

# Paleo Solution - 334

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Robb Wolf: Hey folks, Robb Wolf here, another edition of the Paleo Solution Podcast, recording today from the newly remodeled Lazy Lobo Ranch so I'm super excited. I am not squatting at the Specialty Health Clinic in a broom closet recording these any longer so that's kind of a bonus.

Today's guest is a very good friend of mine, Andy Petranek. Andy Petranek has an incredible background ranging from military service, vast training and movement experience background. He is the founder and owner of one of the very first CrossFit affiliates, CrossFit L.A.

He is also the co-founder of the Whole Life Challenge and you are a crazy son of a gun when it gets down to these extreme endurance races, my friend. How are you doing?

Andy Petranek: I'm the former owner of CrossFit L.A.

Robb Wolf: That's great, that's great.

Andy Petranek: I've just got to add.

Robb Wolf: Which we'll talk about that. We'll talk about that.

Andy Petranek: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: I set that bag of that backpack down about a year ago.

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Andy Petranek: So it's been a good relief.

Robb Wolf: Well, how are you doing?

Andy Petranek: I'm doing great, doing great. I was just telling you before the podcast, my son is back to school and...

Robb Wolf: How old is he again?

Andy Petranek: He's 9.

Robb Wolf: He's 9, wow, holy smokes.

Andy Petranek: He's in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Andy Petranek: So that and everything in September...September is like the start of a year for me, so that soccer starts...usually it's baseball. We're not doing baseball this year because he's on this all-star soccer team and I'm coaching. So that's going to be a big thumbsuck and fun. I mean, I'm not complaining. It's very, very fun.

Robb Wolf: It's always funny when you...

Andy Petranek: It's a part time job. It's a total part time job and maybe even a full...and tonight I have three and a half hours of referee training to go to.

Robb Wolf: Oh, wow.

Andy Petranek: From 6 to 9:30. So there's a lot.

Robb Wolf: I used to think that I was busy until we had kids and now I realized that I just farted around a lot and...

Andy Petranek: My wife and I have this joke that there are people with kids and there are people that don't have kids and they can't...the people that don't have kids cannot relate to time the way people with kids do.

Robb Wolf: No, no.

Andy Petranek: It's just impossible. You can talk and try to explain until you blow in their face and they won't get it.

Robb Wolf: No, nope it's a...

Andy Petranek: I go through that with my sister. It's a...

Robb Wolf: There's got to be some sort of an evolutionary switch that gets flipped in your brain that makes all of that seem like a good idea because in any reasonable assessment, it's like why on earth would I have kids? This is financially time wise but yeah, yeah, yeah.

Andy Petranek: That's crazy. I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Robb Wolf: Awesome.

Andy Petranek: But it's definitely different than it was. So...

Robb Wolf: Andy, I know everybody who follows this podcast likely knows you and your story but if there's two or three people that don't know about you...

Andy Petranek: I know. There's two or three that don't know.

Robb Wolf: Possibly, possibly. But give them your background like you've done some amazing stuff. You had military experience. You have a really, really massive background and strength and conditioning in various movement modalities like walk people through all that stuff.

Andy Petranek: It's funny. You started with the marines or the military service and before that, I mean, it's funny, it really starts before that when I was 5 I picked up the trumpet and I played the trumpet from 5 till 18.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Andy Petranek: I actually got accepted into the Eastman School of Music which is kind of like a Julliard, one of the Julliard, one of the top schools in the country for trumpet and then I decided that's enough music for now. I need to drink beer and chase women and have fun in college and not be too serious and so that's what I did.

Robb Wolf: So you're telling me you should have done guitar instead of trumpet and then you could have continued both of them.

Andy Petranek: May be, I wonder...

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: Yeah exactly.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: Exactly.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: I mean I probably could have done the drink beer and chase women with the trumpet.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Because people would have definitely done that.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: But I didn't see the connection so well.

Robb Wolf: Nicky likes trumpet players. She likes trumpets so...

Andy Petranek: Chris Botti is the kind of the heart throb trumpet player now that a lot of people know about.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Andy Petranek: He's kind of a pop trumpet player.

Robb Wolf: So what do you feel like that music that really deep music education did for you over the long haul? How did that kind of shape you?

Andy Petranek: It's funny, yeah. I think about that quite a bit, the amount, the level of discipline, the level of kind of commitment, the method of practice like how to practice and the meticulous detail that you had to work on something over and over and over and over again until you got it down and you could play it perfectly.

Those definitely have served me. I don't think I ever literally tied my progress in life specifically to music like I don't think now, "Oh, this is just like I used to practice Haydn's Trumpet Concerto back 30 years ago."

**[00:05:07]**

But as I think about those real basic fundamental skills that I learned, they definitely apply. It just become part of my fabric in my life and the way I think

Robb Wolf: Right, and I'm going to have an interesting segue on that because you have this highly disciplined music background which really lends itself to incremental progression and there's really...people can kind of plug into it in different ways. But, I mean, music education is a bit scientifically approached and then you entered the military specifically the marines which they have a very dot the i and cross the t detail oriented kind of process.

Andy Petranek: You think so?

Robb Wolf: Yeah, just slightly. It's the OCD wing of the military.

Andy Petranek: Right.

Robb Wolf: Then CrossFit, which CrossFit has this really interesting element to it of this 80% good, 20% slop like there's been all kinds of drama and gnashing of teeth around all that type of stuff what drew you to CrossFit and then how did this background. For me the detail orientation in this need for progression and a bit of planning and triage and stuff like that. It's a neon kind of a parallel perpendicular vector to I think most of where CrossFit land has gone over time.

I'm curious how...what drew you to CrossFit and then how did this background with this really disciplined approach to training yourself in two different multiple disciplines really when you get down to it. How did that inform your kind of coaching CrossFit?

Andy Petranek: I think when I think about...it's a really good question. I think that the specificity of CrossFit...I do very well when somebody hands me a guide book. It's not that I can't operate outside the guide book because I was kind of known for doing that when I was a marine but I'm very good when somebody hands me a book with the rules and here are rules and as long as I have flexibility outside the rules to be creative and do my own thing, kind of my own way like if I'm boxed in or trapped, I will rebel. I don't do well when I only can do things this way and for me it was interesting. It's interesting that I described the marines that way because a lot of people might describe the marines as "You can only do thing this way." But I found a lot of flexibility and freedom in my leadership style and my getting things done style that they gave me kind of that room to express myself, my individuality and kind of the way I like to do things. It's probably also the reason I got out because I felt like I...after 4 years I'd really done the job that I got in to do? Be a platoon commander, be in a small unit, be on the ground with the people doing the job rather than being in the...as you get higher in the marines, the more you pull away from the guys in the trenches to become more of a leader of...you're deciding things strategically and tactically rather than the guy on the ground and I like being the guy on the ground.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Andy Petranek: So I think that my training with Paul Chek was very similar that he had a rule book. He had kind of this is the way you do it and then there's room to bring in the elements that you want to bring in and I think the same thing with CrossFit. The thing I think that really drew me to CrossFit was the boundless capacity for kind of your boundless capacity for fitness. There was no limit and it was testable. I really liked that it was testable and I never really seen fitness presented in a testable format prior to 2004. That was a radical, other than a 5k or 3k. I guess it's not true totally. In the Marine Corps test fitness, how many pull ups can you do?

Robb Wolf: The old course and stuff like that?

Andy Petranek: The old course.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: How many sit ups can you do in two minutes? How long does it take you to run three miles? But it's different. Everything was testable in CrossFit and for a reason, there were why's. Why does Olympic weight lifting fit in to the equation? Why does gymnastics? Why bother doing things that are more than just push-ups and sit-ups. So I think that those fit really well for me. I hadn't really put those together before but I think that's probably the thing that pulled me in so readily, so quickly.

**[0:10:08]**

Robb Wolf: Nice, nice. So how did that...what was the impetus from first getting exposed to CrossFit to actually wanting to open a brick and mortar location? You are the 9<sup>th</sup> affiliate to come online now out of 10,000, 15,000 affiliates that have popped up globally. What was that kind of that process where you decided, "Okay, yeah I want to open a facility"?

Andy Petranek: It was quick. I mean I discovered it in like March of 2004 and I was just perusing the website. I was thinking about how people were training clients online and I was doing online research and I remember going to the CrossFit site and looking for the paid part. Where's the behind the firewall part you pay 9.99 a month and you get the workouts. It never dawned on me that it's right on the homepage for free like it would took me three hours to find the workout of the day which had been right in front of me from the start. I just decided. What the hell. I'm going to try a workout. That was kind of the miracle for me as I was willing to give something that was kind of crazy, nobody had ever heard of. I mean literally nobody had ever heard of.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: A try, nobody in Los Angeles knew what I was doing or talking about and I had never met coach Glassman or Lauren or any of the crew up in Santa Cruz. I just decided to give it a shot and I did it for about a month and a half and it was working so well that I got to go meet this guy. He's not that far away. I'll drive up the coast and I think it was before. The first seminar I went to was 3 days and it was...I think there were 12 of us, or 10 of us. I think 6 of us were actually newbies and the other 6 had been, were kind of tag along who trained at CrossFit Santa Cruz.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Andy Petranek: They wanted to have kind of fill the space.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: They threw Fran at us. They threw Fight Gone Bad at us. It was very informal. It was very fun and I had a conversation with Lauren that weekend and she said, "Andy, I'm just telling you, this is going to blow up into something." It wasn't that she said that. It was that I somehow that weekend saw that here was a way for me to take this private training business that I had and have a real effective system and a profoundly influential system immediately. Because it was so much in alignment with what I was already doing. It's just that I never systematized my thoughts and then here a coach that has systematized basically all my thoughts around fitness and they have the example of CrossFit Santa Cruz and that was my...I basically took mental and physical pictures of the place and I did everything I could to replicate it in Santa Monica. In December I opened. I mean I had to find a place but it was very quick. I affiliated almost immediately after the seminar and I just knew. It was funny how it all happened and how people in the world thought I was pretty nuts, my family, and my clients. I lost a couple of clients because they really wanted more of the gentle Andy.

Robb Wolf: Right, right, right.

Andy Petranek: I basically made a commitment that if you were coming in to my CrossFit gym, you would do CrossFit and that was confronting for a lot of people but I just saw the bigger picture. Fortunately, I saw the bigger picture. The first couple of years were a struggle but I've kind of operated my life that way. I'm all in which is why I recently sold the gym and to give myself...I'm not kind of a one-trick pony and I'd like to be all in. I put all my eggs in one basket for better or for worse and I put all my eggs into the Whole Life Challenge. Once it was capable of supporting me financially I was like, "Okay, time to go."

Robb Wolf: Right, right well, burn the boat has been an effective strategy for possibly thousands of years depending on what the activity is so that totally makes sense. What do you feel like were the greatest challenges that you had running the gym and maybe some deep insights that you'll carry with you in other activities throughout your life?

**[00:15:00]**

Andy Petranek: The biggest challenges for me, the ones that caused me the most anxiety were dealing with the city, dealing with the neighbors, dealing with my landlord. There was nothing that struck more pain in my stomach like I can even feel the pain right now as we're talking about it. It's this...because I felt like it was out of my control. Like I couldn't...somebody was going to shut me down.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: In spite of the license, in spite of...somebody was going to go out and complain to a neighbor and the neighbor was going to raise hell and then my gym would get shut down or the sewage. There was one morning where I got a frantic call from one of my coaches. There was sewage, raw sewage pumping out of the water fountain in the main gym like shooting out of it, 3-foot high like flowing out. He's trying to teach class at 6:00 in the morning. He's bailing the sewage with a bucket while he's teaching class at the other end of the gym and stuff like that. I'm so relieved that I don't have to deal with it anymore.

Robb Wolf: You know what's hilarious about that is that I've met a ton of people that own gyms and the raw sewage came from somewhere story is like...

Andy Petranek: Is that normal?

Robb Wolf: 10% or 15% of people that I met was like, "Oh, yeah the restaurant upstairs. The toilet's broken. We had raw sewage coming, dripping through the ceiling," whatever it is. I've never heard that it came out of a water fountain before. But the CrossFit...

Andy Petranek: Well, it was the lowest...it came from the city. It came from the city from a backup pipe from a city line and it was the lowest exit point. Basically for lack of better word, we have no bathroom...

Robb Wolf: All of Santa Monica basically so yeah, yeah.

Andy Petranek: Well, yeah we have no bathrooms on the first floor so it wasn't going to go up there. It was going to go through the first exit, and the first exit was the drain line on the water fountain so....

Robb Wolf: Awesome.

Andy Petranek: Yeah it was gnarly, but things like that just so good to be. Yeah, those are the biggest sources of stress. I mean I think from the standpoint of like running a CrossFit gym in terms of the business itself, the biggest challenge was figuring out a way to replicate myself and learn how to really run a business. It didn't rely solely on me to do everything. That was a huge and the one that I couldn't do myself. I actually got help. I hired a guy to help me like figure out how to do that, a consultant.

That was it and I think that's probably one of the things that I take from that, it was really a training ground, a proving ground for me to learn the difference between me just having a job and owning a job which I think a lot of personal trainers they say they run a business but they don't run a business because the moment they stop working, the money shuts off. The difference between owning a job and owning a business and that for me was probably the biggest distinction and the biggest thing I continuously worked on for 12 years was developing coaches and finding new people and figuring out new innovative ways to bring new people on and to allow them to lead and to manage and to let them fall on their decks or so to speak and make mistakes and it's not the end of the world. They don't necessarily get fired but they have to know that they're accountable for those mistakes.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Those lessons will definitely fall on me whatever I do going forward.

Robb Wolf: It's funny like we had ourselves stealing with our own gym and then we've just met so many people that have had pretty heroin experiences with the city, with neighbors like one day you're in business, the next day you're potentially not in business so you're in a battle for your life.

We have a good friend who has a business. I'm not going to go into super heavy duty details but basically some sort of state level, governmental, agency has now intervened in his business and basically sent this person a cease and desist letter and this person maybe out of...not just out of business but bankrupt here in about 12 to 15 days. Like there's major legal shaking going on and this is some of the stuff that really makes me

crazy about governmental overreach and some of the folks out there like talking about that.

**[00:20:04]**

Some don't but it's any type of business activity now. Historically when something has either I have an idea or somebody floats an idea towards me, I'm like, "Wow, is that interesting? Will it help people? Am I passionate about it?" That to some degree has given way to a whole legal fiduciary process of who could try to screw me on this.

Andy Petranek: Right

Robb Wolf: What's the downside potential? It's kind of a buzz kill at this point because passion has kind of given but not entirely but really look at downside potential because I've seen some people just put through the ring or from different governmental stuff intervening and potentially putting them out of business overnight and it'll be interesting to see how this one friend navigates things and the activity that this person does dramatically improves the world and for whatever reason now, again some governmental agency is potentially going to like basically curb stomp this individual.

But the activities that you do now like because of that potential for governmental oversight and reaching and do what you're doing, do you...where does that play out in your thinking when you're doing an activity like with the Whole Life Challenge. It seems like that's reasonably insulated but...

Andy Petranek: Yeah, yeah I mean I can feel it literally in my gut when you're talking about it like that pain, of that fear, that threat of literally going out of existence was...it basically to live. I don't think I'd ever let go of that for...I mean that was government, it was landlord, it was city, it was neighbors, it was...I mean I had a long...I have probably a yearlong feud with my landlord about my renewal rate and she came in at one price. I came in at another price. The lease didn't spell out what to do in case of a conflict and it was an old-fashion standoff. I don't remember really one night being able to go to sleep peacefully without some like what's going to happen?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Where's my business going to be? Because I have nowhere else to go. There's not like there's a plethora of places in Santa Monica to open up a gym.

Robb Wolf: Oh, I remember you talking about that and that was kind of where you guys were both lucky and clearly. There's challenges with it but with such little anchorage available to do something like that like you guys had a pretty good buffer there for quite a long time. Yeah I know that the guys had opened the CrossFit New York had kind of a similar deal where that patent area. There just really wasn't any place that you can do something like this for a very long time.

Andy Petranek: Yup and I think some of the people that have opened up places have been...have figured out ways to get around some of the restrictions and rules. There's still not a lot of CrossFit gyms specifically in Santa Monica. There are probably 4 now and there are 4 or 5 which is still a lot compared to what it was but there's a lot in west LA and right out on the other side of the boarder. It's a whole different story. But with your question about, now how does it affect me? The whole challenge doesn't have a lot of that present because we're...there isn't a physical at least not that I know off. I mean I don't we know of any governmental rules or restrictions or regulations that could "shut us down."

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Or prevent us from doing what we're doing. It's interesting I haven't even thought about that.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, Rob you just...

Andy Petranek: Yeah Rob, you just screwed me dude. God.

Robb Wolf: Well, that's just where you incorporate in Singapore and you just have to stay one step ahead but that the Whole Life Challenge has just been an incredibly successful. Tell folks what that is and where did you come up with the idea for this program? Clearly, this was an outgrowth of just running your brick and mortar location and understanding that a dedicated nutrition and lifestyle kind of focused change is really beneficial for folks but flesh out that whole story.

Andy Petranek: Well, it's an interesting story. I was never trying to create the Whole Life Challenge when we created the Whole Life Challenge. I think it was 2011, 2010, we actually went to the very first attempt or no I think there have been multiple attempts by CrossFit to do nutrition certifications?

**[00:25:21]**

But this was the most recent at the time Dave Castro invited me down to San Diego to go and I brought two of my coaches and we went to this thing and they did...they were dressing...they were dressed in blood

things and blood testing and they did a lot of great stuff in the seminar but we came away from it not so inspired by that particular certification but we came away inspired to do something for our clients like we have to address these things because these things are bigger than your workout in the gym. These things have the potential to affect your life in unbelievably profound ways. The choices you make when you're not in the gym and about whether you just sleep, or your food, or your stretching, or the amount of water you drink, or the quality of your sleep, the quality of your bedroom all that stuff and then the way you think and process. So we have been doing. I started this thing back in before we even knew that CrossFit was called the patriotic fitness challenge. It was an 8-week game that I played between all my clients.

I can't remember exactly how much it cost. I think I charge like 500 bucks per person for it and they got...it was like in Olympics. It was a 10-event thing. One day it was in the gym and one day it was at the track and they would set marks in each one of these events, the 10 events and they would do it independently. They would do it in their training sessions and then over the 8 weeks we would train for those achievements in those 10 things but they were brought together as a community by this competition. They were all competing against each other which made it kind of fun and so I've been doing these for a long time. These fitness challenges and so the idea popped into our heads, well what if we were able to combine these lifestyle and these elements that you do outside the gym in with an 8-week challenge or a 10 week challenge or whatever or how long the challenge was.

I left out an important piece. Prior to that, we thought the solution to this nutrition piece was to create a nutrition program and we did. We created...we call it food you. Michel my partner, Michael Stanwyck created it and it was a stepping stone but it was a huge failure. It was a great educational program but people don't come to the gym for education really, I mean they don't come to listen to somebody talk. There were way too many requirements. It was more like going to school but we started with 12 or 15 people and we finished with 3. It just wasn't enrolling. It wasn't fun. It didn't make a difference. So we took elements of that and we put it together with this fitness challenge idea and we came up with the Whole Life Challenge and we dialled it into, and I don't remember what it was four and a half, five years ago but today it's 7 daily habits, it's nutrition, it's exercise, it's mobility, it's drinking water, it's sleeping, it's life style practices which is things like meditation and gratitude and just disconnecting from electronics and it's reflecting.

We put it together in a game like format where you would each day of the challenge...fortunately, we have a couple of software developer as clients and they talked us off the ledge using a Google doc for this whole thing which would have been a disaster and they built our first platform for doing this because part of my intention, there were two real big intentions. Number one, give my clients the ability to see the impact that their choices every day in their life make on their regular life, on their health and their wellbeing and their life. The second was do it in a way that didn't cause me to have to do an incredible amount of administrative work which for every challenge we had run up to that point was an incredible amount of administrative work. If there's any nutrition involved, it involved checking food logs, it involved one on one coaching and hand holding and it was a nightmare. There was no real community aspect. So the software, the website allowed us to do that. We created this online community because suddenly people could talk with each other outside of their time in the gym.

It got people empowered to start making decisions for themselves and to stop relying on us to tell them what to do. The challenge tell them what to do like we didn't tell them what to do and then they would have to solve their problems. They would have to go out and figure out how to do this so and then they started talking to each other about how to solve problems together.

**[00:30:10]**

Then they created like food groups and they created potlucks and they created meetings to meet and workout on their own because one of the requirements of the challenge was 10 minutes of exercise a day and it just had this profound kind of earth-changing effect on the community. We thought there was no way we cannot repeat this. So the next year, we did it again. We got our developers to build in a way where they can invite their friends and family and even more stories, very similar stories.

People that would never ever do CrossFit suddenly were participating in a...it's not CrossFit but in an event with their friends that do CrossFit, or with their family that does CrossFit. Then we decided that this is too good to not share with the rest of the world and we partnered with John Burch who...we had started this consulting business together but we had since parted ways and John became our first...John's group became our first kind of world-wide litmus test for a challenge and we had 7000 people in that first challenge. It was an accidental...it was a great accident. I mean John wouldn't say it was an accident. I mean he is very intentional. He is very enrolling. He got his group to participate at a very high level but we didn't really know what impact that would have.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Basically gave us our foothold and it just somehow we hit on this thing and we speak about it in a way that puts it in a context that's completely different from what most people have ever done before around challenges. Most people say, "Ah, I've done a challenge. I did a boot camp. I've done that before. I know what this is," and I usually start that conversation with, "Well, no you really don't. It's nothing like that." Although it addresses similar issues, the idea is that it's slow, continuous, gentle progress that allows you to sustain that progress over the 8 weeks and then beyond the 8 weeks not to try to be perfect, not to try to get the perfect score, not to try to beat your friends although that part is fun.

Robb Wolf: The gamification, yeah.

Andy Petranek: The gamification is fun. It's there for the fun part. We don't give away prizes but really the point of the challenge is to help you create context and purpose and accountability for making very small changes that over time will lead to very big changes in your overall health and wellbeing.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: So it is very different than, it's not the Tough Mudder or the Spartan Race or the 4-week Bootcamp like I'd say if that's the way you approach it, you're missing the point.

Robb Wolf: Andy, I've noticed that we always want to simplify where people plug in to different processes and like in my gym, I tended to do a fairly hardline in the sand and of do this thing, the way I tell you 30 days, don't argue, don't bitch just do it and then at the end of 30 days you can look back, asses your progress, figure out if the cost benefit ratio is appealing to you. Oftentimes people would say, "Well, is there a way I can kind of sneak up on this, like I'll just quit drinking soda or whatever?" I'm like, "Yeah, you can do that," but I don't know if I was a jerk. I don't know if I as failing people but my approach was really to hold folk's feet to the fire. Get that really profound compliance and part of it may have been laziness because people that complied got really, really good success.

Andy Petranek: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: But people that didn't peel out and I didn't have to deal with them but how does the Whole Life Challenge address that like because clearly people do succeed whether they go and do it and mark 10 here on fire really get a profound change and they were able to make it stick and then

also people say, “You know what? I’m just going to stop drinking soda,” and they do that for a month and they’re like, “Wow, I lost 10 pounds by just not drinking soda. Maybe I’m going to cut out white carbs now.” Then there’s kind of a step away process. How do you guys address these two kind of ways of plugging in to these processes?

**[00:35:01]**

Andy Petranek:

Yeah, that’s a great question. We started off more the mark 10 back when we first...with the first Whole Life Challenge there were no levels, it was basically a Paleo...it’s a close to Paleo. We allowed sweet potatoes. We allowed beans but over the years, one of my intentions in my life of coaching is to be able to help people of all levels not just people that are willing to go at mark 10 and strip everything from their life and the strong survive and the weak fail and In fact, the people, they are willing to be strong enough to make it. I’ve always wanted to work and help a lot of people and I started thinking about my father in law who at the time was in not great health. He was overweight. He was terrible, pretty regular bad habits. He described his diet as pretty good which is the way most people...

Robb Wolf:

Which is hilarious and always, yeah, then you’re doomed. He said, “It’s pretty good.” It’s like a complete dog shit I got.

Andy Petranek:

I eat pretty well. I eat pretty well. How often have you heard that Robb?

Robb Wolf:

Right, right, every single time. Only like 1 out of 10’s of thousands of people has somebody looked at me and they’re like, “Yeah, I eat like a cockroach,” and I’m owning that.

Andy Petranek:

So I started thinking what will I tell him. If I wanted him to do the Whole Life Challenge, how would I get him because the other parts of the Whole Life Challenge, they’re very docile, 10 minutes of exercise a day, 10 minutes of stretching a day. Although they require some work and some time, they’re not hard in the context of hard and in fact some of the people that have done the Whole Life Challenge are like, “Can’t we get more points for doing more?” Like, “What if I do 20 minutes?” Or “What if I do an hour, can I get like 6 points for that or 12 points or triple?” Really no, not in the Whole Life Challenge, certainly you get credit for it. Your body will give you credit for it and your results will speak for themselves but we’re trying to build habits that you’re sustainable and it’s not about quantity or difficulty.

Robb Wolf:

Right.

Andy Petranek: So I started thinking about my father in law and I thought, "What would make a difference for him?" I came up with 5 things. I said, "Okay, if we got rid of the beer, we got rid of the pasta, we got rid of the bread, we got rid of the..." let's see that was beer and soda that was one category, pasta and bread was another category. "If we got rid of the cheese, if we got rid of the desserts and can't like after dinner dessert and candy" and there's one more that I'm forgetting.

Robb Wolf: Man, he really was eating like a cockroach.

Andy Petranek: But if you think about it it's kind of...

Robb Wolf: The only thing you're leaving off is like hookers and cocaine like it's like well we left those in because exercise is stimulant so.

Andy Petranek: I think it's very easy for us on...I don't know if it's the West Coast or California or be just in the industry to lose sight of...

Robb Wolf: Just how poorly people eat.

Andy Petranek: Just how poorly regularly people eat. I mean think of Top Ramen. How many people in the world live on Top Ramen?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Literally live on Top Ramen, it's insane.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Then they describe their diet as pretty good. That's insane as well. So that was basically what we decided. Let's make a level that we call the kick-start level, and let people start there. So that they don't because the other thing with the challenge, it's all about points, right? So each day, you start with 5 points and for every infraction of the rule on the level that you choose, you lose a point. Well, you can make the argument that everybody should just be at the top level and just fine, just lose points. Like it's okay, they're just points. People don't like to lose points.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: So like if you start the challenge off and you're on the performance at the top level and every day you lose 5 points and you lose all your points, you get zero every day for like two weeks, there's a very high likelihood you just quit. Like, fuck this. I can't do it.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: It's just demoralizing. It would be like walking in to an MMA gym when you have never worked out for three years. Like maybe some people would survive it but not very many.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: So we decided to make this level where people could keep their points. They would make good decisions around these very basic, basic areas and take that step in changing their life. You know what's funny is now that's the level I play. I play to kick-start level but I eat basically performance but I don't want to lose the points.

Robb Wolf: So you were gaming your own system. That's what you're telling me.

Andy Petranek: I'm gaming my own system. I tell people that I'm like this is a great option for you, then I can drink a glass of wine every day and not lose a point for it and because at the performance level there's no wine, there's no alcohol, there's no soda, there's no beer, there's no spirits, nothing and that doesn't work for me all the time.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

**[00:40:00]**

Andy Petranek: So and I don't want to lose points. I fall right into that category. I don't want to lose points every day for these stupid things. So yeah, that's kind of how we've addressed it. We're like progress not perfection and if you're making progress then we love it.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: You know?

Robb Wolf: Right, that's fantastic. Andy when is the next Whole Life Challenge occurring and then where on the interwebs can people track that down? We will have this in assurance also.

Andy Petranek: Yeah, so we operate as an event.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: We only offer three times a year. The next one is on September 17<sup>th</sup>. The one after that is on January and then we do three a year, May,

September and January. So the next one is September 17<sup>th</sup> and it's wholelifechallenge.com. We also provide a ton of content that for people that don't ever engage in all that challenge. You have to pay for it like that' the other interesting thing about the challenge is that there are not many nutrition or fitness challenge type apps or wellness programs that are not free. They're all free.

You download this thing and you get everything for free and you get all these things for free and my experience is if I really want somebody to change, they've got to pay for it.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: They got to pay for coaching. They got to pay for the membership at the gym and if they're not changing, they usually have to pay more because they are not committed enough. There's not enough skin in the game. So it's not expensive. Our price is 49 bucks. There's early registration. That's 39 bucks but some people ask me, "Where do the money go?" Well, we're business and well, it goes to...

Robb Wolf: It goes to the government of course.

Andy Petranek: It goes to the government.

Robb Wolf: Like 50% of everything that everybody makes, yeah.

Andy Petranek: Half of it goes to the government, yeah, and then the rest of it...we're not getting rich off it. That's for sure. Not yet anyway if we had a million players maybe.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: But yeah.

Robb Wolf: Awesome, awesome. Andy where else can folks track down information about you specifically on the interwebs?

Andy Petranek: Well, I'm on Facebook. I do my best to do multiple social media stuff like join me on Twitter, @andypetranek. I'm on Facebook @andypetranek. I'm very uncreative with my names. I'm on Instagram @andypetranek. I'm been trying out snap chat but I'll do it for a week then I'll lose track of it so I'm not so good at it.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, I'm neither snapping or chatting myself.

Andy Petranek: No, no neither of the above and sometimes I go through these moments of I need to just get off of these things.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: But then I think well, I got to keep my presence. I want to keep my presence. I like talking to people but it....

Robb Wolf: It gets to be a bit much though. You're kind of like, what should I be doing here? Is this helping anybody?

Andy Petranek: Yeah, this is the best use of time?

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Andy Petranek: I mean you've got to go through that. I mean you've got a massive audience and people...you've got to be pulled in 27 directions. How do you keep all that together?

Robb Wolf: You know it is my job so like people would ping me a private message on Facebook and I actually reply to it in addition to the other 50 private messages. They're like, "Wow, I really didn't expect a response." I'm like, "Well, this isn't actually a popularity contest for me. This is my job." I try to help people and if I help people then usually they buy a book or go to a seminar or something and so there's some reciprocity there so it is funny but sometimes, like I know like Instagram, like it's a little different than Facebook. It's really not so content driven. It's much more just kind of pictures and videos and I just can't imagine anybody being interested. Like I can still do front levers and back levers. I've most got a one-arm chin again and stuff like that.

Andy Petranek: Wow, wow.

Robb Wolf: But that's just so pedestrian compared to what you can find on the internet. I'm like, "Does anybody really care to see me do a front lever?" But then...

Andy Petranek: Right, right. I subscribed to gymnastic bodies Instagram feed and oh my God, I mean, in one way it's inspiring. There's the 54-year-old guy and I'm almost 50 so in some ways I'm inspired by this like wow, maybe I could do that at some point. Maybe, at the same time it's like are you kidding me?

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Andy Petranek: Are you kidding me?

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: You see that video that's been going around with that guy doing the one-arm hand stand?

Robb Wolf: Yes.

Andy Petranek: And moving back and forth.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, I posted that and I'm like so clearly this guy is on mars so we have to populated mars.

Andy Petranek: No gravity exactly.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, it's like one quarter gravity.

Andy Petranek: Exactly, it was insane.

Robb Wolf: That has largely chased me off of posting, editing workout related so.

Andy Petranek: Right, right. I mean I do it when I work out with my son because it's kind of fun.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: But if it comes to like me trying to take myself seriously, like forget about it, I'm not serious at anything.

**[00:45:03]**

Robb Wolf: Right, right, right, yeah so I don't know.

Andy Petranek: What are you doing these days for workouts and stuffs? Are you...

Robb Wolf: Mainly following the gymnastics body stuff and then...

Andy Petranek: Oh really.

Robb Wolf: Then doing Brazilian Jiu-jitsu two to four days a week and I will dead lift or hip bridge or front squat once every 10 days or so and that seems to supplement the kind of lower body overload that I'm not really getting out of the gymnastics body stuff and that's seems to work.

Andy Petranek: When you do that strength stuff, do you like sets of five, what are you doing?

Robb Wolf: I tend to work up to a heavy triple and by heavy, I'm still getting the reps done in less than a second like there's no grind to it at all but it's basically a work up to a level where if I added five more pounds, it would be a little grindy and then so I work up to that. It's kind of a Bulgarian deal but I work up to kind of a heavy triple and I'll back it off and do anywhere from 3 to 8 sets to get a little volume on that and that kind of depends on the day and I've done enough power lifting and enough lifting over the course of time that seems to be a good maintenance deal like I'm not setting any new records or anything but I've got plenty pop up for jiu-jitsu. It's super time efficient and I tend to do the gymnastics bodies throughout my work day. I'll do 25 minutes of writing, working on the book and then pop up and do my next block of gymnastics body stuff and...

Andy Petranek: It's hard. I mean those gymnastics body workouts are tough.

Robb Wolf: They are no joke. They are no joke.

Andy Petranek: Oh my God.

Robb Wolf: As you look at it and there's really typically not that much volume to it but if you really do it to standard you're like, okay, I just had a diamond roll out of my short. Like it's just...

Andy Petranek: Exactly.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah.

Andy Petranek: I'm working on...let's see, I'm working on the frog. The straight-arm frog hold, frog stand hold. Frog stand with bent elbows.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: So this is the straight arm version of that and then the mobility, "mobility." Because some of them are not mobility I hate to tell you Coach Sommer, not that he's listening to this. Maybe he is. It's the mobility piece is the bent arm straddle planche.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Like how is that mobility?

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Andy Petranek: That one I feel like my eye balls are about to pop out of my head. It's a 10-second hold. When I first tried to do it, I couldn't even...I just kind of laughed at myself. I can't do this.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: I'm not going to be able to do this but now I can do it. It's kind of fun.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah so I I've been really digging that. It seems to work well for jiu-jitsu, keeps a decent amount of muscle mass on me and the mobility pieces when it is actually strength and mobility. I feel like my body just feels good relative to just lifting weights so I've really been digging that but I've got to say like you've got to be really comfortable with glacial progress like you just...

Andy Petranek: Yes, yes.

Robb Wolf: You just get in and you put the time in and you're like, "I have no idea if I made any forward progress at all."

Andy Petranek: When will that algorithm take me to step 7.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: I've been on step 6 for 6 weeks.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: Over seven like when will it move me up?

Robb Wolf: Yeah, so you have to be really comfortable with that if you are...you have to find stimulation elsewhere to put it that way.

Andy Petranek: Totally.

Robb Wolf: That's where or you just get in the Zen state and just log the mileage yeah, yeah.

Andy Petranek: You know I like that and I don't like that.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: I'm motivated by training for something rather than just like a good body of mine does Orange Theory. To me Orange Theory is just fitness for fitness' sake.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Andy Petranek: That's probably another thing that pulled me in the CrossFit place is, it's training for something. You're doing something. You're progressing towards something. There's something you have to journal and log because it makes the difference where you are.

Robb Wolf: Absolutely, yeah, and that's kind of where jiu-jitsu is kind of my I guess testing ground at this point and so everything I'm doing is to kind of support that and to make it better while not putting any type of recovery in roads that are going to limit the amount of jiu-jitsu I can do. Like if I manage to fit in 5 days of jiu-jitsu in a week then everything else gets curtailed to accommodate that so that's kind of where I've oriented all this stuff to be supportive of the jiu-jitsu activity and not take it away from it.

Andy Petranek: That's cool, that's cool.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. Well, Andy Petranek it's been a hoot having you on. Are you doing any traveling or you can be out on the road anytime soon?

**[00:50:00]**

Andy Petranek: I am not officially.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Andy Petranek: I don't have any tours or I don't have a book or the book is still in the thinking stage.

Robb Wolf: Okay, okay.

Andy Petranek: I got a lot to say but I haven't done any writing yet.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Andy Petranek: I like to make my way around the different places that are doing the Whole Life Challenge so I maybe informally traveling around and I was at the Paleo f(x) convention. In fact, did you see, did you get the Paleo f(x) magazine?

Robb Wolf: Yes, yeah.

Andy Petranek: There's a picture in the middle of it me and Sarah Ballantyne at that first day.

Robb Wolf: Oh yeah, yeah. I remember seeing that yeah,

Andy Petranek: It's just a great shot in the middle of it. Logan posted. I actually hadn't got a subscription to the magazine so I emailed him and now I'm getting a subscription.

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Andy Petranek: I forgot I need to post that.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Andy Petranek: But it was a very funny picture.

Robb Wolf: Very cool.

Andy Petranek: So maybe I'm sure I'll see you or people around.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Well, awesome Andy. Well, we will have links to all the Whole Life Challenge information in the show notes.

Andy Petranek: Cool.

Robb Wolf: I look forward to seeing you in real life again.

Andy Petranek: It sounds cool, me too, Robb.

Robb Wolf: Alright Andy, take care man.

Andy Petranek: Thanks.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Bye-bye.

Andy Petranek: Bye-bye.

**[0:51:12] End of Audio**