, and I was like I have to be okay with more of the unknown and also this idea that now, I have that freedom and opportunity to create things that don't currently exist and I

find myself -- there is kind of a nice edge that I exist really well on, which is like yeah, there is that fear of the unknown.

There is that -- I don't know what my income exactly is going to be from month to month. I'm paying myself. I don't have somebody send me a check in the mail every 2 weeks or whatever, but for me, that mental sort of freedom/ability to create whatever I want is what drives me and motivates me now. I feel I've never been more sharp in terms of my own ability to create and that sort of stuff. So yeah, like I could stand up and give a lecture about electron configurations and I would find myself not even thinking about what I was talking about because it was just so route and so easy and that was part of the job that I didn't love. It was like I get to repeat this 5 times today. That's great.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: And now, there is a pressure for me to create and work, but the freedom that comes along with stretching myself and sort of learning new things and always creating stuff is kind of addicting. It's really cool.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. It's awesome, but there is definitely some stress and some unknown. I've got to give some props to my wife. She came from a very entrepreneurial family. I did not and so I discovered that I had an entrepreneurial leaning, but we were really lucky and that she was okay with some unknown and we had some really rough years like getting the gym started and stuff like that, like we made no money. It was super variable. Even when we started making some money as to how much would come in and then the city would change some ordinance and then you're off the hook for like more money or whatever. So it was kind of crazy, but I got lucky and that she was a full supporter of doing this stuff and she is very, very good with business, like she's got a great business head. She has become an amazing kind of project organizer and sees pitfalls that are coming around the corner and stuff like that, so that's been really lucky.

Steph Gaudreau: I was to say I'm glad you mentioned that because I think for people that want to get into their own business, I mean, I couldn't do half the stuff I do without Z and I know he is always like, oh, I don't do anything, but really, I mean, I think of all the really successful people that I know and they are either in it with their spouse or their partner or they have a really strong business partner or they have really core group of people around them. I couldn't do this stuff, like I don't have all the skills. I don't have all the time and it's really been the last couple of years. I feel like I'm finally getting a foothold and I think social media and kind of what's

out there for entrepreneurs just like you can make 6, 7 figures right now if you just learn how to do webinars and like, yey, but the reality is that you have to be willing to put in the work there. There will be those lean months and once you get your systems in place and things start to roll, it's become easier and easier, but I think everybody wants that instant gratification and so you have to be like you almost have to pass the Marshmallow test.

Robb Wolf: Oh totally, totally.

Steph Gaudreau: So are you willing to wait and have that delayed gratification.

Robb Wolf: Not to diverge too far, but I just find this stuff super interesting. It's where my headspace has been a lot lately. I have a dear friend from my childhood who has been in the military for 20 years. He's getting ready to leave that and he has been building a business kind of a little bit on the side and he is super fired up about that. He's made good money with the military as an officer and all this type of stuff, but his wife is a school teacher and has been a school teacher 20 plus years now and there is some real drama brewing there because she is not cool with like a decrease in their income, a potential decrease in their standard of living, unknown like he shot me an email that she had shot him and she's like we just don't know if this thing is going to succeed. I mean, there is no guarantee and he's like, yeah, no shit.

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Steph Gaudreau: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: But again, like the school teacher deal and I'm going to get a bunch of hate mail from school teachers now and they're saying like you're a prick, but going in and just like digging a hole and planting a seed and growing that thing from nothing is no joke. Every once in a while, somebody has a spectacular idea and it absolutely goes to the moon and a lot of people assume that because I've had a New York Times bestselling book that I'm just absolutely rolling a dough. I make good money, but I am not J.K. Rowling. I did not write Harry Potter. There are some vast differences from one tier of the Times list to the next and it's still a lot of rinse, lather, repeat and get it and try to remain relevant. I was early in the scene, but there is a ton of stuff out in Paleo ancestral stuff that land and you have to figure out, okay, how do I continue to enjoy what I'm doing. How do I make it relevant and all that type of stuff, so yeah, it's interesting.

Steph Gaudreau: You have to be flexible enough to -- I love the term pivot, like you've got to have the head on your shoulders and you've got to sort of know where

you're going, but at the same time, and I think it's the book Rework. It talks about the idea of pivoting and staying light and I think that's really important. I think people in your friend's life position, she wants like the next 20 year plan to be written out, and first of all, I mean, the idea that we all have security is a complete myth anyway.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Steph Gaudreau: You have to kind of know where you're going, but having a plan and having it there and being one of those people that sticks so closely to the plan that you can never see any opportunity or new room for growth is also a kind of kiss of death.

Robb Wolf: Right, right, yeah, yeah, absolutely, yeah. We've started a lot of projects where we thought it was going to go one direction and it pivoted and it went entirely different direction and luckily it did. Our initial idea had some good elements, but it definitely needed some fiddling. So as you got into all this stuff, clearly, you've taken on a strong orientation towards performance nutrition and kind of high level coaching. Like what drew you specifically to the more performance-minded person? Like I've always kind of focus more on like the sick nearly dying, like I'll dabble in performance stuff, but my gig has been more autoimmunity cancer. That was my background. I have some really compelling kind of life stories behind that, but what drew you to this kind of performance orientation?

Steph Gaudreau: Well, I think you've summed it up right there and it's what I know and it's always been something that's been an important part of my life, something that I've done. I mean, I've competed in sports since I was about 8 years old and I've done a zillion different things, but being an athlete and competing and moving my body and challenging myself in that way has always been a part of who I am. So for me, I kind of -- whenever I sit down and I think what I'm going to work on next, I always try to think of my own wheel house. I mean, I'm not the type of person that's going to try to be a specialist in something that I know relatively little about.

And so I have gone through that journey of like, again, you name it. I've tried that diet, the pasta dinners, the this and that, and for me, it was a really interesting journey to try to figure out how I could eat a real food based approach, very limited in terms of green intakes, also sometimes I'll do white rice now or sometimes, I'll do like corn tortillas if we're out, but we eat gluten free. Like how I could really train hard and still do well without eating a bunch of crap or a bunch of like fitness food or the stuff that is marketed toward athletes.

It's something that I was doubling in myself and then, I would get people asking me and so it just became kind of a natural fit that I started to explore that stuff even more and really started to... I've gone down that path of like pretty much eating no carbs to eating more carbs to eating anything that had a label to, you just kind of -- you change and flow with the times. I've really learned what works well for me and so then, I would get people asking me and then I think a lot of times, athletes would come up and so when I was in the Crossfit world especially, knowing your own story with Crossfit and Paleo, I was definitely a thing. So a lot of Crossfit boxes, talk about Paleo or they are telling their clients about it, but I would get a lot of people and they would be like, but really, can you do that, and so how do I make it work and when I really looked out there, there wasn't a ton that was marketed toward that type of athlete.

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I was more towards the endurance side of things, which is how it all kind of began Paleo diet for athletes and stuff, and like I said, I had picked up that book myself, but sometimes, people have a hard time applying those concepts to their situation without it being really spelled out. So that's really where my work with other athletes and people who are performance minded. Sometimes, I don't even like to use the word athlete because a lot of people who trained like an athlete don't select to that term to describe themselves because they don't ever maybe enter into a formal competition even though they're thrashing themselves 4, 5, 6 times a week training really hard. They have a lot of goals.

Sometimes, they don't use that word because they're like, why, I don't ever race, so I don't ever do Crossfit competition or whatever it is. But yeah, just for me, it was a sort of a natural fit and I still compete and I still train. I don't do Crossfit anymore really. This is just something for fun and so I do weightlifting now, but I still get questions all the time from my athletes in the gym that I coach or people contact me. It's like I know I want to eat better and I know the foundation of kind of my performance nutrition. I need to change it in some way, but I'm not really sure what to do and so I got a lot of people riding in, like how do I kind of treat my carb intake, how do I know it's too much, how do I recognize if my performance is like I don't even track that stuff.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: And so yeah, it's just been a natural evolution.

Robb Wolf: So talk to us about that because I mean, this has definitely been an ongoing thing for me. In the past, I did really well with cyclic low carb

when I was doing just more gymnastics and Capoeira and stuff like that. When I got into Crossfit, I found that I was just really cratering if I had multiple workouts a week that were pretty glycolytically demanding. I've been in and out of ketosis for years, have really, really good cognition on that, but it just didn't seem to take all the boxes for that high kind of glycolytic output.

I have some people who absolutely want to barbecue me alive from the really low carb camp and they're like no, you can do all the stuff ketotic and like I really, really, really tried, but I haven't really been able to crack that nut. But I'm also trying to find this balance there where like I have good glycemic control. I have good cognition throughout the day. I don't get into these kind of hypoglycemic events, which is part of what I started experiencing when I start fueling for the activity that I'm doing and I do pretty well with that, then I start feeling like I've got that like oxygen bottle analogy with regards to my food, like I really need food all the time whereas if I'm eating lower carb, I'm really resilient with regards to eating. I can go 12, 15 hours. I don't need to eat. So what are your thoughts on all that stuff? How are you dissecting all that?

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah. It's hard. I mean, people want the one answer that's going to apply to them and everyone else in the world, which as we know, those types of generalizations and rules of thumb don't work for everybody. So the first thing people need to know is that if you're going to go on a website and you're going to guess say a macro calculator and you're going to type in your average daily activity level and what not and it's going to spit out a number, like that might be a starting point for you, but to just take that and blindly apply that is not taking into account all the other life factors that you have going on. If it does work for you now, it might not work for you if you change your training, if you get sick, if you have a life event that adds a lot of stress to your life.

All these things that we know when we're talking about these generalizations sort of everything starts to fall apart. So I think a lot of times, the first mistake that people are making is they're going along and they're looking for the one answer and it's just not there. So you do have to pick a point and the way I like to get people to think about this is like for most people, if you're training pretty hard, your protein intake should be roughly around the same number and in the variances will come in, in terms of how much carb or how much you're steering the boat towards carbs or how much you're steering the boat towards fat and some people do really well with kind of a balance between those two things.

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A lot of the people that I know that are training really hard, they are training for Regionals or they are doing like 2 a days or doing lots and lots of training, a lot of it is glycolytic and/or they also have a lot of life stress. They do better with just kind of turning the knob up on the carbs and turning the knob down on the fat. I think where people get into some trouble is thinking that caloric intake doesn't matter at all.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Steph Gaudreau: And so I think for a long time in Paleo at least, it was like, yay, we get to eat all the things and we get to eat all the fats and make sure that the fat and the protein is more satiating like you're mentioning. But I think a lot of people were just like, wow, look at me, downing this bottle of almond butter. This is amazing. I can just eat as much as I want and at some level, energy intake for most of us does matter. Like I think there is obviously a lot of bio-individuality in terms of our resiliency and our ability to be able to deal with, hey, we're going to go through a period where we're taking in more calories or we're taking in less calories, but that unrestricted sort of like eat whatever you want for a lot of people doesn't work.

So again, you will go online and you will see like just eat what you want. Calories don't count. They don't matter and then on the other hand, you will see like unless you're eating exactly the same number of calories and unless you have isocaloric diet, you're automatically going to gain weight, right, or you have to be hypocaloric to lose weight. So people think well, if I'm supposed to be hypocaloric, and I want to lose, in most cases, these are athletes, they want to lean out, I don't think I don't know any athletes who want to lose their muscle mass, but they end up, they're like well if a little caloric restriction is good and a lot is better. So we end up with this chronically hypocaloric high performing, high output athletes either on purpose or by accident. A lot of times people really underestimate the amount that they eat and see all sorts of crazy stuff because people just they think there is -- this is the answer, but then they're going to really push it in one direction because if a little is good, then more is better.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: So I think that's probably the number one thing that I see and also not getting -- we understand this like you're scientifically minded. You kind of know you're not -- if you want to kind of narrow down and we're not just -- human beings are incredibly complex, but if you want to narrow down whether or not the changes you're implementing are working, you've got to give it some time.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: I think a lot of people that I worked with are like I ate this way for a week and nothing happened. I should change something else now so they jump whether it's nutrition related or program related, same thing. They jump from program to program and nutrition tweak to nutrition tweak after a week or a few days or even 2 weeks and they're like nothing happened and then they will give it a time. So I would recommend for athletes, if you're logging your workouts and you really you're going to see now, what if I take my carb intake and I turn it up say like 10% or even just a little bit more depending on what sport they're doing, you got to like kind of be consistent.

I don't want people to be obsessive compulsive about it and have it become almost a point of disordered eating, but you kind of have to keep an eye on things. I had somebody tweet me today, I don't know if she will listen to this, but she's like I just don't feel like things are going well and I was like well, you don't feel they are or like is your performance actually decreasing, do you have any bench marks, do you have any metrics for that. Body composition is the same thing, the typical like the scale, oh I gained weight and then you see somebody and you're like actually you just looked really jacked.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Steph Gaudreau: You're gaining muscle mass and actually losing body fat. So there are so many things that people kind of get super confused about and I would just tell people like keep your protein intake, don't cut that back, you never want to lose muscle mass especially if you're getting older, but if you're going to do anything, it would be like turn the carbs up and the fat down or turn the fat up and turn the carbs down. So I would like to think like it's almost a seesaw and so those high glycolytic type of endeavors to Crossfit interval sprinting, long kind of threshold.

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Robb Wolf: Jujitsu, MMA, all that stuff, yeah.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah like even if you're like, I mean, endurance athlete. This is what I used to do. I'm an endurance athlete, but I would go out and do all kinds of crazy intervals and like be drooling on my top tube on my bike, but I do endurance so shouldn't I be like super low carb, that will be okay for me, it wasn't. I think that's what I kind of tell people to see. You are doing stuff that is really glycolytic or you just need the extra recovery because your life is just crazy pants other than your training, like if you're going to

turn up the carbs and you want to say relatively isocaloric, you may want to turn down the fat a little bit.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: And you kind of think of it as a dial. I never like to tell people like you're going all or none, right, and they're like I'm going to try to be ketogenic and I'm like, well how about you like turn it down first. We know like the body takes time to respond to that sort of stuff hormonally and like up regulating and down regulating transcription translation like all that stuff. Genetically, it takes a little bit of time and your body likes to be at homeostasis. If you're going to do so many super drastic, you may get sort of like that initial change and obviously the thing that people report the most is like I went Paleo and I lost like 10 pounds in the first 2 weeks then what happened, I stopped losing weight and it's like well, that might have been some water weight like some inflammation that was initially going down and then if you want to shift that body fat, it's going to take a little bit of time. So yeah.

Robb Wolf: I like it. I like it. Ten years ago, I thought I had it all figured out. It was like low carb or maybe cyclic low carb and then it's kind of like well, actually there was a lot more nuance to it and that. So I'm always trying to figure out what -- how to crack that nut and again, like I've got some people in the -- I'm a big fan of ketogenic diets low carbs diet as anybody you could find. I think they are amazing for TBIs and a host of different health situations.

There is a lot of people that just cognitively they feel a lot better on a ketogenic diet, but there is also a reality that not everybody follows that pattern. I think you've got to give folks the latitude on both ends of the spectrum to be like well experiment and like use it. Give it a good 3, 4 months to really try on that sweater and see what's going on. Like there are more and more people out of say like the ultra endurance that they're doing quite well on a ketogenic diet and then doing like some targeted carbs during their event. They're like completing the events on a half or a quarter of the calories that they used to bring in because they're burning more stored body fat and that's good from like a gastric emptying perspective and they seem to bounce back quicker because they have less inflammation and that's super compelling, but it's interesting.

I don't see anyone in Crossfit, MMA 2000-meter rowing, 800-meter or mile distance running that are successful with a super low carb intake. Like they may play with that and they do some period of time for

adaptation, but particularly if that glycolytically demanding event has multiple repeats to it, then I really don't see people succeed with that and people will fight me tooth and nail on that. I'm just like dude this is what I'm seeing other research observationally and then as a coach myself trying to do this and going into it with the assumption, no man, we can totally do this low carb and I wasn't going and wondering if we could. I assumed we could and then I was kind of stumped when we couldn't so yeah, it's interesting.

Steph Gaudreau: Well, you know, there is always going to be a spectrum. There is always going to be a genetic outlier that everybody is going to use as the shining example of how it does work and I think you have to be willing to accept that. There are going to be people who are their constitution, their genetics, their environment has led them to -- they are adapted better or they do become better adapted to using those more extreme source of ends of the spectrum. It's not to say and that we can't ignore them, but you have to be kind of careful with applying that heuristic to the rest of the population.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: I would just tell people to just -- you've got to keep an eye on things and be really honest about whether or not it's actually working for you. And that brings up a whole other host of questions, like are you truly an elite athlete trying to eke out that 2 or 3% of performance, are you willing to make the sacrifices you know that what you're doing isn't necessarily health promoting. That's your own choice. You get to decide what you do and if you're going to make it to the Olympics and you're stoked off your brain about that, then that's amazing.

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And I know some people right now who are sort of in the mix for USA weightlifting for 2016 for the games which is awesome, but I don't think anybody in that position would say I'm an elite athlete. What I'm doing is related to optimal health per se. So I would really kind of caution people before they use those examples of either the outliers or the elites it's like are you really after elite performance or are you just trying to be kind of good at your sport because you really love it and it makes you feel good when you do it, but overall, you really just want to have optimal health? I think that's a really important distinction that people have to make.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Steph Gaudreau: Because you're going to be willing to do things in your training and with your nutrition if you're at a true elite level that you wouldn't do if you're

just like to use a Robb-Wolf-ism you want to like look feel and perform good.

Robb Wolf: Right, right, which is the vast majority of folks, but you can get a heck of a lot of good performance while looking and feeling quite well also, so yeah, yeah. I like that. So Steph, you went for more endurance oriented stuff, really have you into mountain biking, did some Crossfit. Was it the Crossfit exposure that really lit the fire for the Olympic weightlifting activities and then getting in as a coach in that direction?

Steph Gaudreau: It's actually pretty amazing because essentially a close hip position for about 8 years.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: On the bike. The fact that I can Olympic weightlift with any sort of proficiency to me is a testament of the fact that your body can be very plastic and adaptable to whatever kind of training you put it under. But I mean, when I started Crossfit, I have a vivid memory of the day. I had to go in and try box jumps for the first time and I think it was 16 inches was the lowest box and I couldn't do it. I couldn't jump on the box, like so any kind of explosive power that I had was almost nonexistent. But I quickly found that the gymnastic stuff I was going to have to work a lot harder because it just wasn't -- first of all, the sports that I had pretty much always done were lower body dominant sports. So my upper body strength wasn't quite there and I just didn't have the coordination, but I found that I was getting pretty strong, pretty fast and so I think I just naturally gravitated toward lifting.

And then in 2013, I went to Regionals in SoCal with team Sea Of Green so that was the second Invictus team and we did really well and I was like this is amazing. Like I had one of those kind of top 3 sports movements where everything worked and we did so well and I was so happy and then I left my job and then I was like, okay now, I'm self employed and I need to work really hard at all my career.

I remember so I moved to Scotland to be with Z and I had a discussion with him at one point. This is kind of in the fall of that year and I was still continuing to do kind of competitive level Crossfit training. I looked at him and I was like this will kill me and I need to not do it anymore if I want to work more on my business and really make this thing succeed. So I decided, hey, the next best thing for me is going to be to do some strength training. I'm still going to get a really good result. Physically, I

can still keep up my strength or get stronger and it didn't have the same kind of training stress/recovery.

Robb Wolf: Demand.

Steph Gaudreau: The demand wasn't quite as high and so I spent that fall lifting and doing some small of junior squatting and got back to the States in January of 2014 and was like I wouldn't just be a weightlifter. I started working back with my old coach and so I've been doing that for the past 2 years and I just love it. I mean, again, like I still continue to put a lot of emphasis on my job and this business that I've created. I still can compete, but my training looks like 3 or 4 days a week now instead of 6 and there is some pretty interesting conversations with my coach and him knowing me well and me giving him good feedback. We've come to a really good place where I continue to get stronger and maintain and I'm not beat down from training all the time.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. That's awesome. So what's the demographic of the folks that you are coaching right now, mainly female? It sounds like there is some go getters that you know that are maybe Olympic team hopefuls, like what's the makeup of the folks you're coaching.

[0:40:15]

Steph Gaudreau: So right now, the folks that I know that are kind of on the docket for potential Olympic spots I know through social media and weightlifting world. But the other gym, we've got some pretty accomplished athletes and we have people joining all the time. We're the largest Olympic weightlifting facility in San Diego now. We have a 12,000-sq ft facility split between weightlifting and Crossfit and we have weightlifting every single day of the week. So that's really cool for people because they can come in and just work on weightlifting if they want. I'd say the split is pretty 50/50 in terms of female and male athletes and we've got a lot of people that have qualified for collegiate nationals, senior nationals, American Open. There are a couple of us that are thinking about going to Masters Worlds because I'm a master lifter, so masters nationals. There is a few of us signed up for that too.

So we have people going to national level competitions and stuff, but a lot of young people now, which is really cool, we do extra masters, and a lot of seniors but a lot of juniors and a lot of collegiate age lifters, which is really cool because they are like indestructible in 20, 21 years old. They're super enthusiastic and it's cool to watch their evolution as athletes and really be able to get at them when they're a bit more plastic and mold them a little bit more. So that's kind of on a daily basis who's coming in and out of the gym, but we've got moms and high school kids and middle

school kids and really everybody doing weightlifting now, so it's pretty fun.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome and is that at Invictus or where is that facility?

Steph Gaudreau: This is Crossfit Fortius.

Robb Wolf: Okay, okay.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah and so we were located just right in the heart of San Diego.

Robb Wolf: Very cool. You have a new project coming out here at online summit. Tell folks about that.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah. This is kind of a passion project for me and I don't know about the origin of city zero but for me, this is a project that I decided I was going to do and I was like there is nothing that's going to stop me. We always talk to my coach about 10s. It's a 10, like I don't care what happens. This project just has to come out to the world. So I have an online summit launching March 1st. It's called the Womens Strength Summit and as I've gotten on in this sort of ancestral health Paleo community in the weightlifting Crossfit community, especially if you hear from so many women that are like I want to start addressing my physical strength. I want to start addressing my nutrition. I know mental strength is a huge part of all this, but they don't really know how to get started. They're like I want to do it, but I don't know how, I don't know who to listen to, I don't know who has trustworthy information.

I decided I was going to put together this online event that people can sign up for and listen to for free. We've got 33 experts' interviews and the thing that -- I don't know if I can actually claim this, but until somebody tells me otherwise, it's the number one conference by women for women. So all of the expert speakers are women who are thought leaders and doctors and coaches and athletes in their particular field.

We're going to get together in sort of online venue and just sort of hash out everything that ladies deal with from the female perspective. I think you know if you're a guy and you're like, it's all going to be chicks just sit in a circle talking. If you're a coach, you run a facility. You have a lot of female clientele, you want to support your significant other and just get some insight into the stuff that women deal with, it's going to be valuable for men and women alike, but yeah, I'm really excited.

I've got some of my own personal sort of heroes coming on board. I sat down the other week from last week and I made a graphic of all the people involved and I was just kind of blown away that not only did I was able to round up all these people and they like to be enough to say yes, but that there are so many strong female voices out there now and growing by the day. It's really cool to be able to -- no offense to the guys out there who are experts in this stuff too, but sometimes, it helps to bring women in when they can identify with somebody.

[0:45:11]

Robb Wolf:

Absolutely.

Steph Gaudreau:

And so yeah, and I think about women in the gym and they come in and sometimes, they're like when are you coaching next and it's not that we don't have good male coaches. We have some amazing coaches. They're like over 40 years of experience put together, but I think sometimes, they are just like she gets me.

Robb Wolf:

Right, right. Nikki, my wife, she has seen me do jujitsu for years and so like it's look okay, but is not really that interesting and then my coach Kelly Ferrell is female black belter in jujitsu, really amazing athlete, great person and she started womens only Brazilian jujitsu program. I was like you know what you should just go check this out. You may not like it. I'm showing a lot of interest in it so far and she's started doing the stuff and she totally digs it and now like in the evenings, we put the kids down and we actually try to put them down a little early and then we throw the mats out in the living room. She's like okay, so show me this omoplata again, and so we are actually doing it together a little bit, but she definitely likes going to this women only group and having a female coach.

I think that there is a really cool kind of experience and tying it maybe back again into the ancestral health scene and this is going to be yet another thing where people attack me on, but in most traditional societies, the men really kind of hang out with the men and the women really kind of hang out with the women and then there was definitely some mixing. It wasn't like there was some sort of implicit line between the two but they just kind of spent a lot of time together and I think that that's okay and I think that we tend to make that wrong for a variety of kind of squirrely reasons when maybe this is yet another piece of our Biology that we would do better to kind of honor it and run with it versus trying to make it a bad thing.

Steph Gaudreau:

Yeah, I know. I think there is something to be said for kind of this. I don't know what you call it, I guess sisterhood mentality and there is always a

lot of competition I think for other females like why do we wear makeup, why do we want to look good, and that's stuff. I think when you really come down to it, it's like how do we look to other people of the same sex and because they our direct competition if we want to like talk about it from a more of a big picture kind of view, but I think for women that are a little bit reserved and like curious, having the entry point that somebody that they can resonate with is a little bit more enticing sometimes than somebody that they just don't identify with quite as well.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Steph Gaudreau: So we've got all kinds of topics in terms of physical and mental strength, emotional strength and some spirituality stuff in there as well, but I think it doesn't... Some people want to work on their strength, but they're like, yeah, the idea of doing Olympic lifting is freaking weird or scary and I'm not in to that so I've got several different entry points for people to start thinking about how they can build their own strength and then eventually progress through whatever sport it is they're really interested in. So I've got people talking about how to improve your sort of torso stability by using yoga and Pilates techniques all the way through power lifting and Olympic lifting topics and everything in between. So it's really kind of a diverse mix of people, but I think all together is a really cool event for people that come in and like dip their toe in the water and see what all the stuff is all about.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. That's fantastic. I love it.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Steph, let folks know where they can track you down online.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah. If you are interested in food and recipes which who doesn't love some good food porn, you can find that all at stupideasypaleo.com and all the related socials for that. My personal coaching website is stephGaudreau.com which you will have to just google how to spell that, but if you do okay, you should find it and then the summit website won't be live until February 14th, so Valentines' Day, but that URL is womensstrengthsummit.com.

Robb Wolf: Okay and we'll get all that in the show notes so that's easy for folks to track down, awesome.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Well Steph, give Z a big smooch for me. I love that guy. Again, I cannot thank him enough for his help early in my floundering here and continue to help me along the way so absolutely love that guy. Super stoked for all the great work you're doing and very pleased that you had the time to come on the show.

Steph Gaudreau: I'm really excited. I've been a huge fan of yours for really, really long time and I really respect all the work that you've done in the community and all the things you're doing so it's been an absolute pleasure for me.

Robb Wolf: Awesome. I hope you guys make your way up to the Lazy Lobo Ranch to hang out with us at some point, so hopefully, we'll see you soon.

Steph Gaudreau: Yeah. Don't threaten us with a good time. We'll be there.

Robb Wolf: We'll do it. We'll do it.

Steph Gaudreau: Okay. Thank you.

Robb Wolf: Alright Steph, take care.

[0:50:30] End of Audio