

Nicki: Welcome to The Healthy Rebellion Radio. This is an episode of Salty Talk, a deep dive into popular and relevant health and performance news pieces mixed with the occasional salty conversation with movers and shakers in the world of research, performance, health, and longevity. Healthy Rebellion Radio Salty Talk episodes are brought to you by Drink LMNT, the only electrolyte drink mix that's salty enough to make a difference in how you look, feel, and perform. We co-founded this company to fill a void in the hydration space. We needed an electrolyte drink that actually met the sodium needs of active people, low carb keto, and carnivore adherence without any of the sugar, colors, and fillers found in popular commercial products. Health rebels, this is Salty Talk.

Nicki: And now the thing our attorney advises. The contents of this show are for entertainment and educational purposes only. Nothing in this podcast should be considered medical advice. Please consult your licensed and credentialed functional medicine practitioner before embarking on any health, dietary, or fitness change. And given that this is Salty Talk, you should expect the occasional expletive.

Robb: Hey, top of the morning there lassy.

Nicki: Where did that come from?

Robb: I don't know.

Nicki: I just felt inspired to have an Irish lilt here. Okay, it is a Salty Talk.

Robb: It is a Salty Talk. How are you doing there wife?

Nicki: I'm good, I'm good. Thank you. Just waking up, waking up. We try to do these early before the girls are awake, and so far we are succeeding in that.

Robb: Generally.

Nicki: We'll see if we get interrupted.

Robb: You're reading the book Deep Work.

Nicki: I am. It was recommended by a couple of rebels in the healthy Rebellion community and it's really good. I actually read you and the girls the introduction just out loud a couple of days ago. And he were like, Robb put his head in his hands and was just-

Robb: It's was just like, "Oh, all of these really productive people that have done amazing things and changed the world."

Nicki: Throughout history, he starts with talking about Carl Young and how he worked best.

Robb: And it's without constant fucking interruptions, which those are only a memory at this point.

Nicki: Well, and we talked about it because when you wrote the paleo solution, we were running the gym, we didn't have kids. We rented a little office in Chico upstairs, this tiny one room, like gosh 100 square feet.

Robb: It was actually way more than what it needed because I chair, I had a table to put my coffee on, and then at that point I just sat with the-

Nicki: And a bathroom.

Robb: And a bathroom. I had a laptop that sat in my lap. Yes, I know that EMF barbecued my-

Nicki: Your junk.

Robb: ... my junk, but somehow I lived to tell the tale. But that was actually-

Nicki: You have long stretches of uninterrupted work with zero distraction.

Robb: And I got a lot of shit done.

Nicki: Yeah. That was before, there was Facebook but it wasn't.

Robb: I had internet, but I really focused on getting the shit done that I needed to get done.

Nicki: You were writing. It's so fascinating you talked about all these different people that just write on typewriters. Like Woody Allen, I think has written all of his things on a typewriter and JK Rowling didn't have Twitter for the whole time she was writing all of her Harry Potter stuff. She had an account at one point, but there was just one tweet that and she never logged in.

Robb: Just some of these people seem to know that if you were really going to do something big and deep, that you needed that focus.

Nicki: You need to be able to concentrate and not have that distraction.

Robb: I think about all the folks I know that have every device notification, one they have everything. They've got messenger. Even messenger early on with Facebook, I was like, "This is a horrible idea. This is just a horrible idea." So I never put it on my phone in particular. And I'm finding I'm slowly uncoupling myself from all that. I still have an Instagram account, but I don't personally put anything on it. Once we move, I'm going to nuke Facebook and yeah it's just interesting. But I just laughed when you described what these folks did and what my life has been by contrast. I don't know that I've got any-

Nicki: It's time for change.

Robb: I don't know I have any deep work in me left, but maybe I do. And if I do, then I'm sure as hell not going to get it by-

Nicki: Well, it talks about if you do a lot of shallow work, which is the opposite of deep work.

Robb: Email and social media.

Nicki: Email, social media, constant distractions, even Slack if you're... Obviously these tools are all very helpful in some regards, but they do have...

Robb: Downsides.

Nicki: Downsides. But if you're doing a lot of shallow work, it can actually make it harder for you to do deep work. It's a trained thing and it sounds unlike riding a bike, you can-

Robb: Break yourself.

Nicki: Break yourself and lose it to some degree and then you need to-

Robb: It sounds like your brain on porn stuff in a lot of ways.

Nicki: Yeah, maybe. I'm only, I just started second chapter.

Robb: But you know how you just so over stimulate parts of the brain that here.

Nicki: I think you can recover it, but it just takes time, it's a muscle it can atrophy.

Robb: Right.

Nicki: So anyway.

Robb: Well, and we're here to talk about another book. I got to hang out with Greg Everett.

Nicki: Yes. And before we go there though, I want to do some updates for healthy Rebellions stuff before we jump into our topic.

Robb: Why don't you just grab the keyboard, take control of this operation dear wife.

Nicki: Robb has the mouse and I need it. I need to be in control here with this one. Let's see, I just wanted to give a couple updates because, let's see here, we are on our movement week in the healthy Rebellion. So this is week three post the seven day carb test. People are working on their movement commitments getting in their movement snacks. We had Christy who got her first ever pull up in her entire life because she's been just diligently working on ecentrix and whatnot. She hasn't even tried to pull up in over a month and then she got up on the bar and got one. So that was a huge, huge win in our crew.

Robb: And she didn't keep it.

Nicki: No.

Robb: It was a legit fucking pull up.

Nicki: Then I also have to say we had so many people who loved from our last Q&A the question from Michael and Poland about wind and passing gas and farts and what have you. We had some hilarious conversations in the Rebellion around that one. So everybody was thankful to Michael for asking that. So if you're listening, Michael, thank you for the laughs. Then today we have today, today, not the day the episode comes out, but here we have our rebel and resident meat expert, Jack Rustin, teaching us all how to make a Valentine's day meal extravaganza. Of course, that includes meat. He's also doing an irresistible chocolate mousse.

Robb: Jack is awesome.

Nicki: So lots of fun stuff coming up and happening in the Rebellion. Okay, Robb, now we can talk about Greg.

Robb: Will you kick it off?

Nicki: Greg Everett. Well, everybody, I think if you've been following Rob's work for any amount of time, you probably know Greg. Greg was one of our very early co-hosts of the Paleo Solution Podcast.

Robb: Well, and going back before that he co-founded CrossFit Norco and Norco Strength and Conditioning and then we had either the good or the terrible idea to also found an online magazine. Some of the backstory with that early in the CrossFit scene, Greg Glassman told everybody involved, "Hey, go be, achieved, do, do all this great stuff." Then also at that time, the CrossFit Journal looked like a word document with a logo on it. It was very rough, great content but not much Polish to it.

Nicki: So then we had an idea to do an online journal like the CrossFit Journal, but have it more be food and nutrition.

Robb: Mainly nutrition.

Nicki: Performance oriented. So we created something called the performance menu. So then I was trying to make our thing look at least as good as the CrossFit Journal, which-

Robb: Which Nicki failed on.

Nicki: Which was like a... And mine looked worse than a parent association document. So thank goodness for Greg Everett because he actually has some-

Robb: We floated that by him and he was like, "Yeah, I can't let you guys release this."

Nicki: And he has amazing design skills.

Robb: So Greg put all this stuff together, we read a CrossFit gig in Santa Cruz and asked Nicole Carol if we could take a picture of her for the first cover. Greg Glassman lost his shit, and that was the beginning of many, many... I just feel like some of these backstories need to be told now. So it was just interesting again that there was this ruse hung out there of like, "Hey, go do big stuff, do good things." Then when people did it, they got their fucking heads lopped off.

Nicki: It was probably because we had Nicole on the cover. That was probably I think part of it.

Robb: That was a little bit of it.

Nicki: And the way Greg made it layout.

Robb: It looked so much-

Nicki: It looked like an actual magazine cover.

Robb: It looked professional and good.

Nicki: And so there was probably some-

Robb: But man, the ACE chaptued after that.

Nicki: There were some sour grapes.

Robb: We definitely had a chilly response for about six months, which seemed to be the way of things with CrossFit HQ at that time.

Nicki: I have so many memories of... Because when we first met and then we met Greg thereafter, early in our relationship it was you, me and Greg in the gym or watching that stupid movie that you guys watched 10 times in a row, "Gary."

Robb: Oh, Team America.

Nicki: "I have a needle or something."

Robb: "Gary, you must pass through the eye of the needle."

Nicki: Yeah. But anyway, funny. All right, but Greg has a book.

Robb: Greg has many books. Greg had a fiction background first. Greg's just a brilliant guy, mega, mega talented.

Nicki: Greg is good at doing deep work.

Robb: Greg is very good at doing deep work and he figured that out early in. When you look at the productivity of the guy, it kind of makes sense. He will have a presence online, but he never made the online thing his gig. Part of me now cries many a salty tear over that. But it is interesting too, like for me, I always felt like part of my work serving people was being accessible and all that. I think that there's pluses and minuses, but Greg has a treasure trove of books that he's written. I would say the vast majority of them were in the Olympic weightlifting and athletic development as it relates to Olympic weightlifting.

Robb: But he's in the interview... So the name of the book is Tough: Building True Mental, Physical and Emotional Toughness for Success and Fulfillment. He had threads of this book written down in 2011. So it wasn't a completely formulated idea then, but he'd jot down some notes here, jot down some notes there, and we'd dig into the process. That's something I am becoming very, very interested in as we go along. I don't really consider myself an author, I feel like fiction is really the place that that exists or like-

Nicki: They don't know.

Robb: The sacred cow maybe I cracked over the top of that because I was thinking about the guy that did 1491 and the Wizard and the Prophet, Man is his last name. Stuff like that, you start to call yourself an author. I feel like diet books, I've always been a little anyway.

Nicki: You're just too self, yeah

Robb: Not about me it's about Greg. But Greg really did an amazing job on this book looking at examples of true toughness throughout history, it's not some chest beating like toxic masculinity thing, it's just looking at people that have been faced with really difficult situations. Ironically so much of what they end up pulling from is creativity. In situations where you would otherwise assume that you have no agency, people figure out a way of garnering agency. Which again is part of where I see so much of modern cancel culture and some of these things steal agency from people and do it in a remarkably concerted, focused way and do it purposefully to take the feet out from under folks. So we talked a little bit about that. There's a process to finding toughness that Greg lays out, so this isn't theoretical, there was actually a very dedicated step-by-step process that involves daily deep work ironically now looking back. But one, it was great to reconnect with Greg and then two, this book is really cool and I've been getting a lot out of it.

Nicki: Awesome. The book releases on Tuesday, February 16th, and you can find that anywhere books are sold. So wherever you like to purchase your books, you can find a copy of Tough. Let's jump into the interview.

Robb: Cool. Greg Everett, what's cracking?

Greg Everett: Man, just so excited to be back with the man himself.

Robb: The person who nearly ruined your career in the health space?

Greg Everett: Oh, man, are you kidding me? All that stuff launched me into the stratosphere, wouldn't have it any other way.

Robb: Hoping that's the case. So what have you been up to? If folks don't know, you helped launch the initial Paleo Solution Podcast, which had a pretty good run, and then you have taken Catalyst Athletics to some pretty big places. Let folks know what your career was post paleo solution.

Greg Everett: Oh, well, it was the same, it was just a little less busy because I didn't have to do that podcast with you. No, Catalyst Athletics is the portal of everything I do, so publishing books, doing a lot of online content, articles, videos, did another podcast for a little while with Ursula Garza specifically to weightlifting. But podcasting, that's a terrible business, you don't want to do that.

Robb: It was a bad idea, I keep trying to get myself out of it and it pulls me back in.

Greg Everett: Everybody wants you to do it, but yeah, it's tough. Just scheduling wise it's tricky. So that's pretty much it, it's just coaching weightlifting, and doing as much quality content as I can for folks out there who would like to be better at those things and doing silly stuff like writing more books.

Robb: Right. Which we're going to talk about your most recent offering in that space too. But you're also competing in some tactical athlete competitions also, could you tell folks about that?

Greg Everett: I could, yeah. It's called the tactical games so it's very tactical, it's right there in the name. It's a really odd thing because I am not a gun guy, I'm not a shooting guy, and then here I am doing competitive shooting. So it's really, if anyone's familiar with two gun or three gun, it's essentially a two gun competition. But

it's spread out over two days with usually six to eight individual events. It's combining some pretty intense athletic challenges with the shooting. So it's not marksmanship, it's not strict shooting like USPSA or something like that, you're doing... I guess the easiest way to describe it would be obstacle course running. Although typically the events aren't quite that long, although we did the national champs back here in November and there was a 12 mile ruck.

Robb: Wow.

Greg Everett: It can get a bit nasty in that regard but typically that five to 12 minute range is pretty standard and you're just a drooling puddle by the end of it. But during the middle of it, you have to actually try to make shots.

Robb: Right. I didn't know that you had gotten into that. Then it was interesting you definitely had pretty remarkable skills early in CrossFit, made the transition into Olympic weightlifting and did really well with that. I didn't even know that you had gotten into the tactical game stuff. It actually looks really cool and it's just remarkably demanding, needing to do that high motor stuff and then just come out of warp drive, be able to get fine motor skills back together while you're throwing up on yourself. and then keep going again.

Greg Everett: Well, yeah. The focus and strategy aspect of it too is tricky. In most shooting competitions, you are the only shooter at that given time whereas in this one, you're running with three to four other people. So there can be people literally five feet away from you sending rounds down range. So not only are you having to focus on your own shooting, but now you're listening to someone else's shooting caterings and you don't know whether or not they're making hits. For all you know they're just shooting the dirt. But you hear it and you see them coming in and out of the firing line potentially, so that makes you tend to want to rush your shots. Again, for all you know they didn't make a single one and now you're rushing yours so you're dropping shots.

Greg Everett: So it's tricky and I think that was what appealed to me. Basically my friend, Mike Gray, who from years back got me into it, he signed up for one and just basically said, "Just go do it all right." All right, well, I had to retire from weightlifting because of a shoulder injury, I'm young and impressionable and desperate for an athletic endeavor, so here we go. It was so appealing because it was so completely different from anything I had done previously and had done quite a few different odd sports. But I think it was that balance where if it's strictly shooting, I'm not that interested. I've done a couple of USPSA matches and I can take or leave it. But it was this specific combination where you have that really difficult challenging physical side of it, which was completely different from weightlifting of course. It's been awful having to get back into running for example.

Greg Everett: And then like you said, having to switch from that mentality where I'm just going to pick up this 200 pound sandbag and lug it over here and almost be vomiting on myself and literally almost passing out at some time and now I've got to figure out how to make these shots, remember round counts on various target arrays, et cetera, et cetera while you're going up against guys who are really good shooters and athletes at the same time. So it's interesting.

Robb: That's awesome. I'm curious, so you have been coaching folks in Olympic weightlifting and then also I know Amy has coached people within the CrossFit

scene for a long time, how has COVID impacted that? I know you guys moved out in the boonies a bit and we're doing a lot of remote stuff, but also you would have people show up there to train. How has that impacted what you guys do?

Greg Everett: Well, fortunately, we made the move out here to the middle of nowhere in mid 2016. We shut down our big public gym in California at that time and we have just a gigantic garage here that's fully outfitted as a gym. So I have one local weightlifter who moved here from Portland a couple of years ago. But aside from that, all of our lifters are remote anyway. And Amy coaches quite a lot of lifters now too. So they're all over the place, I have Canadian, Danish lifters, I've got them everywhere all over the states too of course. So for us it didn't impact it a lot. As you said, we do have training camps pretty regularly. We'll bring a big group of them out here for a week. So that we haven't been able to do quite as well. And the main issue that affected me was not being able to do seminars, I had to cancel a couple seminars and I have one still, Postpone TBD, out in Raleigh that I can't schedule yet because we just have no idea what's going on.

Robb: Right, yeah. It seems to be the case with everybody, folks keep sticking things on the books and then keep pulling them off. I'm just like, "I would just pump the brakes on that entirely."

Greg Everett: Definitely not scheduling anymore right now.

Robb: Yeah, that's interesting. So we are going to talk about your latest book which is called Tough, the tagline is Building True Mental, Physical and Emotional Toughness for Success and Fulfillment. How many books is this for you now? Because you had a run of some fiction and then the Olympic weightlifting books, like the main offerings and then some sub offerings within that. How many books do you have out now?

Greg Everett: I actually don't know, I would have to go and count. But it's a lot less than Stephen King. But it's a dozen plus.

Robb: Maybe I can figure this out of the...

Greg Everett: So the old books, I can think of at least half a dozen I put out in the early 2000s and then a handful with the weightlifting stuff plus this one.

Robb: I'm reading it's somewhere between 10 and 11, I'm not sure if one of them is a German.

Greg Everett: They may not all be on Amazon, but it's at least that.

Robb: Nice. So you've been very much, I would say, like the vast majority of your material has been more in this physical, performance, coaching spectrum in particular with Olympic weightlifting. What drew you to write this current book? What was the seed crystal for it? I know for myself, I've always got a folder and I'm putting research articles in it and everything, but I can't break out of protein, carbs, fat, so it's just always in there. But this seems like a pretty good departure from what you've done historically, what was the Genesis for the idea to write this book?

Greg Everett: Well, the real Genesis was essentially the past 40.95 years of my life. Like you said having that extra folder, I had notes to this book going back to 2011.

Robb: Oh, wow. Okay.

Greg Everett: So even the book specifically has been on my mind for a while. Although at that time I really wasn't sure what it was going to be, which of course is why I didn't get around to writing it until just this last year. Finally, like you said, crystallized and I read, okay, this is what I want to do. But it honestly goes back to growing up the short skinny kid and being probably the most self-conscious person on the face of the planet and having that burden while simultaneously having this very strong sense that I would be able to handle anything I could possibly encounter.

Greg Everett: And having some trying experiences as a young lad, that was tested to some extent, although nowhere near what so many people have experienced. Obviously people have far more dramatic stories than I do and dealing with things like addiction and all these different facets. But then also having what I have found over the years to be a very unusually broad array of experiences personally and professionally owning a gym, being a coach, working on an ambulance, working at bike stores, just anything you can think of, and dealing with people from so many different realms that you see the ways that toughness is viewed, the ways that it's embodied, the ways that it's challenged in so many different ways and you start seeing the underlying patterns there and how you can put it all together and create this unified theory that is then applicable to anybody in any situation.

Robb: No, I like it. I guess in the hoity toity parlance of today, tough is resilience, it's being able to be tested, and then hopefully come back from that test stronger than what you were previously. Could you share some examples? You have some great ones in the book, but what are some examples of where toughness or resilience really benefited people? Then what are some examples you can think of where, and maybe even just like societally or whatnot, where this resilience and lack of toughness is actually causing a lot of problems, it's actually perpetuating people having a far less than optimal life?

Greg Everett: Well, probably the favorite example I have in the book is a guy named Steven Callahan who was, this was in the mid to late '80s, he was doing a solo sailing trip across the Atlantic Ocean, which in and of itself is pretty tough, right?

Robb: Right.

Greg Everett: You couldn't pay me enough money to do that, not a big fan. But his relatively small boat, a whale collided with it, punched a huge hole in it. Things sunk extremely quickly, he didn't even have time to get all of his supplies out before it sunk. He survived in a life raft by himself on the Atlantic for, I believe it was 76 days.

Robb: Wow.

Greg Everett: Which I'm pretty sure it was a record for those circumstances, it's just an insane amount of time. Think about simply just being isolated for 76 days, that alone would drive most people insane. But now you're dealing with just getting baked by the sun, crazy dehydration because your two solar stills aren't working

properly and can constantly get contaminated, sharks swimming around, you having to figure out how to get food, not being able to move off this tiny little raft, and being covered in sores from salt water, it's just a rough 76 days. But the amount of resourcefulness and ingenuity that this guy showed was just unreal and the simplest thing was creating a sextant out of a pair of pencils.

Greg Everett:

But then he got to a point where his raft was leaking he was trying all these different things to fix this leak. The final solution was actually using a fork. Of course not directly, but using a fork to eventually figure out how to seal this leak permanently or at least long enough to get them through to being rescued. The kind of creativity and ingenuity that goes into even considering let alone figuring out how to use something to fix a leak in a raft that we would normally associate with creating a leak is mind blowing. You just have to be on a whole nother level of cognitive operation to get to that point. So that to me is just fascinating and super impressive.

Greg Everett:

With regard to the second part of that question yeah, it is absolutely a societal thing and it doesn't take a lot of work to look and see a lot of problems. It comes down to people being extremely dependent not just on other people, but on structures and systems. We've seen how much of that stuff that we take for granted can be pulled right from under our feet during this COVID thing. So much vulnerability was exposed very quickly that most of us had not even recognized was there. So we have that issue and then the connected issue is this just pervasive sense of entitlement that people have.

Greg Everett:

I sound like the old guy on the porch that the kids these days lament. So it's not new in a sense but I feel like it's gotten worse and worse and worse as the typical person's day to day life has gotten more and more convenient and less and less demanding. So you can sit on a couch and order food, order groceries, order a car, thousands of different channels of entertainment. We don't have to lift a finger to do pretty much anything. So we've created this expectation that that is how life should be, that these things I want it therefore I should have it. We have this huge disconnect with the history of human existence where we had to actually work to earn things. Whether or not we wanted to or found it particularly interesting or thrilling and whether or not we were enthusiastic about it, those things were irrelevant. It was, "Hey, you can either do this and survive and possibly even have an enjoyable life or you can choose to not do it and then you're dead."

Greg Everett:

So it's like, I'm not saying we all need to be Luddites and get rid of technology and go back to the paleolithic lifestyle, but we certainly do need to take a step back and recognize, hey, yeah, it's great that we have all this stuff, these conveniences are wonderful let's exploit them as much as we can to our advantage, but let's not make the mistake of allowing them to completely change the way we view life and our role in it and our responsibility and our sense of agency and have this expectation like we're just a bunch of adult sized children waiting to be spoonfed something by some unknown mother figure.

Robb:

It's funny.

Greg Everett:

Thank you for coming to my Ted Talk.

Robb:

I remember as a kid there was this sense that, and I don't know when I lost it, it was probably far later than what it should have been, but there was a sense that

there was some agency. I'm not really religious at all, but it went beyond that. There was a sense that like, well, the government's there, they take care of you. We're like, "If something crazy happens, there will be people there, the police or the fire department."

Greg Everett: Look for the helpers.

Robb: Yeah, look for the helpers. Then I honestly I don't know where it was, but I remember there was just some moment where I was like, "Oh, the world is more like a snowball cascading downhill." And it just keeps going and sometimes it hits a tree and dodges a tree, but there's really no rhyme or reason to it. There's far, far less control going on than what I think any of us would really like... We're just this hair's breadth away from absolute chaos and anarchy I guess is kinda...

Greg Everett: We're all getting a good look at that reality right now I think.

Robb: Yeah.

Greg Everett: No one's coming to help us.

Robb: I don't know, so my family is fairly poor for white American standards. I just found when we're getting ready to move again, which I want to put a bullet in my own head. But I found this-

Greg Everett: Just buy an RV, Robb, come on.

Robb: We really should, we really should. Our dog is too large for the whole RV though, so that's the main limiting deal. But I found a food stamp from 1977. Because I remember my mom we would go in to buy food and she would open up this bill fold thing and pay for the food. I remember one day, some people saying some cranky stuff to her and it was awkward for her and we shuffled out and I'm five years old at this time. I was like, "What was that thing?" She said, "That's a food stamp." I'm like, "What's a food stamp?" She's like, "Well, we're poor and the government gives us some money and all this type of stuff." I remember I lifted one of them, it was a \$1 thing and I told my mom, I'm like, "I'm never, ever going to need to use these." There were probably points in my life where I probably should have like when we got NoCal going. We were so broke.

Greg Everett: It wouldn't have been a bad idea at that point for any of us.

Robb: I can't even believe what we got by on, it was remarkable. I definitely lived at a socioeconomic level where government assistance was not only available but probably appropriate, but I was like, "I'm not going to do it." So I think that that was a thing that has carried me through in my life. Not that I'm the toughest person in the world or the most successful or whatever, but I definitely drew some lines in the sand. And you know that was what it was. We're raising two kids, I don't want them to be poor, but at the same time I don't want them to be entitled terds either.

Robb: How do we roll out a life where we can benefit from the 1000 channels and the Amazon delivered and all that stuff? We can take some of the cool developments that we have but we almost have to artificially in some ways, do

something to make us tough or keep us tough. What are some ways that you recommend to be able to cultivate that in ourselves? I would suspect that a lot of people are going to be interested for their kids, how do we introduce that into our lives?

Greg Everett: Well, I think that first and foremost what has to happen is a change in mindset and this is very applicable to raising kids. Fortunately, my daughter's now in college, I don't have to worry about her anymore, she's done, took care of it.

Robb: Done.

Greg Everett: I'm just kidding of course. But it's having the mindset that we are personally responsible for the course of our lives and for the outcomes and recognizing very clearly the difference between blame and responsibility. So it was not your fault as a five-year-old that your parents were relying on food stamps, of course. You should have gotten a job, Robb but you were a lazy little five-year-old.

Robb: I did not long after that.

Greg Everett: Entitled little brat, yeah. But you took it upon yourself to make it your responsibility to never find yourself in that position. And that's a pretty stunning level of insightfulness for a five-year-old. I'm sure you didn't quite articulate it the same way you do now but recognized, "Hey, I'm going to make the choice to not be in this position." Of course, I say this all reluctantly because I am not one who believes that no one should be on welfare and it's a handout and all this things. I do believe that those social systems absolutely need to exist and should be used when appropriate. But they can be used when appropriate with the same mindset which is, this is a temporary thing that I'm going to use to help me in my journey to move forward and overcome this temporary problem that I've found myself in for whatever reason.

Greg Everett: So it's that attitude, that sense of agency that so many of us have surrendered for many different reasons. Like some of us it is more of a religious thing, we have this sense of fatalism like, "Well, we'll be taken care of." There is some benevolent force in the universe that wants me to be successful. I don't know why, I haven't really done anything to deserve it, but it will be okay. That's very different from saying, "I believe it will be okay because I know I have the ability to make it okay." It may be a very long, very difficult road and there may be a lot of setbacks and difficulties along the way, but ultimately I trust in my ability and my willingness to do the work and my resourcefulness to make it happen. And so I make that distinction in the book about positivity and optimism being either this baseless faith that things will just magically work out, which is really ill-advised in my opinion.

Robb: Like The Secret. Right.

Greg Everett: Versus I'm optimistic, I trust things are going to work out in my favor because I know I have the ability and the willingness to make them work out in my favor. These are completely different approaches to any experience. So everything else is really built on that foundation, is once you have that attitude, then suddenly you can shop at Amazon without that sense of entitlement, you can watch TV without that sense of entitlement or laziness or whatever because you're also curious and motivated and very interested in going out and building your abilities and gaining unique experiences and really adding to that toolbox

in preparation for novel experiences and adversity that is totally unpredictable, which is a large part of what makes adversity so difficult, is that we can't truly prepare for it specifically.

Robb: Yeah, that's interesting. I've noticed jujitsu and wrestling seems to just be a physical process that seems to induce a fair amount of toughness and resilience because no matter how good you are, no matter how talented you are, somebody is going to mop the floor with you.

Greg Everett: Someones going to smash you.

Robb: Yeah. And unless you decide to quit, then you go back and you do it again, you do it again, and you just really get very process-driven with that. Nicki started doing jujitsu with me a couple of years ago, the girls are doing jujitsu. There's been tears all around from both the women folk and myself occasionally at jujitsu but it's been interesting and it is this real pressure cooker in a way in that you will face adversity, you have to figure out how to overcome. More than anything for me, it really was one of these things that taught me a process, I have to be process driven not outcome driven. I have to just be present and deal with whatever the discomfort is in that moment then it goes forward.

Robb: So we were fortunate that we're able to get some good jujitsu in our lives, and that's one of the things that we put the girls. But what about some of the change, I guess, societally maybe unspoken. And correct me if I'm wrong on this. But I think part of this also is that there's a measure of gratitude that has to be baked in the cake. It's literally, thank you, sir may I have another? And no joke embracing that. But there's some sentiment in society now that seems like whether you come from a disadvantaged scenario or you actually have a more advantaged scenario but you just want to be a good human being, that it's no longer okay to have gratitude for just existing.

Robb: This is one of these things that Viktor Frankl... The two things that I really took away from Man's Search for Meaning one was he created agency from things as seemingly benign or Biental as he would take his piece of bread and break it in half and give it to somebody else because that was the one thing he had control over. Then the other part of this was that he continued to have deep gratitude for everything even in the worst circumstances. But it seems really dangerous to steal the opportunity for people to feel gratitude even from challenging situations. What are your thoughts on that?

Greg Everett: Well, first of all, that book is incredible and that guy. The ability to feel gratitude and to feel some kind of triumph in a situation as horrible as being in a concentration camp is again, that takes Stephen Callahan's experience and makes it look like standing in line at Disneyland, right?

Robb: Right.

Greg Everett: So that's incredible first of all. I quote him a couple of times in the book and refer to that because if you can't take away lessons from that book you don't know how to read. So the gratitude really does underlie everything. I talk about a morning journaling routine in my book and that's the first exercise and that's a pretty common thing for people. It's not just a conscious reminder of everything we have to be thankful for and appreciate even in the worst of times, there's always something you can find and it can be the tiniest detail like you said. But it

actually changes your brain chemistry. This is more your realm, you're the propeller head when it comes to this kind of stuff.

Greg Everett: But the things I've read is expressing gratitude and genuinely feeling gratitude actually changes the way your brain is functioning. It creates a more fertile environment for the things you're going to do, so that's why we start that morning journal routine with gratitude. Then we move on to the things that are more about improving ourselves. So it's like with the piece of bread, let me take care of you first, now let me take care of myself. Even that comes in with the attitude about being helpful with other people's. The best way to stop feeling helpless is to start being helpful. So there's all kinds of things tied to that.

Greg Everett: I don't know that I've necessarily seen what you're talking about about stigma about gratitude or whatever you mean there. But I certainly think there is a lack of gratitude being expressed and, of course, that's tied directly with entitlement. There's this weird sense and I don't know where this left turn happened at what point and what caused it, but it's like there's this weird... I think it comes back to the puritanical attitude where it's like, if you are rich and successful, that means you have been divinely anointed, that is God's plan for you. Versus well, no, it was because my dad exploited a bunch of slave labor and created an empire and then I inherited it, that it wasn't some universal intervention. There's some weird stuff with that, but I think a lot of us still have that attitude about people. We look up to celebrities and business moguls like they are these necessarily-

Robb: Benevolent.

Greg Everett: No. Moral leaders. It's like, well, the two things don't necessarily have anything to do with each other. I would much rather look at someone, and it's just on my mind because of our previous conversation, with someone like John Lewis or Victor Frankl as leaders in how to approach life and how to think and how to behave and interact with people versus like, I don't know, sorry, Elon Musk. Sorry guy, I don't know you. But why would I look at him as an example because he knew how to program stuff and was very good at making money? It's like, well, he might have great qualities but they probably have absolutely nothing to do with making money and very likely are at odds with that.

Robb: Right, that's interesting. And now a quick word from today's sponsor.

Nicki: This Salty Talk episode of the Healthy Rebellion Radio is sponsored by our Salty AF electrolyte company LMNT. And Robb, I have a review here that I want to read. But before I do, I'm curious, we've heard a lot of people mention that taking LMNT and dialing in their sodium markedly improves that afternoon slump or improves energy fatigue. We've commented to this effect before as well, sometimes you're just feeling off in the afternoon and then it's like, "Oh, I haven't had enough sodium today." And you grab a packet of LMNT and then almost immediately you feel noticeably better. So what is it about being low in sodium that can...?

Robb: This is just this brain fog, systemic fatigue that starts setting in. Just as a side note, I had a story come in from a pretty well-known person who considers themselves a biohacker, which I still tease this person religiously about the individual calling himself or herself a biohacker. But anyway, this person did a three-day fast, did a bunch of exercise, only drink water. The individual left their

LMNT at the office and this person ended up in the hospital. By the time he or she got to the hospital, they were entering into convulsions from hyponatremia, from low sodium. So the fatigue starts setting in because your body, your physiology, when it knows you're heading into that hyponatremic state, it tells you to pump the goddamn brakes. You can't keep motoring at the same volume in the same intensity if we're getting into a low sodium environment.

Robb: So I'm trying to couch it as clearly, we're involved with LMNT, we think it's great. But I don't want to couch this like the miracle cure all or anything. But if you are facing an inadequate sodium environment in your body, things are going to get bad and they can get bad really quickly. This is a person with Ivy league credentials and very, very smart and almost killed himself from not paying attention to the need for sodium. I'm going to talk about this more, probably in a Salty Talk or I may do something special for LMNT and actually brings up some questions around just fasting and the utility. And it actually circles back around into my talk from two years ago or whatever longevity we're trying too hard.

Robb: But that's the basics there, is that we experience profound fatigue when our electrolytes are off, in particular sodium. It's important to get potassium and whatnot, but you will die quicker from getting your sodium out of whack. Arguably from too low it's harder to get too low in the potassium, it's not that hard to get too high on the potassium too. So there's different routes but that's the basic thing. And it was a much longer answer I can tell by the way you're looking at me than what you wanted.

Nicki: No, perfect. But I wanted to read this review from one of our LMNT verified buyers, this one is from Chris and he says, "Yum, I love all the tastes, but I've only had the fruity/citrus ones. Usually at the end of the day of work and a workout, I go home ready to fall on the couch because I'm drained. I have really felt that drinking LMNT keeps me from needing a nap and TV shows to end the day. Instead, I have the energy left to finish the day right with any extra work, reading, or family activities. If you feel drained by 3:00 PM, I highly suggest supplementing with LMNT. I'm happy I tried it."

Robb: Cool.

Nicki: That's a pretty cool review. Coming up in March, we'll be re-releasing the first of three new flavors that will be coming out this year in 2021. So we'll announce that new March flavor in the next couple of weeks. But in the meantime, to dial in your hydration, simply go to drinklmnt.com/robb. If you haven't tried it yet, you can grab one of the sample packs. We have a sample pack that includes the citrus, raspberry, orange, and raw unflavored, as well as a Fiesta pack which has the chocolate, salt mango, chili, and lemon habanero. Again, that URL is drinklmnt.com/robb. And now back to the interview with Greg.

Robb: I can say it can cut a little bit both ways in that there does also seem to be there's some people who work hard and achieve and sacrifice. But I guess this is where there's some outer boundary to all of this type of thing. But there's some people that have literally bootstrapped themselves and these are some of the stories that I think are remarkably powerful and inspiring. Usually these folks have a really deep sense of gratitude for their circumstance even if they came from novel or very humble beginnings. We have a good friend now that we met through another friend, Adam Brenneman.

Robb: This guy was born with cerebral palsy, been wheelchair bound since age five, and has built multiple successful companies, has taught himself surfing, has done all this stuff that he wasn't supposed to be able to do. Man, he is just full of piss and vinegar you can not be happy after talking to this guy. He's had a ton of both financial success in life, but also I think I don't know what term, social success or just moral success or whatever. He's a great human being and he's this beacon for hope that it's like, "Okay, even if you're not as physically able bodied as what you might want, whatever limitations you could think you might have maybe a lot less than what you really discover if you get in and try."

Greg Everett: Well, and I think with regard to being financially successful, so much of it comes down to the underlying motivations. Are you rich because your underlying motivation was to be rich? That's a ridiculous goal. Because that's where we see people who they achieve these amazing things in absolute terms but they're miserable and spiteful and hateful and they just are still unhappy and unfulfilled and take it out on everyone around them. Versus a guy like you're talking about, he not only achieved that stuff, but he did it in circumstances that were far more difficult than most people could even imagine dealing with. So to me, it's not like he set out well, I have cerebral palsy and I'm miserable so what's going to make me happy is getting rich by starting businesses. I don't know the guy, but I can pretty well guarantee that was never his true motivation. It was he had much pure and more essential motives. I think that's why he can achieve those things and be happy and be the kind of person that inspires others.

Greg Everett: Like you said, you, you walk away from talking to the guy very happy and very grateful and recognizing that whatever excuses you may have stockpiled to prevent your own success really need to be tossed to the side and you need to just put your head down and get to work. So that's a very different situation, I think that's the key, is those motivations and that ties into the character and value side of the equation which again, underpins everything else. So much of what we talk about is less about what we're actually doing than why we're doing it. What is the purpose of this? What is the reason I'm doing this? Versus what it actually is.

Robb: Interesting. That's interesting. What is the structure? So I think you alluded to part of it, which is this beginning the day with a gratitude journal. But somebody reads the book, they're starting to implement in their life. What is the process that occurs for creating toughness? And is there a differential diagnosis thing to figure out where you are within this equation or the things that you need to prioritize? How does someone... I could see someone maybe being a hard charger in business but then maybe not resilient in family measures or something like that. There's interestingly some toughness that needs to be developed there. How do you delineate where you are or what you need to focus on? And then what's the process for actually doing something about that?

Greg Everett: It starts with everybody's favorite process, which is really honest self-examination. Most people avoid that like the plague because it's really disappointing and discouraging when you really truly take a look at who you are and why you're doing what you're doing. So many of us are great at self-deception, "I'm a good person." But then if you actually objectively look at all the things you've done throughout your life, that's really called into question for example. So step one and literally step one in the book is essentially taken an inventory of who you are and figuring out what your true identity is, what the

associated values are. Then beyond just looking at that is, okay, but who do I want to be?

Greg Everett:

So I am very much of the belief that we are in control of our true character. We may be someone just through the experiences and allowing things to take natural course because you will be influenced by external circumstances unless you take control. But then we can decide like, no, I don't like this, I don't like who I am, this is something I want to change. That's again step one because everything else has to follow from that. Knowing our identity, being secure in that identity is really key because that security and who we are is what prevents all the ridiculous posturing and unnecessary competition and conflict, all this silly stuff that we waste so much time with. The one-upmanship, the classic tough guy persona where you think someone looked at you funny so now you have to fight, now you're in prison for 20 years because you stabbed him with a fork and really it was just he had something in his eye. You know what I mean? Just stupid stuff like that.

Greg Everett:

That's an extreme example, of course, but this applies to everything we do in our life. Whether or not we can commit to things for the right reasons has to do with our character and our security in that identity. So as we go through the book, I really went out of my way to provide practical action steps to address every part of this thing. So it wasn't just like, "Here's a philosophy, good luck figuring out how to apply it in a practical sense." That drives me nuts because it's not really that helpful. People can figure this stuff out on their own if they take the time to think about it, but knowing how to actually translate that into practical change is very difficult.

Greg Everett:

So it pretty much all of it starts with self examination and figuring out where we stand, deciding where we want to go, and then creating the steps to get there. So yes, it is variable depending on who we are. Some of us we do Excel in certain respects and we're huge failures in other. Being great at business and terrible at family interactions is a classic one. It's yeah, I'm a billionaire by age 35 but I haven't seen my kids in two years and now I have their therapy bills for the next 30. So we look at this idea of toughness as a very global thing. And in totality, it's the same end point. We all have this thing of being tough, but the actual components of it are all going to be slightly different.

Greg Everett:

So for example you might have someone who is very physically capable and they're going to excel in that area versus someone maybe who has cerebral palsy. They're not going to be running around carrying heavy stuff and doing snatches and clean and jerks. But what they're going to do is in total, they're going to mitigate whatever problems are attendant to those weaknesses if you want to call it weaknesses. And they're going to exploit their various strengths so that in total that system works out to the same ultimate result. So that's where the individual variability comes in and that's where we get into the male versus females. A lot of us have this weird sense that men are somehow tougher than women by nature or more capable physically. Which from a strictly biological standpoint there are certain differences that are impossible to ignore, they are not hard and fast rules. There are plenty of stronger, more athletic, more muscular women out there than plenty of men. But each of us finds the way that we make this final thing, toughness, work for us regardless of what all these tiny individual details are.

Robb: I love it, I love it. If there was one thing, clearly toughness, but if there was one thing that you hope that folks would get out of the book and the experience of working through this process, is there a one thing or a list of top three characteristics that you want folks to pull out of this?

Greg Everett: I think the number one thing, if nothing else, is understanding that sense of agency and responsibility. Is that ultimately everything comes down to our decisions and our actions, what we do, why we do, when we do them, and what we choose not to do of course. Once you've accepted that part of it, the rest of it starts to fall in place I think a lot more naturally because you start to seek solutions versus wallowing in your misery and feeling sorry for yourself and waiting for someone else or something else to come fix things for you. Like looking around for your mom that hasn't been around in 30 years, but somehow she's going to come, make you a sandwich, and tuck you in, and everything's going to be okay. So that would be number one.

Greg Everett: I think if I had to add another one, it would probably be that sense of identity and security in it. Because again, without that, then you're constantly scrambling to figure out where you stand and what your role is in your own life, and your interactions with other people are just fraught with all kinds of problems. Versus being the kind of person who has the confidence and composure of someone who truly knows who they are and is secure in that. You're willing in that case to go put yourself out there and risk a little bit of temporary embarrassment by getting yourself into a new experience and looking like a dummy. Well, I don't know how to do this, but I'm here because I want to learn how. And that's okay, I don't care if this other guy is going to go make fun of me with his buddies because number one, I don't know him and doesn't matter. But number two, I don't care because while he's over there making fun of me, I'm getting better.

Robb: Right. Now, that's great stuff. It's interesting just in my own podcast, the topic of agency has come up a lot lately in the, I don't know if this is completely factual or one of my 49 year old brain cells misfiring. But I seem to recall that if you place people in a situation in which they feel a lack of agency, that that is about the most stressful thing that can happen to them.

Greg Everett: Oh, yes. Well, and I think one of the books I referenced in there is Martin Seligman's Learned Optimism. So he was the guy who developed the idea of learned helplessness. His original experiments were essentially unfortunately shocking dogs, but it was discovering that when the animal was able to do something that changed the situation, I stopped the shock, they developed this mindset that would push them to seek changes and to take action in any other situation. Versus the ones who were unable to make anything stop, would literally just give up and just accept it. So of course that translates very well into people. When we believe that we have the ability to make changes and determine the course of our lives and who we are and all these different things, we do it. Regardless of how novel the situation is, regardless of how unfamiliar it is, we go into it with that belief that we can get through to the other side, we can achieve whatever it is, whatever the case is.

Greg Everett: Whereas if we've learned that we don't have that ability for whatever reason early on, we had circumstances that made us believe we don't have it, then we don't bother because why would we? If we believe nothing we did would make a difference, then why would we ever lift a finger to make a change? So once

you've learned that, it will apply to everything. And if you have learned the opposite, you got to figure out a way to unlearn it really quick or you're going to be miserable.

Robb: Well, your book seems like an amazing tool for effecting that change. It is due out February 9th?

Greg Everett: 16th.

Robb: 16th, okay.

Greg Everett: There has been some complications primarily with amazon.com. They're a struggling low budget company that's getting new to technology, so it's going to be difficult.

Robb: In the age of COVID, books, get second short shrift on that stuff, so I commiserate with you. Our Sacred Cow launch sucked, they were sold out of Sacred Cow Monday midnight before launch week then people started getting a notice, usually ships in two to four months, which didn't really help us a lot, so...

Greg Everett: We had Amazon cancel a bunch of people's pre-orders saying they didn't know when they'd be able to get the book. It's like, come on guys, this is not that complicated.

Robb: Well, books are unfortunately low priority right now, but we will do what we can to spin this out to you. Greg, remind folks where they can track you down. Tough is available at Amazon, but any other locales that you recommend?

Greg Everett: Well, becomingtough.com is the portal for everything related to the book and that has some links to other retailers. But you can literally buy it from anybody. So the February 16th release hardcover, e-book, and audio book. So essentially any platform that exists, you should be able to get the book on. It's in pre-order right now, so some places do it some places don't. If they don't, you should be able to get it from your local bookstore if you want support them, which would be great. But they likely have to order it from you. I'm not quite at Stephen King's level so the mom and pop shop isn't stocking all my new releases, I don't understand why.

Robb: I don't know, particularly when they're at half capacity for people going through the store but yeah.

Greg Everett: Right, so strange retail business.

Robb: Well, Greg, I'm super stoked for you, this is a really cool project. I've just had one, a ton of fun being your friend for, is it really a minute? It's over 15 years now.

Greg Everett: Yeah, it's like well, 2003-ish, right?

Robb: Yeah.

Greg Everett: So coming up on 20. That performance menu is turning 16.

Robb: But it did.

Greg Everett: Well, no, it did the 5th. February, 2005 was the first issue.

Robb: That's crazy.

Greg Everett: So I can't believe I haven't buried that thing yet, but one day.

Robb: One day, yeah. Well, I'm stoked that you've done this and really excited to see this book help people. Remind everybody about the main portal website and then also your main contact info.

Greg Everett: Becomingtough.com and then also if you're a social media person, Instagram is either becoming tough or my main one is Catalyst Athletics and that's my big one, that's where all the followers are, that's where everything gets posted anyway, so that's where you get all the fun stuff.

Robb: Awesome. Cool, man. All right, Greg. We'll, hope to see you in real life here at some point.

Greg Everett: Well, you move so much you might end up next door one of these days.

Robb: It could happen, yeah. Okay, take care.

Greg Everett: All right, thanks, Robb.

Nicki: Alrighty, that was a good one.

Robb: A ton of fun reconnecting with Greg, yeah and a super valuable book. A lot of folks could benefit from some toughness. We had a little dust up in the Healthy Rebellion that we managed to motor through recently and part of the impetus for it was, I would say, folks could have benefited from being homozygous in the scroll on by gene. If you see something that just rubbed you a little wrong or whatever, it doesn't mean you have to dog pile on it and give a PhD level dissertation on it. Sometimes you can be like, "that's bullshit," and scroll on by or maybe just scroll on by entirely. I think that that is ironically some of this kind of toughness deal. Also it probably circles back into the deep work thing. If you have important shit that you're trying to do that matters to you, then little snips and quips on social media, if you happen to find yourself there, really shouldn't affect you the way that it does so many people. I would say this toughness concept is probably part and parcel for that.

Nicki: So remember to grab a copy of Tough, it comes out on Tuesday, February 16th. Also share this episode if something in this show helped you, share it with your friends. Lastly, thanks for joining us and remember to check out our show sponsor LMNT for all your electrolyte needs. Go to drinklmnt.com/robb and we will see you all next time.

Robb: Bye, everybody.

Nicki: As always, Salty Talk episodes are brought to you by Drink LMNT, the only electrolyte drink mix with salty enough to make a difference in how you look, feel, and perform. Get salty at drinklmnt.com. That's drinklmnt.com.